

Comparing and Contrasting Buddhism and Christianity

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Purpose:

The Big Concepts in this lesson are recognizing the similarities and differences between Buddhism in Korea and Christianity in the United States and fostering an attitude of tolerance of these two religions.

Instructional Note:

This lesson will be implemented as part of a unit on Korea and will be taught cooperatively by the Religion and Social Studies teachers. This lesson will be taught in grade seven, but would be appropriate for all Middle School grades.

Ohio Academic Content Standards: **Social Studies**

People in Societies

- Grade 6-8, Benchmark A: Compare cultural practices, products, and perspectives of past civilizations in order to understand commonality and diversity of cultures.
- Grade 6, Grade- Level Indicator 2: Compare world religions and belief systems focusing on geographic origins, founding leaders, and teachings including:
 - a. Buddhism;
 - b. Christianity;
 - c. Judaism;
 - d. Hinduism;
 - e. Islam.

People in Societies

- Grade 6-8 Benchmark B: Analyze interactions between cultural groups and explain the factors that contribute to cooperation and conflict.
- Grade 6, Grade-Level Indicator 3: Explain factors that foster conflict or cooperation among countries:
 - a. Language;
 - b. Religion;
 - c. Types of government;
 - d. Historic relationships;
 - e. Economic interests.

Essential Questions:

- What are the basic belief systems of Buddhism and Christianity?
- What are the similarities between the religious belief systems of Buddhism and Christianity?
- What are the differences between the religious belief systems of Buddhism and Christianity?
- How can people of different religious belief systems foster tolerance and cooperation among them?

Rationale:

Students will compare two world religions to understand the commonality and diversity of these cultures and their religions.

Materials:

Smart board
 Assorted books for research
 Chart paper
 Rubric
 Presentation Assignment sheet
 Note-taking chart
 Computers for internet use.

Activities:

Day One:

1. Break students into small groups. Assign each group one of the following religions to research:
 - Buddhism
 - Christianity
2. Provide each student with a research chart and each group chart paper to list their findings for the rest of the class.
3. Distribute copies of the presentation assignment, group requirements, and rubric.
4. Groups begin research with provided materials. Students may use in- room computers or the computer lab to search the internet for appropriate information.
5. At conclusion of the class, students will divide the work and assign some research to be completed at home.

Day Two:

1. Before breaking into groups, have class discuss the terms diversity, tolerance, and cooperation. Using the smart board, students decide on a working definition for each of these terms.
2. Break into research groups and have students take a few minutes to create a T-chart of reasons why countries and cultures may practice tolerance or not. Cite

historical examples of countries or cultures that did and did not practice tolerance or accept diversity.

3. As a class, discuss what role religion plays in tolerance or diversity.
4. After discussion, research groups continue and complete their research.
5. Groups may choose to present information in chart form or as a power point using the smart board.

Day Three:

1. Research groups put the finishing touches on their presentations. While the groups are preparing to present, distribute copies of charts to each student so that the information may be recorded.
2. Each group presents their information while the remainder of the class takes notes. As multiple groups will have researched the same religion, ask each group to present a part of their research. After each presentation, allow time for comments and questions. Make sure all information is clear and accurate. Allow students extra time to share information with each other so that all students have complete notes.
3. After all presentations, students reflect on the similarities and differences between these two religions by answering these questions in their religion or history journal:
 - What beliefs do these religions have in common?
 - What aspects of these religions are most different?

After 10 minutes, allow volunteers to share their reflections with the class. Clear any points that may have caused confusion in understanding the similarities and differences between these two religions. Close the lesson by discussing the need to be tolerant.

Post-Assessment:

1. Assessment writing activity: Have students work in pairs to answer the following questions:
 - What are at least two similarities and differences between Buddhism and Christianity in terms of belief systems?
 - How do these belief systems foster a spirit of tolerance and also conflict?
 - How do you suggest people of different belief systems foster tolerance and cooperation instead of conflict and violence?

Scoring Guidelines:

Outstanding, 10 points:

Essay shows understanding of all of the following:

- Both similarities and differences between the two religions;
- How belief systems foster a spirit of tolerance and conflict;
- Suggestions on promoting tolerance and cooperation.

Very Good, 9 points:

Essay shows some understanding of all of the following:

- Both similarities and differences between the two religions;
- How belief systems foster a spirit of tolerance and conflict;
- Suggestions on promoting tolerance and cooperation.

Fair, 8 points:

Essay shows some understanding of at least one of the following:

- Both similarities and differences between the two religions;
- How belief systems foster a spirit of tolerance and also conflict;
- Suggestions on promoting tolerance and cooperation.

Needs Improvement, 7 points

Essay shows minimal understanding of the following:

- Both similarities and differences between religions;
- How belief systems foster a spirit of tolerance and also conflict;
- Suggestions on promoting tolerance and cooperation.

Instructional Note: My school is on a block schedule and each class is 75 minutes long. This lesson has been planned with this in mind. The lesson may be spread out over an entire week if class periods are of shorter duration.

Resources:

The following are book and internet resources to assist the students:

Gurney, Gene. North and South Korea. New York: Franklin Watts Inc. 1983, 28-33.
Solberg, S.E. Land and People of Korea. Philadelphia: Lippincott Co., 1973, 108-113.

The following text will be useful to teachers:

Cummings, Bruce. Korea's Place in the Sun. New York: WW Norton & Co., 2005: 34-37, 43, 47-49, 75, 230-231.

<http://www.slu.edu/organizations/ksa/History.htm>

Ancient Korea from 2333BC to the present.

St. Louis University.

www.religioustolerance.org/buddhism

www.buddhism.about.com

www.religioustolerance.org/christ

Comparing Buddhism and Christianity Presentation Assignment

Instructions:

1. Each group researches assigned religion. Each member completes an information chart based on what section was researched.
2. A designated recorder keeps track of each member's duty.
3. Decide how the information will be presented to the class: power point, chart, smart board, etc.
4. Be creative with the presentation, but make sure all work is accurate.
5. Give the history of the religion and current information including; holidays and festivals, sacred texts, deities, and any other importance information. Include a section on how the religion impacts the culture.
6. Read the rubric to make sure all sections are completed.
When presenting, speak slowly and clearly. This is not a speed speaking activity. Your classmates will be trying to take notes on your presentation.
7. If you are unsure how to pronounce something, please ask for help prior to the presentation.
8. Remember that you are the expert.
9. Be cooperative and help each other. Successful completion depends on each person's cooperation.

Buddhism and Christianity Presentation Rubric

	10	9	8	7
Required Information	Presentation includes all required information.	Presentation includes 90% of required information.	Presentation includes 80% of required information.	Presentation includes 70% of required information.
Accuracy of Information	Presentation includes accurate and relevant information.	Presentation information is 90% accurate and relevant.	Presentation information is 80% accurate and relevant.	Presentation information is 70% accurate and relevant.
Presentation	Information is presented in a clear manner and is easy to understand. Appropriate speaking voice and body language is used.	Information is presented in a clear manner with mostly appropriate speaking voices and body language.	Information presented is difficult to understand with some inappropriate speaking voices and body language.	Information presented is difficult to understand and speaking voices and body language are inappropriate.

Information Chart

Religion: _____

Location and Dates of Origin	Primary Deities	Primary Beliefs	Rituals and Celebrations
Current Geographic Distribution	Sects or Groups	Sacred Texts	Important Dates/Holidays
Current Enrollment Worldwide:	Current Enrollment in Country:	Historic Events:	Current Events:

