

World Cafè

Summary

This activity presents the central beliefs and the intertwined histories of the five major world religions. Working collaboratively, students explore fundamental questions about religion.

Different ideas and perspectives are examined by engaging pupils in three rounds of small-group discussion. At the end of the session, students share their personal experiences with the class.

The World Cafè method is particularly useful when you want to examine a topic from multiple perspectives, to increase peer cooperation and to include everyone in the classroom in the discussion.

Description of the activity

1. Arrange the classroom to form separate conversation clusters with 4-5 chairs around each desk. Provide writing materials.
2. At the beginning of class, introduce the topic of major world religions and explain that you are going to watch a short video clip and then have several rounds of discussion.
3. Watch together the TED-Ed video *The five major world religions* (11:09 minutes).
4. Explains to the class they will now have 3 rounds of conversation of approximately 12-15 minutes each. Encourage your pupils to note, doodle, and draw key ideas. Students should work in groups of four or five.
5. Assign a host to each table. Their task is to keep track of the conversation and to mark key points.
6. The topic of the first round is: "*How are the five major world religions similar?*" You can write it on the whiteboard. Make it clear that everyone in the group should have their say. The point is not to convince others but that everyone expresses their opinion.
7. After completing the first round of conversation, the host remains at the table while the others move to different tables.
8. Asks the hosts to welcome their new guests and briefly share the main conclusions from the initial conversation. After 2 minutes, introduce the new topic: "*How are the five major world religions different?*"
9. Repeat steps 7 and 8. The topic for the final round is "How do religious convictions influence the life of believers?"
10. After the third round of conversation is finished, ask all your students to move their chairs, forming a large circle.





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11. Initiate a sharing of discoveries and insights. Invite your students to take turns and reflect upon the process. Ask each student: "What did you enjoy? What was challenging for you? What did you learn?"

12. Wrap up the session highlighting the high points and the accomplishments of the class.

Activity structure

- **Preferred premises of the activity:** It is essential to create a safe, welcoming environment that evokes a feeling of informality and intimacy. If possible, select a space with natural light and an outdoor view. The school cafeteria might be suitable.
- **Resources needed:** a projector, a whiteboard, various writing materials, pencils and markers.
- **Recommended number of people participating:** 12-24 students, divided in groups of 4-5.
- **Previous knowledge of participants necessary:** None.
- **Activity duration:** 90 minutes.

Learning Objectives

Students learn about the origins and the central beliefs of the five major world religions. They engage in discussion with each other and practice critical thinking and communication skills.

Expected Outcomes

Students will have a better understanding of differences and similarities between the major world religions. Exploring the topic from multiple diverse perspectives will promote tolerance and mutual understanding. Working collaboratively, sharing ideas and experiences and listening to each other will strengthen relationships and build trust among peers.

Target group

Students between 12 and 18 years of age.

Subject of the curriculum in which the activity could be implemented

Philosophy
History
Social studies

Learning objects to be used with this activity

The five major world religions - TED-Ed video

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-five-major-world-religions-john-bellaimey>



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