Go, Buddha, Go: Patterns in the Spread of Religions

Students learn how religions spread around the world.

Overview

Today’s students should have knowledge about religions of the world and how religions have spread around the world.

Purpose

In this lesson students will gain a better understanding of patterns of cultural diffusion, while also reinforcing their knowledge of where religions began and where they spread to.

Materials

- Map of Asia
- STUDENT HANDOUT # 1: Religion Symbols
• STUDENT HANDOUT # 2 Spread of Religion Information Recording Sheet
• World Map
• Scissors
• Computers or handheld devices
• Glue
• Textbook or other reference material
• Names of religions/philosophy in Ziploc bag
• History Notebook (optional)

Objectives
The student will be able to:
1. recall previously learned information about five world religions and the philosophy of Confucianism.
2. document patterns of the spread of religions.
3. analyze similarities and differences of these patterns.

Procedures
Prerequisite Skills: Students should have learned about the five major world religions and the philosophy of Confucianism. Students know the countries of Asia.

SESSION ONE
1. Inform students of the objectives of the day: a) recalling the religions of the world they have previously studied and b) learning how those belief systems spread from their place of origin to other regions of the world.

2. Distribute Map of Asia and STUDENT HANDOUT # 1: Religion Symbols.

3. Orally review which religion each symbol represents.

4. Instruct students to glue symbol where the religion (and the one philosophy) began on the map of Asia. Note: The current country is used since its boundaries are given on the map. Allow students to use an atlas if they do not know the countries in Asia.

KEY
Hinduism and Buddhism began in India.
Confucianism began in China.
Judaism and Christianity began in Israel.
Islam began in Saudi Arabia.

5. After students finish correctly gluing symbols, divide students into 6 groups (number of students in each group will depend on size of class).

6. Distribute World map and STUDENT HANDOUT # 2 Spread of Religion Information Recording Sheet.

7. Assign each group one of the five religions or the one philosophy by pulling names out of Ziploc bag.

8. Read directions aloud to students while they read to themselves: “Each group has been assigned a religion or a philosophy. Members of the group will trace the spread of the religion/philosophy from its point of origin. They will explain how, when, and where this religion spread. You will have no more than 30 minutes to complete this. Use your textbook, your handheld electronic device, or the classroom computers to find the locations. Glue your extra symbols for your religion/philosophy on the World map.”

9. At the conclusion of 30 minutes, students will share information with the rest of the class. As the groups are sharing the dissemination of the religion/philosophy, the other groups should be gluing their extra symbols for that religion/philosophy on the World map. They should also be taking notes on the other religions/philosophy that they did not research.

10. Once the World maps and notes are completed, have students focus on finding any similarities of how and where the religions spread.

Possible Discussion Points:
• Hinduism existed throughout most of India and some of Cambodia by 1500 CE through trade.
• Confucianism spread from China into Korea, Vietnam, and Japan, by trade and colonization.
• Judaism spread through the Middle East and into Europe through the migration of the people.
• Buddhism spread into Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, Bangladesh, China, Korea, Vietnam and Japan through missionaries and trade.
• Christianity spread throughout the Mediterranean region during the Roman Empire. It continued to be spread by trade, missionaries, and conquest throughout Europe and into the Caribbean.
• Islam spread throughout the Middle East, into Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Northern and Eastern
• Africa, and Spain by the methods of conquest and trade.

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10. After students share their findings and have included the similarities in their discussion, students will write a clear and coherent essay in their History Notebook (or on paper) describing the a) similarities and differences of the diffusion patterns, b) how and who was spreading the religion/philosophy and c) when was the spread occurring.

**Assessment**

Essay will be graded in the following manner:

- Clearly identifies similarities and differences of the diffusion patterns. (10 pts)
- Clearly identifies how and who was spreading the religion/philosophy. (10 pts)
- Clearly identifies when this spread was occurring. (10 pts)
- Follows correct writing conventions. (10 pts)

Mastery will be considered 32 points or higher.

Groups will receive participation points for turning in completed World map (10 pts) and STUDENT HANDOUT # 2 Spread of Religion Information Recording Sheet (10 pts).

**Extensions**

Students could create a timeline of where faiths began and were disseminated. Students could identify examples of these patterns happening in the world today, (i.e. missionaries). Students could research the impact of this religion/philosophy on the areas where it is found.

**Sources**

- [www.alliance.la.asu.edu.azga](http://www.alliance.la.asu.edu.azga) Maps of Asia and World map
- [www.religionfacts.com](http://www.religionfacts.com) (symbols)