

Example Project B

World Religions

The Project

World Religions is a two-month “module” (multi-disciplinary unit) designed and refined collaboratively over several years by 9th and 10th grade teachers Avram J. Kline, Rebecca Krucoff, Joel Lowy, Jody Madell, and Alison Ritz at The New York City Museum School (NYCMS). The pages reproduced here are a small but representative fraction of the total support materials.

Suggestions for Reading

For the purpose of informing their jigsaw colleagues about the design of this project, workshop participants are encouraged to carefully read the introductory page and scan the remaining pages to get a sense of the overall character of the unit before examining any details of particular interest to the reader.

The School

The Museum School is an urban, 6-12 grade public secondary school of 400 students with screened admissions to guarantee a heterogeneous population, and with a graduation rate of 75% (compared to 51% at similar schools). Originally founded by Ron Chaluisan and Sonnet Takahisa, all students participate in a rigorous academic program, regardless of their exam history. In addition to standardized tests, students show evidence of meeting standards by engaging in extended observation, questioning, research, synthesis and analysis, written, oral and visual presentations, and reflection.

Source: Avram J. Kline, Rebecca Krucoff, Joel Lowy, Jody Madell, and Alison Ritz at The New York City Museum School (NYCMS). Reprinted with permission.

World Religions: Course Description

Why are there floods?

What causes thunderstorms?

Why do the seasons change?

Why do people get sick?

Why are some people poor and others wealthy?

How should people treat each other?

Is there any way for people to gain more control over the natural world?

What is the meaning of life?

Why am I alive?

How would you go about trying to answer these questions today? Would you consult science? Religion? Both? Neither? Would you look in books? Talk to people? Would you spend time thinking on your own? For almost all of human history people have turned to religion to answer such fundamental questions as those above.

In this course we will study how five major world religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam) and two ancient religions (Egyptian and Greek) have helped people make sense of their world. Over the next several months we will read about these religions, and we will also talk to people who have different religious beliefs, visit religious sites, and study religious objects found in museums and in sacred spaces here in NYC.

As we explore world religions, you will create several presentations to share your ideas and knowledge with class members. Finally, you will create a presentation to show a guest what fascinates you about world religions.

World Religions: Survey of Daresh Museum

Today, Devorah Block, an educator from the Daresh Museum, will give us a presentation about what fascinates her about world religions. We can use her tour as a way to begin thinking about making tours.

Before the tour: Explore the area you have been assigned by looking at the objects in your area and answering the following questions.

1 Topic of your area (read the label):

2 What sorts of objects are in your area? (Paintings, drawings, etc.)

3 What religions are depicted?

4 What topics are depicted?

5 If you were to make a tour of this exhibit for a family member, which objects from this area would you include? Why?

World Religions: Tour Reflection and Evaluation

In two months you will begin working on your own presentation about world religions. Take a few minutes now to reflect on Devorah's tour and to evaluate it. She is an experienced presenter. Think about what you can learn from her work.

1 What did Devorah do to get you interested?

2 Why do you think she chose the objects she did?

3 Based on the survey you did before her presentation, what difficulties do you think she faced in her planning?

4 What did she do that you will want to do on your family tour of the Met?

World Religions: Writing Prompts

Use any or all of these prompts during pre-writes and reflections when we visit sacred spaces and other module sites.

Before:

First Glance

The first thing I notice is ...
My eye is immediately drawn to ...

Deeper Observation

Looking closer, I notice ...

Emotional/Visceral Response

This [place/area/object] reminds me of the time ...
This [place/area/object] makes me feel ...

Curiosity and Speculation

I wonder ...
I think this must mean ...

After:

Wow

I was struck by ...
Now I'm fascinated by ...

Understanding

Now I know that ...
The purpose behind ... is ...
The [teacher/guide/religious leader] pointed out ...

Further Inquiry

I'd like to know more about ...
I'm left wondering ...
I wish I had asked ...
When I come back, I must find out more about ...

World Religions: Family Tour Outline

Your final project for this module will be to create a tour for a member of your family. The topic of the tour will be: "What Wows Me About World Religions." In other words, you'll find a theme in world religions that intrigues you, and you will develop a tour about that theme. You will use the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We have studied five major world religions this year: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism, and two ancient religions: Egyptian and Greek. For your presentation, you will discuss only three. You will pick a total of three objects (one for each religion), and you will use those objects to wow a family member. Below is the outline that you will use for your tour. Next week we will begin work on the tour by reviewing all of the religions and talking about how to select objects.

Today, bring home the flyer for the tour and arrange a time that will be convenient to both you and your family. You should let us know as soon as you know which day you will attend.

I Introduction

In the grand hall

- Explain your theme and why you picked it
- Say a few words about what you will be showing on the tour
- Get your family involved by mentioning things that you think will interest them

II Body

A First Object:

- 1 Name, date, origin of object
- 2 Discussion of significant visual elements of the object
(You may want to first ask your family member a question or two to get them to look closely at the object.)
- 3 Explanation of how the object connects to your theme
- 4 Explanation of how the object connects to a core belief of the religion

- 5 You may want to discuss other core beliefs
- 6 Reference to another museum or sacred space, (you may want to bring your floor plans with you!) such as:
 - a similar or related object you saw in another museum
 - how object, ritual or story is reflected in the space, or
 - a story about your own experience of the sacred space we visited

B. Transition: The transition is part of the tour. You need to plan what you will say as you walk. You may want to ask a question relevant to the topic, or tell a relevant story about something you have seen or heard.

C. Second object: Same as A, and 6. Comparison or connection between the objects, core beliefs, or sacred spaces.

D. Transition: Same as B

E. Third Object: Same as C

III Conclusion

- Closing ideas on your theme to point out similarities and differences
- You may want to mention other religions not covered in your tour
- You may want to refer back to your introduction
- Ask your guest to fill out a questionnaire/evaluation

Presentation Rubric

Content: Development of theme

| FAIL | APPROACHING | MEETS | EXCEEDS |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Theme is vague.</p> <p>No “wow” is included.</p> <p>Objects and stories do not connect to theme.</p> <p>Terms are used incorrectly.</p> <p>Specific similarities and differences between civilizations are not discussed.</p> | <p>Theme is stated in introduction.</p> <p>Objects and stories connect vaguely to theme.</p> <p>Objects and stories give listener some sense of the religion discussed.</p> <p>Relevant terms are used correctly.</p> <p>Specific similarities and differences between civilizations are not discussed.</p> <p>Theme is vague.</p> <p>No “wow” is included.</p> | <p>Theme is clearly defined.</p> <p>Theme is stated in introduction.</p> <p>Presenter explains what wowed them about the theme.</p> <p>Objects and stories help listener understand the theme.</p> <p>Each object and story helps listener understand a big idea of its respective religion.</p> <p>Relevant terms are explained.</p> <p>Specific similarities and differences between the religions are discussed.</p> | <p>Everything from Meets—and:</p> <p>Theme is creative or unusual.</p> <p>Theme is developed with detail.</p> <p>Subtle comparisons are made among religions.</p> |

Content: Use of objects

| FAIL | APPROACHING | MEETS | EXCEEDS |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Audience is not directed where to look.</p> <p>Fewer than three objects and/or three religions are discussed.</p> <p>No references are made to other locations and objects seen during the module.</p> <p>Order that the objects are presented in does not make sense.</p> | <p>Three objects from three different religions are included.</p> <p>Audience is not directed where to look.</p> <p>Objects connect only vaguely to theme.</p> <p>Discussion of other objects and locations is vague or not clearly linked to the rest of the tour.</p> <p>Order that the objects are presented in does not make sense.</p> | <p>Audience is directed where to look.</p> <p>Objects and elements of objects discussed connect to theme.</p> <p>Three objects from three different religions are included.</p> <p>Objects from other locations are discussed in the presentation.</p> <p>Religious sites visited during the module are discussed in the presentation.</p> <p>Objects are presented in an order that makes sense.</p> | <p>Everything from Meets—and:</p> <p>Connections among objects is made clear.</p> <p>Through the presenter’s description, listener is able to picture other objects and locations.</p> |

| Communication | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| FAIL | APPROACHING | MEETS | EXCEEDS |
| Is vague. Is distracted or fidgets. | Speaks too fast, softly and/or in a monotone voice. Is distracted or vague. | Presenter asks one thought-provoking question of the guest. Speaks clearly, slowly, and directly to audience. Looks at audience frequently. | Everything from Meets—and: Knows his/her audience and how to “wow” them. Uses voice to convey enthusiasm. |
| Preparation | | | |
| FAIL | APPROACHING | MEETS | EXCEEDS |
| Has not prepared an outline. | Brings outline or index cards. Reads directly from notes. | Presentation follows outline. Presentation is rehearsed, does not need to read from notes. | See “meets.” |

