SECTION 3
Religious Diversity Fact Sheets

Introduction to the Religious Diversity Fact Sheets

The religious diversity fact sheets that follow have been developed in consultation with representatives from the Manitoba Multifaith Council and draw on the information provided in similar documents and reference material. Each religion's fact sheet provides information on aspects of the religion or spiritual tradition that may require accommodation on the part of schools and school divisions in Manitoba.

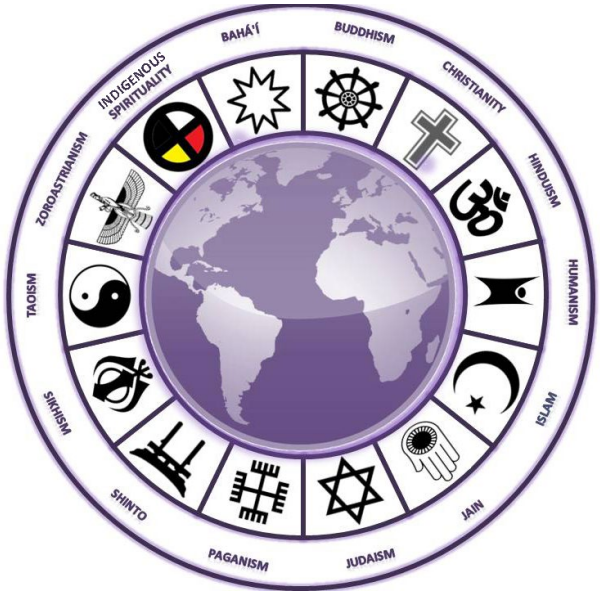


Figure 3.1: Religious names and symbols

The fact sheets include basic information and descriptions which provide an overview of the religion or spiritual tradition. They are intended for use by those not familiar with the specific religion or religions. The descriptions cover those practices and observances of the religion (including those followed by more conservative or traditional members) that may lead adherents to ask for accommodation from the school or school division. **As a result, these are not complete or detailed explanations of the religion, but they are intended to provide sufficient information for school personnel to use when considering a request for accommodation.** In addition, the fact sheets contain web links to additional information on specific religions for situations where more information may be desirable.

It is important to recognize that there is great intra-group and inter-group diversity with respect to religious requirements and practices. Consequently, within a specific religion or spiritual tradition, there may be a diversity of interpretations regarding the requirements and practices. For some members of a particular religion or spiritual tradition, there may be little or no conflict with school curricula and practices, while for other members or sects of the same religion or spiritual tradition, there may be considerable conflict. For example, many different religious and spiritual groups have modesty requirements concerning attire, some of which are quite similar and others which are quite different.

Equally important to recognize is the fact that all followers or adherents of a specific religious or spiritual group make personal interpretations and decisions about the practice of their faith. For some, no accommodations will be required to freely observe their religious requirements within the context of public schools. For others, there may be a need for accommodation to do so.

As well, religious practice varies somewhat within some religions, and there are varying interpretations, doctrines, and aspects of conviction. As a result, the descriptions that follow do not necessarily describe the beliefs and practices of all those who follow the religion under discussion.

This resource focuses on those groups whose practices and observances, from prior experience, may require accommodation. The list is not exhaustive. For information about other religious communities, consult

- Manitoba Multifaith Council, website: www.manitobamultifaithcouncil.ca/
- Living in Manitoba—Multiculturalism, website: www.immigratemanitoba.com/
- Government of Manitoba, Immigration and Multiculturalism, website: www.gov.mb.ca/chc/multiculturalism/index.html
- Multifaith Information Manual by the Canadian Multifaith Federation: http://omc.ca/

Manitoba Education and Training provides the information in this resource in order to assist schools and educators in identifying and exploring options for accommodating the diverse religious requirements, practices, and observances of students and their families, when requested to do so or proactively to create inclusive school and classroom environments. The department respects the right to freedom of religion as provided by the Human Rights Code of Manitoba and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Responsibilities.

Religious Diversity in Canada

The chart that follows is based on the 2011 National Household Survey and provides the religious affiliations of Canadians as reported by respondents.

Religious Affiliations of Canadians		
Religion*	Canada Total	Manitoba Total
Total Canadian Population in Private Households	32,852,320	1,174,345
Buddhist	366,830	6,770
Christian	22,102,745	803,640
Anglican	1,631,845	67,040
Baptist	635,840	19,815
Catholic	12,810,705	309,455
Christian Orthodox	550,690	14,665
Lutheran	478,185	40,915
Mennonite	175,880	44,600
Pentecostal	478,705	22,665
Presbyterian	472,385	9,760
United Church	2,007,610	130,220
Other Christian	3,036,780	189,110
Hindu	497,965	7,720
Jewish	329,495	11,110
Muslim	1,053,945	12,405
Sikh	454,965	10,200
Traditional (Indigenous) Spirituality	64,935	7,155
Other Religions	130,835	4,245
No Religious Affiliation	7,850,605	311,105

Source: Statistics Canada. 2013. Canada (Code 01) (table). National Household Survey (NHS) Profile. 2011 National Household Survey. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-004-XWE. Ottawa. Released September 11, 2013. www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E (accessed June 4, 2015).

* Religion refers to the person's self-identification as having a connection or affiliation with any religious denomination, group, body, sect, cult or other religiously defined community or system of belief. Religion is not limited to formal membership in a religious organization or group. Persons without a religious connection or affiliation can self-identify as atheist, agnostic or humanist, or can provide another applicable response.

Religious Diversity in Manitoba

The chart that follows is based on the 2011 National Household Survey and provides the religious affiliations of Manitobans as reported by respondents.

Religious Diversity in Manitoba 2011	
Total Manitoba Respondents	1,174,345
Buddhist	6,770
Christian (total)	803,645
Anglican	67,045
Baptist	19,815
Catholic	309,450
Greek Catholic, n.o.s.	1,650
Roman Catholic	294,495
Ukrainian Catholic	12,950
Catholic, n.i.e.	350
Christian Orthodox	14,660
Armenian Orthodox/Apostolic	50
Coptic Orthodox	235
Ethiopian Orthodox	285
Greek Orthodox	6,145
Macedonian Orthodox	15
Romanian Orthodox	160
Russian Orthodox	460
Serbian Orthodox	355
Syrian/Syriac Orthodox	70
Ukrainian Orthodox	3,075
Christian Orthodox, n.i.e.	3,815
Lutheran	40,915
Pentecostal	22,670
Presbyterian	9,760

Religious Diversity in Manitoba 2011	
United Church	130,215
Other Christian	189,110
Apostolic Christian Church	95
Associated Gospel	150
Brethren in Christ	155
Charismatic	195
Christian and Missionary Alliance	1,665
Christian Congregational	15
Christian or Plymouth Brethren	495
Churches of Christ/Christian Churches	945
Church of God	350
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	1,845
Church of the Nazarene	155
Community of Christ	25
Evangelical, n.o.s.	9,245
Evangelical Free Church	660
Evangelical Missionary Church	80
Free Methodist	120
Iglesia ni Cristo	735
Jehovah's Witness	3,910
Mennonite	44,600
Methodist, n.i.e.	535
Moravian	25
New Apostolic	80
Protestant, n.o.s.	20,305
Quaker	40
Reformed	2,895
Canadian Reformed Church	1,070

Religious Diversity in Manitoba 2011	
Christian Reformed Church	1,125
Dutch Reformed Church	85
United Reformed Church	80
Reformed, n.i.e.	540
Christian, n.i.e.[8]	91,785
Interdenominational Christian	260
Non-denominational Christian	4,640
Salvation Army	1,180
Seventh-day Adventist	1,765
Vineyard Christian Fellowship	95
Hindu	7,720
Jewish	11,110
Muslim	12,405
Sikh	10,195
Traditional (Indigenous) Spirituality	7,155
Additional Religions	4,245
Baha'i	390
Eckankar	75
Gnostic	55
Jain	35
New Age	90
New Thought-Unity-Religious Science	80
Pagan	1,295
Pagan, n.i.e.	690
Pantheist	40
Rastafarian	20
Satanist	60
Scientologist	45
Shinto	40

Religious Diversity in Manitoba 2011	
Spiritualist	210
Taoist	50
Unitarian	680
Wiccan	605
Zoroastrian	20
Other Religions, n.i.e.	1,065
No Religious Affiliation	311,100
Agnostic	1,625
Atheist	1,715
Humanist	150
No Religion	307,110
No Religious Affiliation, n.i.e.	505

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011032.

Notes

1 Excludes National Household Survey data for one or more incompletely enumerated Indian reserves or Indian settlements.

2 For the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) estimates, the global non-response rate (GNR) is used as an indicator of data quality. This indicator combines complete non-response (household) and partial non-response (question) into a single rate. The value of the GNR is presented to users. A smaller GNR indicates a lower risk of non-response bias and as a result, lower risk of inaccuracy. The threshold used for estimates' suppression is a GNR of 50% or more. For more information, please refer to the National Household Survey User Guide, 2011.

3 Catholic, n.i.e. includes, for example, Polish Catholic, Armenian Catholic, Syrian Catholic, Catholic not included elsewhere, etc.

4 Churches of Christ/Christian Churches includes Disciples of Christ.

5 Community of Christ was formerly known as 'Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.'

6 Grace Communion International was formerly known as 'Worldwide Church of God.'

7 Wesleyan includes Standard Church.

8 Christian, n.i.e. includes those who report only 'Christian' and Christian religions not included elsewhere such as Born Again Christian, Apostolic not included elsewhere, Messianic Jew, Hutterite, etc.

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

In the 2011 National Household Survey, just over 64,900 people reported that they were affiliated with traditional Indigenous Spirituality (Statistics Canada). This might, however, be an inaccurate picture of the situation due to the nature of the survey and its limitations, and the fact that many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples integrate aspects of Indigenous Spirituality with Christianity.

Figure 3.2: Four Directions, Aboriginal Education Directorate

A world view may be seen as the set of beliefs about fundamental aspects of the world around them (reality) that grounds and influences all of a person's or society's perceptions, thoughts, knowledge, and actions. Thus, a world view refers to the principles, values, traditions, and customs of a person or society that enable them to make sense of the world. World views form over time, but once a world view has been formed, it may serve to distinguish the person or people as unique or different from others.

Is FNMI/Indigenous Spirituality a Creed?

FNMI/Indigenous Spirituality in this document is understood to be the spiritual beliefs and practices that Indigenous peoples identify as being traditional or customary among Indigenous peoples. These may sometimes be integrated and practiced in combination with other faith traditions, such as Christianity.

As well, such traditional or customary beliefs and practices may include

- Practices of more recent origin that flow from a desire to revitalize or that are inspired by past Indigenous cultural-spiritual traditions and identities
- Traditional practices that in contemporary indigenous cultures have developed a new or more important sacred or symbolic meaning

Many FNMI peoples do not think of their spirituality as being a religion or a creed but a way of life and knowing. Spirituality is closely linked to their culture and ways of living.

Under the Manitoba *Code*, a person or group does not have to view their spiritual practices or beliefs as a religion or creed for it to be protected as a creed. Therefore, FNMI/ Indigenous Spirituality is deemed to be protected under the Code ground of creed.

"All religious or spiritual beliefs are protected in Manitoba, including the absence of a religious or spiritual belief or if the belief is not highly represented or considered mainstream." *Manitoba Human Rights Commission (MHRC) Teacher's Kit, 2013.*

This is supported by case law in Canada that has recognized FNMI/Indigenous Spirituality to be within the meaning of creed under the *Code* (OHRC, 2015).

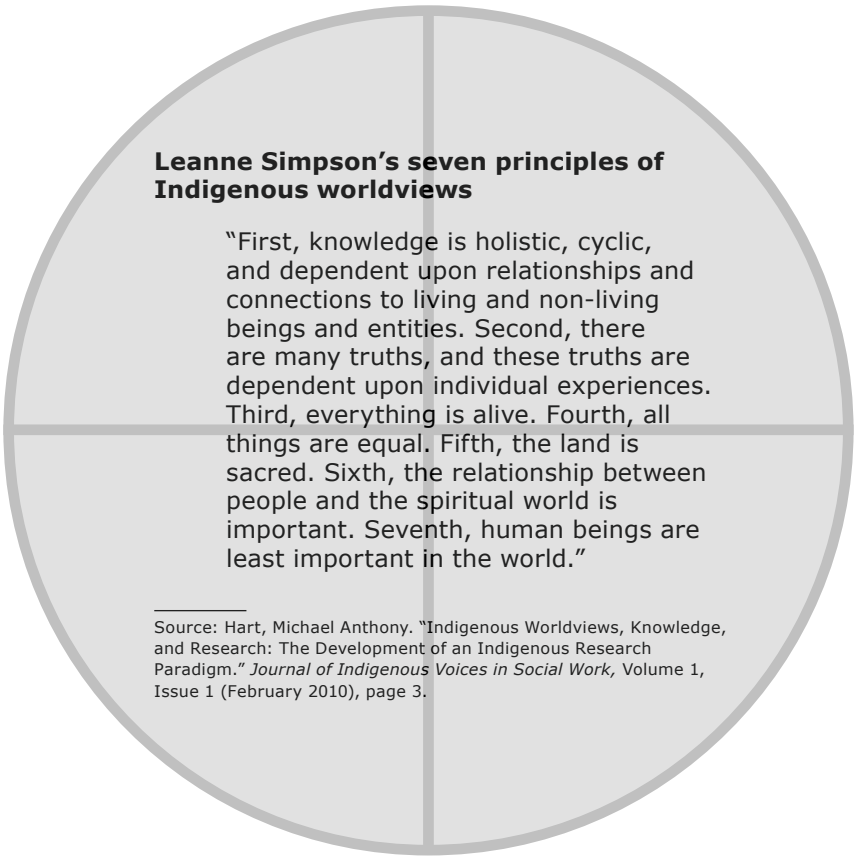
Since First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples comprise many nations, they have many world views; however, certain themes seem to be prevalent in most FNMI societies. There is, for example, less emphasis on hierarchies and more emphasis on interactional, mutually beneficial relationships. Co-operation and consensus are valued, and all views are to be respected and taken into consideration in community decision-making processes. There is recognition that there is harmony in diversity.

In analyzing the beliefs, sacred stories, and traditions from over 22 different indigenous and native cultures from around the world, including North America, Knudston and Suzuki, in *Wisdom of the Elders* (1992), identified the following characteristics as distinguishing indigenous world views:

- Spirituality is embedded in all elements of the cosmos; therefore, the physical and spiritual worlds are inseparable.
- Time is circular, with natural cycles that sustain all life.
- The universe is viewed as a holistic, integrative system with unifying life force.
- The universe is made up of dynamic, ever-changing natural forces.
- Nature will always possess unfathomable mysteries. Humans have a responsibility for maintaining harmonious relationships with the natural world.
- There is a need for reciprocity between human and natural worlds—resources are viewed as gifts.
- Proper human relationships with nature should be viewed as a continuous two-way, transactional dialogue.
- Nature is honoured routinely through daily spiritual practice.
- Wisdom and ethics are derived from direct experience with the natural world.
- The human role is to participate in the orderly designs of nature.
- Respect for Elders is based on compassion and reconciliation of outer- and inner-directed knowledge.

- There is a sense of empathy and connectedness with all other forms of life. Human thought, feelings, and words are inextricably bound to all other aspects of the universe.

Traditional Indigenous education systems worked with two processes that supported learning of world views and values. These two processes can be equally effective in teaching non FNMI students about the various indigenous cultures and peoples being studied.



Respectful Use of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) Cultural Symbols

Teachers should be selective and respectful in using FNMI cultural resources and symbols in the classroom and school. Engaging students in creating items such as totem poles, dream catchers, masks, teepees, drums, and other cultural resources may serve to trivialize FNMI cultures, spirituality, and/or world views. These items have deep cultural and spiritual significance that may not be completely understood in the context of the spirituality of the cultures of which they are a part.

Educators need to ensure that they research or ask Elders about the meanings behind such artifacts and symbols to ensure they are aware of the significance and contexts in which the symbols or artifacts are used. Authenticity is very important, and teachers are encouraged to consult and/or invite Elders and members of FNMI communities to teach students and make these items part of a unit, lesson, or workshop.

Accommodation that May Be Requested for Indigenous Spiritual Observances

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students or parents who follow traditional teachings may request school accommodations for Indigenous spiritual practices and observances. These may include accommodation for Indigenous prayers, smudges, and rituals, as well as participation in rituals, and dietary considerations.

PRAYERS

Beliefs and Practices

Indigenous spiritual traditions see prayer as a means of communicating with the Great Creator and spirit helpers through prayers offered at individual or group ceremonies.

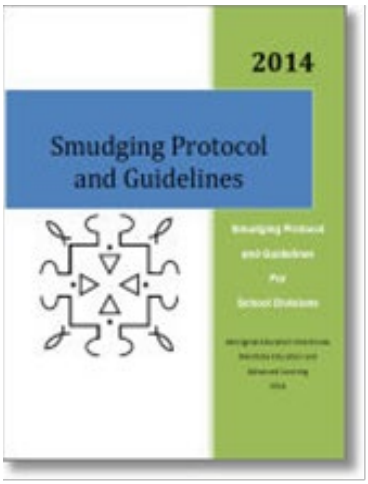


Figure 3.3: Smudging Protocol and Guidelines document

SMUDGING

Beliefs and Practices

Manitoba Education and Training released, in the summer of 2014, the support document *Smudging Protocol and Guidelines,* which is available at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aed/publications/pdf/smudging_guidelines.pdf. The following section on smudging is excerpted from this document.

Manitoba Education and Training Smudging Protocol for School Divisions

Students and parents may request permission to smudge before or during meetings and other gatherings and special events.

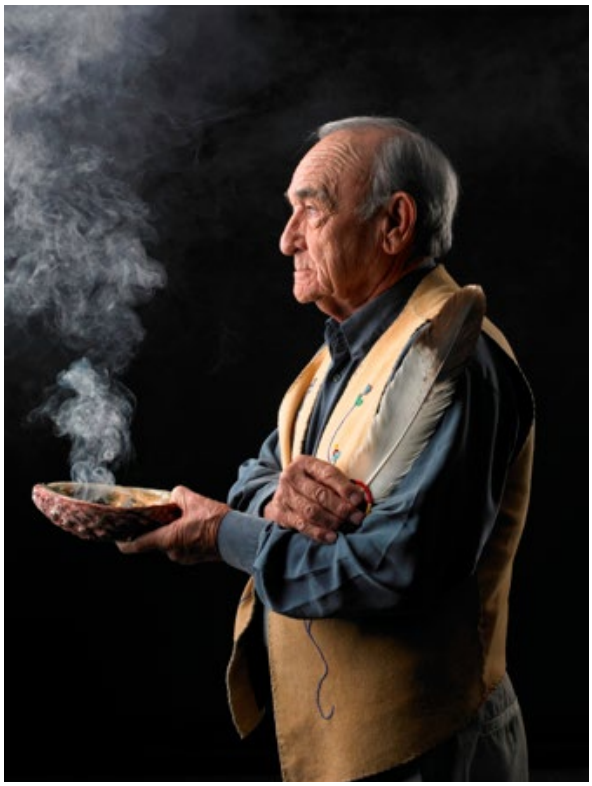


Figure 3.4: Elder smudging

Background

Indigenous Education is a priority for Manitoba Education and Training. School divisions are working diligently to help First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students succeed in all areas, and to ensure that all students have an opportunity to learn about the important role of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples in the past, present, and future of Canada.

School divisions have taken steps to ensure their schools are inclusive and culturally responsive by integrating First Nation, Métis, and Inuit perspectives into school planning and programming in partnership with the school community. This includes welcoming all students to learn about First Nation, Métis, and Inuit traditions.

It is understood and acknowledged that First Nation, Métis, and Inuit people are diverse in their languages and cultures; however, within this diversity, there are common characteristics that can be referred to as the "Aboriginal worldview" and the "Aboriginal perspective".

> The "Aboriginal worldview" represents the guiding principles and traditional values of Aboriginal societies. This suggests the way Aboriginal peoples see themselves in relation to the world. It is a holistic process where learning takes place across different spheres of human experience including spiritual, physical, emotional and mental dimensions. Worldviews may also consider relationships and experiences of the past, present and future as interconnected.
>
> Source: WNCP: The Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2000)
>
> The "Aboriginal perspective" is based on the distinct worldview of the Aboriginal cultures. This worldview has humans living in a universe made by the Creator and needing to live in harmony with nature, one another, and oneself. Each Aboriginal culture expressed this worldview in a different way and with different practices, stories, and cultural products.
>
> Source: WNCP: The Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2000)

Many First Nations share the concept of "mino-pimatisiwin", which means "good life" in both Cree and Ojibwé. Implicit in this is the understanding that all of life is a ceremony; that the sacred and the secular are parts of the whole; that people are whole beings (body, mind, spirit, emotion); and that "mino-pimatisiwin" is achieved by taking care of all aspects of one's self. School divisions are working to share this perspective with their staff, students, and community to foster an atmosphere of respect, understanding and inclusivity. Many divisions offer learning experiences relating to First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures. One of the most commonly shared experiences is the First Nation tradition of smudging.

What is Smudging?

Figure 3.5: Smudging materials

Smudging is a tradition, common to many First Nations, which involves the burning of one or more medicines gathered from the earth. The four sacred medicines used in First Nations' ceremonies are tobacco, sage, cedar, and sweetgrass. The most common medicines used in a smudge are sweetgrass, sage, and cedar.

Smudging has been passed down from generation to generation. There are many ways and variations on how a smudge is done. Historically, Métis and Inuit people did not smudge; however, today many Métis and Inuit people have incorporated smudging into their lives.

A community grandmother presented the following as the steps and rationale for this cleansing process called smudge to Niji Mahkwa School in Winnipeg.

- We smudge to clear the air around us.
- We smudge to clean our minds so that we will have good thoughts of others.
- We smudge our eyes so that we will only see the good in others.
- We smudge our ears so that we will only listen to positive things about others.
- We smudge our mouths so that we will only speak well of others.
- We smudge our whole being so we will portray only the good part of our self through our actions.

Smudging allows people to stop, slow down, and become mindful and centred. This allows people to remember, connect, and be grounded in the event, task, or purpose at hand. Smudging also allows people to let go of something

negative. Letting go of things that inhibit a person from being balanced and focused comes from the feeling of being calm and safe while smudging. The forms of smudging will vary from nation to nation but are considered by all to be a way of cleansing oneself. Smudging is part of "the way things are done" and is part of living a good life.

Smudging is always voluntary. People should never be forced or pressured to smudge. It is completely acceptable for a person to indicate that he/she does not want to smudge and that person may choose to stay in the room and refrain or leave the room during a smudge. Respect for all is the guiding principle in any Indigenous tradition.

How Do We Smudge?

Figure 3.6: Jingle dress dancers

The act of clearing the air, mind, spirit, and emotions may be accomplished in a variety of ways; nevertheless, according to First Nations' practice, a smudge is led by a person with an understanding of smudging and why it is done. That person may be an Elder or cultural teacher who has been invited into the school, a staff person who is knowledgeable about the tradition of smudging, a parent/guardian, and/or a student.

The medicine is placed in a smudge container. The container may be a shell; a ceramic or stone bowl; or a copper, brass, or cast iron pan. The medicine is lit with a match. Once the medicine is lit, the smoke may be pushed forward with a feather or a fan. The person who lights the smudge is first.

The commonly used medicine in schools is sage. A "smudge ball" is created mainly from the leaf of the plant, which is rolled into a ball for burning. It is important to understand that this particular medicine can create a significant billow of smoke, which emerges from the smudge ball. It is not necessary to create enough smoke to fill the entire space where a group is smudging. Only a small stream of smoke for the person who is smudging is required. Therefore, it is important for the helpers who create the smudge ball to keep it relatively small.

When smudging, the person first cleanses their hands with the smoke as if they were washing their hands. They then draw the smoke over their heads, eyes, ears, mouths, and bodies. These actions remind them to think good thoughts, see good actions, hear good sounds, speak good words, and show the good of who they are.

What Does Smudging Look Like in a School Environment?

Many schools are making the tradition of smudging a part of their practice during particular events or as part of the school day.

MEDICINE POUCHES

Beliefs and Practices

Students may carry medicine pouches. These are prescribed by an Elder; plant material can also be worn in a medicine pouch by a person seeking the mercy and protection of the spirits of the Four Directions. Elders caution FNMI peoples not to conceal any other substances in their pouches. To do so would make a mockery of their beliefs.

Peyote, a hallucinogenic material historically used by First Nations in some parts of the United States of America, is usually not considered a part of the Canadian First Nations culture. Other herbs and dried animal parts (diamond willow fungus, dried/powdered beaver testicles, and buffalo droppings) may also be burnt in ceremonial functions.

DIETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Beliefs and Practices

Fasting

Figure 3.7: Young powwow dancer

Fasting is a time-honoured way of quickening spirituality in which a growing number of First Nations people are partaking. An Elder provides the necessary ceremonial setting and conditions to guide the fasting member. Fasting involves the total renunciation of food and drink for a specified time period. Health considerations are evaluated by both the Elder responsible and a physician prior to the fast. Fasting is usually required in order to participate in a sweat lodge, powwow, sun dance, or other ritual.

Feasting

Some ceremonies such as a "doctoring" sweat require the participant to eat a meal. There are specific rituals requiring special foods. Sacred food for the Ojibwé, for instance, consists of wild rice, corn, strawberries, and deer meat. Typical feast foods for the Cree from the prairies would be bannock (Indigenous bread), soup, wild game, and fruit (particularly Saskatoon berries or mashed choke cherries). For a West Coast First Nations, sacred foods might include fish prepared in a special way. Although foods may differ, their symbolic importance remains the same.

Community feasts are common as part of a powwow or other special gathering.

CEREMONIAL RITUALS

Students may request permission to be absent from school to participate in sweat lodges, sun dances, powwows, solstice, and other special ceremonies.

Sweat Lodges

Used mainly for communal prayer purposes, the sweat lodge may also provide necessary ceremonial settings for spiritual healing, purification, as well as fasting. Most fasts require a sweat ceremony before and after the event.

Lodge construction varies from tribe to tribe. Generally, a lodge is a dome-shaped structure about five-feet high, built in about one and a half hours from bent willow branches tied together with twine. The structure is then encased in blankets and/or tarps to preclude all light. A maximum of eight participants gather in the dark.

In the centre, there is a holy, consecrated clean section of ground (untrammeled by feet and untouched by waste material) blessed by an Elder with tobacco and sweet grass. There, red-hot stones heated in a fire outside the lodge are brought in and doused with water. A doorkeeper on the outside opens the lodge door at various times, contributing additional hot rocks. All of the rocks are considered "grandfather relatives" who give their life so that we can receive healing. Each lodge will bring these rocks into the sweat at various times and in various combinations, and will have different numbers of grandfathers to work with (representing the four sacred directions). A prepared pipe is also brought in.

Sweat lodges may be dismantled after the ceremony is over; however, they are often left standing to accommodate the next ceremony. Lodges may only be entered in the presence of an Elder.

Sun Dance

The Plains Cree practised an ancient ceremony called the sun dance, which they called the *Nipakwe Cimuwin,* or "thirst dance." Some groups also call it a rain dance. The sun dance is considered the most sacred of ceremonies to many Indigenous nations across North America and each nation has its own story of how this lodge came to the people. Not all nations will practice the sun dance the same way; nevertheless, all will have a four-day timeline, fasting will occur with self-sacrifice of food and water, and there will be various rituals that occur over the four-day time allotment. Many nations consider this lodge to be the "earning" lodge, a place where individuals may go to confirm vows taken to become keepers of knowledge, ceremony, sacred bundles, lodges, and medicines. A Blackfoot tradition, was an annual gathering that became more prominent after the introduction of the horse. This is not necessarily true for other nations and the story or explanation for the birth or the origins of the sun dance are different for each nation.

Figure 3.8: Cree wearing sun dance dress, June 1895

The ceremony was presided over by a holy woman who had taken the vow of virtue and was highly esteemed in the band. (This might be particular to the Blackfoot, refer to previous paragraph.) A sun dance lodge was usually constructed with poplar trees for the event. A central pole was erected and hung with offerings to the Great Spirit. This pole was then encircled with ten more poles and the whole structure was covered with leafy branches. A bison skull was then placed at the foot of the central pole to signify that the animal is at the junction between the vertical axis of the creator and the horizontal plane of humankind.

Various Plains tribes had similar spiritual beliefs. The great spirits worshipped were the Sun, the Thunderbird, and the Old Man of the Dawn. The Dakota called them *wakan tanka*—the greatest sacred ones. The classic sun dance involved only a few men who fasted, prayed, and danced from the circle wall of the sun dance lodge to the central pole and back. Traditionally, the end of the dance entailed some personal sacrifice such as piercing, flesh offerings, or dragging buffalo skulls (with sharp skewers that were forced through the skin).

Powwows

Some say the name is derived from the Algonquian word meaning "to dream." *Powwow,* an ancient tradition among Indigenous peoples, is a time for celebrating and socializing after religious ceremonies. In some cultures, the powwow itself was a religious event, at which families held naming and honouring ceremonies.

Resources and References

First nations Elders and FNMI Educators were consulted with respect to this section.

- Four Directions Teachings: www.fourdirectionsteachings.com
- Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc., 2008, First Nations Teachings and Practices
- Manitoba Human Rights Commission (MHRC) Teacher's Kit, 2013. www.manitobahumanrights.ca/pdf/teachers_kit.pdf
- Myra Laramee, Elder and Aboriginal Awareness Consultant, Indigenous Inclusion Directorate
- Ontario Human Rights Commission, Policy on preventing discrimination based on creed, 2015. www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-creed
- RCMP, Native Spirituality Guide: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/native-spirituality-guide
- The Canadian Encyclopedia, Aboriginal People: Religion: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/religion-of-aboriginal-people/
- The Medicine People. 2000, 38 min: www.firstnationsfilms.com/
- The Medicine Wheel. 2005, 24 min: www.firstnationsfilms.com/

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

The Bahá'í Faith is an independent world religion that was founded in 1844 and has been present in Canada since 1898. It is a "world religion with followers in 235 countries and territories, and with 184 National Spiritual Assemblies. There are now an estimated 36 000 Bahá'ís in Canada".*

Figure 3.9: Nine-pointed star, Bahá'í

> "It is based on the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, which emphasize the oneness of humanity, the oneness of God and the fundamental oneness of religion.
>
> Canadian Baha'is' come from diverse backgrounds and are dedicated to the promotion of a global society that reconciles the spiritual and material aspects of life…
>
> The central principle of Bahá'u'lláh is the oneness of humanity. It is the hallmark of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and of His teachings. Bahá'u'lláh taught that there is one God, who has sent a succession of divine educators in the form of Prophets (or "Manifestations" of God), and the teachings of these Messengers have been the chief civilizing force in human society.
>
> All of the great religions come from the same divine source, like a series of chapters in a book, and they have the same essential purpose: to guide and educate the peoples of the world.
>
> Baha'is' believe that humanity, after a long and turbulent adolescence, is reaching a stage of maturity in which its unification into a global and just society can finally be realized."**

Basic beliefs include the following:

- The oneness of God, the oneness of religious systems, and the oneness of humanity
- The purpose of religion is to unify humanity
- All great religions and prophets are divine in origin
- All great religions represent successive stages of divine revelation throughout human history
- The eradication of racial and religious prejudice

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* Source: The Canadian Encyclopedia, Bahá'í Faith, www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/bahai-faith/.

** Source: Bahá'í Community of Canada, www.ca.bahai.org/.

- The search for truth as an individual responsibility
- The harmony of religion and science as complementary aspects of the truth
- The establishment of an international auxiliary language
- Basic education for all children
- Abolition of extreme wealth and poverty
- Equality of the sexes

Figure 3.10: A popular Bahá'í House of Worship in Delhi, India

Religious Accommodations that May Be Requested

OBSERVATION OF BAHÁ'Í HOLY DAYS

Beliefs and Practices

There are eleven Holy Days in the Bahá'í calendar. Of these, there are nine holy days throughout the year on which a Bahá'í should abstain from school or work. The usual date on the Gregorian Calendar for each holy day follows:

■ Naw-Rúz (Bahá'í New Year)	March 20/21
■ First day of Riḍván	April 20/21
■ Ninth day of Riḍván	April 28/29
■ Twelfth day of Riḍván	May 1/2
■ Declaration of the Báb	May 23/24
■ Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh	May 28/29
■ Martyrdom of the Báb	July 9/10
■ Birth of the Báb	Celebrated on the 1st day after the new moon following Naw-Rúz
■ Birth of Bahá'u'lláh	Celebrated on the 2nd day after the new moon following Naw-Rúz

For additional information, on Bahá'í Holy and special days see

- Holy Days, The Bahá'í Community of Canada at https://www.ca.bahai.org/being-bah%C3%A1%C3%AD/holy-days
- The Bahá'í Calendar at http://calendar.bahaiq.com/about/
- The interfaith calendar at www.interfaith-calendar.org/
- The BBC's Interfaith calendar at www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/
- There are calendar apps available for iPhones, iPads, and other smart phones.

Accommodation

Students should be excused from attendance at school on these holy days. Scheduling of school and school-related activities should take Baha'i holy days into consideration. In the case of a conflict with assignments, examinations, and major tests, Baha'i students must be accommodated.

Other significant holy days (one may work or attend school) include

- Ayyám-i-Há (Intercalary Days) February 25/26 to March 1
- The Alá' (Month of Fasting) March 2 to 20
- Day of the Covenant November 25/26
- Ascension of Abdu'l-Bahá November 28/29

DIETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Beliefs and Practices

Figure 3.11: Bahá'í gardens

The Bahá'í teachings permit the eating of all foods. The only dietary law concerns the prohibition of alcohol, which is forbidden except for medicinal purposes.

Bahá'ís' believe that living a simple life and abstaining from the use of alcohol and mind-altering drugs is beneficial to spiritual development, greatly reduces illness, and has a good effect on character and conduct.

Vegetarian food was recommended by `Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of the Faith's Prophet-Founder, Bahá'u'lláh, as being the most natural food for humankind; however, Bahá'ís' are free to be vegetarian or non-vegetarian.

FASTING

Beliefs and Practices

Bahá'ís' practice fasting as a discipline and a way to focus upon God. They fast on an annual basis from sunrise to sunset during the month of Ala, March 2–20. Baha'is do not eat or drink from sunrise to sunset on each of the 19 days. It is obligatory for all those who reach the age of 15. Persons may be exempt from fasting for health or medical reasons.

Bahá'ís also hold special feasts during the year such as Bahá'í New Year and the birthday of the prophet Baha'u'llah.

Accommodation

Students and staff should be allowed to gather in an area apart from the cafeteria during lunch breaks during the fast. They may also ask to be excused from strenuous exercise during the fast and request low intensity exercises in their place.

PRAYERS AND WORSHIP

Beliefs and Practices

Baha'is from the ages of 15 to 70 are required to perform one of three obligatory prayers daily and individually. While there are protocols for when each of the three prayers must be said, there is flexibility in the timing for each.

Accommodation

If there is a request for accommodation, an appropriate room/space should be made available.

Resources and References

- BBC the Bahá'í at a Glance: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/bahai/ataglance/glance.shtml
- The Bahá'í Faith—The International Website of The Baha'is of The World, website: www.bahai.org
- The Bahá'ís of Winnipeg, website: http://winnipegbahais.org
- The Bahá'í Community of Canada, website: www.ca.bahai.org
- The Canadian Encyclopedia, Bahá'í Faith: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/bahai-faith/

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

In 2011, 366,800 Canadians reported being Buddhists, which represents 1.1% of the total population (Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011). Buddhism has a long presence in Canada. The Japanese and Chinese were the first Buddhists to arrive in Canada when they immigrated to work on the railroads, in the mines, and in other sectors. During the late 1800s, the Japanese Canadians established Buddhism in Canada, usually gathering at group members' homes. The first Buddhist temple in Canada opened in a rented space in British Columbia in 1905, and the following year was moved to a house in Vancouver*.

Figure 3.12: Buddhist Dhamma

Buddhism is generally believed to have been founded in the late 6th century B.C.E. by Siddhartha Gautama (the "Buddha"). Buddhism is an important religion in most of the countries of Asia and beyond.

Buddhism may be seen to have two or sometimes three major branches or schools. The first two are Theravada and Mahayana, and the third is Vajrayana. It should be noted, however, that Vajrayana is founded on Mahayana philosophy, and is often understood to be an extension of Mahayana. Today, Theravada is the dominant form of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Burma (Myanmar), and Laos. Mahayana is dominant in China, Japan, Taiwan, Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia, Korea, and most of Vietnam. Vajrayana is associated with Tibetan Buddhism as well as a Japanese school called Shingon.

While Buddhism is essentially a monastic religion, Lord Buddha also taught spiritual practices for lay people to follow.

All paths of Buddhism embrace the following foundational teachings of Lord Shakyamuni Buddha. The Eight-Fold Path—often pictorially represented by an eight-spoked wheel, the Wheel of Dharma (see above) includes the Right Views or the Four Noble Truths, which are

- Dukkha: Ordinary Existence Is a State of Suffering
- The Arising of Dukkha: Cause of Suffering

* The Canadian Encyclopedia, Buddhism, www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/buddhism/

- The Cessation of Dukkha: End of Suffering
- The Path: Embracing the Teachings of Lord Buddha

The seven other spokes of the Dharma are

- Right Intention, Right Speech
- Right Action, Right Livelihood/Occupation, Right Endeavour
- Right Mindfulness (total concentration in activity), Right Concentration (meditation)

As well, Central to Buddhist belief, the only way by which one can attain liberation from suffering is to follow the path of Buddhism. This requires both mental discipline and the actual practice of Buddha's teaching, which involves many lifetimes of devoted effort and commitment.

The Eightfold Path is pervaded by the principle of the Middle Way, which characterizes the Buddha's life. The Middle Way represents a rejection of all extremes of thought, emotion, action, and lifestyle for lay people. The eightfold noble path involves the following:

Figure 3.13: Buddhist Temple

- Body
  - Abstention from killing
  - Abstention from stealing
  - Abstention from sexual exploitation
- Speech
  - Abstention from lying
- Mind
  - Abstention from all drugs and intoxicants which alter the mind

To worship, Buddhists meet in a group in temples or centres to learn spiritual practices, and follow up with individual practice.

Religious Accommodations that May Be Requested

OBSERVATIONS OF BUDDHIST HOLY DAYS

Beliefs and Practices

There are many special or holy days throughout the year in the various Buddhist communities. The most significant celebration happens every Spring around May on the night of the full moon, when Buddhists all over the world celebrate the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha. This holy day is commonly known as Buddha Day. The calendar that follows below provides information regarding three important Buddhist holy days. See Section 4: Religious Holy Days for a more complete listing of Holy days.

Buddhist Holy Days

Holiday	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Theravada (Buddhist New Year)	April 30–May 2	April 19–21	April 7–10	April 27–30	April 16–19
Visakha Puja (Buddha Day)	April 29	May 18	May 7	May 26	May 27
Bodhi Day (Rohastu Mahayan: Commemorates the day that the Buddha experienced enlightenment)	December 8	December 8	December 8	December 8	December 8

Note: For additional and future approximate dates for these selected holy days, refer to

- The Buddha Net, Buddhist Festivals and Holy Days: www.buddhanet.net/festival.htm
- Harvard Divinity School, Interfaith Calendar: www.interfaith-calendar.org/
- The BBC's Interfaith calendar: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/
- There are calendar apps available for iPhones, iPads, and other smart phones.

DIETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Generally speaking, Buddhism recommends people eat foods that are grown in their particular location of the world. As well, people are encouraged to eat food that is needed for their unique health requirements, which may not necessarily be vegetarian; however, many Buddhists are strict vegetarians (meaning no eggs, dairy, fish, or meat).

Accommodation

Teachers and cafeteria staff must be aware of food restrictions. Availability of strict vegetarian options that include no eggs and dairy are advisable in school cafeterias; elementary school snacks, breakfast or lunch programs; as well as on overnight stays and school or extra-curricular events that involve a meal.

Resources and References

- Manitoba Buddhist Temple, website: www.manitobabuddhistchurch.org
- The Canadian Encyclopedia, Buddhism: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/buddhism/
- Buddhist Education and Information Network, website: www.buddhanet.net
- Buddhist Resource File: http://pears2.lib.ohio-state.edu/BRF/index.html
- Buddhist Studies WWW Virtual Library: www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-Buddhism.html
- Resources for the Study of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism: www.human.toyogakuen-u.ac.jp/~acmuller/index.html

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

Christianity was introduced to Canada by the early English and French settlers. According to the 2011 National Household Survey (Statistics Canada), the largest religion in Canada was Christianity. Just over two-thirds (67.3%) or about 22,102,700 Canadians reported that they were affiliated with a Christian religion.

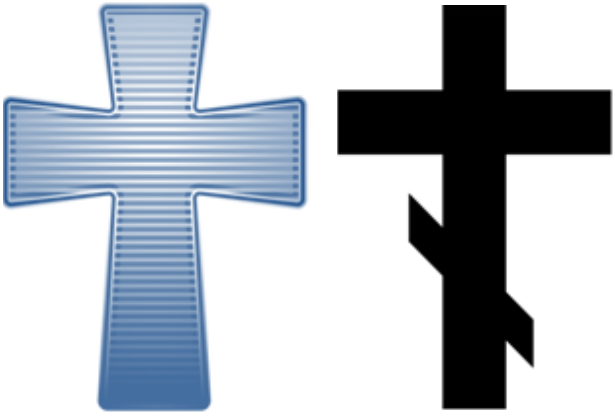

Figure 3.14: Latin and Orthodox crosses

Christianity is a monotheistic faith that is very diverse, and is practiced in numerous ways by its many adherents. Christians believe in one God who is the creator of all things and who desires a loving relationship with all people. However, through both their relationship to the first humans as well as their own actions, everyone has, at some point, broken that loving relationship with God, and this is what Christians mean by the word sin.

Christianity is a historical religion which has its roots in Judaism. When using the term historical, Christians mean God acts in human history and through human beings. This activity of God is traced throughout history in such people as Abraham, Moses, and the prophets (such as Isaiah) and is most fully seen in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Bible is the sacred text of Christians. It consists of the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament. The Bible traces the activity of God in human history from the beginning of time. The New Testament comprises the four Gospels (meaning Good News) which tell the life and teachings of Jesus. Christians believe God speaks to them through the Bible.

What all Christians have in common is a belief in the deity of Jesus of Nazareth, and that he came into the world to restore the relationship with God through his death on the cross and his resurrection. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, each individual can choose to re-enter a relationship with God through repentance or by turning away from sin and toward God. One grows in the Christian life through prayer, studying the Bible, and regularly gathering together with other Christians to worship. Christians believe that eternal life with God awaits them after their physical death.

Diversity of Christianity

Early and contemporary Christianity is diverse. This diversity has changed and evolved over time from its early beginnings and emergence from Judaism and continues today. During its early history, Christianity evolved from a 1st-century Jewish following to a distinct religion that spread across the entire Greco-Roman world and eventually beyond.

Early Christianity is often divided into two distinct phases: the apostolic peiod and the post-apostolic period. The apostolic period occurred during a time when the first Apostles were alive and led the Church. This was followed by the post-apostolic period that led to the development of an early organizational structure, and the clarification of foundational beliefs and theological perspectives. It occurred during a time when persecution of Christians was often intense. The Roman persecution of Christians came to an end in 311 CE when the Roman Emperor Galerius declared an end to the persecution.

The accession of Constantine as emperor of Rome was a significant turning point for Christianity. Constantine, who was eventually baptized on his deathbed, was accepting of Christianity. He supported the Church financially, built a number of basilicas, granted privileges to clergy, appointed Christians to some high-ranking offices, and returned property confiscated in earlier times. He was instrumental in solidifying and uniting early Christianity by calling the First Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, which was the first of seven Ecumenical Councils.

One of the earliest schisms or splits in Christianity occurred in 451 CE following the Council of Chalcedon. Disagreements in theological perspectives led to the split between Coptic Orthodox Christians and other Christians of the era. The Coptic Orthodox Church is one of the Oriental Orthodox family of Churches, and has been a distinct Christian body since the schism in 451 CE.

Figure 3.15: Singing and dancing at an Ethiopian Christian wedding

Coptic Christianity has its roots in Egypt and the city of Alexandria. It is one of the oldest and most influential branches of Christianity that rose out of the Apostolic Period. Coptic Christians trace their origins to Apostle John Mark, (author of the Gospel of Mark). Mark is seen as being the founder and first bishop of Coptic Christians sometime between 42 CE and 62 CE.

From the early Apostolic period and the split with the Oriental Orthodox Christian churches, Christianity grew and expanded its presence and power, becoming the official religion of the Roman empire. Christianity, at that time, was led by several Bishops who had seats in various cities, with the Bishop of Rome being first in importance followed by the Bishop of Constantinople. However, ecclesiastical differences and theological differences and perspectives between the Greek Eastern and Latin Western churches led to the Great Schism that occurred in 1054 CE. This resulted in the formation of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

The next major development in Christianity resulted from dissatisfaction and differences within the Catholic Church that eventually led to the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. The movement originally sought to reform the Roman Catholic Church, but eventually led to a splitting from Catholic Church and Papal control, and the emergence of an independent and distinct branch of Protestant Christianity.

Since the emergence of Protestantism and its separation from the Catholic Church, Protestantism has grown and evolved as well. Contemporary Protestant sects may be seen as flowing from four major divisions or branches: Lutheran, Baptist, Anglican, and Reformed.

Christianity in all its forms continues to evolve and grow in many ways, contributing to the great diversity that exists today in terms of theology, structure, organization, and expression. The chart that follows provides an overview of the development of Christianity over time as well as some of the major branches. For further information on the diversity of denominations in Christianity and their relationships

- The Association of Religion Data Archives. *Religion Family Trees.* www.thearda.com/denoms/families/trees/index.asp.
- Truth for Saints. *A Resource for Researching World Religions and Matters of Faith, Denominations*. http://truthforsaints.com/.
- Christianity in View. *Denominations*. http://protestantism.co.uk/denominations.
- Jewish-Christian Relations, Insights and Issues in the ongoing Jewish-Christian Dialogue. *The Family Tree of the Churches.* www.jcrelations.net/A_Family_Tree_of_the_Churches__A_graphic__showing_the_major_branches_of_the_Chri.1364.0.html.

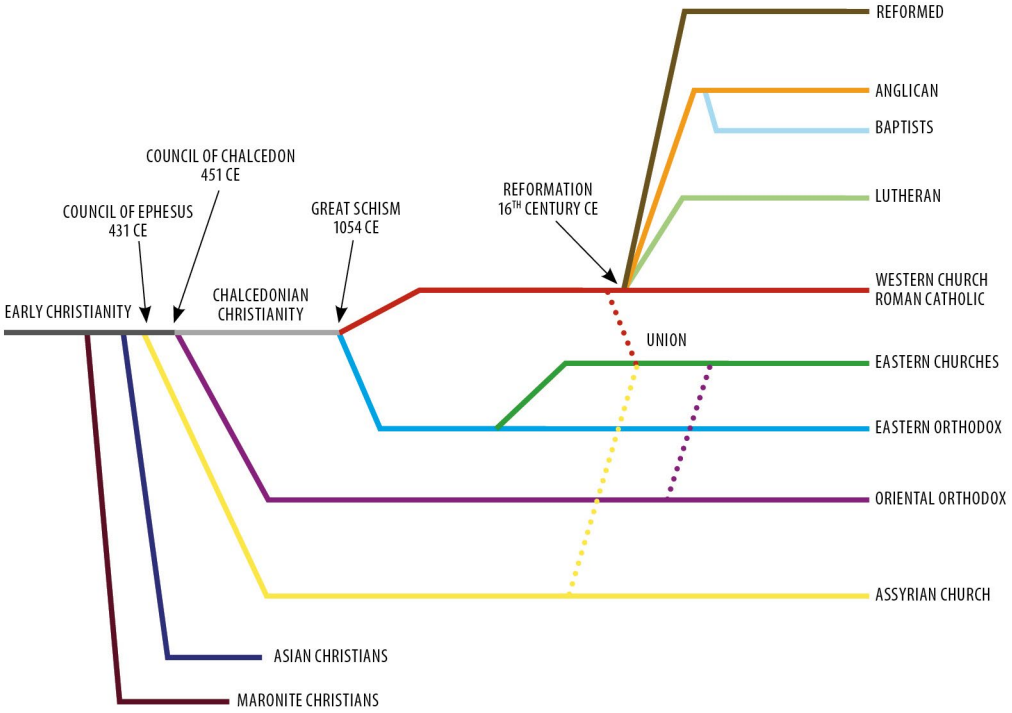

Figure 3.16: Timeline and major branches within Christianity

Religious Accommodations that May Be Requested

OBSERVATION OF CHRISTIAN HOLY DAYS

Christians of various denominations and faith traditions celebrate a diversity of holy or special days. These vary based on denominations and, to some degree, nations. Holy days may require that adherents fast, abstain from work or study, or participate in all-day or fixed time activities, such as congregational prayer. As with any type of religious or spiritual groups, there will be followers who are much more strict and active in their involvement than others.

Though many of the Christian holy or special days are statutory holidays in Canada, there may be times during the year where church attendance, or other practices, conflicts with school schedules. Staff should be aware of this and of the diversity within Christianity with respect to holy days and practices.

The major holy days of the Christian year are

- Christmas
- Good Friday
- Easter Sunday
- Pentecost Sunday
- Ascension

Within the aforementioned description, different Christian groups will have varying beliefs and practices that may give rise to the need to consider accommodation in one or more of the following areas:

- religious holy days and celebrations
- dietary requirements and fasting
- prayer
- opening and closing exercises
- religious attire and modesty requirements
- participation in daily activities and curriculum

Celebration of Christmas

Origins and History

Christmas commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ, who Christians believe is the Son of God. The English name Christmas has its origins in a late Old English term for the Mass of Christ. References to Cristes Maesse were first found in 1038, and Cristes-messe, in 1131. In Dutch it is Kerstmis, in Latin it is Dies Natalis, from which comes the French Noël, and Italian Il natale. In German Weihnachtsfest, derives from the term for Christmas Eve.

In the early years of Christianity, Christmas was not one of the holy or special days celebrated by Christians. Easter was the main holiday and Epiphany (January 6) was first celebrated. However, in the fourth century, church officials decided to institute the birth of Jesus as a holiday. As there is no biblical reference to the year, date, or month of Jesus' birth, the early Christians had disagreements about when and how the birth of Jesus should be celebrated. The first recorded reference to Western Christians celebrating Christmas on December 25th dates back to 336 CE during the time of the Christian Roman Emperor, Constantine. Eastern Christians, however, recognized January 6 as the date of Christ's birth and his baptism.

Although some evidence suggests that Jesus may have been born in the spring, Pope Julius I officially declared shortly after 336 that the birth of Jesus would be celebrated on December 25 each year. First called the Feast of the Nativity, the celebration of Christmas spread to Egypt by 432 and to England by the end of the sixth century. By the end of the eighth century, the celebration of Christmas had spread all the way to Scandinavia.

There are many different traditions, theories, and beliefs as to why December 25, was selected to celebrate the birth of Jesus. An early Christian tradition is based on Mary being told on March 25 that she would have a baby (the Annunciation). December 25 is nine months later.

Many believe, however, that the early Christian church chose this date in an effort to expand its membership; thus the adoption and absorption of the traditions of the pagan festivals that were held in December and the selection of a time when people were already used to celebrating as a community.

This perspective highlights that the Winter Solstice and the ancient pagan Roman midwinter festivals called 'Saturnalia' and 'Dies Natalis Solis Invicti' were celebrated in December around the 25th of the month. As a result, pagan festival practices and traditions were incorporated into the Christian nativity celebration. Thus some popular customs associated with Christmas today were not originally associated with the commemoration of the birth of Jesus and come from pre-Christian festivals that were celebrated around the winter solstice by pagan populations who were later converted to Christianity.

Overtime, the celebration of Christmas grew and evolved. While still maintaining its Christian roots, Christmas has been transformed into what for some is a largely secular festive event that is celebrated by people of various faith, cultures, and traditions throughout the world. Today, Christmas Day is celebrated as a major festival and public holiday in many countries around the world, including those whose populations are mostly non-Christian. The fact that Christmas is not a formal holiday in about 35 countries, about half of which still observe the date (such as Japan) is evidence of the worldwide popularity of this celebration. Christmas celebrations and traditions vary greatly around the world, reflecting differing cultural and national traditions.

Different Dates/Calendars

Today, in the Eastern Orthodox Christian churches, which use the Julian calendar, and the Coptic Orthodox and Ethiopian Orthodox churches, which use other calendars, Christmas is also celebrated on December 25. However, because of the differences in the calendars, this date falls 13 days after December 25 of the Gregorian calendar, which is also referred to as the Epiphany or Three Kings Day. Armenian Apostolic and Catholic churches celebrate Christmas on January 6.

Not All Christians Celebrate Christmas

The recognition and celebration of Christmas among Christians has been controversial from the beginning. In the 17th century, the Puritans had laws forbidding the celebration of Christmas and most of the Protestant Denominations refused to celebrate it until the 1700s. At that time, Christmas was seen to be a Catholic practice.

Christmas in Canada was not a very important celebration early in the 19th century. However, it's popularity in Canada and in North America grew and by the early 20th century it had become the most significant annual celebration and had begun to take on the form and traditions associated with Christmas in Canada today.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the celebration of Christmas by Christians is not universal. Some Christian denominations do not promote or encourage the celebration of Christmas because of its linkages to pagan traditions and lack of biblical references. Others object to the secular Christmas celebrations that exclude the religious significance of the event and have a heavy emphasis on self-indulgence and consumerism. The Christian groups that do not formally celebrate Christmas or have historically not done so until very recently include, but are not limited to, Jehovah's Witnesses, 7th Day Adventists, Quakers, Worldwide Church of God, and Church of Christ.

As well, while some people of other faith groups embrace the secular celebration of Christmas, many others do not because of its roots in Christianity. For many of Jewish faith December 25 is not something to celebrate because of the historical treatment of Jews in Europe—Jews were often persecuted, shamed, subjected to violence, and even murdered during the Christmas season.

Origins of Halloween

While the origins of Halloween are disputed, it is often thought to have originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. During the Samhain festival people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off roaming ghosts. In the eighth century, Pope Gregory III designated November 1 as a time to honour all saints and martyrs. About two hundred years later, All Souls' Day on November 2 was added. This day was set aside for people to pray for friends and family who had died.

The November 1 holiday became known as All Saints' Day and borrowed some of the traditions and customs of the Celtic Samhain festival. The evening before All Saints Day became known as All Hallows' Eve and eventually Halloween. In some countries over time, Halloween grew into a secular, community-based event that is commonly celebrated in North America and other countries. Although there are different practices and traditions, in North America and in some other countries Halloween is characterized by child-focused activities such as trick-or-treating.

Canadian Halloween customs were brought to Canada in the mid-to-late 1800s by Irish and Scottish immigrants and included wearing disguises to ward off ghosts and offering food to appease evil or hostile spirits. The first recorded instance of wearing costumes or disguises on Halloween in North America took place in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1898. The first recorded use of the term trick or treat in association with Halloween took place in Lethbridge, Alberta, in 1927.

Overtime, Halloween has become increasingly popular throughout the world. In Canada it has become increasingly popular among adults in the last several decades such that by 2014 it was estimated to be a $1-billion industry, making it the second most commercially significant holiday behind Christmas in the country.

Because of Halloween's connection to the pagan Celtic Samhain Festival and association with ghosts, witches, demons, vampires, werewolves, and so forth, some Christian faith groups and other faith groups interpret Halloween to be contrary to their beliefs and practices and do not participate in Halloween-related activities. The reading and viewing of books and other text, as well as oral or visual representations, that relate to Halloween are also forbidden.

Furthermore, in Canada and in other countries, controversy has arisen with respect to the nature of the costumes that are sold and worn. Some groups have objected to costumes that they feel are inappropriate and that stereotype groups/individuals, misappropriate indigenous cultures, are racist in nature, or celebrate violence and evil.

References:

BBC. *Religion & Ethics*. "Halloween: Witches, Old Rites and Modern Fun. www.bbc.co.uk/religion/0/24623370. Accessed January 13, 2017.

Historica Canada. *Halloween in Canada.* www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/halloween/. Accessed January 13, 2017.

History. *History of Halloween.* www.history.com/topics/halloween/history-of-halloween. Accessed January 13, 2017.

Some of the groups from which the most common requests for Christian religious accommodation arise are listed in the following section.

Apostolic or Oneness Pentecostals

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

Figure 3.17: Baptized in Jesus' name

Oneness Pentecostalism refers to a grouping of denominations and believers within Pentecostal Christianity, all of whom are nontrinitarian—that reject the idea of the Holy Trinity of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit and instead have adopted the theological doctrine of Oneness. Trinitarian beliefs are the foundation of Orthodox, Catholic, and many other Christian denominations.

The origins of this movement have been traced to 1914 and the doctrinal disputes which were emerging within the nascent Pentecostal movement in America. There are about 24 million adherents today, but elements of church following the Apostolic doctrine predate Protestants and the Roman Catholic Church itself.

Oneness Pentecostalism derives its unique name from the church's teaching on the nature of God, which is popularly referred to as the Oneness doctrine. Oneness doctrine states that there is one God, a singular divine Spirit, who has and does manifest himself in many ways, including as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit). These beliefs are fundamentally different from the doctrine of three distinct and eternal "persons" posited by the Trinitarian theology of the Orthodox, Catholic, and many other Christian denominations. In addition, Oneness believers baptize in the name of Jesus Christ, commonly referred to as Jesus-name baptism, instead of the Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, beyond their beliefs about the nature of God, Oneness Pentecostals differ significantly from most other Pentecostal and evangelical Christians in matters of the doctrine of human salvation. While most Pentecostals and evangelicals believe that faith in Jesus Christ and repentance from sin are the only essential elements for salvation, Oneness Pentecostals believe that salvation requires repentance, baptism (in Jesus' name), and receipt of the Holy Spirit. The evidence required to demonstrate the receipt of the Holy Spirit is the ability to speak in other tongues. Lastly, Oneness Pentecostals tend to require adherence to strict "holiness standards" in dress, grooming, and other areas of personal conduct that are often not shared by other Pentecostal groups, at least not to the degree that is usually expected in Oneness churches.

DRESS AND MODESTY

Beliefs and Practices

Apostolic Christians believe that both men and women should dress modestly, and may believe in gender specific attire. This can be interpreted in different ways depending on one's, or one's congregation's, interpretation. Some males will wear only long pants when in public. Some females will not wear pants, and will only wear skirts (usually that are at least knee length).

Apostolic Christians also observe biblical requirements concerning the covering of the head—that is, that men's heads should be uncovered, and women's heads should be covered during prayer. However, since the Bible also requires that Christians be in an attitude of prayer at all times, some Apostolic groups will observe these requirements continuously, rather than only during times of formal prayer. Thus, female students may be required to cover their heads with a hat or other head covering at all times, while some groups regard women's uncut hair as the means of fulfilling the requirement for the woman to be covered during prayer.

Some groups also disallow swimming with members of the opposite sex because of the brief nature of swimming attire.

Accommodation

School expectations regarding uniforms and head coverings should take these requirements into account. There may be particular need for accommodation during physical education. To maintain modesty, both male and female students may opt not to wear shorts, and thus will need to be accommodated around required gym uniforms or guidelines.

For male students, a track suit or jogging pants will normally be appropriate. Some students will consider shorts that are knee-length or longer to be sufficient. For female students, a track suit or jogging pants may be considered appropriate, or they may wish to wear a long skirt during physical education classes as well. Exemptions may become necessary in some cases. Schools should ensure that parents/guardians know and understand the Physical Education curriculum so that they can come to an informed decision about co-educational activities, as well as about acceptable attire for activities such as those in the gym and in swim class. Parents should be aware that students may be allowed to have up to two compulsory credits substituted during their high school program, subject to divisional policy.

There should be a climate of acceptance of individuals' choices and commitments with regard to spiritual expression through their attire. The student body should be aware of the consequences of harassing students because of their spiritual choices and commitments.

FASTING

Beliefs and Practices

Apostolic Christians often practice fasting, though the times of year for fasting are not predictable. Some congregations encourage fasting one day per week or one day per month; they may also observe specific times of fasting set by the pastors of their congregations. Fasting may or may not allow the ingestion of water.

Accommodation

For accommodations, see Food Requirements and Fasting.

HALLOWEEN

Beliefs and Practices

Halloween is considered a pagan celebration that, in the past, included rituals linked to chasing away evil spirits.

Accommodation

Some Apostolic parents/guardians may request that their children be exempted from any activities related to Halloween. If exemptions are requested, provision of curricular alternatives is recommended.

See also Participation in Daily Activities and Curriculum.

HUMAN SEXUALITY—HEALTHY ACTIVE LIVING EDUCATION

Beliefs and Practices

Apostolic Christians believe that teaching children about sexuality is the responsibility of parents/guardians. Some parents/guardians may request that their children be excused from human sexuality classes.

Accommodation

For accommodation, follow Participation in Daily Activities and Curriculum.

SOCIAL EVENTS AND SCHOOL DANCES

Beliefs and Practices

For many Apostolic Christians, social events and school dances may represent exposure to music and influences that are considered worldly and inappropriate.

Accommodation

Consideration should be given to the timing of the event within the school day. If a dance happens during the school day, and accommodation is requested, students should be given valuable alternative activities that are not, and will not appear, punitive. They should not be grouped with students who are not allowed to attend the dance for disciplinary reasons.

Church of Christ, Scientist

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

Figure 3.18: The cross and the crown

They appear in the seal of the Church of Christ Scientist, but also appear in many Roman Catholic churches and are used by other Christian faith groups.

The first services in Canada of the Church of Christ Scientist were held in Toronto in 1888. There are currently about 38 Christian Science churches in Canada.

Christian Science has its origins in 1860s Massachusetts, where Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910) began to teach and practice spiritual healing. In 1866, Mary Baker Eddy discovered what she considered to be the Science of the Christianity which she believed Jesus taught and lived.

She based her views and work on her intensive study of the Bible and Jesus' healing ministry. The foundation of the Church of Christ, Scientist is Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* and other writings by her as well. In *Rudimental Divine Science,* she defined Christian Science as, "The law of God, the law of good, interpreting and demonstrating the divine Principle and rule of universal harmony."

In 1879, she founded the First Church of Christ, Scientist. Since then, many thousands of testimonies of adherents about their healing, experienced by them and others, have been published in the church's periodicals. These testimonies cover virtually every illness, many diagnosed as incurable or terminal. Christian Science also teaches the healing of moral problems and addictions.

Overview

- "Christian Science is a Christian denomination based on the teachings and works of Christ Jesus. The Church was founded in 1879 by Mary Baker Eddy, with this purpose: ". . . to commemorate the word and works of our Master, which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing." (from the Manual of The Mother Church by Mary Baker Eddy)
- Christian Scientists do not have an organizational creed; however, the following is a brief exposition of the important points, or tenets, of the religion as written in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy (p. 496):
  - "As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life.
  - We acknowledge and adore one supreme and infinite God. We acknowledge His Son, one Christ; the Holy Ghost or divine Comforter; and man in God's image and likeness.
  - We acknowledge God's forgiveness of sin in the destruction of sin and the spiritual understanding that casts out evil as unreal. But the belief in sin is punished so long as the belief lasts.
  - We acknowledge Jesus' atonement as the evidence of divine, efficacious Love, unfolding man's unity with God through Christ Jesus the Way-shower; and we acknowledge that man is saved through Christ, through Truth, Life, and Love as demonstrated by the Galilean Prophet in healing the sick and overcoming sin and death.
  - We acknowledge that the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection served to uplift faith to understand eternal Life, even the allness of Soul, Spirit, and the nothingness of matter.
  - And we solemnly promise to watch, and pray for that Mind to be in us which was also in Christ Jesus; to do unto others as we would have them do unto us; and to be merciful, just, and pure."
- Seeking and finding God is central to the practice of Christian Science. God is understood as the all-loving, omnipotent Father-Mother, and Christ Jesus as His Son. Jesus' human life characterized the kind of sonship that Christian Scientists believe is provable for all as the children of God. He is seen as the Exemplar, the Way-shower. The divine nature he expressed is the Christ, and the Christ-God's expression of Himself-is eternal and ever-present. Understanding man's pure, indestructible relationship with God is what results in regeneration and healing."*

* From The Church of Christ, Scientist (a.k.a. Christian Science), Religious Tolerance ORG: www.religioustolerance.org/cr_sci.htm, accessed June 11, 2015.

Figure 3.19: Christian Science Center, Boston

HEALTH CARE/IMMUNIZATIONS

Beliefs and Practices

This denomination promotes the healing of physical and mental illnesses and disorders through prayer. Christian Scientists are aware and respectful of the work of the medical professionals, but have chosen prayer as the first treatment for themselves and their children rather than medicine because they believe that they experienced prayer's healing powers and effectiveness at many points in their lives. They believe that the regeneration of the heart and the mind is what brings about physical healing and is the most significant aspect of healing.

While spiritual healing is central to the practice of Christian Science, adherents generally comply with all federal and provincial laws governing quarantine, the reporting of contagious disease, and mandated vaccinations. In addition, Christian Science parents/guardians recognize that teachers and especially principals must give careful attention to the health and comfort of their students.

Within the framework of Canadian and Manitoban law, Christian Science parents/guardians make health care decisions regarding their children, with no intervention from the Church.

Accommodation

Christian Scientists typically choose not to participate in immunization programs where there is the possibility of opting out on religious or other grounds.

Ideally, parents or legal guardians should inform the school administration, upon registration of their children, if they require care for their child that would differ from the standard care ordinarily provided. When this is done, the teacher(s) or supervising adults responsible for the child will know what steps the parents/guardians wish to be taken.

Christian Scientist parents and guardians may also request to have their children excused from school-sponsored medical-intervention programs.

In addition, some parents/guardians may request exemptions from classes which deal with human sexuality, disease awareness, human biology, and other health-related content.

Resources and References

- Christian Science, Religious Tolerance Org: www.religioustolerance.org/cr_sci.htm
- Canadian Encyclopedia, Christian Science: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/christian-science/
- First Church of Christ, Scientist, Winnipeg, website: www.mts.net/~fccswpg
- First Church of Christ Website, Christian Science: http://christianscience.com/

The Hutterian Brethren (Hutterites)*

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

The Hutterian Brethren or Hutterites are a faith group that emerged from the Radical Reformation of 16th century Christianity. Hutterites and Mennonites (as well as the Amish who are of Mennonite descent) share common roots. Both of these groups are Anabaptists and both faith groups trace their beginnings to the same era and the same movement during the Reformation.

The term *Anabaptist* means "one who baptizes over again." Anabaptists require that baptismal candidates be able to make their own confessions of faith and so reject baptism of infants. Adults who join the Anabaptist groups are re-baptized.

* Adapted from the Hutterian Brethren, www.hutterites.org/.

The early guiding principles of the Anabaptists were as follows:

- Baptizing babies is in contravention of the Bible's teachings.
- The Bible requires the separation of church and state.
- Christians should not wield the sword: they should be pacifists.
- The Lord's Supper is symbolic of the suffering of Jesus, and should be done in remembrance of Him.
- Baptized members who fall into sin repeatedly should be banned from the congregation.
- Pastors in the Church are responsible for teaching and disciplining, as well as the ban and other duties.
- Christians should not take oaths.

Hutterian religious beliefs are unique as they believe in living in 'a community of goods', in which all material goods are held in common. Communal living has been practised since the early church. All members of the colony are to be provided for equally; no assets are to be kept for personal gain. Hutterites do not have personal bank accounts. All earnings are held communally and funding and necessities are distributed according to one's needs. Hutterites believe that all their individual work is to benefit the collective and is a form of service to God.

Hutterites attend a half-hour church service (Gebet) almost every day and a one to one and a half hour-long service (Lehr) every Sunday as well as on common religious holidays: Christmas, Easter, Epiphany, Ascension Day, and Pentecost. In addition, special services are held for baptisms, marriages, and funerals.

The 15th birthday of young Hutterites signals their transition from childhood to adulthood: a girl becomes a dien and a boy turns into a buah. (A dien is an unmarried female over the age of 15 and a buah is an unmarried male over the age of 15.) This transition brings about major changes in young people's lives as they are considered adults by other members. This includes eating in the adults' dining room, taking part in the buem and diene activities, and being given more responsibilities. In the adults' dining room, the young man or woman will take their ordered place on their respective side of the room. The seating arrangement is by age, with the oldest unbaptized young man sitting across from the most senior adult males and the eldest buah will sit next to the next eldest buah across from one of the older female members.

Traditionally, Hutterites have valued music and songs as an important method of binding Hutterite faith, history, and culture together. Besides the traditional songs, Hutterites love to sing other types of songs. Within the last 20 to 30 years, there has been a greater emphasis within many Hutterite colonies to sing in choirs with full part harmony. These choirs made up of young unmarried men and women over the age of 15, sing for various audiences at weddings, on religious holidays, and at other special events; however, musical instruments are officially not allowed in many colonies.

In the past, Hutterites had a very limited amount of leisure time. Sports and other recreational pursuits were discouraged or banned and, in some cases, still are banned. Nevertheless, attitudes towards leisure time are changing and depending on the view of the particular colony or church leaders, many Hutterites play sports, such as hockey, visit other colonies, work on crafts, read books and magazines, blog, and create music.

All Hutterite children attend an on-colony school built and paid for by the colony, but usually staffed by the local public school boards. They generally follow the provincial curricula. A few colonies have opened independent schools which receive provincial funding. Colony teachers can be non-Hutterian; however, in Manitoba, there are a growing number of certified Hutterian teachers. Hutterian children in the USA and in Canada generally begin attending public school on their home colonies by age 5.

Figure 3.20: Jumping Hutterite children

Today, changes in the nature of the colonies and their economic activities, among other factors, have led to more Hutterite students completing high school and entering post-secondary institutions to become educators or to obtain certification in trades (e.g., plumbers, electricians, carpenters). In the past, few colonies offered Grade 12 education; however, a greater number of colonies are moving in that direction. In fact, both Schmiedenleut and Dariusleut now have students who obtain their Grade 12 diplomas. In addition, Manitoba passed amendments to the Public Schools Act in 2011 regarding Learning to Age 18. This initiative is intended to help all Manitoba students attend school to age 18. (See http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/p250e.php). Schools, including those that are Hutterian, are encouraged to identify and implement programs and initiatives that help students stay in school and extend their learning and personal development.

DRESS AND MODESTY

Beliefs and Practices

Hutterites believe that both men and women should dress modestly and wear gender-specific attire. This belief stems from their Anabaptist beginnings in sixteenth century Europe. The early traditional style had their origins in the German and Austrian national costumes : black Lederhosen and suspenders for men and boys and the Dirndl, a sleeveless dress with a blouse and an apron for women and girls. Over the years, Hutterites have modified their clothing to make them more practical and comfortable. In addition to its value as a cultural tradition, the Hutterian clothing acts as a visible symbol of modesty and is an integral part of their faith life, identifying and reminding them of who they are as a people.

There are three distinct groups of Hutterites: Dariusleut, Lehrerleut, and Schmiedenleut. They each adhere to their own variations of this dress code. Similarities among the groups include blouses and ankle-length dresses, along with a Tiechl (head kerchief) for women; dark trousers and suspenders for men. Both men and women usually wear dark jackets/coats. Children, for the most part wear lighter colours than adults and, in all three groups, young girls wear a head covering known as a Mitz (cap or bonnet).

Accommodation

Hutterian children usually attend schools in their own colonies. Consequently, the school's expectations regarding uniforms and head coverings take these requirements into account. There may be particular need for accommodation during physical education. To maintain modesty, both male and female students may opt not to wear shorts, and thus will need to be accommodated around required gym uniforms or guidelines.

HALLOWEEN

Beliefs and Practices

Halloween is considered a pagan celebration that, in the past, included rituals linked to chasing away evil spirits.

Accommodation

Hutterites do not mark Halloween in any way and will request that their children be exempted from any activities related to Halloween.

See also Participation in Daily Activities and Curriculum.

HUMAN SEXUALITY—PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH EDUCATION: MANITOBA CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK OF OUTCOMES FOR ACTIVE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Beliefs and Practices

Hutterites believe that teaching children about sexuality is the responsibility of the parents/guardians. Hutterite colonies may request that their children be excused from human sexuality classes and opt for parental delivery of curriculum outcomes.

Accommodation

For accommodation, follow General Religious Accommodation Guidelines and Procedures.

Mennonites

Figure 3.21: Mennonite woman at the market

The Mennonites are a group of Anabaptist denominations based on the teachings and tradition of Menno Simons. They are one of the peace churches, which hold to a doctrine of non-violence and pacifism. Their core beliefs, deriving from Anabaptist traditions, are similar to those of the Hutterites, with the exception of communal living.

The 2001 census recorded 191 000 Mennonites in Canada. In 2010, the largest concentrations of urban Mennonites were located in Winnipeg, Vancouver, Saskatoon, and Waterloo-Kitchener, each fed by large Mennonite rural communities. Winnipeg has one of the largest urban Mennonite populations in the world with more than 20 000 Mennonites and 45 Mennonite churches.

Mennonites in Canada and other countries typically have independent denominations due to the practical considerations of distance and, in some cases, language. There are more than 20 different Mennonite groupings that are distinguished by a wide range of lifestyles and religious practices. Some Mennonite communities conscientiously reject the use of modern technology, such as electricity or motor transport. Such Mennonites are often referred to as Old Order Mennonites (although the term strictly refers to a particular church within that group) in order to distinguish them from Mennonite denominations that fully accept modern inventions. Some groups have retained their original German dialect (i.e., Plautdietsch).

The Old Order Amish and Old Order Mennonites reject the use of modern technology such as electricity and motorized transportation, and have also succeeded in continuing a traditional farming style. Most children of traditional (Old Order) Mennonites attend rural schools that are similar to those of 100 years ago. The children walk to a one- or two-room school, they have Bible readings and prayer daily, they get their exercise at recess, and they do most of their learning from books because they have no electronic equipment in the classroom. These schools are deliberately old-fashioned because traditional Mennonites see the modern world as having strayed from the old-fashioned values of decorum, devotion to God, respect for others, and hard work. Historically, Old Order Mennonites and Old Order Amish feared that secondary education was dangerous to their faith and way of life. Thus, the Old Order Mennonites and Amish proscribed all secondary education.

Figure 3.22: Ethnic Germans from the Volga region at a refugee camp in Schneidemühl, Germany, in 1920

The Volga Germans lived along the Volga river in southeastern Russia around Saratov and to the south. They were recruited to immigrate to Russia in the 1700s. In Russia they were allowed to maintain their German culture, language, traditions, and churches (Lutheran, Reformed, Catholics, and Mennonite). However, by the 19th and early 20th centuries, many Volga Germans emigrated to Canada, the Dakotas, and other parts of the western United States, as well as to South America (especially Argentina and Brazil).

As a church that emphasized separation from the world and social nonconformity, Mennonites frequently resisted the influence of state-run public schools. Today, Canadian Mennonites operate elementary education, private high schools, colleges, and one graduate theological centre.

Because of the diversity of Mennonite denominations and practices, the request for accommodations can vary greatly. For some denominations, parents will generally be comfortable with most aspects of public school and curriculum. For others, parents may request accommodations similar to those of Hutterian communities, including

- Dress and modesty requirements
- Halloween and learning resources that refer to witches or witchcraft
- Human Sexuality—Physical Education/Health Education

Jehovah's Witnesses

Charles Taze Russell, along with a small group of Bible students, were instrumental in the establishment of the Jehovah's Witnesses in the late nineteenth century. They were first known as "International Bible Students." In 1879, they began publishing the Bible journal now called *The Watchtower*. In 1931, the group adopted the name Jehovah's Witnesses.

Jehovah's Witnesses base their beliefs solely on the principles found in the Bible and view first-century Christianity as a model. They believe that in addition to drawing one closer to God, living by Biblical principles gives purpose to life, promotes strong family ties, and develops productive and honest citizens.

Figure 3.23: Nazi era purple triangle badge

Jehovah's Witness were among the groups persecuted by the Nazis between 1933 and 1945 for refusing to perform military service, join Nazi organizations, or give allegiance to the Hitler regime. Prisoners were identified by purple triangle badges in concentration camps.

OBSERVATIONS OF HOLY DAYS

Beliefs and Practices

Jehovah's Witnesses commemorate Christ's death annually. This commemoration is referred to as the Lord's Evening Meal. A simple religious ceremony is held at the Kingdom Hall after sundown. The Lord's Evening Meal occurs in March or April (based on the Jewish lunar calendar).

Jehovah's Witnesses hold weekend assemblies twice each year. In addition, they attend a three- or four-day Bible education convention annually.

Accommodation

Students and staff may ask to be excused from attendance at school and department evening meetings on the day of the Lord's Evening Meal celebration.

CELEBRATIONS, BIRTHDAYS, HOLIDAYS, FUNCTIONS, AND SOCIAL EVENTS

Beliefs and Practices

Jehovah's Witnesses celebrate special events such as weddings, anniversaries, engagements, or baby showers. Witness families find enjoyment in spontaneous giving throughout the whole year as expressions of love and

affection. They encourage generosity, gift giving, and other expressions of appreciation.

Holidays

Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate religious or semi-religious holidays that have non-Christian religious origins, or those that promote patriotic exercises or expressions of patriotism.

Birthdays

Jehovah's Witnesses respect the rights of others to celebrate birthdays, but do not share in such celebrations for religious reasons.

Accommodation

Do not extend invitations or expect participation in festivities or social functions surrounding celebrations such as Christmas, Valentine's Day, New Year's Eve, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Halloween. Provide alternative activities if celebrations happen during class time and exemptions are requested.

Jehovah's Witnesses respect the rights of others to celebrate birthdays and holidays. Their right to not participate should also be respected. In the event of classroom birthday celebrations, provide alternative activities. If there are Jehovah's Witnesses in class, teachers are encouraged to be careful when choosing curriculum that focuses on birthday celebrations. Consultation with Witness parents/guardians in this area is advised.

OPENING OR CLOSING EXERCISES

Beliefs and Practices

Jehovah's Witnesses respect the country's flag and show this respect by obedience to the laws of the land. Yet, they do not share in patriotic exercises or expressions of patriotism, nor do they participate in any activities promoting nationalism. While others stand for the national anthem, Jehovah's Witnesses remain seated. In the case of students who are Jehovah's Witness practitioners, if they are already standing when the anthem is played they will not necessarily sit down. If a group is expected to stand and sing, Witnesses may choose to stand out of respect, but not sing.

Accommodation

Accommodate as per request. See Participation in School Opening or Closing Exercise (Patriotic Observances) and Participation in Daily Activities and Curriculum.

HEALTH ISSUES

Beliefs and Practices

Jehovah's Witnesses actively seek medical care when needed and accept the vast majority of treatments available today, with the exception of blood transfusions. They accept reliable non-blood medical therapies, which are increasingly recognized in the healthcare field. Each baptized mature minor Witness carries an Advance Medical Directive that provides emergency contact instructions. His or her conscientious decision, outlined in this document, should be respected. Younger children carry an Identity Card which similarly provides parental contact information and directives for emergency situations.

Accommodation

In the event of serious injury during school trips and other activities, school staff should endeavour to contact the parents/guardians and provide emergency medical personnel with the medical directive instructions.

CURRICULUM CONCERNS

Music/Art/Drama

Witness youths do not participate in any kind of music and art instruction in connection with religious or patriotic holidays.

Accommodation

Jehovah's Witnesses' right to not participate should be respected.

HUMAN SEXUALITY—PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH EDUCATION: MANITOBA CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK OF OUTCOMES FOR ACTIVE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Beliefs and Practices

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that teaching children about sexuality is the responsibility of the parents/guardians. Some parents/guardians may request that their children be excused from human sexuality classes.

Accommodation

For accommodation, see Modesty Requirements and Participation In Daily Activities and Curriculum.

Seventh-Day Adventist Church

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has grown from a small group of individuals from the New England region of the United States, who carefully studied the Bible in the mid-1800s based on the teachings of William Miller, to a worldwide community. In 1860, at Battle Creek, Michigan, the Adventists chose the name Seventh-day Adventist and, in 1863, formally organized a church body.

Figure 3.24: Three angels messages

Adventists base their faith in God as revealed through Jesus Christ and as shown through the Bible, inspired by the Holy Spirit. They believe the Bible is the sole rule of faith and practice, and that it is the unequivocal word of God.

Seventh-day Adventists observe the Sabbath on Saturday as Jesus observed the seventh-day Sabbath while on Earth. They demonstrate their belief and commitment to their faith through baptism (being immersed in water), following the example of Jesus.

The writings of Ellen G. White, one of the Church's founders, are an aid to Bible interpretation. She also prescribed a dietary regimen of vegetarianism and abstention from tobacco and alcohol.*

OBSERVATION OF THE SABBATH

Beliefs and Practices

The Sabbath is a 24-hour unit of time that begins at sunset on Friday and concludes the following evening.

Accommodation

Schools should accommodate Seventh-day Adventist students in the scheduling of school requirements prior to and during the Sabbath, sunset Friday to Saturday. Weekend expectations should not include school activities on the Sabbath (e.g., work expectations or attending music festivals or camp).

DIETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Seventh-day Adventists encourage a vegetarian lifestyle and, in general, do not eat animal products.

* Source: Multifaith Information Manual and Seventh-day Adventist website. https://www.adventist.org/en/

Accommodation

Teachers and cafeteria staff must be aware of food restrictions wherever and whenever food is served. Availability of vegetarian options is advisable in school cafeterias, elementary school snacks, breakfast or lunch programs, as well as during overnight stays and school or department events that involve a meal. Vegetarianism is not considered a test of faith, but is encouraged in the interest of better health. Where animal products are eaten, such is confined to

- animals that chew the cud and have split hooves (e.g., cattle, sheep, goat, deer)
- fish with both fins and scales

The following is not permissible:

- pork and pork products
- coffee, tea, and other caffeinated beverages

CURRICULUM CONCERNS

Halloween

Halloween is considered a pagan celebration that, in the past, included rituals linked to chasing away evil spirits.

Accommodation

Some Seventh-day Adventist parents/guardians may request that their children be exempted from any activities related to Halloween. If exemptions are requested, provision of curricular alternatives is recommended.

Resources and References

GENERAL

- The Canadian Encyclopedia, Christianity: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/christianity/
- Consultants on Religious Tolerance: www.religioustolerance.org/
- BBC Religions-Christianity: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/
- Religious Studies Web Guide-Christianity: http://people.ucalgary.ca/~lipton/christian1.html

DENOMINATIONS

- Anglican Church of Canada: www.anglican.ca/
- Apostolic Church of Pentecost of Canada (ACOP): www.acop.ca
- Baptist Churches in Canada: www.fellowship.ca/
- Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops: www.cccb.ca/site/eng/
- Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt: www.coptic.net/EncyclopediaCoptica/
- Greek Orthodox Church of Canada: www.gometropolis.org/
- Jehovah's Witnesses, website: www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses
- Lutheran Church in Canada: www.lutheranchurch-canada.ca/home.php
- Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada: www.adventist.ca/
- Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada: www.uocc.ca/
- United Church of Canada: www.united-church.ca/

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

Hinduism is the religion of about one billion people in India, Africa, Indonesia, and the West Indies. Immigration from these countries, principally India, to Canada has resulted in a significant Canadian Hindu community*. In 2011, almost 500,000 Canadians identified themselves as Hindu, representing 1.5% of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey).

Figure 3.25: Om or Aum, sacred sound symbol

The term Hinduism is commonly used to describe the oldest continuous religion in the world (elements of Hinduism date back many thousands of years). The majority of people in India and Nepal are followers of Hinduism. Hinduism extends to significant populations outside of the subcontinent and has over 900 million adherents worldwide, of which about 500,000 live in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household survey).

Within Hinduism, there are a vast array of practices and beliefs. Consequently, defining Hinduism is challenging. The religion has close associations conceptually and historically with three other Indian religions: Jainism, *Buddhism,* and Sikhism.

Unlike many religions, Hinduism cannot be traced to a single founder, single scripture, and commonly agreed upon set of teachings. Throughout its long history, there have been contributions by many important figures who had different teachings and different philosophies, and who wrote many holy books. Therefore, some writers think of Hinduism as being 'a way of life' or 'a family of religions' rather than a single religion.

A more precise and widely used term for describing this belief system is Sanatana Dharma or Hindu Dharma. The term 'Hindu' is thought to have derived from the name of the river or river complex of the northwest of India, the Sindhu. Sindhu is a Sanskrit word used by the inhabitants of the region. Other groups who arrived in the land used the name in their own languages for the land and its peoples.

The term Hindu is thought to have first been used by people, in the 15th and 16th centuries, to differentiate themselves from followers of other traditions,

* The Canadian Encyclopedia, Hinduism, www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/hinduism/.

especially the Muslims (Yavannas), and the Kashmir and Bengal. It is thought that, at that time, the term may have simply indicated groups that shared certain cultural practices such as cremation of the dead and styles of cuisine. The 'ism' was added to the word Hindu in the 19th century as a result of British colonialism and attempts to Christianize the population. Today, the term is widely recognized and accepted although there are many competing definitions.

Although defining Hinduism is a challenge, it may be stated that Hinduism has its roots in India. Most Hindus have a principal body of sacred scriptures known as the **Veda** and share a common system of values known as **dharma**.

Because of the antiquity of Hinduism, as well as its inclusiveness and tolerance for diverse expressions and beliefs, an extensive array of philosophical doctrines and dogmas has evolved. This has resulted in the appearance of additional scriptural texts, such as the Upanishads, Puranas, Ramayana, and Bhagavad Gita.

Figure 3.26: Ganesha, God of foresight, wisdom, and good fortune

Hinduism can be considered a monotheistic religion as most Hindus believe in a **Supreme God** whose qualities and forms are represented by a multitude of deities which emanate from him. The Ultimate Reality is called Brahman. Hindus believe that Brahman is manifested as Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. They comprise the Hindu Trinity, where Brahma is the Creator, Vishnu is the Preserver, and Shiva is the Dissolver.

Brahman also manifests as the world of multiplicity and plurality, and may assume divine physical forms (avatara) from time to time for the preservation of righteousness. Three prominent avataras are Rama, Krishna, and Buddha. The many Deities worshipped by numerous Hindus are considered various aspects of Brahman, and not a substitute for the supreme impersonal Brahman.

There are many prominent concepts and tenets enshrined in Hinduism that have widespread relevance and applications. Some of these are

- the Immanency of Ishwara Avatara (Manifold Incarnations of God)
- the Theory of Punarjanma, the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, governed by Karma (Reincarnation)
- the Law of Karma (Action and Reaction)

- the Doctrine of Maya (Illusiveness of Nature)
- the Principle of Gunatraya (Three Gunas of Nature)
- the Proclamation of Varnashrama Dharma (Chaturvarga—Four Objectives of Life; Chaturashrama—Four Stages in Life; Chaturvarna—Four Caste Division)
- the Practice of Sadharana Dharma (Virtues of Purity, Austerity, Detachment Morality, and Non-Injury)
- the Observance of Sadhana Yoga (Karma Yoga—Yoga of Action; Bhakti Yoga—Yoga of Devotion; Jnana Yoga—Yoga of Knowledge)

Hindus use a variety of sacred symbols during worship. Some of these are the OM, Swastika, Trishul, Shivalingam, and Nataraja. Most Hindu rituals are performed in the presence of many of these symbols. Moorties (icons) of the various Deities are also used during worship. Hawan (fire offerings) is an integral component of all Hindu worship. During worship, devotees must be dressed appropriately, and the body is usually adorned with sacred religious symbols such as Chandan (red vermilion, sandal paste, or ashes, applied to the forehead as a dot or any other symbolic shape).

Religious Accommodation for Hindus

For devout Hindu students, Sanatana Dharma is a way of life. For these followers, the secular nature of the public school system may present some difficulties. Hence, accommodations may be required to allow these students to pursue academic, athletic, and social endeavours at school while being in harmony with their faith.

OBSERVATIONS OF HOLY DAYS

Figure 3.27: Family celebrating the Festival of Holi

Beliefs and Practices

There are many holy days which are celebrated or recognized. The dates for each of the most commonly recognized holy days that follow will vary from year to year because dates are calculated based on the lunar and solar astronomical alignments.

Diwali (Deepawali)

Diwali is one of the most widely celebrated Hindu festivals. It is commonly known as the Festival of Lights. Diwali has many meanings, the most important being the celebration of the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and happiness over suffering.

Other significant holy days celebrated by Hindus include

- Janam Ashtami (Birth of Lord Krishna)
- Ram Navan-Li (Birth of Lord Rama)
- Dussehra (Festival that celebrates the victory of good over evil)
- Maha Shivaratri (Appearance of Bhagavan Shiva)
- Navarathri (Nine days of Fasting and Worship)
- Thai Pongal (Day of Thanksgiving)
- Holi (Spring Festival)

For a more complete listing of Hindu celebrations and holy days, see Section 4: Religious Holy Days.

Calendar of Hindu Holy Days

Holiday	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Navarathri (Navaratri)	October 10–19	September 29 –October 8	October 17–26	October 7–15	September 26 –October 5
Dussehra (Dasara)	October 19	October 8	October 25	October 15	October 5
Diwali	November 7	October 27	November 14	November 4	October 24

Note: For additional and future approximate dates for these holy days, refer to

- The Heart of Hinduism web site, Festivals: https://iskconeducationalservices.org/HoH/practice/401.htm
- Harvard Divinity School, Interfaith Calendar: www.interfaith-calendar.org/
- The BBC's Interfaith calendar: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/
- There are calendar apps available for iPhones, iPads, and other smart phones.

Accommodation

Scheduling of all school and school-related activities should take Hindu holy days into account. In the case of a conflict with assignments, examinations, and major tests, Hindu students need to be accommodated.

DIETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Figure 3.28: Indian food

Beliefs and Practices

Many Hindus are strict vegetarians, and some are lacto-ovo (milk-egg) vegetarians. Meat, fish, eggs, and dairy products are not allowed in these diets.

Accommodation

Teachers and cafeteria staff need to be aware of food restrictions. Special care must be taken to keep vegetarian and non-vegetarian food separate, and to ensure that the same spoons and serving utensils are not used to serve both kinds of food. Food and snacks that have been prepared using animal by-products (e.g., lard, beef tallow) should be properly labeled and not served to vegetarian Hindu students. Teachers or schools may wish to adjust their snack, pizza/hot dog days, fun fair, or lunch programs to accommodate students who are vegetarians. Religious diversity may also be taken into consideration when revising local school/division nutrition policies.

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Beliefs and Practices

Devout Hindu students need to pay homage to Saraswati Devi (Deity of knowledge and learning) prior to starting their classes. This is usually done in the early morning before formal teaching and learning commences. The space used for worship is considered sacred and should be conducive to spiritual growth and development.

Accommodation

If there is request for accommodation, an appropriate room/space could be made available to allow students and staff the privacy to perform morning prayer.

NAVARATHRI (FASTING)

Beliefs and Practices

Hindu students and staff may fast during the nine days of Navarathri, which occurs during the spring and autumn. During this time, students/staff will not eat or drink throughout the day.

Accommodation

Allow for a separate area (e.g., the library) for students so they can avoid the cafeteria during lunch breaks. Excuse students from strenuous physical activity during the fast. Avoid organization of late-night and food-related events (e.g., pizza or hot dog days, overnight school trips) if there are a large number of students in the school who observe the fast. In addition to accommodating students, schools can use the opportunity to honour those who are taking on the responsibility of fasting. Staff and student awareness of fasting will help avoid misunderstandings.

HINDU DRESS

Beliefs and Practices

The traditional dress of Hindu women in India is the sari. This is a piece of brightly coloured material that is wound and pleated around the waist to cover the legs. An underskirt is worn beneath it. A short blouse is worn on top, and the end of the sari is draped over the shoulder on top of this. This leaves the midriff bare.

Most younger Hindu women today will wear western style clothing and some will wear long trousers and tunic tops as a compromise between the sari and western clothing.

For Hindu men, the traditional attire is a jacket with buttons down the front worn over a tunic top with a 'Nehru' collar, and trousers which are generally quite loose. Today, most young Hindu men generally wear western style clothing, but some may compromise by wearing trousers and a long tunic top over them.

Some Hindus cover their heads: males with either a pagree (turban) or a kishtee (religious cap), and females with an ornhnee (scarf). These may be permanently worn head covers or they may be worn only during special days of significance.

Make-up

Hindu women wear a coloured spot on their forehead as a sign of their marital status and are very proud of this. The mark is called a bhindi (also called bindi, or kumkum after the name of the red powder that is used to make it). Widows and some unmarried women may wear a black bhindi. Young and unmarried women usually wear a bhindi that matches the colour of their outfit.

Men sometimes use sectarian marks (known as tilaka) in a similar way to bhindi, as a symbol of their caste (jati), class (varna), or religious sect.

Figure 3.29: Henna body art

Hindus also practise henna body art for special occasions. The intricate designs are traced onto their hands, arms, and feet using a henna paste and fine brushes or feathers. Once the henna is washed off, the design remains as a tracery of fine ochre lines on the skin and is there to ward off evil spirits and bad luck, and attract good fortune.

Accommodation

If Hindu students request accommodation for head cover or other clothing, see School Dress or Attire in the Guidelines section.

CURRICULUM CONCERNS FOR PHYSICAL/HEALTH EDUCATION

Beliefs and Practices

Privacy and modesty are important tenets of Hinduism.

Accommodation

There could be the following requests for accommodation in Physical Education/Health Education classes:

- Separate classes for males and females
- Girls-only swim programs
- For some Brahmin Hindu boys, a preference for taking a shower individually in order to maintain privacy and modesty

Exemptions with alternative delivery for sections of health education related to human sexuality may also be requested.

Resources and References

- BBC Religion: Hinduism: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/
- The Canadian Encyclopedia, Hinduism: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/hinduism/
- Heart of Hinduism: https://iskconeducationalservices.org/
- Hindu Society of Manitoba, website: http://hindusocietyofmanitoba.org
- Himalayan Academy: www.himalayanacademy.com/readlearn/basics
- Oxford centre for Hindu Studies: www.ochs.org.uk/

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

In 2011, about 7,850,600 or 23.9% of the total Canadians who participated in the National Household Survey reported that they had no religious affiliation. This was a significant increase from just a decade earlier when 16.5% of the population in the 2001 Census reported not having a religious affiliation.

Figure 3.30: Happy human symbol

Humanism is a naturalistic, scientific, secular philosophy of life. Humanists embrace core human values of respect, responsibility, compassion, and love. They look to nature and ongoing inquiry for the explanation of life, rather than to a divine or supernatural power. Humanism is an ethical stance that calls for a commitment to the betterment of humanity through the methods of science, democracy, and reason, without limitations imposed by political, ecclesiastical, or other dictates.

HUMANIST PRINCIPLES AND CORE VALUES

Humanists live their lives in the belief that this is their only life. Therefore, they have a great responsibility to themselves, and to the others with whom they share this planet, to make it the best life possible. Humanists hold human happiness and gender parity with the highest regard. As such, they believe that the orderly progress of society demands that the views of others must be respected regardless of race, gender, social class, religion, or creed so long as those views do not limit or intrude on the rights of others. Humanists support the full inclusion of all individuals through the separation of religious practices from the democratic institutions of state and governance.

HUMANIST PRACTICES

Humanists have no established rituals or practices, but do recognize many rites of passage and historical events on an individual or ad hoc basis. For example, Humanists may celebrate birthdays or the coming of age of children; Humanists may choose to host a celebration of life at the death of a loved one, and some individuals may wish to publicly declare their decision to unite by means of an appropriate ceremony.

HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

Humanists do not have any holidays or celebrations unique to themselves. Nevertheless, Humanist groups and individuals frequently observe special dates on the calendar such as the solstices. Others may wish to recognize, from time to time, the decisive role in the advancement of reason and scientific method represented by the work of Charles Darwin, Marie Curie, Bertrand Russell, and Dora Russell.

Resources and References

- Humanists, Atheists and Agnostics of Manitoba: http://mbhumanistsatheists.ca
- Humanist Canada: www.humanistcanada.ca/
- Religious Tolerance, Humanism: www.religioustolerance.org/humanism.htm

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

In 1938, the Al-Rashid Mosque, the first mosque in Canada, was opened in Edmonton, when approximately 700 European Muslims lived in Canada*. In the 2011 National Household Survey, just over 1 million individuals identified themselves as Muslim, representing 3.2% of the nation's total population, up from 2.0% recorded in the 2001 Census (Statistics Canada). In the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), 7.7% of the population identified as Muslim, making Toronto one of the North American cities with the highest concentration of Muslims.

Figure 3.31: The crescent and the star, symbols of Islam

According to the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, Islam is the world's second-largest religious tradition after Christianity, with an estimated 1.6 billion Muslims living around the world (Global Religious Landscape, 2012). With respect to the two major branches of Islam, Sunni's are the largest group representing 87–90% and Shi'a making up about 10–13% of the world's Muslim population.

The Arabic word Islam literally means "surrender" or "submission." This word was derived from the word "Salam" which means peace. Islam, as a faith, means total and sincere submission to God so that one can live in peace and tranquility. Peace (Salam in Arabic) is achieved through active obedience to the revealed commandments of God (who Muslims refer to as Allah).

Peter Seda in *Islam Is…* describes Islam in the following manner:

> The name Islam is universal in meaning. Islam is not named after a tribe of people or an individual, as Judaism is named after the Tribe of Judah, Christianity after Christ, and Buddhism after Buddha. Islam is not a name chosen by human beings; it was divinely communicated from God. Islam is a global faith, not of the East or West. Islam is a complete way of life, implying a total submission to God. One who surrenders his or her will to God, voluntarily, is called a Muslim. It was not Muhammad, but Adam who first brought Islam to humanity. Then, each prophet and messenger came to exhort the people to a clear understanding of God's commandments. They offered teachings relevant to that time, until God chose the final Prophet, Muhammad (571 CE) (upon whom be God's peace and blessings), to come with the "Message" referred to as the Quran.**

* Al Rashid Mosque, History: http://alrashidmosque.ca/about/history/

** From Islam Is… by Peter Seda, The Islamic Propagation Office in Rabwah (2002)

Islam is built on five main ritual practices called the Five Pillars of Islam.

- Shahada: Affirmation that there is no deity but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah
- Salat: 5 daily prayers
- Zakat: Charity
- Sawm: Fasting during the month of Ramadan
- Hajj: Pilgrimage

Islam promotes teaching of tolerance from a humanist perspective. As such, the right to life, dignity, and respect for all human beings should be acknowledged.

DIVERSITY WITHIN ISLAM

As with most religions, there is great diversity within Islam itself. The division between Sunni and Shi'a is the most significant and oldest in the development of Islam. *Sunni* and *Shi'a* are two of the oldest lines of Islamic faith groups and it is important to recognize these two distinct groups. Religion influences every aspect of life in Muslim communities and, therefore, understanding Sunni and Shi'a beliefs is essential in understanding the modern Muslim communities.*

Figure 3.32: Excerpt from the Qur'an

Sunni and Shi'a are in agreement on the fundamentals of Islam and share a common Holy Book (The **Qur'an**), but there are significant differences that resulted from their different historical experiences, political and social developments, as well as ethnic composition.

These differences may be traced back to the death, in 632, of Islam's founder **Prophet Muhammad** and the eventual disagreement over who should be the successor and leader of the emerging Muslim community. The term "successor" should not be understood as meaning that the leaders that followed the Prophet Muhammad were also considered to be prophets—both Shi'a and Sunni agree that Muhammad was the final prophet.

The followers of Muhammad were split over who should inherit Prophet Muhammad's political and religious office. The majority of the followers, who eventually became known as the Sunnis, chose Abu Bakr, a friend of the Prophet and father of his wife Aisha, to succeed The Prophet Muhammad. Sunni means one who follows the Sunnah' (what the Prophet said, did, agreed to, or condemned).

* BBC Religions, Islam: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/subdivisions/sunnishia_1.shtml

Other followers thought that Muhammad's kin should be the rightful successors. They believed that the Prophet had chosen Ali, his cousin and son-in-law to follow him as leader. This group became known as the Shi'a, the partisans of Ali, a contraction of "shiaat Ali".

Abu Bakr's supporters initially won and Abu Bakr became the first Caliph (the title given to Muhammad's successors); however, Ali did briefly rule as the fourth Caliph.

Islam's division was concretized when Ali's son Hussein was killed in 680 in Karbala (which is in modern Iraq) by the ruling Sunni caliph's troops. While Sunni rulers continued to monopolize political power in the land, the Shi'a lived in the shadow of the state and sought guidance from their imams (the first twelve were directly descended from Ali). With the passage of time, the religious beliefs of the Sunni and Shi'a started to diverge.

While the Shi'a started out as a smaller group, today significant numbers are found in many countries including Iraq, Pakistan, Albania, and Yemen. In Iran, Shi'a represents 90% of the population, making Iran the political centre of Shi'a Islam today.

Other Diverse Groups within Islam

Diversity in Islam extends beyond Sunni and Shi'a. The following text describes three examples of other significant groups.

- "Sufi: Sufism is a mystical dimension of Islam in which believers seek a direct, personal experience of God. It attracts Sunnis, Shi'a and non-Muslims. Sufis emphasize a master-disciple relationship with a teacher and belong to Tariqas, or orders, which have (in almost all cases) a teacher who traces his roots to the Prophet. As with many other observant Muslims, observant Sufis are dedicated to the worship of Allah and abstain from worldly pleasures.
- Ahmadiyya: The Ahmadiyya Muslim community is the only Islamic faith group that believes the Messiah has already come, in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in the late 19th century. There are millions of Ahmadiyya Muslims around the world. As in other traditions, because of their belief that there were prophets after Muhammad, there is debate within the Muslim community whether the Ahmadiyya are to be considered Muslims.
- Kharijite: The Kharijites, or, "those that seceded" are a group believing that the caliph (their religious and civil leader) could be from the least esteemed class within society, as long as he is pious and capable of exercising authority with justice. The only surviving branch of the Kharijites is Ibadism. Most Ibadi Muslims live in Oman and Northern Africa."*

* Source: Diversity in Islam Fact Sheet, Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding: https://tanenbaum.org/religion-at-work-resource/hot-topics/addressing-anti-muslim-sentiment/.

Religious Accommodation for Islam

OBSERVATIONS OF ISLAMIC HOLY DAYS

Beliefs and Practices

There are several days in the Islamic calendar with special religious significance, but the major celebrations common to all Muslims are the two Eids. The first Eid (Eid-ul-Fitr) is celebrated the day after the end of the month of Ramadan. The month of Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic Calendar.

The second Eid (Eid-ul-Adha) is celebrated on the tenth day of the twelfth Islamic month. The festivities include congregational prayer and gatherings with family and friends.

Accommodation

Muslim students and staff are to be excused from attendance from school for these holy days

- Eid-ul-Fitr: one day off (some families follow the tradition of celebrating for three days)
- Eid-ul-Adha: one day off (some families follow the tradition of celebrating for four days)
- Ashura: one day off (for Shi'a Muslims)

Scheduling of all school and school-related activities should take Islamic holy days into account. In the case of a conflict with assignments, examinations, and major tests, Muslim students should be accommodated.

Calendar of Islamic Holy Days

Holiday	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Ramadan (Muslims fast from dawn to sunset)	May 16–June 15	May 6–June 5	April 24–May 24	April 13–May 12	April 3–May 2
Eid-al-Fitr (Celebrates the end of Ramadan)	June 15	June 5	May 24	May 13	May 3
Hajj	August 19–24	August 9–15	July 28–August 2	July 17–22	July 9–13
Eid-al-Adha (End of the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca)	August 22	August 12	July 31	July 20	July 10
Al-Hijra (Islamic New Year)	September 12	September 1	August 20	August 10	July 30

Note: For additional and future approximate dates for these selected holy days, refer to

- Calendar, Manitoba Islamic Association: www.miaonline.org/calendar/
- Harvard Divinity School, Interfaith Calendar: www.interfaith-calendar.org/
- The BBC's Interfaith calendar: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/
- There are calendar apps available for iPhones, iPads, and other smart phones.

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

Beliefs and Practices

Muslims are careful about the food they consume and how it is prepared. Islamic laws are very specific and Muslims seek to eat foods defined as "Halal", which is defined by Muslims as "that which is allowed"… It is a religious obligation for all Muslims to consume only food that is Halal. Muslims can consume food that is prepared and/or sold by non-Muslims as long as it is Halal. Halal includes standards that regulate the slaughter and preparation of meat and poultry.

Figure 3.33: Market scene

The following products are considered Halal:

- Milk (from cows, sheep, camels, and goats)
- Honey
- Fish
- Plants which are not intoxicant
- Fresh or naturally frozen vegetables
- Fresh or dried fruits
- Legumes and nuts like peanuts, cashew nuts, hazel nuts, walnuts, etc.
- Grains such as wheat, rice, rye, barley, oat, etc.
- Animals such as cows, sheep, goats, deer, moose, chickens, ducks, game birds, etc., are also Halal, but they must be Zabihah (slaughtered according to Islamic Rites) in order to be suitable for consumption.

The following foods are considered Haraam (foods that are forbidden):

- Meat from swine—pork, ham, gammon, bacon, etc.
- Pork-based products and by-products—sausages, gelatine, etc.
- Gelatin-based candies and desserts
- Foods containing or prepared with lard or animal shortening (chicken fried in lard, breads, puddings, crackers, cookies, etc.)—vegetable shortening is acceptable
- Cheeses or other milk products that have been processed using coagulating enzymes derived from either beef or swine (rennet, lipase, and pepsin), cheeses that have been produced using enzymes derived from the growth of pure cultures of certain molds (microbial rennets are acceptable)
- Animals improperly slaughtered, or already dead before slaughtering is due to take place
- Animals killed in the name of anyone other than Allah
- Intoxicants
- Most carnivorous animals, birds of prey, and land animals without external ears (i.e., snakes, reptiles, worms, insects, etc.)
- Blood and blood by-products
- Foods contaminated with any of the aforementioned products

Food items that are considered questionable or suspect and for which more information is needed to categorise them as halal or haraam are often referred to as mashbooh. Food falling into this category should be treated as haraam until additional information is available.

Accommodation

School snack and lunch items containing ingredients derived from pork must be clearly identified, both in elementary and secondary schools. Vegetables, fruits, fish and seafood, and Halal foods are appropriate for Muslim students. In general, school and cafeteria staff should be aware of food restrictions and carefully plan appropriate menus, snacks, and other food. Consideration should be given to food served on "pizza day," "hot dog day," or at annual school fairs. Schools/divisions may need to revise local nutrition policies to accommodate dietary restrictions based on religious diversity.

DAILY PRAYER

Beliefs and Practices

Muslims worship in a building called a mosque or *masjid*, meaning place of prostration. Outside every mosque, or just inside the entrance, is a place where worshippers can remove and leave their shoes. There is also a place where they can carry out the ritual washing required before prayer.

The main hall of a mosque is a bare room with very limited furniture. There are no pictures or statues present as Muslims believe these are blasphemous, since there can be no image of Allah, who is wholly spirit. Everyone sits on the floor and everywhere in the mosque is equal in status. A mihrab (niche in one of the walls) points to the direction that the worshippers should face in order to face Mecca.

Figure 3.34: Muslims praying in a Mosque in Bangladesh

Islam requires adherents to pray daily at specific times, which change throughout the year, depending on the time of sunrise and sunset. Before praying, Muslims are required to perform a ritual washing (wudu) of their faces, hands, head, and feet. At an early age children are encouraged to begin praying, and at puberty prayer becomes compulsory. Prayer can be performed individually or in a group, and men and women pray in separate areas within the same room. Women do not pray during menstruation.

Prayer times will vary according to the changing time of sunrise and sunset. Holy days are governed by the lunar calendar, and may fall on dates that vary by several months from year to year.

Salat are the obligatory Muslim prayers, performed five times each day by Muslims. It is the second **Pillar of Islam**. The required five prayers are

- Salat al-fajr: dawn, before sunrise
- Salat al-*dhuhr* (aka *Zuhr* or *Duhr*): midday, after the sun passes its highest
- Salat al-'asr: the late part of the afternoon
- Salat al-maghrib: just after sunset
- Salat al-'isha: between sunset and midnight

All Muslims are required to try to meet their prayer obligations. As a result, Muslim children as young as seven are encouraged to pray.

Accommodation

There will be points during the year when Muslim prayer times conflict with the school schedule. Early afternoon prayer times often fall within the lunch period or shortly thereafter and, in such cases, students can use all or part of their lunchtime for prayers.

However, it can be expected that the duhr and sometimes the asr prayer obligations will occur during school/class time. In such cases, students should be allowed time for prayer. Teachers should be aware of the Muslim prayer schedule during exams and/or tests, class outings, and overnight outings.

Prayer takes an average of about 5 to 10 minutes. The school could provide a private designated area or a room for prayer. Where possible, a washroom within the school should be identified for washing before prayers (up to 10 minutes may be required for washing). A private washroom would be most appropriate.

The Manitoba Islamic Association website at www.miaonline.org/prayer-locations provides information on prayer times and locations for praying in Manitoba, including an annual schedule of prayer times.

SALAT ALJUM'A (FRIDAY CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER)

Beliefs and Practices

Friday is the Muslim weekly holy day. Muslims can pray anywhere, but it is considered good practice to pray with others in a mosque. Praying together in a mosque helps Muslims to recognize that all of humanity is one, and that all are equal in the sight of Allah.

Salat Aljum'a is a prayer (*ṣalāt*) that Muslims hold every Friday, just after noon in the place of *dhuhr*. Friday prayer is obligatory for every Muslim male, who has reached the age of puberty. The service is congregational, and its performance in a mosque is preferred. The scheduled period of time for Friday Congregational Prayer is consistent throughout the year, but may vary from mosque to mosque.

Accommodation

Students should be allowed to attend Friday afternoon prayer services. Where possible, schools should allocate space for congregational prayer. Sufficient time (about 15 to 30 minutes) should be allotted for students performing the Friday prayer in the school. If students are praying in a nearby mosque, they should be allowed a maximum of one hour.

PILGRIMAGE (HAJJ)

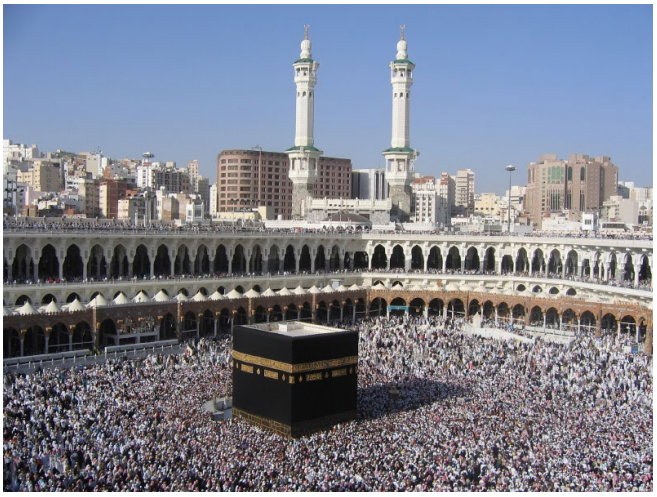

Figure 3.35: The Kaaba is the cuboid building at the Centre of Islam's most sacred mosque, Al-Masjid al-Haram, in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Beliefs and Practices

The Hajj is an annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. It is a mandatory religious duty for all adult Muslims that must be carried out at least once in their lifetime if they are capable physically and financially of undertaking the journey, and can support their family during their absence. It is one of the five pillars of Islam.

Accommodation

Students whose families are travelling to Mecca should be accommodated.

FASTING DURING RAMADAN

Beliefs and Practices

The month of Ramadan lasts for 29 or 30 days, depending on the lunar calendar. During Ramadan, Muslims do not eat or drink from the break of dawn to sunset. Ramadan is a continued period of enhanced commitment to self-restraint, and a time to focus on moral conduct. Fasting is required when children reach the age of puberty; however, younger children are encouraged by their parents/guardians to participate in the fast so they may become accustomed to the practice. Women and girls who are menstruating are exempt from fasting. Certain persons may be exempt from fasting for health or medical reasons.

For more detailed information on Ramadan and suggestions for schools, see *A Simple Guide to Working with Muslim Students During Ramadan* at https://www.miaonline.org/wp-content/uploads/A-Simple-Guide-to-Working-with-Muslim-Students-During-Ramadan2018.pdf.

GENDER ROLES AND RELATIONS IN ISLAM

Beliefs and Practices

The Qur'an views women and men to be equal in human dignity; however, this spiritual or ethical equality is not necessarily reflected in Muslim practices or customs. In Islamic practice, gender roles manifest themselves, partially because men and women are sometimes allotted different rights and experience different cultural expectations. Perspectives regarding gender roles are varied within Islam, according to different interpretations of the Quran, different sects of the religion, and different cultures and regions.

Regardless, gender relations in many Islamic communities can be said to be based upon maintaining social distance between members of the opposite sex. After puberty, Islam discourages any kind of casual touching or privacy between unrelated persons of the opposite sex.

Accommodation

Some students and their families will observe traditions and practices that differentiate gender roles and expectations. As a result, their expectations with respect to gender roles may conflict with the dominant practices and expectations in Canadian society and schools. It is advisable to allow the individual in question to be the one to determine his/her degree of comfort with gender related issues.

For some students and their families, shaking hands, touching, or any other close physical contact between members of the opposite sex should be avoided (for example, shaking hands with students of the opposite sex in graduation ceremonies or when greeting parents). When meeting with students or parents of the opposite sex in one-to-one meetings, doors should be left open. Some students may feel more comfortable if accompanied by a friend. In group work or in paired assignments, some students may not be comfortable sitting next to members of the opposite sex.

These customs and practices may also have an impact on Physical Education/Health Education classes and sports teams. Many schools have gender-specific classes and sports teams, especially in middle and senior years schools. In other schools, Physical Education/Health Education classes and some sports teams are coed.

ISLAMIC DRESS

Beliefs and Practices

Islam prescribes that both men and women behave and dress modestly. Muslims believe that an emphasis on modesty encourages society to value individuals for their wisdom, skills, and contribution to the community, rather than for their physical characteristics.

Headscarves or other head coverings may have a religious significance or function, or may be an aspect of social or cultural practice, or may be a purely personal style and fashion. It is important to recognize that women of many other religions and cultures may choose to wear head scarves and other aspects of clothing that are very similar to those that many observant Muslim women wear. For example, this is true of some Christian groups and of Orthodox Judaism.

Figure 3.36: Woman wearing a hijab

Hijab

The hijab is commonly referred to as a "veil" or head cover, which characterizes the appearance of many Muslim women. It also refers more generally to the loose-fitting, non-revealing clothes worn by Muslim women. The wearing of the hijab is primarily an Islamic requirement and is seen within Islam as a symbol of identity and modesty; nevertheless, the requirement for a hijab has been interpreted differently by Islamic scholars and Muslim communities. Another way to understand the importance of the hijab is by recognizing that there are different cultural constructions of the concept of "nakedness." For Muslim women and girls, the amount of their body that they feel comfortable showing in public is governed by a different sense of what it means to be "naked" (e.g., showing even their arms or legs would make them feel naked).

Niqab

Some women extend the concept of nakedness to include covering their faces with a niqab. There are different types of niqabs. One style veils the whole face by using a rectangular piece of semi-transparent cloth that is attached to the head-scarf so that the veil hangs down covering the face but may be turned up if the woman chooses to do so. In the other style, the niqab covers the face only below the eyes, allowing the eyes to be seen.

Figure 3.37: Woman wearing a niqab

Figure 3.38: Woman wearing a burqa

Burqa

A burqa (aka burka or chadri) is an outer garment worn by women in some Islamic traditions to cover their whole bodies when in public.

Figure 3.39: Woman wearing a chador

Chador

The chador is worn by many women in Iran and some other countries when they are outdoors or in public spaces. The Chador is a full-body length semi-circle of cloth or cloak that is open down the front and often worn with a smaller headscarf underneath.

Kufi

Males may also choose to wear a head covering called a kufi.

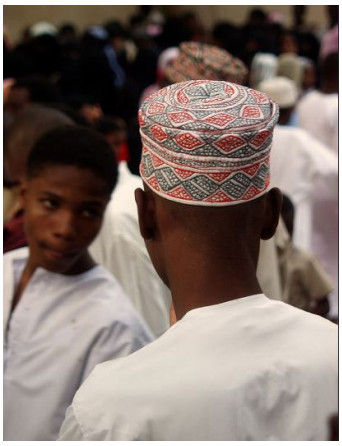

Figure 3.40: Man wearing a kufi

Diversity of Islamic Dress

There is great diversity among the Muslim communities worldwide in terms of their interpretation of modesty dress requirements, and cultural and regional traditions, and fashion. For example, the burqa and the niqab are **not** commonly worn in many predominantly Muslim countries with the exception of Saudi Arabia.

Figure 3.41: Muslim family showing individual head covering choices

As well, within the same families, different individuals will make different choices in terms of the choice of head coverings, with some choosing not to wear any of the traditional headscarves or coverings.

Schools can expect that students of Muslim background or origins will exhibit a diversity of ethnicities, cultural and regional customs and traditions, and interpretations of modesty dress requirements.

Figure 3.42: Collection of images reflective of Muslim diversity

Accommodation

Although the Islamic dress code is required once a student reaches puberty, many Muslim parents/guardians seek to instill modest habits in their children from a much earlier age. Students who wear Islamic dress may be subject to social pressure and the wearing of a head and/or face covering may lead to teasing by other students. Muslim students should feel supported and there should be a climate of acceptance of Islamic dress. The student body should be aware of the consequences of harassing students because of their religious dress.

It is important to understand that while some non-Muslims may consider Islamic dress to be restrictive, Muslim women who wear it see it as a way to be noted for their character and intellect, rather than for their bodies.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Islam encourages the study of meaningful and useful areas of human knowledge. There are, nevertheless, certain areas or aspects of the school curriculum where families may request accommodation, since they may find them to be in conflict with their religious requirements.

Islam not only recommends sports as a source of enjoyment and recreation, but also advocates for maintaining a healthy lifestyle… Muslim women's roles differ depending on country of origin, social class, religious orientation, culture, gender norms, and family support. All of these factors shape different attitudes and beliefs on athletics and physical education. For some, participating in sports comes without many obstacles, but for others there are many challenges. Muslim women face various hurdles in engaging in sports, including: dress codes; attitudes toward the body related to privacy and modesty; mixed-gender classes; exercise during the month of fasting, Ramadan; limited resources, and restrictions in extra-curricular activities due to cultural and religious reasons….

However there are other countries, such as England, where schools are trying to be more inclusive. For example, track suits are allowed to be worn instead of shorts, single-sex physical education training is increased, more privacy is given to changing and showering arrangements and accommodations are made for Ramadan.

Source: Current Issues in Sports, Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (Wise Muslim Women) website, www.wisemuslimwomen.org/currentissues/sports/. Accessed May 28, 2015.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Beliefs and Practices

In Islam, physical education for both males and females is highly valued.

The primary issues of concern to Muslim parents/guardians with regard to physical education centers on the Islamic dress code and male/female interaction. It is important to preserve and maintain the importance of Islamic dress requirements in physical education.

Attention to modesty in dress can be relevant to girls and boys of all ages. In Islam, modesty often becomes important following puberty, although it is a cultural preference in some communities to introduce stricter modesty in dress with younger children. For example, some parents may prefer that their daughter wear a hijab (headscarf) before puberty, or a girl whose family does not prefer that she wear a hijab may still experience peer pressure to wear one. It is important to note the different interpretations of modesty, which are dependent on an individual's religious and cultural background. However, one common interpretation that may affect involvement in physical activity is for women to cover their hair, arms, and legs, and for men to cover themselves waist to knees. Whatever a youth's preferred expression of modesty, it need not preclude his or her participation in physical activity or physical education. If an organization offers physical activity with a dress code, such as a sports team uniform, that group can adapt the dress code to accommodate both Islamic requirements and safety.

Source: *Improving Muslim Youth Participation in Physical Education and Physical Activity in San Diego County*, published by University of California, San Diego at the Center for Community Health, 2017 https://ucsdcommunityhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Muslim-Practical-Guide-for-Youth-Participation.pdf.

Males

The area from the navel to the knee must be covered. The covering should be loose so as not to define the contours of the body, and should be of an opaque material so that the body cannot be seen through it.

Figure 3.43: Turkey's women's youth soccer team

Females

The whole body, except the face and hands (and feet according to some scholars), should be covered with clothing that is loose and opaque, as described above.

Figure 3.44: Iran's women's youth soccer team

Accommodation

Schools should ensure that Muslim parents/guardians know and understand the Physical Education/Health Education curriculum so that they can come to an informed decision about co-educational activities, as well as about acceptable attire for gym, swimming, and spectator sports. Muslim families should also understand that the alternative to compulsory high school credits is a substitution of credit.

SHOWERS AND CHANGE ROOMS

Beliefs and Practices

Muslims are not permitted to undress or shower in front of members of the same or opposite sex, so communal change rooms and showers are a source of much consternation and distress for many Muslim students and their families. Facilities should be made available for those students who require privacy. (Recent trends in school facility planning include the addition of some private stalls in gym change rooms.) Males should be allowed to wear shorts or appropriate covering in showers if there is no access to private showers. Females should be allowed to wear appropriate covering if there is no access to private showers.

GYM AND SPORTS

For males, a track suit or jogging pants with a T-shirt should be worn. If shorts are worn, they should be of the Bermuda type, reaching the knees.

For females

- For many Muslims, allowing the wearing of tracksuits/leggings or sport pants and long sleeved sports shirts enables them to participate while meeting the modesty requirements of their faith. Some pupils who have reached puberty might consider the tighter fit of Lycra garments inappropriate.

Figure 3.45: A girl passes a ball during a drill at basketball training session in Modadishi, Somalia

- Give all children, regardless of faith, the same choice as equitable practice. For example, allow T-shirts and shorts, or long sleeved T-shirts, sports pants, and tracksuits for all.
- Apply the same flexibility to meet requirements for modesty of dress code for physical education lessons outside.
- Encourage adoption of latest, safest hijabs. Contemporary sports hijabs are being designed in flexible, breathable fabrics. They do not require tying and do not slip or move around. Some schools are encouraging girls to adopt this type of hijab because it is much safer and more comfortable for physical activity than the tied version.
- Be flexible. If girls are unable to adopt the modern sports versions, the wearing of headscarves should be permitted, where requested, provided they are safely secured (tied not pinned), tight-fitting, with ends tucked in and are not a hazard or a distraction. A properly secured hijab should be as safe as properly secured long hair.

Figure 3.46: Women wearing burqinis

SWIMMING

Many contemporary swimsuits will not be acceptable for many Muslims and some members of other faith groups and cultures. As well, some students may have skin allergies or conditions that require the body to be covered to prevent exposure to the sun or for other reasons. A combination of jogging suit pants/spandex leggings with leotard or T-shirt, plus a swimming cap, may be acceptable. Modest swimsuits that are acceptable to students of Muslim or other faiths, or those with medical or other needs are available.

SUPERVISION

For some students, after puberty, there could be requests for supervision by instructors of the same sex, in swimming and other Physical Education activities.

CO-ED CLASSES AND SPECTATOR SPORTS

There may also be concern about members of the opposite sex being spectators of Physical Education activities. Some Muslim families may request same-sex Physical Education classes or exemptions after puberty. See Participation in Daily Activities and Curriculum and Case Scenario 7: Accommodation for Gender Segregation.

HUMAN SEXUALITY—HEALTHY ACTIVE LIVING EDUCATION

Beliefs and Practices

In Islam, the teaching of sexuality is strictly regulated and also predicated upon principles of modesty and issues of separation of males and females. Sex education is grounded in Islamic teachings—just the manner of articulating differs.

Accommodation

Modesty may preclude students in coed classrooms from participating in discussions or asking questions about some aspects of sexuality. The explicit nature of pictures and videos sometimes used in the teaching of health and sexuality units will be considered inappropriate by some parents/guardians, especially if introduced in elementary classes. It is advisable to inform parents/guardians of the content of the curriculum prior to teaching the units.

Where possible, classrooms should be gender-segregated to discuss sensitive issues. Exemptions may need to be provided with alternative delivery of learning outcomes, if requested by parents/guardians.

TRIPS AND CAMPING OUT

Beliefs and Practices

Islam allows the absence of children away from home for legitimate reasons, such as field trips, camping, or track meets. In some cases, there may be requests that a family member accompany females after puberty. This applies to all trips—day, overnight, or camping.

Accommodation

Allow parents/guardians reasonable time to review detailed information about the purpose and nature of trips and camping activities. For overnight and camping excursions, the provision of separate sleeping facilities for males and females should be communicated and explained to parents/guardians. Meals, snacks, and drinks must consider Muslim dietary restrictions (Halal). School-accommodation suggestions for male/female interactions should be followed. Provide alternative activities in the areas of dancing and music, when necessary.

SOCIAL EVENTS AND SCHOOL DANCES

Beliefs and Practices

Social events and school dances constitute an area of great concern to many Muslim families. Gender relations in the Islamic community are predicated upon social distance between unrelated people of the opposite sex.

Accommodation

Consideration should be given to the timing of the event within the school day. Students should be given valuable alternative activities if a dance happens during the school day.

MUSIC

Beliefs and Practices

Figure 3.47: Ramadan drum

Traditionally used during the Holy Month of Ramadan when the faithful fast during the day to wake people up to eat their predawn meal Sohour before morning prayers.

Historically, music and poetry have been a significant part of Muslim cultures around the world. Islamic music or Muslim religious music is sung or played in public services or in private devotions. As Islam has a strong presence in the Middle East, North Africa, Iran, Central Asia, Horn of Africa, and South Asia, Islamic music today is extremely diverse and reflects the influence of the indigenous musical styles of these regions.

Within the Muslim faith, there is a great diversity of views pertaining to the place of music in Islam and what is acceptable. These views are often influenced by local cultures and differences in interpretations of religious texts. At one end of the spectrum, a relatively small number of Muslims believe all forms of music to be haram (forbidden). At the other end of the spectrum, many Muslims enjoy listening to and creating a variety of music. Many Muslims enjoy a cappella or nasheed (religious songs sung without musical accompaniment).

Figure 3.48: Oud

The Oud is a pear-shaped stringed instrument commonly used in Mediterranean and North African regions and countries. It is commonly used in Arabic, Hebrew/Jewish, Greek, Turkish, Byzantine, North Somali, and Middle Eastern music.

Traditionally, within many Muslim communities, music is limited to the human voice and non-tuneable percussion instruments such as drums. Today, depending on the Muslim sect and interpretation, the use of string and wind instruments may be prohibited but percussion instruments are allowed, as well as computerized music forms*. The only sanctioned musical instruments are certain percussion instruments, specifically the baseless drum, which are usually limited to weddings and religious celebrations. Songs and lyrics cannot conflict with Islamic teachings and morals.

* Muslim Council of Britain (2007). "Towards greater understanding: Meeting the needs of Muslim pupils in state schools: Information and guidance for schools". London: MCB. Accessed January 3, 2014 from www.mcb.org.uk/downloads/Schoolinfoguidancev2.pdf and Islamic Social Services Association (2009). "A Teacher's Guide To Working with Muslim Students," Winnipeg: ISSA.

Accommodation

There is a wide spectrum of views related to music within the Muslim faith. Some Muslims believe that all music is haram (not permissible). Traditionally, however, in many Islamic communities, music was Halal (permissible) as long as it was limited to the human voice and non-tuneable percussion instruments such as drums. Yet other Muslims believe that any instrument is lawful as long as it is used for good purposes, such as Nasheeds (moral, religious songs sung by some Muslims). As such, there is a long tradition of instrumental accompaniment to devotional songs in many Muslim communities. A wide variety of instruments may be used, depending on local musical traditions. Finally, some Muslims believe that all music forms are permissible as long as they do not involve sinful actions or lyrics.

Figure 3.49: Singing at the Umayyad Mosque, Damascus

It is important to recognize that there will be some Muslims who find music incompatible with their Islamic orientation. These parents/guardians may wish their children to be exempted from any participation in the music curriculum. See Participation in Daily Activities and Curriculum.

As a general rule, teachers should avoid teaching units that involve instrumentation; rhythm-focused music is an alternative. Singing, clapping, and snapping fingers are Islamically viable alternatives that would allow students to demonstrate rhythm as well as the performing and creating requirements of the curriculum.

Students' use of computerized and/or digital music programs may be permitted, as it involves playing neither wind nor string instruments.

Appropriateness of song lyrics should be taken into account, and religious exemptions provided, when necessary. For example, unaccompanied songs about the purpose of human life, the well-being of society, and the appreciation of nature could be acceptable to families requesting accommodation.

DANCE

Beliefs and Practices

As with music and musical instruments, there are significantly different interpretations, points of view, or doctrinal disputes with respect to dancing in Islam. This split is in part due to ambiguities with respect to Prophet Mohammed's position on music and dancing. One aspect of this split is along sectarian lines with more austere or fundamentalist Islamic sects, such as the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia, generally viewing music and dancing as haram, or forbidden, while more moderate or other believers accept them as halal or permissible. For members of the Sufi Islamic tradition, dance is an essential aspect of their religious practice and they embrace whirling and other trance-like dance movements as a way to grow closer to Allah.

Figure 3.50: Muslim boys dance at function for vocational training centre (Sri Lanka)

Another aspect of the opposing interpretations or views is to some degree based on class, and regional and cultural diversity. To some degree, urban elites have historically avoided dancing, as they view it as being frivolous and beneath their dignity; however, many rural Muslims have developed rich dance traditions.

Until approximately three decades ago, dancing was a common part of rural Muslim weddings around the world. For example

- In Afghanistan, Pashtun men have traditionally circled up to perform the attan.
- Yemeni villagers dance the shabwani using special sticks for the dance.
- Men in the United Arab Emirates dance the razfa, grasping one another's waists to simulate combat.

There are also specific dances for females in the Muslim world, such as the muradah, traditional in Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia and couples' dances, such as the Yemen sharh.

Figure 3.51: The Sufi at Hamad al-Nil tomb: Friday service

Anti-dance sentiment grew within the Muslim diaspora in the 1980s, as Wahhabism expanded out of Saudia Arabia and fundamentalist Muslim sects grew. While most moderate Muslims generally don't object to music and dancing per se, a large portion of Muslim adherents do view sexually suggestive movements and lyrics, and unmarried couples dancing together as haram, or not permissible, because they may lead to behaviours that are disrespectful or un-Islamic.

Figure 3.52: Kalash women dancing during their annual festival of Chelum Josht at Kalasha Dur, a museum for Kalash people and valley

It is important to recognize that such viewpoints on music and dancing are not unique to Muslims as there are Christian and Jewish groups/sects who may share similar views and practices.

For Muslims who view unmarried couples dancing together as haram, they may express concerns about coed dance programs or classes. While dancing is allowed, if it is not considered vulgar, generally these parents and students will request that they do not participate in coed dances or dance pairings of opposite genders. Muslims who view all forms of dancing as haram and consider dancing to be a sin, may request their children be exempted from dance programs, classes, or activities.

Accommodation

Requests from Muslim parents/guardians to withdraw their children from dance activities should be accommodated and an agreement reached about viable alternatives.

VISUAL ARTS

Beliefs and Practices

Certain traditions within Islam do not allow for the depiction, portrayal, or representation of human beings and animals. This is seen as replicating the creation of God and is, therefore, an unacceptable Islamic practice. There is, however, a long and renowned artistic tradition within Islam. Islamic art is characterized by calligraphy and intricate geometric patterns and floral art forms, which have been traditionally used to decorate buildings, rooms, and objects.

Accommodation

Teachers can adjust curriculum and create alternatives for study and practice. For example, assignments in line pattern, colour, and texture can be substituted. In art appreciation, the development of calligraphy, tile design, and architecture in Muslim cultures can be substituted.

Special attention should be paid to assessment and placement practices that require students to draw human and animal pictures. Muslim children may object to or have limited or no experience drawing human and animal pictures.

References and Resources

REFERENCES

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- The Canadian Encyclopedia, Islam: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/islam/
- Diversity in Islam Fact Sheet, Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding: https://tanenbaum.org/religion-at-work-resource/hot-topics/addressing-anti-muslim-sentiment/
- Islam and Islamic Studies Resources: Website of Professor Alan Godlas of the Department of Religion at the University of Georgia: http://islam.uga.edu/
- The Muslim Council of Britain. (2007). Towards Greater Understanding, Meeting the needs of Muslim pupils in state schools: Information and Guidance for Schools: www.mcb.org.uk/downloads/Schoolinfoguidance.pdf

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- Alhijra Islamic School: www.alhijra.ca
- Brandon Islamic Centre
  834–10th Street, Brandon, Manitoba R7A 4H1
  Website: www.brandonislamiccentre.com/
- CCMW—Winnipeg Chapter (Canadian Council of Muslim Women):
  www.ccmw.com
- CMLI (Canadian Muslim Leadership Institute):
  https://cmlichangemakers.wordpress.com/
- Canadian Muslim Women's Institute
  61 Juno Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3A 1T1
  Telephone: 204-943-8539
  Website: www.cmwi.ca
- École Sofiya School: www.ecolesofiyaschool.weebly.com
- Islam Alive (a community service organization)
- Islamic Social Services Association Inc.
  200–72 Princess Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1K2
  Telephone: 204-944-1560
  Fax: 204-944-8712
  Email: info@issacanada.com
  Website: www.issacanada.com/
- Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA): www.miaonline.org
- Manitoba Muslim (community news and resources):
  http://manitobamuslim.com/
- Muslim Association of Canada: www.macnet.ca/English/Pages/Home.aspx
- Yaseen Centre (Shia Muslim Centre): www.yaseencentre.org
- Thompson Branch of the Manitoba Islamic Association:
  www.miaonline.org
- Zubaidah Tallab Foundation (Canadian Muslim Charity)

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

Worldwide it is estimated that there are about eight million adherents to the Jain religion. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, nationally 3,320 respondents and provincially 35 respondents reported identifying with the Jain religion; however, some estimate that there are almost 6,000 Jains in Toronto, alone*.

Figure 3.53: Official symbol of North American Jains

Jainism has its roots in India and is one of the oldest religions in the world. Today, less than one percent of India's 900 million people follow the Jain tradition, but Jains continue to be influential and maintain a distinctive presence in the mosaic of Indian civilization**.

Jainism was founded on the lives and teachings of Jina, men who were thought to have conquered the endless cycles of life and enlightenment. Jains believe that in the current cycle of the universe, 24 great Jinas have reached perfection until this point, and that these 'saints' serve as role models and guides who have demonstrated the pathway to liberation to others. Of these saints, called Tirthankaras, the most important and most recent was Mahavira Naraputta Vardhamana. Mahavira lived in the 6th century B.C.E. and was born into an aristocratic family, but chose to leave home at 30 years of age to live the life of a wandering holy man.

Jainism is a system of thought and a way of life, whose basic beliefs rest upon five "pillars".

- Ahinsa: Non-violence, ranging from an act of simple kindness to a comprehensive outlook of universal fraternity. Intolerance is violence that violates the other person's right.
- Asteya: Non-stealing means not taking anything that does not belong to us, or which is not given to us by its owner.
- Apareigrah: Non-acquisition (non-hoarding) or setting limits to one's desires so that one does not deny others. This means not accumulating wealth, possessions, power, etc., beyond the minimum that is absolutely essential.

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* Toronto's Jains build a 'landmark' temple, The Globe and Mail, Feb. 1, 2013: www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/torontos-jains-build-a-landmark-temple/article8129948/. Accessed June 29, 2015.

** Jainism, Pluralism Project: www.pluralism.org/religion/jainism

- Satya: Truth includes honesty to oneself and to others in all interactions and relationships.
- Brahmacharya: Celibacy or chaste living refers to curtailing sexual activity. The idea is to learn to control our desires and our mind.

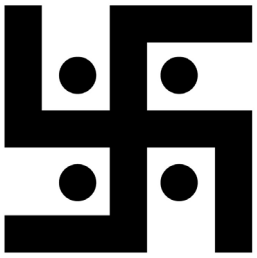

Figure 3.54: Jain Swastika

The **swastika** (aka **gammadion cross** or **manji**) is a common, historical symbol (estimated to be more than 3,000 years old) that has appeared in many cultures and religions throughout the world. The term "Swastika" is Sanskrit in origins and means a hooked cross. Swastikas have been found on artifacts, buildings, and clothing. Today it is still a sacred and auspicious symbol in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. The swastika may also be found in some traditional North American indigenous people's art and icons.

While historically the swastika was largely a positive symbol, today, especially in the Western World, the swastika is mostly associated with the holocaust and the Nazi Party of Germany, which formally adopted it as its symbol in 1920. The symbol was used on the party's flag, badge, and arm band.

For Jains, the swastika represents the four types of birth that an embodied soul might attain until liberation: heavenly, human, animal, or hellish. The four arms of the swastika are intended to remind us that during the cycles of birth and death we may be born into any one of the four.

Sources

- The History of the Swastika, Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007453
- The Nazi Party: The Swastika, Jewish Virtual Library: https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Swastika.html
- Jain Symbols, Ejainism: www.ejainism.com/jainsymbols.html
- JAINA: Federation of Jain associations in North America: www.jaina.org/

JAIN SYMBOLS

The Jain symbol pictured on the previous page is a congregation of various symbols, each having a deeper meaning. This symbol of the North American Jains is an adaptation of the world Jain symbol that was adopted by all sects of Jainism while commemorating the 2500th anniversary of the nirvana of Lord Mahavira. In the North American version of the Jain symbol, the swastika was replaced with the Om symbol due to the sensitivities related to the association of the swastika with Nazism.

The symbol provides an overview of core aspects of Jain teachings.

- The text at the bottom of the symbol states that "All life is bound together by mutual support and interdependence."
- The outline of the symbol defines the universe (Lok) and represents the shape of the universe as defined by ancient texts. Jains do not believe in a creator or God. They believe that the universe was not created by anyone, nor can it be destroyed by anyone. While the universe may change in form, it has always been and will always be present.
- The stylized hand is in a gesture of blessing, but also symbolizes that humankind should stop and think before acting to ensure that all violence is avoided.
- On the palm, the wheel of dharma (Chakra) appears. The wheel has 24 spokes representing the religion preached by the 24 Tirthankars consisting of nonviolence (Ahimsä), compassion, Anekäntvaad, and other virtues. At the center of the wheel the inscription Ahimsä or non-violence appears, which for many is the essence of Jain ethical teachings.
- Just above the hand, where a swastika would commonly appear is the symbol for Om, which means completeness. Om is a symbolic word meaning infinite, the perfect, and the eternal. The very sound of Om is thought to be complete, and represents the wholeness of all things.

- The three dots just below the crescent symbolize the threefold path by which humans may obtain liberation: Samyak Darshan (right faith); Samyak Jnana (right knowledge); and Samyak Charitra (right conduct).
- The half crescent with a dot at the top of the diagram represents the abode of siddhas (liberated souls), which in Jain beliefs is situated at the apex of the universe.

DIVERSITY OF JAINS

There are several branches of Jainism including Digambaras, Shvetambaras, and Sthanakavasis. Jains are divided into two major sects; the Digambara (meaning sky clad) sect and the Shvetambara (meaning white clad) sect.

These two sects agree on the basics of Jainism, but disagree on

- details concerning the life of Mahavira
- the spiritual status of women
- whether monks should wear clothes
- rituals
- which texts should be accepted as scripture

Figure 3.55: Jain Temple, Jaisalmer, Rajasthan

The Digambara sect is more austere, and is closer in its ways to the Jains at the time of Mahavira.

The Sthanakavasi sect is a modern offshoot of the Shvetambara sect of Jains. They are also known as the Dhundhia (searchers).

The Sthanakavasi derive their name from their preference for performing religious duties at a secular place such as a monks' meetinghouse (sthanak) rather than at a temple. They also differ from the Shvetambara sect as they reject image worship and temple rituals. The Sthanakavasi sect was founded in the 1600s by Lava of Surat, a member of an earlier non-image-worshipping sect called the Lumpaka, or Lonka Gaccha. Both groups base their belief on their reading of the Jain canon which makes no mention of idol worship. The Sthanakavasis sect in turn gave rise to another group, the Terapanthi (those who follow the path of the 13 precepts).

Religious Accommodation for Jains

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Beliefs and Practices

Worship prayers are done individually in the mornings (Chaitya Vandan) for about 30 minutes, and in the evening or night (Pratikrakam) for 48 minutes.

Accommodation

Accommodation will be needed for students attending overnight camps. Worship is done after a bath, in clean clothes, at a clean, quiet place on a rug or mat. Teachers should be aware of the length of each prayer time to ensure students have enough time to pray before breakfast and dinner.

Figure 3.56: India, Jain Temple

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Beliefs and Practices

The Jain motto is "live and let live" by being kind to all. This principle extends to all living beings, including humans, animals, and even plants. Hence, Jains are mostly vegetarians. Some do not eat root vegetables and some are vegan or lacto-ovo vegetarians. Meat, fish, eggs, wine, honey, butter, and cheese (unless rennet-free or of a specific variety) are not acceptable. Animal by-products or items with non-vegetarian ingredients are not consumed.

During the holy days of Paryushan (eight days) and Daslakshana (ten days), green leafy vegetables and root vegetables grown under the ground, like potatoes and onions, are also not consumed.

Accommodation

Cafeterias (for students and staff) should be aware of such food restrictions and local nutrition policies may need to be revised. Providing alternative vegetarian food options is suggested. Special care should be taken to keep vegetarian and non-vegetarian food separate, and not to use the same utensils (e.g., spoons, knives) for both. A Jain child or youth who is vegetarian at home may not be able to join school parties if vegetarian food is not made available. Participation in projects related to Easter celebrations or Thanksgiving, where eggs and turkey are important, may be inappropriate for Jain students.

FASTING

Beliefs and Practices

Practicing Jains may observe fasting on full/half moon days, as per the lunar calendar, and during the holy days, including Paryushan and Daslakshan Parva.

Accommodation

Vigorous exercises should be avoided when students are fasting during holy days. In addition to accommodating students, schools can use the opportunity to honour students who are taking on the responsibility of fasting. Staff and student awareness of fasting will help avoid misunderstandings.

HOLY DAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

Jain festivals are sober and pious and are based on the lunar calendar. Dates may not be the same as the Western calendar every year.

Important Holy Days

- Mahavir Janma Kalyanak (Tirthankar Mahavir's Birthday)

  Celebrated as an Ahinsa (Non-Violence) Day—On this day, the community gathers at the temple, and the life and teachings of Mahavir, 24th and Last Tirthankar, are explained in the form of worship, or pooja.
- Paryushan Parva (for Swetambers, eight days) and Daslakshana Parva (for Digambers, ten days)—Each holy day consists of eight days of meditation-penance, when special confession-type services are done. The last day of both festivals is important and observed as the Samvantsari, the Forgiveness Day. Most Jains fast during these holy days.
- Mahavir Nirvan (Salvation) Kalyanak

  Celebrated on the same day as Diwali (the Festival of Lights).

Figure 3.57: Jain Temple, Bombay

Other Holy Days

- Gnan Panchami
  The day of knowledge, observed with pooja (ritualistic offering) to pay homage to Saraswati Devi, the deity of knowledge and learning.
- Guru Purnima: The day of reverence to Guru-Teacher
- Maun-agiyaras: The day of silence

Note: For additional and future approximate dates for these selected holy days, please refer to

- Section 4: Religious Holy Days
- The interfaith calendar: www.interfaith-calendar.org/
- The BBC's Interfaith calendar: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/
- There are calendar apps available for iPhones, iPads, and other smart phones.

Accommodation

Students/staff are to be excused from attendance from school for important holy days. Scheduling of all school and school-related activities should take important holy days into account.

DRESS REQUIREMENTS

Beliefs and Practices

It may be noted that the Tilak or Chandlo (dot/symbol/design) on the forehead after visiting the temple is retained for the day and should be considered acceptable. It is common to wear pendants with religious symbols and designs.

Figure 3.58: Women carrying a Jain Nun down the hill from a temple at Palitana, Shatrunjaya

Lay Jains will demonstrate great respect and veneration to their monks and nuns, often inviting them to provide teachings and hear their confessions and faults.

Accommodation

Consideration to students using Tilak or Chandlo after temple is recommended.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM—PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Beliefs and Practices

It is hoped that schools create an atmosphere of acceptance and ensure that students are not bullied, teased, or harassed due to the non-violence principle of Jain students. Decency in behaviour toward others is an important customary practice observed, especially when selecting physical activities and athletics.

Accommodation

Whenever and wherever possible, boys and girls should sit or stand separately. Specific physical activities where physical contact is likely should be modified or avoided.

Resources and References

- Jainism: Jain Principles, Tradition and Practices, website: www.cs.colostate.edu/~malaiya/jainhlinks.html
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- Aidan Rankin and Atul Keshavji Shah (2008). Social Cohesion: A Jain Perspective. Diverse Ethics Ltd.: www.diverseethics.com/resources
- Toronto's Jains build a 'landmark' temple, The Globe and mail, Feb. 1, 2013: www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/torontos-jains-build-a-landmark-temple/article8129948/

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

In 2011, 1.0% or 329,495 persons who responded to the National Household Survey reported being affiliated with the Jewish religion (Statistics Canada). This included 11,110 Manitobans.

Figure 3.59: Magen David (Shield of David, commonly known as the Star of David) is the symbol most associated with Judaism today.

The Jewish people have a long presence in North America. Jews came to North America, with the exception of New France, from western Europe during the colonial and settlement period. Jews were legally barred from residence in New France where immigration was restricted to Catholics.

Jews settled in the British colonies to the south and after the British domination of New France, they also began to settle in Lower Canada. By 1768, the Jewish community in Montréal had grown to the point where they were able to establish Canada's first synagogue, Shearith Israel. Similarly, Jews participated in the settlement of Upper Canada and, in 1856, established the first synagogue in Toronto*.

Jewish immigration to Canada grew in the late 1800s and early 1900s. At the end of the 19th century, 80% of the world's 10 million Jews lived in the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and German empires. Prejudice, legal discrimination, and violence encouraged the emigration of Jews from those countries. Pogroms—violent mob attacks on Jewish people—began in the Russian Empire in 1881. As a result, Jews fled eastern Europe and went to many places, including Canada.

Jews in Canada faced discrimination and limitations on their freedom as did the European Jews. During the period between World War I and World War II immigration was significantly restricted by the government. In 1930, the Canadian government responded to the unemployment caused by the beginning of the Depression by imposing severe restrictions on immigration. Although the cabinet could, and did, give permission for some immigrants to come to Canada, permission for Jews to enter was almost never given. Religious intolerance was still a common feature of Canadian society and anti-Semitism was strong.

* The Canadian encyclopedia, Jewish Canadians: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/jewish-canadians/

Shortly after World War II, in response to a growing economy in need of workers and a change in policies and attitudes, Canada opened its doors to immigrants. Approximately 40 000 survivors of the Holocaust immigrated to Canada in the late 1940s, In the 1950s, Many Jews fled hostilities in the newly independent countries in North Africa and immigrated to Canada, settling mostly in Montréal, where their French language skills were an asset.

ORIGINS

Judaism is the original of the three Abrahamic faiths, which also includes **Christianity** and **Islam**. Judaism has its origins in the Middle East over 3500 years ago. Jews believe that God chose Abraham to introduce the concept of monotheism, thus establishing an individual covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their families and furthering spiritual teachings that would be later identified with Jewish theology. The nature of this individual covenant was transformed to one of a national orientation, when the Jewish people collectively received the Torah at Mount Sinai. According to Jewish tradition, this occurred after Moses led the people to freedom from slavery in Egypt. (Source: Multifaith Information Manual). Some key aspects of Jewish faith are as follows:

- Jews believe that there is only one God with whom they have a covenant.
- In exchange for all the good that God has done for the Jewish people, Jewish people keep God's laws and try to bring holiness into every aspect of their lives.
- Judaism has a rich history of religious text, but the central and most important religious document is the Torah which contains the Pentateuch (the Five Books of Moses).
- Halakhah is the Jewish law and it derives from three sources: the written Torah (Tanakh), the interpretations/ discussions of the scholars/ rabbis (Gemara), and the oral laws or traditions (Mishnah). Together, Gemara and Mishnah comprise the Talmud.
- Spiritual leaders are called Rabbis.
- Jews worship in Synagogues.

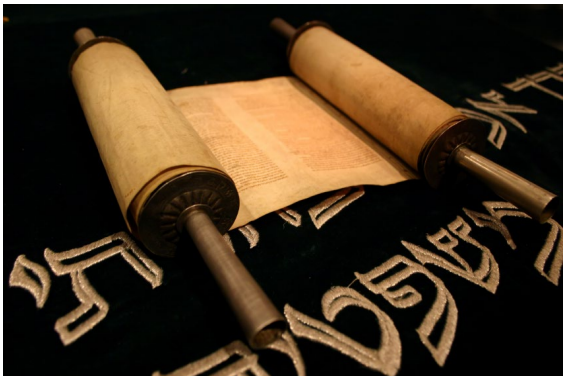

Figure 3.60: The Torah is one of three components of the Tanakh and is Judaism's most important religious text.

DIVERSITY WITHIN JUDAISM

Historically, as well as currently, Judaism encompasses a diversity of cultures, perspectives, and interpretations.

One aspect of this diversity is with respect to ethnicity. Jewish ethnic diversity is reflected in the distinctive communities within the world's ethnically Jewish population. Although considered one single self-identifying ethnicity, there are distinctive ethnic divisions among Jews. This ethnic diversity is the result of migration and geographic branching from an original Israelite population, mixing with local populations, and subsequent independent evolutions.

Figure 3.61: Judaica

Historically, European Jews have been seen as falling into two major groups: the Ashkenazim, or Germanics, and the Sephardim, or Hispanics. A third historic term Mizrahim, or Easterners, has been used to describe other non-European Jewish communities to the east, but the usage of this term has changed over time and geographical contexts. Today Mizrahim, includes both Middle Eastern and North African Jews.

Presently, Ashkenazi Jews are the largest group, and represent an estimated 70% to 80% of all Jews worldwide. As a result of their massive emigration from Europe in search of better opportunities, as well as asylum during periods of war and intense persecution, they became the overwhelming majority of Jews in the 'New World', including the United States, Mexico, Canada, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, and South Africa. In Venezuela and Panama, Sephardim represent the majority of the Jewish communities in these two countries. In France, more recent Sephardic immigration from North Africa and their descendants means that they now outnumber the Ashkenazim.

DIVERSITY OF JUDAISM

In addition to ethnic diversity, the Jewish adherents are divided into several different branches or sects. In North America, the four main branches include the following:

Figure 3.62: Orthodox Jewish family walking

- **Orthodox Judaism** is considered the most traditional form of modern Judaism. Orthodox Jews believe the entire Torah—including Written, the Pentateuch, and Oral, the Talmud) was given by God to Moses at Mount Sinai and remains authoritative for modern life in its entirety and requires adherence to a highly distinctive way of life.
    - **Reconstructionist Judaism** is the most recent branch to emerge from within Judaism. Reconstructionists see Judaism as an evolving religious civilization. They do not believe that God chose the Jewish people or that a personified deity is active in history. This branch rejects the assertion that the Torah was given to Moses at Mount Sinai. For this branch, Judaism is in a continual process of evolution that incorporates the inherited Jewish beliefs and traditions with the needs of the contemporary world.
- **Reform Judaism** may be considered the most 'liberal' form of Judaism. While respecting traditional sources of wisdom and inspiration, it explicitly rejects the divine revelation of the oral law. Reform Jews observe practices such as the dietary laws or Sabbath restrictions on an optional basis.
- **Conservative Judaism** may be seen to take a more centrist position between Orthodox and Reform Judaism. Conservative Judaism developed in the United States at the Jewish Theological Seminary, and interprets the Torah from a different perspective, allowing its adherents to share in Canadian social, cultural, and educational institutions while still professing Jewish identity and religious practice. Zacharias Frankel's (1801–75) teachings form the foundation of Conservative Judaism.
- **Hasidic (or Chasidic) Judaism** emerged in 12th-century Germany. The Hasidim, or pious ones in Hebrew, belong to a special movement within Orthodox Judaism. It is a mystical movement that stresses joy, faith, and ecstatic prayer, accompanied by song and dance. The Hasidic ideal is to live a pious life, in which even the most mundane actions are sanctified. Hasidim live in closely-knit communities (known as courts) that are spiritually centered around a dynastic leader known as a rebbe, who is both a political and religious authority.

- **Haredic Judaism:** Haredim (members of Haredic communities) are one of the most visibly identifiable groups within Judaism today. This is in part due to their distinctive dress and appearance. Haredi men wear black suits and wide-brimmed black hats and haredi women wear long skirts, thick stockings, and head coverings. "Haredi" is a general term, used either as an adjective or a noun, which refers to a broad array of theologically, politically, and socially conservative Orthodox Jews. Sometimes they will be referred to as being ultra-Orthodox.

  What unites haredim is their absolute reverence for the Torah including both the written and oral laws as being the central and determining factor in all aspects of the adherent's life. Haredi Jews usually live in communities that are comprised primarily or exclusively of haredim. To prevent external influences and erosion of values and practices, haredim tend to limit their contact with the non-haredic world, thereby avoiding, as much as possible, interaction with both non-haredi Jews and persons of other faiths.

  The origins of the haredi may be traced to 19th century Europe as a reaction or response to the changes in Jewish societies and communities and the emergence of a more worldly Jewish life and culture. This reaction or backlash to these changes resulted in an extremely conservative, anti-secular, and isolationist expression of Judaism.

  The Holocaust was also a fundamental factor in the development of haredi Judaism. With the destruction of the major European Jewish communities and the deaths of millions of Jews throughout Europe, the ability to live a religious life as practiced in the shtetls (small towns and communities) seemed nearly impossible.

  Consequently, the surviving, highly observant European Jews, inspired by a desire to preserve their lifestyle, moved their communities and learning institutions to mother places, mainly Israel and the United States. While haredi communities were established throughout the world after World War II, with the emergence of the State of Israel, Israel became the center of haredi activity and institutions. In Israel, haredim re-established their yeshivots (religious schools) and their communities.

  Currently, it is estimated that over 800 thousand haredi live in Israel, making it the largest haredi community in the world.

Mysticism in Judaism

Mysticism and mystical experiences have been a part of Judaism dating back to the beginning of the faith. For example, the Torah contains an abundance of stories of mystical experiences, ranging from visitations by angels to prophetic dreams and visions.

The mystical school of thought came to be known as Kabbalah. Generally, Kabbalah refers to Jewish mysticism dating back to the time of the second Temple. For many years, it was a carefully guarded oral tradition; however,

it became systematized and dispersed in the Middle Ages. The focus of the Kabbalah is the simultaneous transcendence and immanence of God, with the latter described in terms of the sefirot, or attributes of God.

Kabbalah is one of the most commonly misrepresented and misunderstood aspects of Judaism. This is mostly due to the fact that the teachings of Kabbalah have been significantly distorted by mystics, occultists, and new age practitioners.

Religious Accommodations for Judaism

PREPARATION FOR THE SABBATH AND HOLY DAYS

Beliefs and Practices

Jewish holy days start the previous evening at dusk and end after sunset. Preparation for the holy day is seen as an integral part of its observance. During Eastern Standard Time, especially during days when the sun sets early, getting ready for Shabbat (the Sabbath) is greatly complicated by the lack of adequate preparation time. Similarly, the holy day of Passover requires immense advance preparation.

Figure 3.63: Brothers lighting the Menorah

Accommodation

Schools should accommodate Jewish students and staff in the scheduling of before-and after-school requirements prior to holy days and the Jewish Sabbath. Note that Jewish holy days begin the prior evening.

SHABBAT (THE SABBATH)

Beliefs and Practices

The Jewish Sabbath begins Friday at dusk and concludes Saturday after nightfall each week. Many activities undertaken on this day accentuate the fact that Shabbat is to be devoted to one's spiritual needs.

Accommodation

Weekend expectations should not include school activities on the Jewish Sabbath (e.g., work expectations or attending music festivals or camps). All the Jewish holy days follow the lunar calendar.

OBSERVATION OF HOLY OR SPECIAL DAYS

Rosh Hashanah (The Jewish New Year)

Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) usually falls in the month of September, but can, on occasion, fall at the beginning of October. This is a major holy day, and most Jewish students and staff will not attend school on these two days.

Accommodation

Staff and students should be accommodated on Rosh Hashanah.

Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement)

Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year and is spent fasting and immersed in prayer. Although girls from the age of 12 and boys from the age of 13 are required to fast, children begin at a younger age to practice fasting for part of Yom Kippur. This is a major holy day, and most Jewish students and staff will not attend school on this day.

Accommodation

Staff and students should be accommodated on Yom Kippur.

Figure 3.64: Synagogue and Congregation Emmanu-el, Victoria, B.C.
Built in 1863,it is the oldest surviving synagogue in Canada. The synagogue is still in use today. The building is a National Historic Site of Canada.

Passover (The Season of Our Freedom)

Passover lasts for eight days and recalls the miraculous exodus of Israel from slavery in Egypt. It is also a commemoration of the birth of the Jewish people as a separate nation distinct from the other nations of the world. All leaven products and by-products are forbidden for the duration of this holiday, and many Jews use special utensils and cookware during Passover.

Accommodation

Most Jews will not be in school on the first day of Passover, and observant Jews will also be absent on the second and last two days of Passover. School staff should be aware that many Jews will bring their own food for snack time or school events.

Other Jewish Holy Days

The following holy days may also require accommodation for some students and staff:

Jewish Holy Days	
Sukkoth (Tabernacles)	Sukkoth comes five days after Yom Kippur and commemorates how Jews lived in temporary dwellings during the 40 years in the desert after leaving Egypt. Jews celebrate this holy day by leaving the comfortable confines of their homes and dwelling in makeshift, temporary structures called Sukkoth (Tabernacles).
Shimini Atzeret (The Eighth Day of Solemn Assembly) and Simchat Torah	The holiday Shemini Atzeret is celebrated after the seventh day of Sukkot. Shemini Atzeret literally means "the assembly of the eighth (day)." It is a seperate, yet linked, holy day devoted to the spiritual aspects of the festival of Sukkot. Simchat Torah (The Joy of Receiving the Torah) celebrates the joy of receiving the Torah from God. On this day, the annual cycle of weekly Torah readings is completed and begun again to symbolize the unending cycle of Torah study. In Israel, these two holidays are combined and celebrated on the same day. Outside of Israel, they are two consecutive holidays that follow the seven days of Sukkot.
Shavuot (The Season of the Giving of the Torah)	This holiday commemorates the receiving of the Torah from God at Mount Sinai.
Tisha B'Av	On this day, Jews remember the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, as well as other tragedies which have befallen the Jewish people. Observant Jews will fast on this day.

Accommodation

Observant staff and students may need to be accommodated on Sukkoth, Shimini Atzeret, Simchat Torah, Shavuot, and Tisha B'Av.

The calendar that follows provides information regarding the important Jewish holy days excerpted from the Interfaith Calendar of Rockwood School District, Eureka, Montana, at www.rockwood.k12.mo.us/calendar/201213%20Calendars/Interfaith%20calendar.pdf.

Figure 3.65: Seder plate

Calendar of Jewish Holy Days					
Holiday	2018–2019	2019–2020	2020–2021	2021–2022	2022–2023
Rosh Hashana (Jewish New Year)	September 10–11, 2018	September 30–31, 2019	September 19–20, 2020	September 7–8, 2021	September 26–27, 2022
Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)	September 19, 2018	October 9, 2019	September 28, 2020	September 16, 2021	October 5, 2022
Hanukkah/ Chanukah	December 3–10, 2018	December 23–30, 2019	December 11–18, 2020	November 29 –December 6, 2021	December 19–26, 2022
Pesach (Passover)	April 20–27, 2019	April 9–16, 2020	March 28–April 4, 2021	April 16–23, 2022	April 6–13, 2023

Note that in the Jewish calendar, a holiday begins at sunset the day before the first date listed and ends at sunset the last day listed.

Note: For additional and future approximate dates for these selected holy days, refer to

- Hebcal Jewish Calendar (Converter and Shabbat Times): https://www.hebcal.com/
- Jewish Virtual Library, Dates of Upcoming Holidays: www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/dates-of-upcoming-holidays
- Havard Divinity School, Interfaith Calendar: www.interfaith-calendar.org/
- Also, there are calendar apps available for Smart Phones, tablets, iPhones, and iPads.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Beliefs and Practices

The Hebrew word kosher means that a given food is permitted and acceptable. All fresh fruits and vegetables are kosher. The Jewish dietary regulations begin when dealing with foods that derive from animals, fish, or fowl.

- Animals: Any mammal with split hoofs that chews its cud is kosher. Pigs are not kosher.
- Fish/Seafood: Fish that have fins and scales are kosher. Catfish and seafood such as lobster, shrimp, crab, and squid as well as amphibians (e.g., frogs, turtles) are not kosher.
- Fowl: Chicken, goose, and duck are kosher. Fowl specifically listed in the Torah are not kosher.
- Separation of Dairy and Meat: It is not permitted to mix dairy with meat foods, to cook milk and meat together, or to serve them together at the same time. Kosher rules are complex, as they also involve a specific approach to food preparation and processing.

Accommodation

Staff and students who observe the Jewish dietary laws and only eat food certified as kosher will not consume food prepared in the absence of rabbinic supervision. Local nutrition policies may need to reflect these dietary accommodations. If possible, teachers or schools may wish to make available packaged kosher snacks that have reliable certification markings visible on the item's packaging. Teachers or schools may wish to adjust their snack, pizza/hot dog days, fun fair, or lunch programs to accommodate students who observe the Jewish dietary laws. The following general chart outlines some of the foods that may be problematic.

Jewish Dietary Accommodation			
Food	Concern	Alternative	Availability
Crackers	May be made with animal shortening (lard)	Kosher food products require rabbinic certification to be considered kosher. This is determined by the presence of one of these symbols on the product label: COR, MK, U.	Many supermarkets carry Kosher products.
Cookies	May be made with animal shortening (lard)	Kosher food products require rabbinic certification to be considered kosher. This is determined by the presence of one of these symbols on the product label: COR, MK, U.	Many supermarkets carry Kosher products.
Cheese	Many cheeses are made with rennet and pepsin which are animal by-products	Cheeses made with vegetarian rennet or kosher cheeses are acceptable.	Supermarkets now carry acceptable cheeses which are also available through special order.
Pizza	May be made with cheeses that were made with rennet and pepsin which are animal by-products	Cheeses made with vegetarian rennet or kosher cheeses are acceptable.	Some supermarkets and Kosher restaurants carry acceptable products.
Beef and Poultry	Beef and poultry must be slaughtered in a certain way	Kosher meat, veggie hot dogs, and other vegetarian substitutes are acceptable.	Alternatives are available at all supermarkets.
Pork or Pork By-Products	Pork is forbidden. Some foods may be made with pork by-products (e.g., hamburgers, wieners).	No pork products are acceptable.	

Jewish Dietary Accommodation			
Combination of Milk and Meat Products	Milk and meat products are not eaten together.	Provide adequate alternatives to milk beverages. Do not automatically add cheese to hamburger and meat to pizza.	
Gelatin-Based Desserts and Candies	Many candies and desserts are made with gelatin which is an animal by-product (e.g., Jell-O, wine gums, Starbursts, gummy bears, and gumdrops).	Choose other candies and desserts.	Alternatives are available at all supermarkets.

Figure 3.66: Kosher symbols card from COR (Kashruth Council of Canada)

MINOR FAST DAYS

There are a number of "minor" fast days on the Jewish calendar, where one can attend school and be involved in normal activities. These fasts begin at sunrise and end at nightfall.

Accommodation

School administration and staff should be mindful of the fact that some Jewish students and staff may be experiencing the hardships associated with fasting.

Minor fast days include the following:

- 10th of Tevet
- 17th of Tammuz
- 3rd of Tishrei (The Fast of Gedaliah)
- 13th of Adar
- 14th of Nisan (The Fast of the Firstborn)

The following Jewish holy days do not require accommodation:

- Hanukkah/Chanukah (The Festival of Dedication or Festival of Lights)

  This commemoration goes back to the time when the Greek-Syrians, who ruled over the entire Middle East region, sought to prevent the Jews from observing their religion. In a series of battles led by Judah the Maccabee and his brothers, the Jews emerged victorious and re-established Jewish observance in the land.

Figure 3.67: Last night of Chanukah

- Purim (The Feast of Lots) commemorates the salvation of the Jewish people who lived in the Persian Empire from the anti-Semitic prime minister Haman, who plotted to annihilate the Jewish population.
- Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) is a time of communal reflection, sadness, and loss as the six million Jews who were murdered by Hitler and the Nazis between 1939 and 1945.
- Yom HaAtzmaut (Israeli Independence Day) celebrates the rebirth of the State of Israel in 1948.

DAILY PRAYER

Beliefs and Practices

Jews pray three times daily—in the evening, the morning, and the afternoon. Many Jews try to pray in a minyan, which is a public quorum that enables the saying of specific prayers. Morning prayers may be said from the time the sun comes up until approximately mid-morning. Afternoon prayers are said from shortly after midday until the sun sets.

Accommodation

When requested, schools should accommodate students and staff before and after school time so that they may attend morning and afternoon services, especially during November, December, and January, when there are fewer hours of daylight.

BEREAVEMENT RITUALS

Beliefs and Practices

Jewish law formally considers the bereaved to be those who have lost any of the following close relatives: father, mother, spouse, son, daughter, brother, sister. During the seven days following the burial, the bereaved sits Shiva in the home of the deceased. During this time, the mourner emerges into a new frame of mind, talks about his or her loss, and accepts comfort from friends. The mourner will not be in school, and will welcome visitors to the Shiva house. For 11 months from the death of a close relative, the bereaved is obligated to recite the Kaddish prayer in memory of the departed. Kaddish is said each morning and evening in a quorum of ten persons and is part of the daily prayer obligation.

Accommodation

Students who are sitting Shiva should be accommodated.

GENDER RELATIONS

Beliefs and Practices

Jewish tradition and custom prohibit direct physical contact between men and women who are not related. How this is interpreted will depend on one's level of religious observance. Formal contact, such as a handshake, may be seen by some as a form of greeting; however, others may include a handshake in the prohibition of physical contact.

Accommodation

It is important to be aware that some Jews will observe this tradition. It would be best to allow the individual in question to be the one to determine his or her degree of comfort with gender-related issues.

DRESS REQUIREMENTS

Beliefs and Practices

Tzniut is a Judaic term for the character traits of modesty and humility as well as a group of Jewish laws that concern human conduct in general, especially interaction between genders. Tzniut has the greatest influence within Orthodox Judaism. These concepts are not unique to Judaism, as there are similar concepts and requirements within Islam, Christianity, and other faith groups and traditions.

The term is frequently used with regard to the rules of dress for women, but it applies to all members of the community. Jewish tradition requires men and women to dress modestly. This can be interpreted in different ways, depending on one's level of observance and one's faith community. For those who are very observant, males will wear only long pants when in public, and females will only wear clothing that doesn't reveal the shape of their bodies.

Orthodox Judaism interpretations of Tzniut require both men and women substantially cover their bodies. Customarily, this includes covering the elbows and knees.

Furthermore, Jewish law requires married women to cover their hair. The nature and form of the hair coverings vary across different Jewish groups and cultural communities. Modern Orthodox Jewish women usually use hats, berets, baseball caps, bandanas, or scarves tied in a number of ways to accomplish the goal, depending on how casually they are dressed. Some modern Orthodox women cover their hair with wigs.

According to Jewish tradition, men must cover their heads regardless of whether they are married or not. The most common head covering for males is the *kippah* (Hebrew for skull cap), which is also known as *yarmulke* in Yiddish. Orthodox men will tend to wear a head covering at almost all times. Non-Orthodox men may choose to cover their heads when performing a religious act or when eating.

The style of dress involved also depends on cultural considerations that are distinct from religious requirements. For example, members of Conservative and Reform synagogues may follow dress codes that generally range from 'business' casual to informal. In contrast, many Haredi and Hassidic communities have specific customs and styles of dress which are distinctive and help identify members of their communities. These dress codes and styles are seen as customs of their communities rather than a general religious requirement expected of all observant Jews.

Some additional examples of the diversity of dress codes and styles within the Jewish communities follow:

- In Haredi communities, men will wear long pants and mostly long-sleeved shirts. Haredi women wear blouses covering the elbow and collarbone, and skirts that cover the knees while standing and sitting. The ideal sleeve and skirt length varies by community. Some women try not to follow fashion, while others wear fashionable but modest clothing.
- Contemporary Orthodox women also usually attend to tzniut and dress in a manner which would be considered modest compared to the style of dress of contemporary urban societies. However, their communal definition does not necessarily require the covering of their elbows, collarbones, or knees, and may allow for wearing pants. Contemporary Orthodox men's dress is often indistinguishable from those of non-Orthodox peers.
- Conservative Judaism generally requires modest dress, although this requirement may often not be observed on a daily basis, but is more likely to be adhered to when when members attend synagogue.
- Reform Judaism has no religious dress requirements.

Figure 3.68: Orthodox girl, Jerusalem

Accommodation

Schools should be sensitive to the issue of accommodating the need for some students to wear traditional religious clothing during physical education classes or activities. There may be cases that will necessitate an exemption from required gym wear that does not meet traditional religious dress codes. Schools should create an atmosphere of tolerance and ensure that students are not teased or harassed due to this visible sign of their beliefs. Jewish students should feel supported and there should be a climate of acceptance of their dress. The student body should be aware of the consequences of harassing students because of their religious dress.

CURRICULUM CONCERNS

Music

- School choirs are sometimes taught classical works that come from Christian prayer services.
- Some Orthodox Jews forbid males from listening to a female singing as part of the modesty rules.

Accommodation

- School staff should be sensitive to the religious roots of some music and accommodate students if they express a concern in this area.
- Boys may need to be excused from listening to music performed by women (live and/or recorded).
- Regarding concerns about other areas of the curriculum, see Participation in Daily Activities and Curriculum.

Resources and References

- BBC Religion, Judaism: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/
- Jewish federation of Winnipeg, website: www.jewishwinnipeg.org
- Jewish Virtual Library, website: www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/index.html
- Religious Tolerance, Judaism: www.religioustolerance.org/judaism.htm
- The Canadian Encyclopedia, Judaism: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/judaism/
- The Canadian encyclopedia, Jewish Canadians: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/jewish-canadians/

SYNAGOGUES

- Aish Hatorah Winnipeg Learning Centre
- Herzlia—Adas Yeshurun Synagogue: www.ou.org/network/new/can-herzlia.htm
- Chabad-Lubavitch of Winnipeg: www.chabadwinnipeg.org/
- Congregation Shaarey Zedek: www.shaareyzedek.mb.ca/
- Temple Shalom: www.templeshalomwinnipeg.ca/

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

According to the 2011 National Household Survey, 1,055 Canadians, including 20 Manitobans reported being Rastafari (Statistics Canada).

Figure 3.69: Ethiopian flag from 1897 to 1974 with the Lion of Judah, popular with Rastafaris

Rastafari is a relatively young, Africa-centred religion which emerged in Jamaica in the 1930s, following the coronation of Haile Selassie I as King of Ethiopia in 1930. For Rastafarians, Haile Selassie is God. Rastafarian theology draws on the ideas of Marcus Garvey, a political activist who wanted to improve the status of fellow blacks.

Today, worldwide, there are approximately one million adherents of Rastafari as a faith. Many more have been influenced by the faith and its culture.

Followers of Rastafari are known by a variety of names: Rastafarians, Rastas, Sufferers, Locksmen, Dreads, or Dreadlocks.

While Rastafari is a new faith, some of their practices and principles are as ancient as the way of the Nazarite of Biblical times. Rastafari beliefs are based on the Bible and on many African beliefs and traditions. They embrace the divinity of their ancestors and owe their allegiance to the throne of David, of the line of Solomon, of which throne the 225th king was Haile Selassie 1st. Rastafari do not believe in nationalism or patriotism.

Many Rastafari practices are also embedded within the tradition of Ethiopian Orthodoxy. African peoples in the New World have historically traced memories of an African homeland through the trauma of slavery and through ideologies of struggle and resistance. The Rastafari vision of an ancestral homeland centres on Ethiopia and reflects a complex of ideas and symbols known as Ethiopianism.

The belief in Ethiopia as the promised land emanates from references in the Bible to African peoples as Ethiopians and, for over three centuries, it has expressed the political, cultural, and spiritual aspirations of Africans in the Caribbean and North America.

Key aspects of Rastafarian beliefs and practices include

- A faith and culture based, among other beliefs, on an Africentric reading of the Bible and communal values
- The belief that blacks are the chosen people of God, but that through colonisation and the slave trade their role has been suppressed; therefore, the repatriation of blacks to their homeland, Africa, and the reinstatement of blacks' position in society is central to the faith
- Religious ceremonies are intended to allow adherents to reach a state of heightened spirituality and consist of chanting, drumming, and meditating
- The ritual inhalation of the holy herb marijuana to increase the spiritual awareness of adherents
- I-tal (strict dietary laws) which requires that they eat clean and natural produce, such as fruit and vegetables, refrain from eating meat, especially pork, and abstain from alcohol
- A number of Old Testament Laws
- A separate code of religious practice for women: traditionally women are known as Queens but were regarded as subordinate to men (While early Rastafarians probably strictly followed these rules, women tend to have more freedom in modern Rastafarian society.)
- A belief in reincarnation and the eternity of life
- A rule forbidding them to cut their hair; instead, they grow it and twist it into dreadlocks
- Opposition to abortion and contraception

RASTAFARI DIVERSITY

Figure 3.70: Rastafari

The term "Mansions of Rastafari" is used to refer for the various groups or branches of the Rastafari faith/ movement. These include groups such as Bobo Ashanti, the Niyabinghi, the Twelve Tribes of Israel, and several smaller groups, including African Unity, Covenant Rastafari, Messianic Dreads, and the Selassian Church. The use of 'Mansion' derives from a reference in the Bible, "In my Father's house are many mansions."

Many Rastas do not have a deep affiliation with these Mansions or may not be affiliated with any. This is in keeping with the principle of freedom of conscience, a general distrust of institutionalism shared by many, and the teachings of Haile Selassie I as Emperor that "faith is private" and a direct

relationship requiring no intermediary. The Mansions reflect a diversity of beliefs and practices, holding different perspectives on the Bible, dreadlocks diet, and ganja (marijuana).

OBSERVATION OF HOLY DAYS

Many of the holy days and festivals reflect the reverence shown to Haile Selassie and underline the importance and inspiration of Ethiopia in the development of Rastafarianism. Many Rastafari celebrations of faith, more particularly for the Nyahbinghi tradition (sect), happen over a period of seven days and seven nights. There are Rastafarians who observe the calendar of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The following is a list of holy or special days that are important to Rastafari internationally.

- Ethiopian Christmas
- Fasika, Celebrating the Passover
- Groundation Day
- African Liberation Day
- June 11: Battle of Adowa
- Constitution Day
- July 23: Haile Selassie's Birthday
- August 1: Emancipation Day
- August 17: Marcus Garvey's Birthday
- September 11: Ethiopian New Year
- November 2: Coronation Day

Rastafari also honour and celebrate other holidays acknowledged and celebrated by the African Diaspora.

> **Note:** For additional information and dates for these selected holy days, please refer to
>
> - The interfaith calendar: www.interfaith-calendar.org/

OPENING AND CLOSING EXERCISES

Beliefs and Practices

Rastafari do not embrace nationalism or patriotism. There may be requests for exemptions from having to sing "O Canada" or "God Save the Queen."

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Beliefs and Practices

Ital or I-tal is the name for the dietary requirements or practices of many in the Rastafari faith/movement. While it is compulsory in the Nyabinghi mansion it is not in the Twelve Tribes of Israel or Remi mansions. The expression of Ital diet varies widely from Rasta to Rasta, and there are few universal "rules" of Ital living; however, in spite of different interpretations of ital regarding specific foods, the general principle is that food should be natural, or pure, and from the Earth. Rastafari thus abstain from eating food which has been modified with chemicals or contains artificial additives (e.g., colour, flavourings, and preservatives). Some also avoid added salt in foods, especially salt with the artificial addition of iodine, while others use pure sea or kosher salt. Early adherents adopted their dietary laws based on their interpretation of several books of the Bible. Nonetheless, observing a vegetarian diet is one of the practices early Rastafari adopted from the Indian Hindu indentured servants living in Jamaica. Leonard Howell, an influential early leader, although not of Indian descent, was fascinated with Hindu practices and was a major influence in promoting a plant-based diet in the Rastafari community of Pinnacle.

Generally, those Rastafari who do eat beef, do not eat pork or their derivatives. Fish is considered Ital food, but lobster, crab, and shrimp are not allowed. The fish allowed is small (no more than 12 inches long). Tea and herbal drinks are permitted. Coffee, milk, soft drinks, and liquor are considered unnatural and are not allowed.

Rastafari require a supportive and spiritually comfortable environment for eating.

Accommodation

Many Rastafari parents/guardians are concerned that alternative diets, such as theirs, are not traditionally reflected in school cafeteria menus, or breakfast or lunch programs. Strict vegetarian options are recommended. Rastafari students' dietary needs should be considered when planning in-school or out-of-school activities, celebrations, and gatherings. Caterers need to ensure appropriate dietary alternatives. Local nutrition policies may need to be revised to accommodate dietary restrictions based on religious diversity.

DRESS

Beliefs and Practices

Contemporary Rastafari wear the typical modern clothing of the countries they live in. Since Rastafari is a worldwide religion, this means that daily dress can be varied. Rastafari focus on modesty and cleanliness as opposed to clothing for fashion. Choices of adornment show a respect for that which is natural, simple, and practical. Traditionally, Rastafari women are expected to dress modestly. They also cover their hair when praying or worshipping.

Rastafari believe that hair should be worn naturally. They point to Biblical verses prohibiting the cutting of hair, and believe that combing and styling hair are signs of vanity. This usually means that they wear their hair in dreadlocks. The tam, which is a large knitted or crocheted woolen cap, is used to help contain the dreadlocks. Tams can be any colour, but are often done in broad stripes of yellow, green, and gold.

Figure 3.71: Rastafari youth

The colours represent the rainbow land of Ethiopia and throne of God from the Scriptures and are important symbolic colours. These colours are an important part of Rastafarian attire and are seen on everything from hats to shirts: they are the colours of the Ethiopian flag. The Lion of Judah, which is a feature of the Ethiopian flag, is another common motif on printed clothing and jewelry.

Rastafari do not object to their children wearing a school-mandated uniform as long as the uniform in its physical and or metaphysical functioning does not offend or impinge on the rights and principles of the faith.

Rastafari should be permitted the right to cultural norms of attire. Tokens, emblems, buttons, badges, and shawls depicting symbolic colours of relevance to the culture should be permitted.

Accommodation

Schools with no-hat policies should be aware of Rastafari needs to cover dreadlocks. A letter from parents/guardians regarding this need for accommodation is advisable to avoid misunderstandings.

SCHOOL CURRICULUM: FAMILY STUDIES

Beliefs and Practices

When the body bleeds, it is going through a stage of purification and should be in a state of withdrawal. Females do not worship during menstruation. They also abstain from cooking during menstruation as well.

Accommodation

Rastafari females may request to be allowed to refrain from cooking activities in Family Studies during their menstrual period.

References and Resources

- BBC Website on Religion, Rastafari: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/rastafari/
- Church of Haile Selassie I: http://himchurch.org/
- Encounter World religions, Rastafari Overview: www.worldreligions.ca/
- Leahcim Tufani Semaj. (1980) Rastafari: From Religion to Social Theory, Caribbean Quarterly , Vol. 26, No. 4, RASTAFARI (December 1980), pp. 22-31 Published by: University of the West Indies and Caribbean Quarterly (Stable URL: www.jstor.org/stable/40795019)
- To Zion ORG: www.tozion.org/Startpage.html

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

The first Sikhs came to Canada in the early 1900s. The first immigrants then arrived in 1904 in British Columbia. By the time south Asian immigration was banned in Canada in 1908, over 5,000 South Asians, more than 90 per cent of them Sikhs, had immigrated to British Columbia.

In the 2011 National Household Survey, 454,000 respondents identified with the Sikh religion, including 10,195 respondents in Manitoba.

Figure 3.72: Khanda or Sikh Coat of Arms
The Khanda is composed of three symbolic items: a double-edged sword at the center, also called a Khanda, a Chakkar (Circle), and two Kirpans (single-edged swords).

Despite severe racial discrimination, Sikhs quickly established religious institutions in British Columbia. For example, the Vancouver Khalsa Diwan Society was created in 1906 and in 1908 the Society built their first permanent temple or gurdwara*. In 2011, about 454,000 Canadians reported they were affiliated with the Sikh religion, which represents 1.4% of the total Canadian population (Statistics Canada, National Household Survey 2011). In the same survey, 10,195 Manitobans reported identifying with Sikhism.

The Sikh religion was founded by Guru Nanak, who was born in 1469. Guru Nanak's message was one of universal love, peace, equality, respect, and understanding. Guru Nanak was followed by several leaders. Eventually, leadership of this new religion was passed on to nine successive gurus. Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th and final living guru, died in 1708.

During his lifetime, Guru Gobind Singh established the Khalsa order (meaning "The Pure") of soldier-saints. The Khalsa are committed to upholding the highest Sikh virtues: dedication and social consciousness. Women and men may be initiated or accepted into the Khalsa order. Traditionally, when a Sikh male was being initiated into the Khalsa he adopted the surname Singh meaning "Lion" and when a female was being initiated into the Khalsa she adopted the name Kaur meaning "Princess". By adopting the same last name, the equality of all Sikh males and females was reinforced. (Singh and Kaur may also be used as middle names and they are names used by many non-Sikhs.)

* The Canadian Encyclopedia, Sikhism, www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/sikhism/.

Initiated Sikhs are commonly referred to as Amritdhari (having taken Amrit). The Khalsa are men and women who have undergone the Sikh initiation ceremony, and who are expected to strictly follow the Sikh Code of Conduct and Conventions and wear the prescribed five physical articles of the faith. Initiation into Khalsa is a very personal decision and can happen at any age, depending on the individual's readiness and knowledge of the faith. The family plays an important part in the decision, and family members may be initiated at different ages.

Sikhs believe that humans can possess a direct linkage with God, with no intermediaries being necessary. For this reason, no formal priesthood or clergy exists within Sikhism; however, they do have individuals who perform the daily service at the Sikh places of worship called the granthi, custodians of the Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh holy scripture). Any Sikh is free to read the Guru Granth Sahib in the Gurdwara or in their home.

Sikhs come together for congregational worship in a Gurdwara, a place for communal worship and other activities. The first Gurdwara in the world was built by Guru Nanak in 1521-2 at Kartarpur. Today, there are over 60 Gurdwaras throughout Canada.

In Punjabi, the literal meaning of the word Gurdwara is 'the residence of the Guru', or 'the door that leads to the Guru'. The Guru does not refer to a person but to the book of Sikh scriptures called the Guru Granth Sahib In a modern Gurdwara, it is the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib that gives the Gurdwara its religious status, so any building containing the scriptures is a Gurdwara.

Figure 3.73: Communal meal at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, New Delhi, India

Inside a Gurdwara, there are no idols, statues, or religious pictures. This reflects the fact that Sikhs worship only God, and they regard God as having no physical form. Other ritualistic devices such as candles, incense, or bells are also absent.

Although a Gurdwara may be called the residence of the Guru (meaning the residence of God), Sikhs believe that God is present everywhere.

Before the time of Guru Arjan Dev, the place of Sikh religious activities was known as a Dharamsala, which means place of faith.

THE PURPOSE OF A GURDWARA

A Gurdwara is

- a place to learn spiritual wisdom
- a place for religious ceremonies
- a place where children learn the Sikh faith, ethics, customs, traditions, and texts
- a community centre which offers food, shelter, and companionship to those who need it

Figure 3.74: Interior of Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha in Southall Green London, UK

Sikhs believe in equality of humankind and respect for all faiths. Therefore, people of all religions are welcome to the Gurdwara. A free community kitchen can be found at every Gurdwara, which serves meals to all people, regardless of their faith.

DIVERSITY WITHIN SIKHISM

Mainstream Sikhs follow the Sikh code of conduct based on the hukam of Tenth Guru Gobind Singh as outlined by Rahit Maryada published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGCP). There are, however, a number of sects which may also be considered as being part of Sikhism. Members of these sects may ascribe to supplemental teachings of their founder, they may be thought of as being branches of a single tree; all are recognized as part of the Sikh Panth, as they adhere to the fundamentals and core criteria of Sikhism.

OBSERVATION OF HOLY DAYS

Beliefs and Practices

Generally, Sikhs meet in congregation for prayer and the sharing of a communal meal on all holy days; however, in Canada, Sikh families and students may be more selective and may be absent from school or work on the following days:

Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh who was the tenth and last of the living gurus of the Sikhs. After his death, "guruship" was transferred to the eternal guru, the Sikh holy scripture, Guru Granth Sahib. This day generally occurs in early January.

Vaisakhi Day celebrates the founding of the Khalsa order (Sikh religion) in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh Ji. For this reason, many Sikhs choose to be initiated into the Khalsa order on this day. This day is generally either April 13 or 14.

Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji who was the founder of the Sikh faith. This day generally occurs in November.

Maghi commemorates the battle fought on behalf of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, in which 40 Sikhs, led by a women devotee, Mai Bhago, died.

Figure 3.75: Golden Temple Amritsar

The holiest Sikh shrine is the Golden Temple, known as Sri Darbar Sahib, or "Temple of God."

Hola Mohalla takes place at the end of winter and welcomes the new season with sports and athletic activities.

Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji: Guru Arjan Dev Ji was the fifth guru. He sacrificed his life for freedom of religious expression. Guru Arjan Dev Ji's contributions to the faith included building the Golden Temple at Amritsar, India and compiling the Adi Granth, the Sikh scriptures. The Golden Temple is the heart of Sikhism, similar to the Vatican for Roman Catholics and Mecca for Muslims.

Parkash celebrates the introduction of the Adi Granth to the Golden Temple.

Investiture of Guru Granth Sahib (Eternal) is a celebration of the transfer of the guruship from ten living gurus to the eternal guru, the Sikh holy book, Guru Granth Sahib.

Bandi Chhor Divas is a celebration of the release of the sixth guru, Guru Hargobind Ji, and 52 other religious prisoners of various faiths from jail, and the guru's subsequent journey to the holy city of Amritsar. This day coincides with the Hindu festival of Diwali.

Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji: Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji protested against the forced conversion of Hindus to another faith and sacrificed his life for freedom of religious expression and liberty.

SIKH CALENDAR

For most of its history, Sikhism has followed the traditional Vikrami (or Bikrami) calendar, shared by Sikhs and Hindus in North India, to set the date of its festivals. The Nanakshahi Calendar was developed by a Canadian Sikh, Pal Singh Purewal, a retired computer engineer. He began working on the calendar in the 1960s. Purewal believed that having a unique calendar was

vital for the integrity of the Sikh religion. The adoption of the new calendar has not been universal and has been controversial to some degree.

Note: For additional information and specific dates for these selected holy days, please refer to

- Sikh Calendar: www.sikhs.org/dates.htm
- Sikh Gurpurab Calendar: www.sikhnet.com/pages/sikh-gurpurab-calendar
- The interfaith calendar: www.interfaith-calendar.org/

Accommodation

Schools and classrooms with Sikh students should consider and take into account Sikh holy days when planning school and school-related activities. In the case of a conflict with assignments, examinations, and major assessments, Sikh students should be accommodated.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Beliefs and Practices

Sikh dietary practices have, like all religious groups, been influenced by their social and geographic contexts. As a result of the influence of living in the Indian subcontinent social environment, some Sikhs will not eat beef, others will not eat pork, and others will be vegetarians. Because of such diversity of practice and sensitivities, all food served in a Gurdwara is strictly lacto-vegetarian; however, Sikhs are not required to be vegetarians.

Although there is some difference of interpretation, the general consensus is that Sikhs are free to choose whether to adopt a meat-free diet or not. Sikhs, once they become Amritdhari (have been initiated) via the Amrit Sanskar (initiation ceremony), are forbidden from eating Kutha or ritually-slaughtered meats (such as Halal and Kosher meats) because it transgresses one of the four restrictions in the Sikh Code of Conduct.

Other dietary Sikh practices include Sarbloh Bibek, which translates literally to "all-iron lifestyle," and consists of the use of only iron utensils, strictly eating food prepared by the Khalsa (Sikh community), and abstaining from drinking alcohol.

Fasting in Sikhism, except for medical reasons, is not required or part of traditional practice. Moderation in eating is encouraged.

Accommodation

Generally, students will not require accommodation, with exception of those who do not eat beef or pork. Also, in the event that foods served at school events have hallal or kosher meats as an ingredient, these should be clearly marked.

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Beliefs and Practices

Sikh worship may be public or private.

Figure 3.76: Sikh boy wearing a Patka, a type of turban

Private worship

- Sikhs can pray at any time and any place.
- Sikhs aim to get up early, bathe, and then start the day by meditating on God.
- The Sikh code of conduct lays down a stern discipline for the start of the day:
  A Sikh should wake up three hours before the dawn, take a bath, and concentrate his/her thoughts on One Immortal Being, repeating the name Waheguru (wondrous destroyer of darkness).
- There are set prayers that a Sikh should recite in the morning and evening, and before going to sleep.

The morning prayer may take as long as 50 minutes, has three segments, and is usually done just before dawn or breakfast. It consists of reciting specific verses from Guru Granth Sahib. The evening prayer is said just before supper and may take up to 20 minutes. The last prayer of the day takes about five minutes and is offered just before bedtime. Whenever possible, it is best to say the morning and evening prayers in congregation. The last prayer is generally done individually.

Public worship

Although Sikhs can worship on their own, they believe congregational worship has special qualities and value. Sikhs believe that God is visible in the Sikh congregation or Sangat, and that God is pleased by the act of serving the Sangat. Sikh public worship can be led by any Sikh, male or female, who is competent to do so.

Accommodation

Accommodation will be needed for students attending overnight camps. A clean, quiet room is needed for worship. Worshippers normally sit on a rug or a mat and, before worshipping, there should be time for washing. Teachers should be aware of the length of each prayer time to ensure that students have enough time to pray before breakfast and supper.

DRESS REQUIREMENTS, RELIGIOUS ATTIRE

Beliefs and Practices

Men and women who have been initiated into the Khalsa order are expected to wear the five articles of faith, commonly referred to as the 5 Ks: Kesh, Kangha, Kirpan, Kara, and Kaccha. The 5 Ks are a type of **uniform** that all "soldier-saints" wear. It dates back to 1699 and the creation of the Khalsa Panth (the collective body of all initiated Sikhs) by Guru Gobind Singh.

Figure 3.77: The creation of the Khalsa; initiated by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh's reasons for introducing the 5 K's included

- Identification: These 5 common symbols would identify members of the Khalsa.
- Bonding: As all members of the Khalsa were to wear the 5 Ks they would be more likely to strongly bond together within the community.
- Significance: Each K has a special significance.

The Meaning of the 5 Ks

The 5 Ks collectively symbolize that the Sikhs who wear them have dedicated themselves to a life of devotion and submission to the Eternal Being. Guru Gobind Singh Ji made sure that Sikhs understood that they were to accept the authority of "the Eternal Being" only and no one else. The symbols are a powerful reminder of Sikh history. By wearing the 5 Ks, every initiated Sikh remembers all the Sikh warriors, saints, and martyrs since 1699, and every living member of the Khalsa.

Kesh

In Sikhism, Kesh (a.k.a. Kes) refers to the practice of allowing one's hair to grow naturally as a symbol of respect for the perfection of God's creation. Generally, Sikhs should not cut their hair; however, in practice many Sikhs, especially youth, choose to cut their hair. Men are expected to cover and protect their hair with a turban, which women may also wear. A Sikh (male or female) may wear a head covering that can include any of the following: a dastar (turban), patka, rumal (top knot with handkerchief) or chunni (headscarf). The turban itself is a five- to seven-metre piece of cotton cloth.

Figure 3.78: A Sikh princess, a woman who has been initiated into the Khalsa

Accommodation

The turban is an essential element aspect of Kesh. It is an identity symbol for all Sikhs, even those who are not yet initiated into the Khalsa. The wearing of a turban or patka may lead to teasing (harassment) by other students. To have one's turban knocked off by others is considered to be a great affront to the Sikh religion and a personal insult to the wearer. All students should understand the serious consequences of harassing students because of their religious dress.

Sikh students/staff should be allowed to wear the turban or a patka. School uniforms and/or no-hat policies should be revised to accommodate Sikhs. Sikh students will usually replace the turban with a patka when participating in organized sports or for swimming. Accommodations for wearing/protecting of a turban and/or a patka in physical education, swimming, and organized sports should be made.

Kangha

The kangha is a wooden comb used to comb the uncut hair of Sikhs and symbolizes physical cleanliness, orderliness, discipline, and commitment to life. A Sikh is required to keep their uncut hair clean and to comb it twice a day. The kangha is tied into the knot of hair and is concealed in the turban or patka.

Accommodation

See the accommodations under Kesh.

Kirpan

The kirpan is a ceremonial sword with no defined style. It can range from a few inches in length to three feet long. The kirpan is kept in a sheath and can be worn over or under clothing. Although it is a ceremonial instrument, Sikh tradition dictates that when all other means of self protection fail, the Kirpan may be used to defend oneself or others from violent attacks.

The kirpan is a symbol of courage, self-sacrifice, defence of the weak, and righteousness. Wearing the kirpan is a requirement of being an initiated Khalsa Sikh. This ceremonial sword symbolizes each individual's duty toward other human beings, particularly the poor and oppressed. It is worn on the person. Strict rules guide the use of the kirpan. For safety reasons, two or three clasps hold the kirpan securely in the sheath.

Figure 3.79: Street portrait: annual Sikh parade

Accommodation

The Supreme Court of Canada in *Multani v. Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys* [2006] struck down a policy of a Quebec school board, which prohibited a Sikh child from wearing a *kirpan* to school, as a violation of freedom of religion under section 2(a) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Therefore, schools will accommodate Khalsa Sikh students and staff who wear a *kirpan* under the following conditions:

- At the beginning of the school year or upon registration, the student and parents/guardians should report to the school administration that they are Khalsa Sikhs and wear the five articles of faith.
- The *kirpan* is small (six to seven inches).
- The *kirpan* will be sufficiently secure to render removal difficult.
- The *kirpan* should not be worn visibly, but under the wearer's clothing.
- There is notification in writing to the principal by parents/guardians and student, and, where possible, from the gurdwara (place of worship), confirming that the student requesting accommodation is a Khalsa Sikh.
- Students under 18 must be accompanied by parents/guardians when discussing the rules regarding the wearing of the *kirpan*.

It is important that the principal and student, in consultation with the parents/guardians, discuss the school program and identify any situations where the wearing of a *kirpan* could unintentionally and inadvertently cause physical harm to the wearer or to another individual in the school. In cases where this may occur, modifications to the activities should be made or they should be substituted.

Figure 3.80: Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara Delta-Surrey

It is a major centre of Sikhism in Metro Vancouver and counts tens of thousands of pious Sikh religious worshippers among its congregation.

Kara

The kara was, among other things, initially intended to protect the warrior's wrist from sword strikes. The kara is a steel or iron (gold, silver, brass, and copper are not permitted) bracelet worn by all initiated Sikhs on the right wrist. It symbolizes the wearer's commitment to God. The kara is a constant reminder of a Sikh person's mission on Earth and of the fact that he or she must carry out righteous and true deeds and actions. The bracelet has no beginning nor end, just as God has no beginning nor end.

Accommodation

No religious accommodations are needed.

Kacchera

Kacchera are a form of short pants or drawers that must not come below the knee and which are currently usually worn as undergarments. There are different explanations for the original purpose of the kacchera, two common ones are the following:

- They were intended as functional garment for Sikh warriors of the 18th and 19th centuries—allowing for freedom of movement and especially suitable for warfare when riding a horse.
- They served to distinguish Sikhs from Hindus who at that time commonly wore the loose dhoti.

Kaccha are a symbol of chastity and modesty and are worn by both men and women. The Sikh Code of Conduct states that, for a Sikh, there is no restriction or requirement as to dress except that he must wear the kacchera and a turban. Kacchera are made from lightweight cotton fabric and, while they were originally knee length, at present they are similar in length to boxer shorts.

Accommodation

There may be need for accommodation in the expected dress for Physical Education. Some students may want to wear their kaccha under their gym shorts.

Resources and References

- The Canadian Encyclopedia, Sikhism: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/sikhism/
- Dasmesh School Winnipeg: www.dasmeshschoolwpg.ca/
- The Pluralism Project—Sikhism: www.pluralism.org/religion/sikhism
- Sikh Museum: www.sikhmuseum.com/
- The Sikh Next Door: www.sikhnextdoor.org/
- Sikh Net: www.sikhnet.com/
- Sikhs Org: www.sikhs.org/topics.htm
- Sikhism, Religion of the Sikh People: www.sikhs.org
- Sikh Wiki: www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Main_Page
- Winnipeg South Sikh Centre: http://winnipegsouthsikhcentre.blogspot.ca/
- World Sikh Organization of Canada: http://worldsikh.ca/

GURDWARAS IN MANITOBA

- Deshmesh Darbar Gurdwara
  566 Archibald Street, Winnipeg, MB R2J 0X4
  Telephone: 204-237-7788
- Khalsa Diwan Society of Manitoba
  807 McLeod Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2G 0Y4
  Telephone: 204-668-5798
- Gurdwara Nanaksar
  255 St David Road, Winnipeg, MB R2M 3J9
  Telephone: 204-255-7503
- Guru Nanak Darbar Inc.
  900 McLeod Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2G 2T7
  Telephone: 204-668 4466
- Gurudwara Kalgidhar Darbar
  2762 King Edward Street, Winnipeg, MB R3C 2E6
  Telephone: 204-633-7777

- Sikh Society of Manitoba Inc.
  1244 Mollard Road, Winnipeg, MB R2P 2T6
  Telephone: 204-697-8018
- Sikh Society of Winnipeg
  221 Cathcart Street, Winnipeg, MB R3R 0S1
  Telephone: 204-889-3096
- Singh Sabha of Winnipeg Inc.
  4000 Sturgeon Road, Winnipeg, MB R2Y 2L9
  Telephone: 204-885-5495
- Sikh Society of Thompson
  Game and Fish Hall, Thompson, MB R8N 1N7
- Winnipeg South Sikh Centre
  500 Dovercourt Drive, Winnipeg, MB R3Y 1A0
  Telephone: 204-489-0567

Introduction and Foundational Beliefs

Zoroastrianism is an ancient pre-Islamic religion of Iran that still survives there in isolated pockets, and in larger numbers in India, where the descendants of Zoroastrian Iranian (Persian) immigrants are known as Parsis or Parsees. In India, the religion is called Parsiism.

Figure 3.81: The Faravahar, a common symbol of Zoroastrianism, depicts a man emerging from a disk flanked by wings spread wide. It has been used by Zoroastrians for thousands of years.

Zoroastrianism is possibly the oldest monotheistic religion in the world. It was founded by Prophet Zarathustra (a.k.a. Zoroaster) in ancient Iran (North Central Asia in the region of the Aral Sea, close to the present-day Tajikistan) approximately 3500 years ago. For about a 1000 years Zoroastrianism was one of the most powerful religions in the world; however, today, it is one of the smallest religions, with estimates of less than 190,000 followers worldwide.

The religion is taught to be the first 'revealed' religion and is based on God's revelation to humans. It is a universal religion that recognizes Ahura Mazda (Lord Wise) as the godhead. Zoroastrian scriptures are called the Avesta. The Avesta may be thought of as being composed of the following two main sections:

- The oldest and core part of the scriptures containing the Gathas which are seventeen hymns believed to be composed by Zoroaster himself
- The commentaries to the older Avesta written in later years which contain myths, stories, and details of ritual observances

Zarathustra encouraged humans to participate in life through thinking with a good mind and choosing a path of truth and benevolence through good words and deeds. Free will is seen as the ability to make these choices. In Zoroastrianism, the ideal for humankind is to emulate in life the values of Amesha Spentas (Bounteous Immortals). These values are thinking through good mind, and choosing the path of truth and righteousness, all of which are aspects of Ahura Mazda.

Zoroastrianism believes in the existence, yet complete separation, of good and evil. This is recognised in two interconnecting ways.

- cosmically (opposing forces within the universe)
- morally (opposing forces within the mind)

Recognizing this duality of good and evil, the fundamental concepts enshrined in the Zoroastrian faith are that humans have the freedom to think with Vohu Manah, the good mind, endowed by the creator, and choose to live through truth and righteousness characterized in the concept of Asha. By doing so, humanity helps to bring divine rule, prosperity, and harmony in the physical world through peace. Zoroastrians are dedicated to all the creations of nature (heavenly bodies, earth, water, plants, animals, and humankind), which are all believed to be sacred and merit our care.

Contemporary Zoroastrianism has a positive perspective on life and the state of the world. From this perspective humankind is ultimately good and this goodness will, in the end, triumph over evil.

Zoroastrians believe that fire represents God's light or wisdom, but they are not fire-worshippers, as some people wrongly believe. Zoroastrians worship communally in a Fire Temple or Agiary.

Zoroastrians may be split into two groups: the Iranians and the Parsis.

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Zoroaster emphasized living in accordance with the central ethics of 'good words, good thoughts, and good deeds' rather than on ritual worship. Therefore, Zoroastrian worship is not prescriptive and followers may choose whether they wish to pray and how they wish to do so.

Communal or congregational worship is usually associated with seasonal festivals, but there are other opportunities for worshipers to gather, such as the Navjote, the initiation ceremony through which children are accepted into the Zoroastrian community.

Young Zoroastrians from the ages of 7 and 15 may be invested through the Navjote ritual, wearing an undergarment called sudreh (symbol of the the pure path) and a girdle (cord) woven out of 72 woolen threads known as kusti.

Zoroastrian rituals emphasize purification and Zoroastrians focus on keeping their minds, bodies, and environments pure in the quest to defeat evil (Angra Mainyu). Fire is seen as the ultimate symbol of purity, as Zoroastrians believe that fire represents God's light or wisdom, even though they are not fire-worshippers. Consequently, Zoroastrians worship communally in a Fire Temple or Agiary where sacred fires are maintained and are never extinguished. Every Zoroastrian ritual or ceremony requires the presence of a sacred fire.

Zoroastrians traditionally pray several times a day with devout Zoroastrians expected to say their prayers five times a day. The school will need to make accommodation to provide a secluded location for a Zoroastrian child who wishes to fulfill his or her spiritual devotion to the Creator.

During prayers, some wear a scarf, a cap, or a kusti, which is a cord knotted three times, to remind them of the maxim, 'good words, good thoughts, good deeds'. Prayers are said facing the sun, fire, or other source of light representing Ahura Mazda's divine light and energy. Some students may choose to have the cap on all the time as part of their dress code. The school should make appropriate accommodations to permit the prayers and use of head coverings.

During the prayers, as well as after gym-class showers, a devout Zarathushti (Zoroastrian) unties and reties the girdle (kusti or kushti) through the recital of the Holy Mantra. Students, teachers, and other staff not familiar with this ritual practice should demonstrate tolerance and respect.

Figure 3.82: Navjote ceremony: The priest guides the child in the tying of the Kushti

HOLY DAYS

Zoroastrians recognize and celebrate many holy or special days throughout the year (see Section 4 for more details). The Zoroastrian calendar presents a difficult issue for Zoroastrians because, over the centuries, there have been a number of changes which have resulted in the three following competing calendars:

- *Fasli*
- *Shahanshahi*
- *Qadimi*

This means that festivals are celebrated at different times depending on which calendar is being used by the specific community. For example, Naurooz, the Zoroastrian New Year, starts March 21 of the year in the Fasli calendar and around August 20 in the Shenshai calendar.

Resources and References

- BBC, Religions: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/zoroastrian/
- Zoroastrian Association of Manitoba
  5 Raber Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2R lG4
  Telephone: 204-694-1142
- Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, website: www.fezana.org
- The World Zoroastrian Organization, website: www.w-z-o.org

Notes