

World Religions in Greater Indianapolis Teaching Module

Teacher Name: Audrey Jefferson

Humanities Discipline: American History

Date: February 22, 2017

World Religion: Buddhism

Teaching Module Title: Buddhism as a World Religion

Teaching Module Goals:

1. Create an awareness of the religious meanings and functions of Buddha in comparison to those of Muhammad and Jesus Christ
2. Assist students in understanding the Buddha's impact on and different meanings to his followers
3. Have students use timelines to explore his life, teachings, and the spread of his dharma, or teachings

Assigned Readings and/or Websites:

1. Bowker, John. World Religions: Pages 62-69, Life of Buddha; pages 154-161, Life of Christ; pages 180-183, Life of Muhammad.

Study Questions and/or Discussions Prompts for Students

Group Exercises:

1. Make a timeline in which you depict this historical Buddha and when people in northern India, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and East Asia came to follow him.
2. Make three columns on a whiteboard or butcher paper—one each for Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad. Using the seven dimensions of religion as a guide, compose a side-by-side comparison of how their followers understand the meaning and importance of the founding figure. For example, name an example of the way that followers engage Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad as an aesthetic dimension of their religion. For this line, you might list “as the statue of the enlightened Buddha,” “as a suffering body on a cross,” and “miniature paintings of the Night Journey.”

Written Assignments and/or other Assessment Instruments:

5 – 7 pp. essay, double-spaced:

Compare and contrast how Buddhists, Christians, and Muslims understood the meaning and significance of each religion's founder. There will be important differences in various doctrinal understandings. For example, Christians generally consider Jesus to be incarnated deity while Buddhists often say that Siddhartha Gautama was primarily a teacher. But you will also find similarities. Make sure to include ethical, doctrinal, aesthetic, mythological, institutional, ritual, and experiential dimensions in comparing and contrasting these figures' meaning to religious practitioners.