Teaching and Learning Resources

Religious Education Guidelines

- **Guidelines for Teaching about Religion in K–12 Public Schools in the United States:** https://www.aarweb.org/about/teaching-about-religion-aar-guidelines-for-k-12-public-schools

- **Teaching Tolerance Website** (www.tolerance.org/) of the Southern poverty law centre is a place "to find thought-provoking news, conversation and support for those who care about diversity, equal opportunity and respect for differences in schools. The site offers a number of ideas and resources for antibias education, including World Religions." This includes Taking a Closer Look at Religions Around the World | Teaching Tolerance and 10 Tips for Starting a World Religions Curriculum | Teaching Tolerance.

- **Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools:** www.osce.org/odihr/29154

- **United Kingdom: Religious Education in English Schools: Non-Statutory Guidance 2010** (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010): The purpose of this publication, produced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), is to support the provision of high-quality religious education (RE) in maintained schools in England. It provides clear, non-statutory guidance about RE in the curriculum and the roles of those who have a responsibility for, involvement in, or interest in the subject.

- Wertheimer, Linda K. "How to Teach about World Religions in Schools." Time, 30 Sept. 2011, http://time.com/4515229/religion-teaching-public-schools/.

Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusive Classrooms

- **Developing Cultural Sensitivity in the Classroom:** www.acsa.edu.au/pages/images/ideas_developing.pdf

  This Australian resource provides a short learning sequence that focuses on developing cultural sensitivity and intercultural understanding. It incorporates practical strategies and includes Blackline masters that help students explore their cultures and religions.

Dealing with Sensitive or Conflictual Ethical and Social Issues

- **Teaching Controversial Issues in Religious Education:** www.re-handbook.org.uk/section/approaches/teaching-controversial-issues-in-religious-education
- **Teaching Controversial Topics:** http://ctl.yale.edu/teaching/ideas-teaching/teaching-controversial-topics
- **Religion and LGBT People:** https://wiki2.org/en/LGBT_and_religion_topics
- **Controversial Issues in Word Religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam:** http://schools.yrdsb.ca/markville.ss/history/religion/islamissues.html

Canada Religious Diversity Statistics and Information

- Canada Policy Research Initiative (2009). Religious Diversity in Canada, Horizons, Vol. 10, No. 2. http://publications.gc.ca/site/archivee-archived.html?url=http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2009/policyresearch/CP12-1-10-2E.pdf.
- **Statistics Canada: Religion** (www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/help/bb/info/religion) web page of the Government of Canada with links to the latest information on religion from Statistics Canada, including tables and articles.

World Religions—Religious Diversity Curricula

- **International Baccalaureate World Religions Curriculum:** "The Diploma Programme SL world religions course is a new course that was launched in September 2011… The Diploma Programme world religions course is a systematic, analytical yet empathetic study of the variety of beliefs and practices encountered in nine main religions of the world. The course seeks to promote an awareness of religious issues in the contemporary world by requiring the study of a diverse range of religions." https://www.ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/curriculum/individuals-and-societies/world-religions/

- **Newfoundland and Labrador Religious Education Curricula** (https://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/curriculum/guides/religion/index.html): Curriculum guides for religious education for Kindergarten to high school are available. This includes the World Religions high school course. (https://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/curriculum/guides/religion/rel_ed3101_3106.pdf)

- **Religions of the World Course and Digital resources at HippoCampus** is a project of the Monterey Institute for Technology and Education (MITE). The goal of HippoCampus is to provide high quality, multimedia content on general education subjects to high school and college students free of charge. www.hippocampus.org/Religion

Diversity of Religion: Websites

- **Adherents.com** (www.adherents.com/): Provides a collection of adherent statistics, religious geography citations, and references to published membership/adherent statistics and congregation statistics for over 4,200 religions, churches, denominations, religious bodies, faith groups, tribes, cultures, movements, ultimate concerns, etc. The religions of the world are enumerated and data is provided from both primary research sources such as government census reports, statistical sampling surveys and organizational reporting, as well as citations from secondary literature, which mention adherent statistics.

  Adherents.com also has detailed lists of influential and famous adherents of over 100 different religious groups and lists of prominent people classified by religious affiliation. These lists are linked to detailed religious/spiritual biographies.

- **American Academy of Religion, Why Study Religion?** (www.studyreligion.org/site/about.html) welcomes all disciplined reflection on religion, both from within and outside of communities of belief and practice. The site offers resources related to the study of religion and may serve as a guide for students interested in the study of religion. The website is divided into sections.

    - Why Study Religion?
    - What Is Religion?
    - Misconceptions
    - Pressing Issues
    - What Will I Study?
    - Where Can I Go?
    - Where Do I Start?

- **Annenberg Learner:** Features several resources that may be useful for this course. Annenberg Learner resources can be accessed free at https://www.Learner.org.

- **Bridging World History** (www.learner.org/courses/worldhistory/about.html) is a set of multimedia materials designed to help learners discover world history. The following two units may be particularly useful for this course.

    - **Unit 7: The Spread of Religions** (www.learner.org/courses/worldhistory/unit_main_7.html) explores how religions interact, adopt new ideas, and adapt to diverse cultures. As the missionaries, pilgrims, and converts of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam moved around the world, the religions created change and were themselves changed.

    - **Unit 5: Early Belief Systems** (www.learner.org/courses/worldhistory/unit_main_5.html) explores how people begin to understand themselves in relation to the natural world and to the unseen realms beyond, and how religion is a community experience. In this unit, animism and shamanism in Shinto are contrasted with philosophical and ethical systems in early Greece and China, and the beginnings of Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, and Judaism.

- **BBC World Religions** (www.bbc.co.uk/religion/): The British Broadcasting Company website features a section devoted to religion and religious education. Resources available range from information on specific religions (www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/) to podcasts of shows and includes "Class Clips" (video) on religious themes.

- **Beliefnet** Website (www.beliefnet.com): Beliefnet is a multi-faith inspiration and spirituality website. It provides information, community, and services on a wide variety of topics. Beliefnet's main topic channels include Inspiration, Health, Entertainment, Love and Family, Holistic Living, Blogs, Community, Faith & Prayer, and News. Beliefnet is not affiliated with any spiritual organization or movement. The website is ad supported.

- **Facets of Religion** is a religious resources index and is the WWW Virtual Library's official Religion category. The WWW Virtual Library was the very first web directory. www.facetsofreligion.com/About/about.html

- **Geography of Religion** Website (www.greenwoodsvillage.com/gor/mainmenu.php): This site is the result of classes offered at Morehead State University in Morehead, KY taught by Dr. Timothy Pitts and features a collation of the research done by the students of GEO 399, The Geography of Religion. Various religions are covered, with each page containing the main points of each religion, and may include related texts, graphics, and links to relevant sites. The summary of each faith is followed by the geography of that faith which may include maps and demographic data.

- **Interfaith.org** (www.interfaith.org): Is an independent online publication, providing information on a comprehensive range of issues relating to religion, faith, and spiritual matters. The main areas the site covers include major world religions, new religions, and spiritual development. While Interfaith.org was primarily developed with a United Kingdom audience in mind, they try to cover key events across the world, as they deem relevant.

- **Internet Guide to Religion (Wabash Center):** The Wabash Center supports teachers of religion and theology in higher education. The Center's website offers a selective, annotated guide to a wide variety of electronic resources related to the study and practice of religion, including syllabi, electronic texts, electronic journals, web sites, bibliographies, liturgies, reference resources, and software. www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/resources/guide-headings.aspx

- **Internet Sacred Text Archive** (www.sacred-texts.com/index.htm): Features the electronic texts of over 1700 sacred texts from various religions and backgrounds.

- **Lessons from the World's Major Religions: A Narrative WebQuest**—An Integrated Social Studies and English Unit for Middle School Students from School District No. 71—Comox Valley, British Columbia by T. Jerome (Cape Lazo Middle School). This WebQuest (http://sd71.bc.ca/Sd71/Edulinks/ICT6_9/lessons/Index.htm) is a Humanities based project that integrates Social Studies and English learning outcomes. Students can seek information about one of the world's major religions, read stories from this religion, and then write their own religious narratives based on their research.

- **The Major World Religions** (www.omsakthi.org/religions.html): This is a world religions site of the Hinduism based Adhiparasakthi Movement that originated in Southern India. The site provides basic information on major world religions including key books/resources.

- **New York Times: Resources—World Religions** (http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/09/10/resources-world-religions/): This is a resource from the New York Times Learning Network site. It features a list of resources on world religions, and students' responses to the paper's Student Opinion questions on spirituality and religious tolerance.

- **Public Broadcasting Station Education** (www.pbs.org/education/) provides resources from the PBS for teachers. The site includes resources for teaching about religious diversity and ethics. **Public Broadcasting Station Learning Media** (https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/) offers media that teachers may use and https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/student/ is dedicated to student use.

- **The Pluralism Project** (www.fas.harvard.edu/~pluralsm/) was developed by Diana L. Eck at Harvard University to study and document the growing religious diversity of the United States, with a special view to its new immigrant religious communities. The website features many resources related to religious diversity of interest including online resources on specific religions and teacher resources. The site includes a description of the CD-ROM and slide sets that give teachers and students of religion multi-media resources to enhance their appreciation of religious diversity.

- **RE: Online** (www.reonline.org.uk) Culham St Gabriel's (www.cstg.org.uk) is a charitable trust from the United Kingdom dedicated to supporting religious education (RE) in schools. RE: ONLINE offers a range of resources from guidelines to articles on specific religions.

- **Religion and Diversity Project** (www.religionanddiversity.ca/en/): Is a bilingual website of academic collaborative whose aim is to explore a number of questions on religious diversity in Canada.

- **Religion Facts** (www.religionfacts.com/): The goal of ReligionFacts is to provide free, reliable information—just the facts—on the various questions related to religions, as well as the rituals and customs that go along with them. The site features articles on a wide variety of world religions, both ancient and modern, as well as "ways of life," philosophies, mind-body teachings, and even some anti-religion systems like ancient Epicureanism and modern atheism. In addition, comparison charts, a glossary, and information on icons and images are featured.

- **Religious Studies in Secondary Schools (RSISS)** website: RSISS is a coalition of public and private secondary school teachers working in conjunction with the Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education (CSEE), in Portland, Oregon. They are committed to the idea that education is not complete without the academic study of the world's religious traditions and the ethical values, literatures, and cultures inextricably linked to them. The site offers information on texts and resources on specific religions and examples of religious studies syllabi, including, but not limited to World Religion courses. http://fore.yale.edu/education/professionaldevelopment/workshops/rsissworks/

- **Religious Studies Web Guide**: This website, in existence since 1995, focuses on free Internet resources of use to researchers involved in the academic study of religion. (https://library.ucalgary.ca/religiousstudieswebguide)

- **Religious Tolerance** (www.religioustolerance.org/): This Ontario group is dedicated to promoting understanding among different faith groups. Teachers will need to review the resources of this site for appropriateness.

- **Religious Worlds of New York: Teaching the Everyday Life of American Religious Diversity**: The Religious Worlds of New York site is the result of a summer institute that was developed and offered in New York. The goal is to contribute to such understanding by helping public, private, and parochial school teachers teach more effectively about the everyday lives of American religious communities. The institute introduces teachers to six religious traditions. The site has an excellent array of downloadable resources from teaching guidelines to literature reflecting religious diversity. (http://religiousworldsnyc.org/content/welcome)

- **The Islam Project Education Resources** (www.theislamproject.org/education/Lessonplans.htm): The Islam Project is a multimedia effort aimed at schools, communities, and individuals who want a clearer understanding of this institution: complex, diverse, historically and spiritually rich, and—to many—mysterious and even forbidding.

- **World Religions and Spirituality** (www.has.vcu.edu/wrs/index.html): The stated mission of World Religions and Spirituality is to provide "objective, reliable and comprehensive information about the diverse array of religious and spiritual groups currently found in North America." The central feature of the site is to provide profiles of contemporary religious and spiritual movements, established world religions, and historical religious and spiritual movements. Each profile includes a presentation of the group's distinctive beliefs, rituals, organization and leadership, and issues/challenges. This website strives to offer comprehensive, balanced information for religion scholars, students, media representatives, and those with a personal interest in understanding the diversity of religious and spiritual alternatives in the contemporary world. The text-based group profiles also include video clips and links to scholarly resources. WRSP profiles currently can be searched alphabetically.

- **United Communities of Spirit**: is a "global interfaith network, linking people of diverse faiths and beliefs who want to work with others to build a better world." Their aim is to promote awareness that all humanity is part of the same spiritual family. UCS has been online continuously since January 1996. http://interspirit.net/home.cfm?group=462823

- **A Comparative Analysis of the Major World Religions from a Christian Perspective** (www.comparativereligion.com/index.html): Provides a comparative analysis of the major world religions from a Christian perspective.

- **World Religions Index** (http://wri.leaderu.com/index.html): This is a site developed by a Christian group, Telling the Truth Project, which seeks to equip "Christians to Understand Other World Faiths and Religious Philosophies". The site features personal stories, articles, and comparison studies, as well as the group's recommended links for other sites that deal with world religions, cults, and religious philosophies.

Multifaith Calendars

- **Canadian Multifaith Calendar** (www.amssa.org/): Information on the calendar and how to obtain it.
- **Interfaith Calendar** (www.interfaith-calendar.org/): Extensive online calendar with a wealth of information including short descriptions of the special days noted.

Religious Diversity Texts

Armstrong, Karen. *The Great Transformation: The Beginning of Our Religious Traditions.* Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2007.

Bishop, Peter and Darton, Michael, Eds. *Encyclopedia of World Faiths: An Illustrated Survey of the World's Living Religions.* New York: Facts on File, 1988.

Bowker, John, Ed. *Cambridge Illustrated History of Religions.* New York: Cambridge, 2002.

———. Ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions.* New York: Oxford, 1997.

———. *World Religions: The Great Faiths Explored and Explained.* New York: Doris Kindersley, 2003.

Breuilly, Elizabeth et al. *Religions of the World: The Illustrated Guide to Origins, Beliefs, Traditions & Festivals.* New York: Checkmark, 2005.

Cannon, Dale. *Six Ways of Being Religious: A Framework for Comparative Studies of Religion.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1996.

Coogan, Michael, Ed. *The Illustrated Guide to World Religions.* New York: Oxford, 1998.

Wilkinson, Philip. *DK Illustrated Dictionary of Religions.* New York: DK, 2006.

Eliade, Mircia. *History of Religious Ideas,* 3 vols. Chicago: Chicago, 1981.

———. Ed. *Encyclopedia of Religion,* 16 volumes. New York: Macmillan, 1987.

Esposito, John L. et al. *World Religions Today.* New York: Oxford, 2005.

Farrington, Karen. *The History of Religion.* Quadrillion, 1999.

Fisher, Mary Pat. *Living Religions* (seventh edition). New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2007.

Ganeri, Anita. *The Atlas of World Religions* (NTC/Contemplative Publications, 2001; ISBN 0872266915)

Gwynne, Paul. *World Religions in Practice: A Comparative Introduction.* New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008.

Hinnels, John. *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion.* New York: Routledge, 2005.

Langenscheidt. *Hammond Atlas of World Religions.* 2008.

Ludwig, Theodore M. *The Sacred Paths: Understanding the Religions of the World* (4th Edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005.

Macmillan Reference USA. *MacMillan Information Now Encyclopedia: World Religions.* New York: 1998.

Mathews, Warren. *World Religions.* Wadsworth, 2006.

Meredith, Susan, Rogers, K., Seay, C. A., and Hickman, C. *The Usborne Encyclopedia of World Religions: Internet-linked.* Tulsa, OK: EDC Pub., 2005.

Molloy, Michael. *Experiencing the World's Religions.* McGraw-Hill Humanities, 2006.

Noss, David S. and John B. Noss. *A History of the World's Religions* (12th edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007.

Oxtoby, Willard G. and Segal, Alan F. *A Concise Introduction to World Religions.* New York: Oxford, 2007.

Hinnells, John R. *The Penguin Handbook of the World's Living Religions.* London: Penguin UK, 2010.

Rechtman, Jane Baron, and Terry Ward (Eds.). *A Compendium of Readings on World Religions.* CSEE, Updated Edition 2006.
Resource for secondary school faculties and students. The book contains first-person accounts of religious practices and rituals representing all of the major spiritual traditions. This Center for Spiritual and Ethical Education; Updated edition (CSEE) provides in depth coverage of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, with additional discussion on symbols, myths and rituals, indigenous cultures, and religious experiences. Available through the Curriculum page, Resources for Grades 9-12, World Religions, on the CSEE website: www.csee.org.

Richards, Chris, Ed. *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of World Religions.* New York: Barnes and Noble, 1997.

Rodrigues, Hillary and John Harding. *Introduction to the Study of Religion.* New York: Routledge, 2008.

Sharma, A. and K. Young. *Her Voice, Her Faith—Women Speak on World Religions* (Westview Press, 2003; ISBN 0-8133-6591-0): Professors of Religion Sharma and Young teach at McGill University and co-edit "The Annual Review of Women in World Religion." Their book features first-person accounts of nine lady scholars.

Smart, Ninian. *The World's Religions.* New York: Cambridge, 1998.

Smith, Huston. *The World's Religions.* Toronto: HarperCollins Canada, 1991.

Smith, David Whitten and Elizabeth Geraldine Burr. *Understanding World Religions: A Road Map for Justice and Peace.* New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007.

Smith, Jonathan Z. and William Scott Greed, Eds. *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion.* San Francisco: Harper, 1995.

Times Atlas World Religions. Toronto: HarperCollins Canada, 2000.

Toropov, Brandon. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to World Religions, 4th edition: A Revealing Comparison of the Faiths That Shape the Lives of Millions*. New York: Penguin Group, 2011.

Ward, Hiley H. *My Friend's Beliefs: A Young Reader's Guide to World Religions*. USA: Walker Publishing Company, Inc., 1988.

Examples of Teaching Units

- **Grade 7 Unit on World Religions** in the Michigan Citizenship Collaborative Curriculum: A Comprehensive K–12 Social Studies Curriculum, Based on the Michigan Social Studies Content Expectations. www.scope.oakland.k12.mi.us

- **Unit—How Have World Religions Shaped Who I Am Today?** From Thirteen Ed Online. www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/mi/lp_middle1.html

- **World Religions Unit** developed by Introduction to some of the worlds faith traditions by Cindy Dougharity-Spencer. www.livebinders.com/play/play_or_edit?id=127886

- **World Religions and Spirituality Unit (Grade 6)** (www.rainiervalleyhistory.org/world-religions-and-spirituality/): This is a unit developed by a teacher, Chris Quigley for Grade 6 students. In the unit, students are exposed to many of the world's major religions, as well as forms of spirituality that are not "organized" religions. The document provides many useful insights and suggestions for teaching world religions courses. It is one of two teaching units developed by The Rainier Valley Historical Society, located in Seattle, Washington.

Student Project Example

- **The World Religions—Opening the Doors to Understanding** website was developed by a student team consisting of two eighth graders and two seventh graders. http://library.thinkquest.org