



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SCHOOLS DIVISION OF NEGROS ORIENTAL
REGION VII

Kagawasan Ave., Daro, Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental



Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems

Quarter 1 – Module 1: Understanding the Nature of Religion



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Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems – Grade 12
Alternative Delivery Mode
Quarter 1 – Module 1: Understanding the Nature of Religion
First Edition, 2020

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Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems

**Quarter 1 – Module 1:
Understanding the Nature of
Religion**



Introductory Message

For the facilitator:

Welcome to the Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems – 12 Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) Module on Understanding the Nature of Religion!

This module was collaboratively designed, developed and reviewed by educators both from public and private institutions to assist you, the teacher or facilitator in helping the learners meet the standards set by the K to 12 Curriculum while overcoming their personal, social, and economic constraints in schooling.

This learning resource hopes to engage the learners into guided and independent learning activities at their own pace and time. Furthermore, this also aims to help learners acquire the needed 21st century skills while taking into consideration their needs and circumstances.

In addition to the material in the main text, you will also see this box in the body of the module:



Notes to the Teacher

This contains helpful tips or strategies that will help you in guiding the learners.









As a facilitator, you are expected to orient the learners on how to use this module. You also need to keep track of the learners' progress while allowing them to manage their own learning. Furthermore, you are expected to encourage and assist the learners as they do the tasks included in the module.




For the learner:

Welcome to the Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems - 12 Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) Module on Understanding the Nature of Religion!

This module was designed to provide you with fun and meaningful opportunities for guided and independent learning at your own pace and time. You will be enabled to process the contents of the learning resource while being an active learner.

This module has the following parts and corresponding icons:

 <i>What I Need to Know</i>	This will give you an idea of the skills or competencies you are expected to learn in the module.
 <i>What I Know</i>	This part includes an activity that aims to check what you already know about the lesson to take. If you get all the answers correct (100%), you may decide to skip this module.
 <i>What's In</i>	This is a brief drill or review to help you link the current lesson with the previous one.
 <i>What's New</i>	In this portion, the new lesson will be introduced to you in various ways; a story, a song, a poem, a problem opener, an activity or a situation.
 <i>What is It</i>	This section provides a brief discussion of the lesson. This aims to help you discover and understand new concepts and skills.
 <i>What's More</i>	This comprises activities for independent practice to solidify your understanding and skills of the topic. You may check the answers to the exercises using the Answer Key at the end of the module.
 <i>What I Have Learned</i>	This includes questions or blank sentence/paragraph to be filled in to process what you learned from the lesson.
 <i>What I Can Do</i>	This section provides an activity which will help you transfer your new knowledge or skill into real life situations or concerns.

 Assessment	This is a task which aims to evaluate your level of mastery in achieving the learning competency.
 Additional Activities	In this portion, another activity will be given to you to enrich your knowledge or skill of the lesson learned.
 Answer Key	This contains answers to all activities in the module.

At the end of this module you will also find:

References

This is a list of all sources used in developing this module.

The following are some reminders in using this module:

1. Use the module with care. Do not put unnecessary mark/s on any part of the module. Use a separate sheet of paper in answering the exercises.
2. Don't forget to answer *What I Know* before moving on to the other activities included in the module.
3. Read the instruction carefully before doing each task.
4. Observe honesty and integrity in doing the tasks and checking your answers.
5. Finish the task at hand before proceeding to the next.
6. Return this module to your teacher/facilitator once you are through with it.

If you encounter any difficulty in answering the tasks in this module, do not hesitate to consult your teacher or facilitator. Always bear in mind that you are not alone.

We hope that through this material, you will experience meaningful learning and gain deep understanding of the relevant competencies. You can do it!



What I Need to Know

Why is there a need to study religion? Perhaps, you, along with other Senior High School learners, ask this question upon learning the K to 12 SHS Curriculum. Religion has been in existence since the earliest time of humankind. Possibly, some asks the difference between religious and spiritual and why is religion linked to humankind's quest to search for the real meaning of life and death. This module will introduce you to several concepts related to religion.

Understanding the nature of religion enlightens learners about the common grounds that bind believers into examining the questions of life and death and how persons yearn for spiritual inspirations. Recognizing the inherent characteristics of religion provides the opportunity to deeply grasp the many beliefs and practices that molds humankind's spiritual needs.

MOST ESSENTIAL LEARNING COMPETENCY:

Differentiate the concept, elements and characteristics of belief system, world view, religion, and spirituality

At the end of the module, you should be able to:

K: Identify the concept, elements and characteristics of belief system, world view, religion, and spirituality;

S: Differentiate the concept, elements and characteristics of belief system, world view, religion, and spirituality; and

A: Appreciate each differences of different belief systems.



What I Know

Direction: Read each item carefully and use your notebook to write your answers.

A. Match Column A with Column B. Read each item carefully and use your notebook to write your answers.

Column A	Column B
_____ 1. a belief in the existence of one God viewed as the creative source of the human race and the world	a. theology
_____ 2. relating or affecting the human spirit or soul that is one's personal integrative view on	b. agnosticism
_____ 3. the belief that there is only one God who could have designed and created the universe	c. polytheism
_____ 4. the belief in many principal gods among whom no one is supreme	d. theism
_____ 5. the belief that there is no genuine distinction between God and the universe	e. worldview
_____ 6. denial of the existence of God	f. monism
_____ 7. the belief that God's existence is unknown and unknowable	g. monotheism
_____ 8. an organized system of beliefs, ceremonies, and rules used to worship a god or a group of gods	h. atheism
_____ 9. a collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by people	i. religion
_____ 10. the systematic study of the existence and nature of the divine	j. spirituality



What's In

It should be noted that the world's greatest religions originated from Asia, a fact that we Asians should be proud of. Judaism, Christianity and Islam emerged in the arid western frontier. South Asia's Hinduism, Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism started in the vast Indian subcontinent. Meanwhile, in the east, came Confucianism, Daoism and Shintoism.

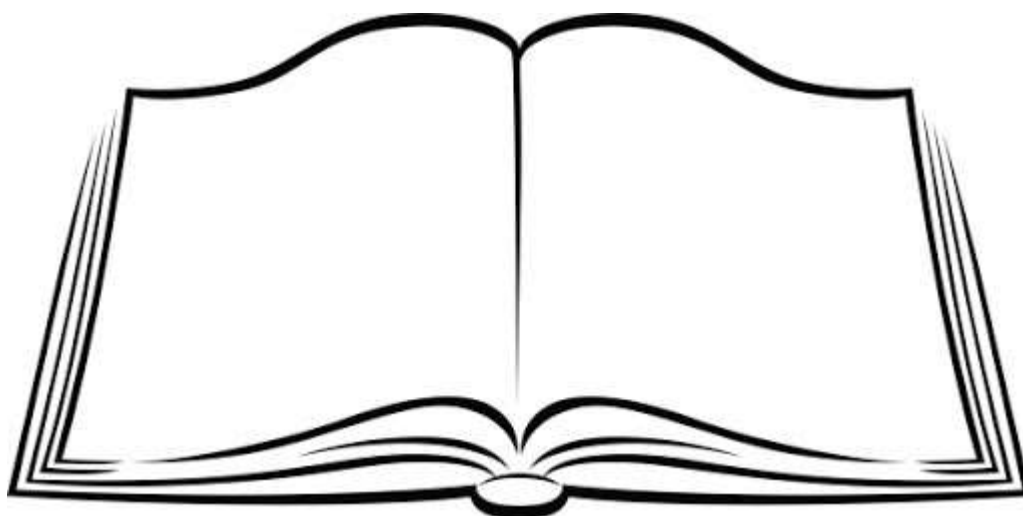
The study of world religions is both a challenging and worthwhile endeavor. However, the learning activities contained in the different learning modules you will be studying will help you learn not only about the core teachings and practices but also the historical background, geographical context and cultural milieu of these profound Asian religions/belief systems.



What's New

Bible Graphics. Answer the following questions. Draw a Bible, Quran or any related text/material used in your religion (just like below). Place it in your notebook, together with your answers to the questions below.

1. How do religions come about?
2. How does religion differ from spirituality?



<http://clipart-library.com/clipart/374822.htm>



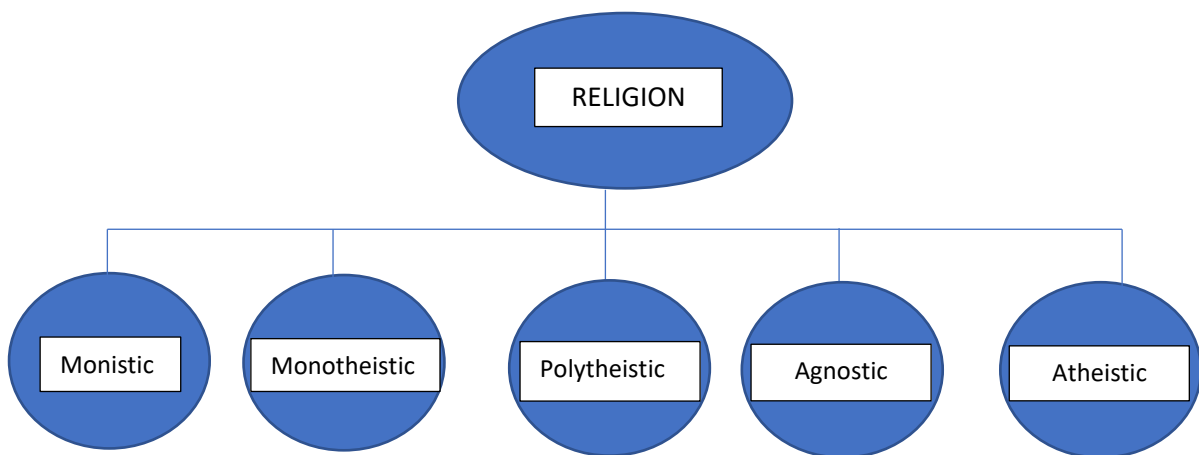
What is It

Understanding the Nature of Religion

What does it mean to be religious and spiritual? Why is religion linked to humankind's quest to search for the real meaning of life and death? As we all know, when one prays, he or she actively seeks an affinity to divine beings or supernatural entities that are beyond the purely natural world. Majority of world religions follow a set of prayers in the form of chants, mantras, or creed. Whether you pray or not, you may have witnessed the influential roles being played by religions all over the world.

Understanding the nature of religion enlightens learners about common grounds that bind believers into examining the questions of life and death and why or how persons yearn for spiritual inspiration. Recognizing the inherent characteristics of religion provides the opportunity to deeply grasp the many beliefs and practices that mold humankind's spiritual needs.

CONCEPT MAP



Understanding Beliefs and Worldviews

Every individual sees and interprets the world quite differently from one another. This overall perspective is also termed *worldview* which is a collection of beliefs about life and the universe being held by people (The Free Dictionary 2014). For a certain individual, social environment and upbringing are critical in the development of a religious life. All these factors have an effect on how people organize their beliefs and ideas while eventually creating a comprehensive narrative through which they look at the world and interrelate with it.

Belief in god or gods is found in almost all religions. There is a good reason to presuppose that religion had existed during prehistoric times and this has continued

to the modern day. Human life may have produced hundreds of religious and belief systems. There could be more unknown than known religions in the world since recorded history covers only several thousand years of human existence.

Likewise, many may have lived and died within just a short period of time. Table 1.1 enumerates the different kinds of beliefs systems or worldviews.

Kinds	Description
Monism	there is no real distinction between god and the universe
Polytheism	the belief and worship of many gods
Monotheism	the doctrine or belief in one supreme god
Atheism	disbelief in or denial of the existence of a personal god
Agnosticism	God cannot be known

Theism, often used as a synonym to monotheism, is defined as a “belief in the existence of one god viewed as the creative source of the human race and the world who transcends yet is immanent in the world” (Merriam – Webster Dictionary 2014). *Monotheistic religions* claim that there is only one God who could have designed and created the universe or may have directed all events that led to the creation of everything. There is one supreme God who is both personal and moral, and who seeks a total and unqualified response from humans (Hick 1990). Modern – day examples of monotheistic religions include Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. On the other hand, *polytheistic religions* that are common among early people recognize many principal gods among whom no one is supreme. These include the ancient religions of Egypt, Greece, and Rome wherein people worship a multitude of personal gods.

Meanwhile, *monism* asserts that there is no genuine distinction between God and the universe. Two implications arise from this belief. Firstly, it contends that God is dwelling in the universe as part of it. Secondly, the universe does not exist at all as a reality but only as a manifestation of God.

Furthermore, while *atheists* deny the existence of God, *agnostics* deny the possibility for man to acquire knowledge of the existence of God.

DEFINITION AND NATURE OF RELIGION

Religion may be defined as “an organized system of beliefs, ceremonies, and rules used to worship a god or a group of gods” (Merriam Dictionary 2014). The Latin word *religio* refers to “something done with overanxious or scrupulous attention to detail” (Browker 1997). This term may have probably been derived from Latin verb *religare* which means “to tie together, to bind fast.”

In its original sense, the word refers to expressions of proper piety, that is, binding to god (Grassie 2010). Quite later, *religion* was eventually applied to what we now call as religion because of the manner in which people performed rituals during those days. While religion may be universal in all stages of human history, it does not

follow that all individuals are religious or even religious to some degree. (Parrinder 1971).

ORIGINS OF RELIGIONS

Since the nineteenth century, people began to show great interest in explaining the origins of religion. In fact, numerous theories have been postulated to explain the origin of religion while looking at primitive societies for ideas concerning the development of belief systems (Hendry 1999).

Archaeologists believe that they have discovered elements of religious belief practised by Homo sapiens almost 60,000 years ago. A part from burying the dead, various items such as foods, tools, and other objects were placed inside the site. All these rituals imply reverence to their loved ones and perhaps the thought that the dead will utilize these materials in the afterlife. While they believe in the presence of supernatural entities, they also try to communicate with them (Ember & Ember 1996).

Various explanations have surfaced that somehow tend to simplify or even denigrate primitive religions. Others maintain that since early humans are weak and ignorant of the different forces of nature, they had to invent religion to explain the seemingly unexplainable mystery and fury of nature. In the process, they had to create a scheme of deities and spirits. Still others contend that religion was conceived by few to stifle and repress the ideals of the masses (Hopfe 1983).

The nineteenth century witnessed the development of the fields of the social sciences that enabled scholars to apply a more scientific way of explaining phenomena rather than speculate on matters concerning the origin of religion. Through field research, observations, and analysis of historical documents, scholars formulated a number of theories that have endured well into the present time.

The table below summarizes the different theories on the origin of religion and the major proponents of these theories.

Name of Theory	Proponent	Explanation
Animistic Theories	Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917), English anthropologist	Primitive people believed in souls or <i>anima</i> found in people (seen in dreams) and in all of nature. Since spirits could be helpful or harmful to human beings, early people had to pray to these spirits, offer sacrifices, and appease or avoid them.
	Robert Henry Codrington (1830-1922), Anglican priest and anthropologist	In his investigation, he found out that the Melanesian people believed in <i>mana</i> , a mysterious force that inhabited all of nature. All early people began their religion in cognizance of such force; the destructiveness of the <i>mana</i> can be avoided by establishing <i>taboos</i> .
Nature-Worship Theory		Human beings first developed their religions from their observations of the forces of nature. Early people became aware of the regularity of the seasons, the tides and the phases of the moon, and began personalizing them by giving them names, describing their activities with tales that transformed into mythology. Primitive people identified the forces in nature, personified them, created myths, and developed religions around them.

Wish Fulfilment Theory	Ludwig Andreas von Feuerbach (1804-1872), German philosopher and anthropologist	There were no gods and that belief in gods was simply wish fulfilment. Troubled people who could not cope with the difficulties in life projected their wishes and developed gods and religions.
	Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883), German philosopher and sociologist	Religions were developed by the few as a means to control the masses and suppress revolution as a result of the continuing struggle between classes. Rulers and allied priests wished to control all wealth so they had to create a scheme of gods, heavens, and hell. Masses were persuaded to accept poverty and be obedient to inherit bliss in another life.
	Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Austrian neurologist and founder father of psychoanalysis	Religion originated from the guilt that individuals supposedly feel in hating their fathers. All males possess a similar tendency to desire our mothers and hate our fathers. As a result of this subconscious hatred and ensuing guilt, a great father image was projected in the sky called God. A healthy mature person can face problems without the need for gods or religions.

EXPLORING SPIRITUALITY

A comparative analysis of major religions reveals that an important characteristic of their belief system focuses on the longing for a value in life (Parrinder 1971). For thousands of years, people have been searching and yearning to understand the mystery of life and the universe. There may come a point in time when an individual realizes that life is not entirely accidental and meaningless (Parrinder 1971). This is where the concept of *spirituality* comes in with the term “spiritual” being defined as “relating or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things” (Oxford Dictionary 2014). One author points out that it is quite common for people to say that they are “spiritual, not religious” (Grassie 2010). Spirituality may be manifested in quite a number of ways. For example, a person can also have a feeling of oneness or a bond with other living beings.

While *spirituality* is derived from the Latin word *spiritus*, its verb root is *spirare* which means to “to breathe” literally. There is an impression that people are surrounded by a “divine reality as pervasive, intimate, necessary, and invisible as the air we breathe” which is similar to Hindu prana and Chinese *chi*. (Grassie 2010).

While religions are frequently viewed as set of ideals practiced and followed by organized groups, “spirituality is something an individual can have without being

implicated in the ambivalent complexity of human societies and institutions" (Grassie 2010). Although traditional spirituality is frequently associated with religiosity, many people assert that personal spirituality can grow separately from religion. One may find inner peace, satisfaction, and contentment in life that are truly independent of religious dogmas and tenets.

In the study of religion, there are basic concepts that need to be understood such as theology, philosophy of religion, and spirituality. While religion refers to any sets of attitudes, beliefs, and practices concerning a supernatural power---theology involves the systematic study of the existence and nature of the divine. It deals with the study of the nature and purpose of god that may be undertaken using a particular perspective. Theology is a study, not a formulation of religious beliefs. On the other hand, philosophy of religion deals primarily with issues concerning religion, which includes analysis on the existence of a divine being or on sacred texts. It may involve studying the "concepts and beliefs systems of the religions as well as the prior phenomena of religious experience and the activities of worship and meditation on which these beliefs systems rest and out of which they have arisen" (Hick 1990). It seeks to analyze various concepts such as god, spirit, karma, creation, immortality, heaven, hell, and purgatory among others. Philosophy of religion is not a branch of theology but a branch of philosophy. It is said that this particular study need not be undertaken from a religious perspective at all because atheists, agnostics, and the person of faith can and do philosophize about religion (Hick 1990).

Meanwhile, spirituality is something an individual can have without being implicated in the ambivalent complexity of human societies and institutions (Grassie 2010). Thus, spirituality can be described as one's integrative view of life and involves a quest for the meaning and ultimate value of life as opposed to an instrumentalist or materialistic attitude to life. Hence, one can be spiritual without being religious.



What's More

Task 1: Answer the following questions. Write your answer in the activity notebook.

1. How did religion originate? Cite key theories to support your answer.
2. Do you agree that the universe is designed and created by a single divine being or God? Explain your answer.
3. How can an individual lead a spiritual life? Cite some examples.

Task 2: Write a two-page essay on your activity notebook on the topic "Religion: What does it Mean to Me?" guided by the following questions:

- a. Write different values have your religion instilled in you?
- b. What various guiding principles which may have been influenced by your religion do you adhere to in your life?

RUBRIC FOR ESSAY

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	POINTS	POINTS OBTAINED
Content	The content was well – thought of guide questions were thoroughly answered	7	
Organization	The paper was well – written with ideas easily conveyed to readers.	7	
Development	Points are thoroughly developed	6	
		Total: 20	



What I Have Learned

Instruction: Make journal to manifest your understanding about the topic. You can start it by following the format below. Write it in your notebook.

<p>I have learned that _____.</p> <p>I have realized that _____.</p> <p>I will apply _____.</p>



What I Can Do

Task 3: In the context of religion, list down 10 things that you believe in by completing the following statements. What have you observed in your own belief systems? Write it in your activity notebook.

1. I believe in/that _____
2. I believe in/that _____
3. I believe in/that _____
4. I believe in/that _____
5. I believe in/that _____
6. I believe in/that _____
7. I believe in/that _____
8. I believe in/that _____
9. I believe in/that _____
10. I believe in/that _____

Task 4: Say something about the two pictures below. Use your activity notebook.



<https://dannydodd.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/bible-studying-the.gif>



<https://www.pngwing.com/en/free-png-tqlyt>



Assessment

A. Match Column A with Column B. Read each item carefully and use your notebook to write your answers.

Column A

- _____ 1. a belief in the existence of one God viewed as the creative source of the human race and the world
- _____ 2. relating or affecting the human spirit or soul that is one's personal integrative view on
- _____ 3. the belief that there is only one God who could have designed and created the universe
- _____ 4. the belief in many principal gods among whom no one is supreme
- _____ 5. the belief that there is no genuine distinction between God and the universe
- _____ 6. denial of the existence of God
- _____ 7. the belief that God's existence is

Column B

- a. theology
- b. agnosticism
- c. polytheism
- d. theism
- e. worldview
- f. monism
- g. monotheism

unknown and unknowable

_____ 8. an organized system of beliefs,
ceremonies, and rules used to worship
a god or a group of gods

h. atheism

_____ 9. a collection of beliefs about life and
the universe held by people

i. religion

_____ 10. the systematic study of the existence
and nature of the divine

j. spirituality



Answer Key

References

BOOK

Ong, Jerome, A., and dL. Jose, Mary Dorothy., *Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems*

TEACHERS GUIDE

Most Essential Learning Competencies

INTERNET SOURCES/PICTURES

<https://www.pngwing.com/en/free-png-tqlyt>

<http://clipart-library.com/clipart/374822.htm>

<https://dannydodd.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/bible-studying-the.gif>

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