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SCHOOLS DIVISION OF NEGROS ORIENTAL  
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Kagawasan Ave., Daro, Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental



# Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems

Quarter 1 – Module 2: Origin of World Religions



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**Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems – Grade 12**  
**Alternative Delivery Mode**  
**Quarter 1 – Module 2: Origin of World Religions**  
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# **Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems**

**Quarter 1 – Module 2:  
Origin of World Religions**



# Introductory Message

For the facilitator:

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

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 Origin of World Religions!

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:

 <b><i>What I Need to Know</i></b>	This will give you an idea of the skills or competencies you are expected to learn in the module.
 <b><i>What I Know</i></b>	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.
 <b><i>What's In</i></b>	This is a brief drill or review to help you link the current lesson with the previous one.
 <b><i>What's New</i></b>	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.
 <b><i>What is It</i></b>	This section provides a brief discussion of the lesson. This aims to help you discover and understand new concepts and skills.
 <b><i>What's More</i></b>	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.
 <b><i>What I Have Learned</i></b>	This includes questions or blank sentence/paragraph to be filled in to process what you learned from the lesson.
 <b><i>What I Can Do</i></b>	This section provides an activity which will help you transfer your new knowledge or skill into real life situations or concerns.
 <b><i>Assessment</i></b>	This is a task which aims to evaluate your level of mastery in achieving the learning

	competency.
 <b><i>Additional Activities</i></b>	In this portion, another activity will be given to you to enrich your knowledge or skill of the lesson learned.
 <b><i>Answer Key</i></b>	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***

Similar to living organisms, religions are born in history and they gradually develop into living traditions and affect the lives of their followers. Belief systems originate in certain localities within the context of culture and even geography. We need to look at the different culture, geography and backgrounds of each religion and how it came to be.

This module will let you know the origin of the world religion, its geographical and historical context. You will also determine how geography and culture affect the establishment and development of religions. Moreover, this module will primarily deal with religions that are still active until the present time. Through this, the learner will have inherent the desire to show the spirit of unity from embracing that each belief system must be honored and respected.

### **MOST ESSENTIAL LEARNING COMPETENCY:**

Analyze the interconnectedness of geography, culture and religions

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

K: Identify the origin and the historical and geographical contexts of the different religions in the world;

S: Discover how religions originated and developed into living traditions; and

A: Show respect and understanding on someone's belief.



## ***What I Know***

**Direction:** Read each statement carefully. Write **TRUE** if the statement is correct and **FALSE** if the statement is incorrect. Write your answers in your notebook only.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The term 'Shinto' came from two Indian words.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The Hindu god of fire is Agni.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Judaism has 48 prophets and seven prophetesses.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The concept of filial piety is integral in Islam.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The Arabian Peninsula consists of countries that are predominantly Buddhist in character.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac at Mount Hira.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The Analects and Dao De Jing are sacred texts in Chinese religions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The Ganga is the holiest river for the Muslims.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Saudi Arabia experienced a bloody civil war from 1975 to 1990 between Christians and Muslims.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The Hindus believe in the trimurti or the three forms of their god.



## ***What's In***

In Module 1, you were introduced to some important terms such as religion, spirituality, world view and belief system. You have also learned the different kinds of belief systems or world views such as monotheism, polytheism and atheism. Likewise, the origin of religions was also discussed in the first module.

This module, will take you into the historical, geographical, and cultural contexts of various world religions of today.





## What's New

### Word Bubble Quiz

Read and answer each statement in the WORD BUBBLE QUIZ below which will show CULTURE as the main concept. The clue is provided below.

1. A system of philosophical and ethical teachings founded by Confucius
2. Region where Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism originated.
3. The pursuit of transformation guided by a sacred belief system.
4. The region where Judaism started
5. a widespread Asian religion or philosophy, founded by Siddhartha Gautama in northeastern India in the 5th century BC
6. in Judaism) the law of God as revealed to Moses and recorded in the first five books of the Hebrew scriptures (the Pentateuch).
7. The region where Shintoism and Daoism originated.

#### CLUES:

1.		(C)	-----
2.	-----	(U)	----- ( 2 words)
3.		(L)	-----
4.	-----	(T)	----- ( 2 words)
5.		(U)	-----
6.		(R)	-----
7.		(E)	----- ( 2 words)



## What is It

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Scholars hold the view that religion is universal and can be found in all known contemporary societies (Ember & Ember 1997). Even the most fundamental of belief system can be seen to a greater or lesser degree in all religions (Hopfe 1983). Various theories have been formulated to explain the origin of religion. Even prehistoric humans, such as the Neanderthals showed numerous beliefs including burying their dead, painting on the walls of caves, and carving images from stones.

The existence of humankind for so long a time has resulted in the formation of religion and belief systems. It is certain that many religions may have been unrecorded in the past. Others may have gradually died down.

The succeeding table illustrates some significant dates in the history of the establishment of several world religions.

Date	Significance
c. 2000 B.C.E.	time of Abraham, the patriarch of Israel
c. 1200 B.C.E.	time of Moses, the Hebrew leader of Exodus
c. 1100 – 500 B.C.E.	Hindus compiled their holy texts, the Vedas
c. 563 – 83 B.C.E.	time of the Buddha, founder of Buddhism
c. 551 – 479 B.C.E.	time of Confucius, founder of Confucianism
c. 200 C.E.	the Hindu book, Bhagavad Gita, was written
c. 2 to 4 B.C.E. – 32 C.E.	time of Jesus Christ, the Messiah and founder of Christianity
c. 32 C.E.	the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ
c. 40 – 90 C.E.	the New Testament was written by followers of Jesus Christ
c. 100 C.E.	Beginnings of Shintoism (no known founder)
c. 500 – 580 B.C.E.	Time of Lao Tze, Founder of Daoism
c. 570 – 632 C. E.	Time of Muhammad who recorded the Q’uran as the basis of Islam

## The Patriarch of Abraham

The prophet and patriarch Abraham played a major role in the establishment of the three monotheistic religions namely, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, which account for more than half of the world’s total population at present. As such, these organized religions are collectively known as Abrahamic religions. The Jewish people regard Abraham as the ancestor of the Israelites, through his descendants Isaac and Jacob. The Muslims consider Abraham’s son Ishmael as the ancestor of the Arabs. The Christians view Abraham as “father in faith” as narrated in the Bible and the ancestor of Jesus Christ. Notable religious personalities trace their origin in Abraham’s sons from different wives through their descendants. The importance of Abraham in these three religions lies in the fact that the patriarch appears as an elemental figure for a monotheistic belief system and a paragon of extreme devotion.

Derived from a common source, it is but natural that the three monotheistic religions share some commonalities in their basic tenets. For one, they all worship one supreme being. The ancient Hebrews call their God *Elohim*, *Adonai*, or *Yahweh*. Present – day Judaism uses the names “Lord” and “God.” For the Muslim, they call their God as *Allah*. In addition, prophets and apostles play major roles in these religions. Judaism has 48 prophets and seven prophetesses. Early prophets include Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, and Joshua to name a few. In Christianity, the 12 apostles were the primary disciples of Jesus Christ, some of whom wrote parts of the New Testament. For the Muslims, they believe that Muhammad is the final prophet or the “Seal of the Prophets.”

Prior to their establishment as organized religions, the role of divine revelation or intervention is associated among their progenitors. For instance, God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his own son Isaac at Mount Moriah, God presented the Ten Commandments to Moses at Mount Sinai. God sacrificed his son Jesus Christ through crucifixion as the plan to salvation. God commanded Muhammad to establish a new religion at a cave in Mount Hira. Then and now, followers of the three Abrahamic religions are presented with a choice between good and evil.

## **The Indian Mosaic**

With its history dating back to at least 6500 B.C.E., India is one of the world's oldest surviving civilizations. The many conquerors that came to India were gradually absorbed into the native Indian religions. With great movements of various people in the past came their customs, arts, languages, literature, beliefs, and many more facets of their culture. The Harappan civilization, the Aryan influence, the local dynasties, and the Muslim conquest all had their fair share in building the intricate Indian mosaic. As a result, variety and complexity characterize Indian culture.

Religion is an essential part of the Indian tradition. Four great religions originated in India – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism – and a myriad of minor cults and local sects. Even Muslims and Christians have found their way into the Indian heartland along with the Jews and Zoroastrians. Hinduism perfectly reflects Indian heterogeneity with its eclectic, diversified, and assorted ways of religious expressions that are quite confusing to outsiders. It has no specific founder, no one sacred book, and with innumerable gods and goddesses that any Hindu can venerate. As such, Hinduism can be considered as 'museum of religions' (Israel and Grewal 1989). It was during the Vedic Period that Hinduism or *Sanatana Dharma* became systematized as a religion that preached order and purpose to the cosmos and human life. During this period, universal order became equated with a stable society as evidenced by the establishment of a centralized government and the integration of collective traditions into Indian lives. On the other hand, whereas many religion focus on the worship of one god, many gods, or the Buddha was not a god but a human being who came to discover how to terminate suffering in order to escape the painful and continuous cycle of rebirth (Coogan 2005). Buddhist followers revere Buddha in the same way that members of other world religions worship their gods. The Mahayana sect of Buddhism differs from the Theravada school because of its rich array of buddhas and bodhisattvas who have attained spiritual enlightenment. These beings are already eligible to enter nirvana but choose to delay this glorious path to guide others to the path of salvation. Born near the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., Siddhartha Gautama' life is closely linked with the historical and religious development of Buddhism in India. Gaining new converts due to its mass appeal as compared to the exclusivity of Hindu beliefs,

Buddhism spread far and wide from India to Sri Lanka and to Southeast Asia. The religion was transported to China and gained much headway as it reached Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. Across the Himalayas, it reached the Tibetan lands. Presently, Buddhism has become more popular outside its place origin while Hinduism has remained entrenched in India throughout many centuries.

## **The Way of the Dao**

Chinese civilization is one of the world's oldest, dating back almost 4,000 years ago. Even during the olden days, the Chinese had already endeavored to establish and attain good governance (Perry 1988). China adopted Kung Fu-Tzu's (Confucius) ideals and ethics as the nation developed meritocracy as a basis for government officials. Confucius is regarded as China's greatest philosopher and teacher who lived at the same time as Siddhartha Gautama in India (Perry 1988).

Confucian ideals aspire to harmonize human relations and serve as guide to social behavior. Providing a backdrop for traditional Chinese values, Chinese dynasties used Confucian morals and political ideals that became influential among the Chinese people. The Confucian principles can be applied at the levels of individual, community, and state. It is no wonder that Confucian values can be seen in the Chinese method of governance, merit of one's education, and importance of order in the society (Rozman 1991). An ideal human society is of utmost concern for Confucian followers.

Meanwhile, mysteries abound the birth and personal life of Laozi (Lao-tzu) who may have written *Dao De Jing (Tao Te Ching or The Book of the Way and its Power)* around the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Other sources indicate that he lived during the period of the Warring States around the 5<sup>th</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Believed to be a contemporary of Confucius, he once worked as government archivist or record keeper at the time of the Zhou Dynasty but soon left the service due to his frustration with corruption. Around 142 C.E., Daoism began as an organized religion with the establishment of the *Way of the Celestial Masters sect by Zhang Daoling* during the Han Dynasty. This group along with other later Daoist sects devised intricate rituals, venerated heavenly beings, and wrote numerous religious texts. The writings of Daoism centers on the concept of *Dao as a way or path* signifying appropriateness of one's behavior to lead other people.

Similar with Daoism, the writings of Confucius frequently dwell upon the theme of the *Dao* understood as being the *truth or way* things ought to be done concordant with a specific view of life, politics, and customs. This Confucian view is somehow close to the meaning of Dao in Daoism which means a *road, path, or way* in which one does something. The Confucian *Dao* principally concerns human affairs while the Daoist Dao means the way the universe works.

On the other hand, Shintoism is a loosely organized local belief of Japan, somewhat an ardent religious form of Japanese patriotism (Hopfe 1893). Its mythology highlights the superiority of Japan over other lands. Shrines celebrate great heroes and important events in Japan's history. Japanese people believed that their emperors literally descended from the sun goddess *Amaterasu*. Conscious effort is being done to revere the beauty of Japan's lands, especially mountains. The term 'Shinto' was coined around the sixteenth century C.E. to distinguish native belief system from the imported religions of China and Korea, including Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. The term actually originated from the Chinese words **shen** and **tao** roughly translated as the 'way of the gods.' Of primal importance were the **kami** that were often defined as gods but could also refer to deities of heaven and earth, or even spirits in human beings, animals, trees, seas, and mountains (Hopfe 1983).

## **GEOGRAPHY OF FAITH**

Laws and social norms vary by region and localities. The study about geography of religion may reveal some fascinating truths why a certain country is predominated by one particular religion or why a specific region became homeland of great religions.

### **The Western Frontier**

West Asia is home of three great religions, namely, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Comprising the area bordered on the west by the fertile coasts of the Mediterranean Sea and on the east by the arid deserts of Arabia, the history of these religions is closely linked with this region.

Countries closest to the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea north of the Arabian Sea and south of Turkey, sometimes called the Levant, have experienced numerous religious cataclysms in their existence as nation – states. These include Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Syria, and Palestine. Gaining independence in 1944, Lebanon has undergone a protracted civil war from 1975 to 1990 between Christians and Muslims. During that time, while the Christians controlled wealth and power, majority of Muslims felt discriminated. Around 250,000 lives were lost as a result of the conflict.

After 1917, many Jews migrated from Europe to their ancient homeland, Palestine. In 1948, Israel was established after driving away the Palestinian Arabs who had been living in the area for centuries. The long drawn – out war between Israel and Arab countries has resulted in the deaths of many Jews and Muslims from both sides. Israel remains the only country in the world with a Jewish – majority population comprising almost 75% of its citizens. Within Israel are Muslims that constitute 16% of the population. There is a continuing unrest among the Palestinian

population as a result of Israeli policies that run counter to their nationalist ideals. Needless to say, religions have increasingly become involved in the domestic politics of nation – states and between nations as well (Brasswell 1994).

The Arabian Peninsula, the world's largest peninsula, consists of countries that are predominantly Islamic in character. These countries include Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and Oman. Most West Asian countries follow the Shi'a and Sunni denominations of Islam. Majority of Muslims in Iraq and Iran associate themselves with the Shi'a sect. Meanwhile, majority of Muslims in Saudi Arabia belong to the Sunni branch.

What geographical features of this arid land could have influenced the growth, evolution, expansion of these religions from the time of the great patriarch Abraham until the rise of the prophet Muhammad? Located directly south of Eastern Europe, West Asia contains some of the world's most desolate environments. The Arabian Peninsula situated on the north – eastern part of Africa is almost completely a baking hot desert where no plants can thrive.

The topography of West Asia is characterized by vast areas of mountains terrains. Mountains play significant roles in many religious beliefs as these landforms provide ideal settings where gods live or where gods and mortals meet.

The temple Mount is one of the most sacred sites in the world revered by the Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Three structures are found in the present site that include the *Al – Aqsa Mosque*, the *Dome of the Rock*, and the *Dome of the Chain*. The Jewish people consider the *Temple Mount* as their holiest shrine. Mount Moriah is also believed to be the site of sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham.

Meanwhile, vast expanse of deserts and bodies of water in West Asia also figure significantly in biblical history. From the *Book of Exodus*, it narrates *Yam Suph* being crossed by the Israelites as they escaped from Egyptian lands. *Yam Suph* is believed to be the present – day Red Sea which is an extension of the Indian Ocean located between Africa and Asia. The modern – day translation of *Yam Suph* is "Sea of Reeds." For many years, the Israelites lived in the wilderness at the Sinai Desert en route to the *Promised Land*. It is believed that the spiritual cleansing of one's self transpires in the desert. Another body of water mentioned in the Bible is the Dead Sea along with the dwelling caves near it at the time of David. The Dead Sea is a landlocked Salt Lake between Israel and Jordan.

Presently, followers of the three Abrahamic religions place high regard on the city of Jerusalem in Israel because of the numerous sites that are central to their belief system. In Jerusalem, there are more than a thousand synagogues, more than a hundred churches, and more than 70 mosques. Jerusalem has been sacred for the Jews almost three thousand years now with the city being the site of the *First*

*Temple (King Solomon's Temple)* and the *Second Temple*. The *Western Wall (Wailing Wall or Kotel)*, one of the four remaining walls that surrounded the Temple Mount, is the second holiest shrine for the Jews. Meanwhile, the city has been revered by the Christians for almost two thousand years now. Important Christian sites include Mount Zion and the *Church of the Holy Sepulchre* which is the site of the Golgotha (or the place of crucifixion) and the empty tomb of Jesus Christ. Lastly, the city has been held sacred by the Muslims for almost 1400 years now. For the Sunni Muslims, it is their third holiest city. Located at the *Temple Mount*, the Islamic Dome of the Rock is the most recognizable structure in Jerusalem. It is believed that the rock is the spot from which Muhammad ascended to heaven. Likewise, the First and Second Temples is believed to lie beneath or near the shrine. Another Islamic structure at the Temple Mount is the *Al – Aqsa Mosque* associated with the “night journey” undertaken by Muhammad.

### **The Indian Subcontinent**

The subcontinent of South Asia covers an area of more than one and a half million square miles stretching from the Hindu Kush and Baluchi Hills on the west and the Great Himalayan mountain range on the north, to the Burmese mountain on the east and the Indian Ocean on the south (Wolpert 1993). More than 4000 years ago, a civilization emerged along the Indus River that developed a unique and exceptional culture long before the dawn of the Christian era. Invasions from people originating in Macedonia and Central Asia have added diversity to India's population and complexity to its culture (Wolpert 1993).

Because sweltering heat is one major feature of India's ecological setting, it is no wonder that Hindus revere the sun (Surya) and fire (Agni). Likewise, water also plays a major role in the Indian psyche as evidenced by Hindus venerating a god of water and celestial oceans (Varuna). The South Asian countries of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh depend mightily on the rivers Indus, Ganga-Yamuna, and Brahmaputra. Traversing the great plains of north India, the Ganga (Ganges) is the holiest river for the Hindus. From its point of origin to its confluence with the ocean, many ancient pilgrimage sites and cities line up along the Ganga that include Rishikesh, Haridwar, Prayag and Varanasi.

Even Buddhists consider Varanasi an important religious site. During the olden days, there was once a deer park in Samath which is now a residential area in Varanasi. Here Siddhartha Gautama gave his first sermon about the principles of Buddhism. It is presently marked by the Dhamek Stupa shrine. The Buddha also met his first disciple at this place which is now commemorated by the Chaukhandi Stupa monument (Douglas 2007). It is worth noting, however, that Buddhism is not widely held in India but rather in the neighboring countries located in South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia.

## **The Eastern End**

At the eastern end of the great Asian continent one finds the cultural and political dominance of China. Stretching more than 5,000 kilometers across the Asian landmass, it is bordered by various bodies of water in the east and land borders in all other directions. China's population is concentrated primarily in the eastern and southern parts where agricultural activities flourish. Deserts (such as the Gobi and Taklamakan) and plateaus dominate the northern and western territory of China that served as natural barriers from foreign invaders coming from that front. As such, the great Chinese civilization developed entirely on its own without interference from outside forces.

Chinese culture practically influenced all other countries at its outskirts, including Japan and Korea. The supremacy of China on the eastern front can be explained by the role of its environment and geography that includes vast of China proper in the valleys of two great bodies of water, the Huang He and Yangtze, is quite favorable because of the support these streams provide to the Chinese people that made historic China the center of culture. Geographically speaking, the farming people of the river valley were isolated from rest of Asia because of deserts and mountains. From these river valleys emerged small states now controlled by the first recorded dynasties in China, the Shang and the Zhou. Soon after, states began centralize, established a taxation system, organized military organizations, and imposed codes of law (Perry 1989). Public officials and bureaucrats who were also scholars, philosophers, and teachers gained prominence because of their interest in politics and government. It is within this context that the great teacher Confucius became fascinated with ethical questions and morality in government affairs.

Confucius, the main person behind this emerging social philosophy, did not intend to start a new religion but rather expound on the nature of order and stability in the society. For Confucius, this was not the result of stringent laws but of the rituals and ceremonies undertaken by people who have become civilized through time. Only a refined society can achieve lasting social order. With growth of Confucianism and the development of urban Chinese culture, the ecstatic and religious nature of shamanism began to decline in China.

It was only during the second millennium after the death of Confucius in 479 B.C.E. that the teachings and ideals identified with his philosophy spread in China (Rozman 1991). By the time of the Han Dynasty, Confucian teaching had become the state religion (Palmer 1996). In Korea, it began to be by the majority during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Meanwhile, Daoism emerged in response to the widespread warfare and social turmoil that besieged the Zhou Dynasty. It served as the guiding principle to abandon and withdraw from the disorder brought about by incessant struggle for power, wealth, and prestige. The common people began to oppose the rising authoritarian rule and the rigidity of the moralists who were Confucian supporters. Daoist followers aspired for autonomy in the midst of social adversities and for



conformity to social patterns with the aim of attaining social harmony. Korea experienced a great deal of exposure to Chinese culture with the Han and Tang Dynasties maintaining close ties with Koreans. As the three kingdoms of Goguryeo, Silla, and Baekje were being influenced by China, Korea also adopted Buddhism and Confucianism from the mainland. A small country compared to China, Korea had adopted the Confucianism model of harmonious family relations. Eventually, Korea was able to guarantee its sovereignty from China and develop its own culture that is uniquely Korean in style. Relatively distant from China when compared to Korea, Japan also had a fair share of China's influence that became entrenched in Japanese culture. Japanese envoys to China picked the useful aspects of Chinese culture, imported and adapted these elements to their own genius and need (Latourette 1964). The Japanese feudal system embraced the ideals of Confucianism. Ancestor worship complemented elements of Confucianism and Daoism that underscored the concept of *filial piety*. Between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Centuries, Japan experienced major cultural change. The entry of Buddhism in Japan had a direct effect in the religious traditions of Japan and its reaction was fourfold. Firstly, the name 'Shinto' was introduced to differentiate the native belief from new foreign religions. Secondly, local Shinto followers acknowledged that the numerous *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas* *kami* as Japanese revelations of these celestial beings. Thirdly, there came a fusion or syncretism between Shintoism and Buddhism and for 10 centuries people. Lastly, Japan developed a unique form of Buddhism taking its fullest meditative form under *Zen*. (Hopfe 1983)

## THE CULTURAL MILIEU

World religions can be regarded along the lines of their exclusivity or non – exclusivity. Exclusive religions are oftentimes monotheistic with Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as examples. Meanwhile, non – exclusive religions are often polytheistic in nature. Examples of non – exclusive religions are Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shintoism.

### On Monotheism and University

Monotheism or the belief in one God is an ancient idea that predated the establishment of Abrahamic religions. From the three Abrahamic religions, however, Christianity has somewhat differed based on its concept of the *trinitarian* creed in contrast to the *unitarian* creed. While Judaism and Islam affirm the presence of one god Christianity acknowledges one God in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God having three persons could also mean three persons and one substance as forwarded by the Church Father Tertullian (c. 155 – 240 C.E.).

The basic principles of the Muslim faith are reflected in the "Five Pillar of Islam." The first pillar as the profession of the Muslim faith succinctly states that "there is one god but Allah." Simply put, there are no gods, but only Allah. Allah is eternal, creator, omnipotent, infinitely good, merciful, but harsh on those who oppose his will (Jomier 1999). Muslims are urged to worship Allah alone and avoid veneration of transitory things of the world (Frager 2002).

Both Christianity and Islam are considered universalizing religions because they attempt to operate on a global scale and are not inextricably linked to any nation, ethnicity, or place as opposed to ethnic religions that attract one group of people residing in one locality. Universalizing religions have a variety of means to transmit their principles and their followers believe that what they think is appropriate for humankind. Because these religions originated from a certain founder, they are relatively younger than ethnic religions, such as Hinduism, Confucianism, or Daoism. These types of religions actively seek out new recruits, hence, conversion here is quietly easy. They have many members who belong to diverse groups of people because everyone is a welcome addition to these religions.

### **On the Concept of Dharma**

Majority of Indians are Hindus. Buddhism, which originated in India, has been absorbed into the Hindu worldview (Kolanad 1994). Hindu religions foster tolerance as they coexisted peacefully for many generations in most parts in India, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism.

In Hinduism, *dharma* could mean duty, righteousness, and ethics. In all humanity, this is common and evident in virtues such as peacefulness, empathy, and kindness. *Dharma* is also found in one's caste in the present life and toward another life that could lead to liberation from the cycle of rebirth (Coogan 2005). For Buddhism, it means cosmic law and order, or the teachings of the Buddha and the truth of the way things are. For the Theravada sect, *dharma* is sometimes used to indicate all the factors of existence. As the Buddha himself explained, "*This Dharma that I have attained is profound, hard to see and hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise.*"

Dharmic religions do not their adherents to profess their devotion to be a believer or a practitioner. For followers of dharmic religions, meditational and yoga rituals lead to right behavior and ultimate understanding of the universe. The final spiritual truth is beyond all delusions of the physical world where in pain and sufferings exist because of existence attachment to people and material things.

While the Hindus and Buddhists share similarities on some of their basic tenets, such as ideas concerning enlightenment and liberation, there are palpable differences between the two dharmic religions. For one, while the Hindus believe in the *trimurti* or three forms of god, Buddhists do not believe in the existence of any god. As such, intermediaries of humans and gods are not necessary along with the many rituals that go with venerating them.

### **On Nature and Ancestors**

The elements of cult of heaven and ancestor worship are features of ancient Chinese culture integrated into the Confucian philosophy and belief. Apart from

Confucianism lesser deities are also apparent in Daoism with the presence of atmospheric gods, gods of locality, and functional gods. Chinese belief systems soon arrived in Japan and influenced the local culture and the indigenous polytheistic religion Shintoism.

In Shintoism, divinities are closely linked to nature and natural forces. The sacred Mount Fuji, an abode of Japanese gods, is surrounded by temples and shrines. It is one of three holy mountains along with Mount Tate and Mount Haku. Shrines are erected to venerate or remember ancestors, an occurrence, and natural phenomena, such as mountains, rivers, rocks, and trees. Shinto followers carry out ritualistic practices conscientiously in order to establish union with the present society and the nation's past. Shintoism serves as a guide and way that somehow run contrary to established world religions. Majority of its followers also practice Buddhism.

Meanwhile, Confucius had a firm conviction in a natural order that was also a moral order. The Confucian stance on the world is basically encapsulated about an individual's understanding of heaven and the people's relationships with heaven. Everyone had significant roles to play in society that could very well affect heaven and earth despite their seeming immensity as compared to humankind. Apart from having a harmonious relationship between humans and heaven, the establishment of an ideal human society is also key to Confucian followers. Central to this objective concerns family relations as emphasized in the concept of filial piety being the major pillar of Confucian ethics. Confucius outlined the five basic social relationships: (1) ruler and subjects, (2) father and son, (3) husband and wife, (4) older and younger brothers, and (5) friends or members of a community (Perry 1989). All human relationships had a set of definite responsibilities and obligations with participants conforming to and accepting their roles. With all this mechanism in mind, a perfect society is attainable. Quite similarly, Daoism promotes harmonious relationship between humankind and nature. Appropriateness of one's behavior is also integral in the Daoist teachings.



## ***What's More***

### **Task 1:**

Make a poster presentation illustrating the unity of world religions. Explain your work at the bottom space of your poster. Your poster will be graded based on the rubric below.

#### **RUBRIC FOR THE POSTER PRESENTATION**

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>POINTS</b>	<b>POINTS OBTAINED</b>
Organization	The concept was clearly and creatively conveyed.	6	
Content	Important concepts were highlighted and explained.	7	
Explanation/ Presentation	The idea was clearly presented based on the poster illustration.	7	
		<b>Total: 20</b>	



## ***What I Have Learned***

Copy and answer the following questions on your activity notebook:

I have learned that \_\_\_\_\_.

I have realized that \_\_\_\_\_.

I will apply \_\_\_\_\_.



## ***What I Can Do***

### **Task 2:**

Identify the religion that each picture depicts below.

1.



[themuslimstimes.info.com.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/quran-image.jpg?w=1024](http://themuslimstimes.info.com.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/quran-image.jpg?w=1024)

2.



[en.m.wikipedia.org](http://en.m.wikipedia.org)

3.



<https://media.beliefnet.com/~media/photoswithattribution/religious/001/religionbuddha.jpg?as=1&w=400>

4.



[https://cdnthumbs.barewalls.com/tori-moon\\_bwc6213014.jpg](https://cdnthumbs.barewalls.com/tori-moon_bwc6213014.jpg)

5.



<https://s24193.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/crash-course-hinduism-entity-1320x720.jpg>



## ***Assessment***

**Direction:** Read each statement carefully. Write **TRUE** if the statement is correct and **FALSE** if the statement is incorrect. Write your answers in your notebook only.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The term 'Shinto' came from two Indian words.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The Hindu god of fire is Agni.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Judaism has 48 prophets and seven prophetesses.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The concept of filial piety is integral in Islam.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The Arabian Peninsula consists of countries that are predominantly Buddhist in character.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac at Mount Hira.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The Analects and Dao De Jing are sacred texts in Chinese religions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The Ganga is the holiest river for the Muslims.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Saudi Arabia experienced a bloody civil war from 1975 to 1990 between Christians and Muslims.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The Hindus believe in the trimurti or the three forms of their god.



## ***Additional Activities***

No Additional Activities

# 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

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