



## ***Christianity and Religions Chart***

*Christianity and Religions* is a comparative chart that lists features of the major religions in this course. As a teacher resource, it provides additional information for answering questions that may arise during lesson discussions.

The chart is designed on legal size (8 1/2" × 14") pages. It may be viewed from the CD or printed for reference. After printing the pages, trim and combine to form a chart.

# Christianity and Religions: Monotheistic Religions

	Biblical Christianity	Eastern Orthodoxy	Islam	Judaism	Roman Catholicism
Founder, date, location, and key information	Jesus Christ, AD 30–33, in what is modern-day Israel  Christianity is the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises.	Paul and the apostles, according to Eastern Orthodox believers, first century AD, southern Europe	Muhammad, 570–632, Arabia  Muhammad was the last of Allah’s prophets.  Islam is divided into two main groups, Sunni and Shiite.	Judaism grew out of the true Old Testament religion and is a false religion. Today, most rabbinic Jews recognize the Talmud as Scripture. Thus, they do not live out the books of Moses directly, but instead interpret them through the teachings of rabbis. Judaism is split into many different groups.	Peter (Jesus’ disciple), according to Catholics, was the first pope and founder of the Catholic Church.
Key writings	Bible  The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.	Bible, Apocrypha	Qur’an (or Koran)  Muslims accept the biblical Law, the Psalms, and the Gospels (called the Gospel of Jesus or the Injil) but are told that Christians and Jews have corrupted these books.	Torah, Talmud  The Torah is the first five books of the Old Testament, or the Law, which is part of the Tanakh (the Old Testament). The Talmud is an explanation of the Old Testament and is also important. Writings by wise men and teachings of each sect are significant as well.	Bible, Apocrypha
Who is God?	God is one God in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), also called the Trinity. He is not three gods. God is a spirit (without a physical body), transcendent and immanent, eternal, and holy (set apart from evil).  One day God will judge humans based on their works.	There is one God, the Creator, Who is a Trinity.	There is one god, Allah.  Muslims believe the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is polytheism, and making anything equal with Allah is the worst sin in Islam.	God is a spirit, but there is no Trinity. Orthodox Jews believe God is knowable (personal), omnipotent, and everlasting.	There is one God, the Creator, Who is a Trinity.
Who is Jesus?	Jesus is and has always been fully God and the second member of the Trinity. He was not created; He is eternal. When He came to earth, He was born of the virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully human at the same time. He is sinless. His death and resurrection paid the penalty for man’s sin. Those who believe on Him have eternal life.	Jesus is a member of the Trinity, the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully human, and His death on the cross paid the penalty for sin. He was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven. One day He will return to judge mankind.	Jesus is not God, just a respected prophet and a teacher from Allah. He was, however, born of a virgin and did not sin. Jesus was crucified. He will return before Judgment Day, possibly to turn Christians to Islam.	Jesus was either a good teacher who was murdered or a false messiah. He is not the Messiah nor the Son of God and did not rise from the dead.	Jesus is a member of the Trinity, the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully human, and His death on the cross paid the penalty for sin. He was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven. One day he will return to judge mankind.
Who is the Holy Spirit?	The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit fills the Christian and guides, teaches, and comforts.	The Holy Spirit is a member of the Trinity. He comes from the Father and is given to believers. The Holy Spirit gives them the love of God in their hearts, spiritual gifts, and empowers them to serve God.	Allah has or is a spirit, but there is no separate person known as the Holy Spirit.	The Holy Spirit is another name for God working in events and people on earth. The Holy Spirit is not a person but merely God in a different form.	The Holy Spirit is God and part of the Trinity. He works actively in the hearts of believers, and His main ministry is to comfort and guide them.

	Biblical Christianity	Eastern Orthodoxy	Islam	Judaism	Roman Catholicism
Salvation	God the Father provided salvation for all people by sending God the Son to earth to live righteously and die in the place of all, who deserve death for their sin. Salvation is received when one repents of sin and trusts the Son for salvation. Those who trust only in what Jesus has done for them are declared righteous before God and receive the Holy Spirit to help them live lives pleasing to God.	Salvation is obtained by being baptized into the Eastern Orthodox Church.	A person must do more good works than bad works to try to get to heaven, but in the end Allah can decide either way.	A person must obey the Law, pray, and repent of sins to be saved.	Christ died for man’s sin. Salvation is received by faith in Him and through baptism. It is kept by doing penance, doing good works, and receiving Communion (the Eucharist).
What happens after death?	At the end, all people will be judged. Those who are declared righteous in Christ will live and sinlessly serve God for all eternity in resurrected bodies. Those who did not turn to Christ for salvation will receive just punishment from God for all eternity in hellfire.	The soul is separated from the body and goes either to Hades (“outer darkness,” not a literal place, but a condition of having rejected God) or to paradise. Eventually, the soul and the body will be reunited and go to either Hades or paradise after the final judgment.	A bodily resurrection will take place. A person will either go to eternal torment or to paradise. Paradise is a garden filled with <i>houris</i> (young women).	A bodily resurrection will take place. Those who have obeyed God will live with Him forever, but those who have not will suffer.	Souls of the faithful go to heaven, or if they are not good enough yet, they go to purgatory to be purified. The souls of bad people go immediately to hell.
How do people know right from wrong?	Right and wrong are revealed through the Bible, God’s Word.	Right and wrong are revealed in the teachings of the church, the Bible, and sacred writings.	Right and wrong are revealed in the Qur’an and the Hadith.	Right and wrong are revealed in the Torah (Law) that God gave to Moses.	Right and wrong are revealed in the teachings of the church, the Bible, and sacred writings.
Truth	God Himself is the foundation of all truth.	Scripture and other sacred writings as interpreted by the Orthodox Church reveal truth.			Scripture and other sacred writings as interpreted by the Roman Catholic Church reveal truth.
Evil	Evil is anything that is not perfect and holy as God is.	Evil is anything that is not perfect and holy as God is.			Evil is anything that is not perfect and holy as God is.
Where do laws come from?	God built His laws into the world He created, and He has, over time, revealed them to man. Laws also come from government, and if they do not conflict with God’s laws, they should be obeyed.	Law is not a major focus in Eastern Orthodoxy, though it would also ground them in God.	Laws come first from Allah. Laws also come from government, and if they do not conflict with the Qur’an, they should be obeyed.	Laws come first from God and were given in the Torah. Laws also come from government, and if they do not conflict with the Torah, they should be obeyed.	God built His laws into the world He created, and He has, over time, revealed them to man.
Can miracles happen?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

	Biblical Christianity	Eastern Orthodoxy	Islam	Judaism	Roman Catholicism
What is the meaning of human history?	The purpose of history is for God to work out His plan of redemption, specifically the coming of His kingdom.		The purpose of history is to draw attention to Allah.	The meaning of history is to point toward God and His plan.	
How does man get to know God?	Faith in Jesus as Savior is the beginning of knowing God. Prayer and Bible study increase our knowledge of Him.	Man can know God by following the teachings of the Orthodox Church and becoming “closer to” God. Some Orthodox followers believe that man can become God (“deification”).	Submission to Allah is the focus, not knowing Allah.	Scripture is the key to knowing God.	Man knows God through natural revelation and through special revelation mediated through Scripture and the tradition of the Church.
What is a human being?	a creation of God, in His image, for the purpose of having a relationship with Him and worshiping Him	a creation of God, in His image, for the purpose of having a relationship with Him and worshiping Him	a creation of Allah	a creation of God	a creation of God, in His image, for the purpose of having a relationship with Him and worshiping Him
Are humans basically good or evil? How bad is the flaw?	Humans are basically evil. They are so evil that they can never do enough good deeds to make up for their sins, and God must send them to hell as punishment for sin. Faith in Jesus is the only way to avoid eternity in hell.	Humans are born with a weakened will, but they bear no guilt for sin until they freely choose to sin.	There is no doctrine of original sin, so humans are basically good.	There is no doctrine of original sin, so humans are basically good.	Humans are born sinners. They are born guilty, prone to sin, and in need of salvation.
Is it possible to know anything at all?	yes  Everything in the Bible is absolutely and completely true. Also, God made humans to rule over the world, so it is possible for them to learn about themselves and God’s creation through observation and reasoning.	yes  Eastern Orthodoxy places emphasis on knowledge through revelation from God.	yes  Man can know things by recognizing revelation from Allah.	yes  Man can know things by recognizing revelation from God.	yes  Roman Catholics believe in both general and special revelation.
What is real?	God and all He made	God and all He made	Allah and all he made	God and all He made	God and all He made
Origin of what is real	Everything came from God, the Creator. He created the world ex nihilo (out of nothing). He simply spoke and things were created.	God has always existed; all else came into being by His creative word.	Everything came from Allah, the creator. He created the world ex nihilo.	Everything came from God, the Creator. He created the world ex nihilo.	God has always existed; all else came into being by His creative word.
Other facts, beliefs, or practices	Worship together in churches is emphasized. Usually there are only two symbolic events: baptism and Communion (also known as the Lord’s Supper). Telling others about Jesus/Christianity is strongly emphasized.	Eastern Orthodox followers use icons for worshiping saints and believe that when they take the Eucharist (Communion) that the bread and wine is truly changed into the body and blood of Jesus.	Muslims go to a mosque (like a church) to pray and listen to teachings from the Qur’an. To be a good Muslim, a person must confess that only Allah is the true god, pray five times a day while facing Mecca, travel to Mecca once in his life, fast (eat very little) during the month of Ramadan (around October), and give money. These things are known as the five pillars of Islam.	Jewish people meet in a synagogue (like a church) between Friday evening and Saturday evening, which is their Sabbath. They have many holy days and festivals.	Catholics believe that Mary (Jesus’ mother) was a perpetual virgin and treat her as a saint and believe that when they take the Eucharist (Communion) that the bread and wine is truly changed into the body and blood of Jesus.

# Christianity and Religions: Eastern Religions

	Buddhism	Confucianism	Hinduism	Taoism	Shintoism
Founder, date, location, and key information	Gautama Siddhartha (“the Buddha” or “Enlightened One”), ca. 500 BC, southern Nepal	Confucius, sixth century BC, China	between 1800 and 1000 BC, India	Lao Tzu, around the same time Confucianism started in the sixth century BC, China	500 BC or earlier, Japan
Key writings	Various groups of Buddhists have their own scripture collections, which they claim are sayings of Buddha that have been passed down.	The Analects, The Great Learning, The Doctrine of the Mean, Mencius, Book of Filial Piety, the Five Classics	Bhagavad-Gita, Vedas  There are many writings, but these are the most important. The Vedas are the oldest.	Tao Te Ching, Zhuangzi, the Daozang	Kojiki, Jinno Shotoki, as well as the Rikkokushi, containing Shoku Nihongi and Nihon Shoki
Who is God?	Gautama Siddhartha (the Buddha) did not believe in God; however, some Buddhists consider Buddha a god.	Confucius did not talk about God, but he and his disciples and wise men are worshiped in temples today.	Brahman is the great god, the world spirit. Brahman is a universal spirit that every person is a part of, but most people do not realize that. Brahman is manifested in many different gods and goddesses, which people worship.  Hinduism is a combination of pantheism and polytheism.	Some Taoists are atheists, while others worship many gods, including the Jade Emperor and Lao Tzu.	God is not personal but is the force that is in all spirits. All nature has these spirits (kami) in them.  Shintoism combines pantheism and polytheism.  Shintoists also believe the emperor descended from one of the gods.
Who is Jesus?	Jesus is not part of the historic Buddhist worldview. Modern-day Buddhists usually think Jesus was a good teacher or an avatar, but not God.	Jesus is not part of Confucianism.	Jesus was a son of God just as some others are. He was a guru (teacher). He did not rise from the dead, and His death does not pay for the world’s sins.	Jesus is not part of Taoism.	Jesus is not part of Shintoism.
Who is the Holy Spirit?	Spirits exist, but there is no Holy Spirit.	The Holy Spirit is not part of Confucianism.	The Holy Spirit is not part of Hinduism.	The Holy Spirit is not part of Taoism.	The Holy Spirit is not part of Shintoism.

	Buddhism	Confucianism	Hinduism	Taoism	Shintoism
Salvation	The goal of life is nirvana, the state of complete enlightenment and freedom from all desires. This is an escape from suffering. Following the Eightfold Path helps one get rid of desires.	Salvation is not discussed in Confucianism.	A person continues to be reincarnated over and over until he is set free by meditation, yoga, and good works. Final salvation and release from reincarnation is being absorbed into Brahman.	Some Taoists believe immortality may be obtained through prayer, good works, and other rituals.	Salvation is not discussed in Shintoism. Being moral is the purpose of life.
What happens after death?	After death, a person is reincarnated into a different person or life form.	Many Confucians would follow Buddhism on this point. Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism are compatible, and many people hold to all three. Confucius spoke about “heaven,” but only as a spiritual idea.	If a person has been good, he will be reincarnated into a better person and good things will happen to him. If a person has been bad, he will be reincarnated and will pay for past sins by suffering in his next life.	Some Taoists believe in reincarnation, and some have other ideas, such as an afterlife on earth sustained by ancestor worship. Others do not believe in life after death.	A person is transformed into a kami.
How do people know right from wrong?	There is no ultimate source, but the sayings of Buddha are important, as are the Five Virtues.  In general Buddhists seek to do that which minimizes suffering.	Right and wrong are learned from examples of the ancient sages and from individuals and societies that try to live loving and good lives and try to do what is fitting.	Right and wrong are revealed in the Vedas, traditions, teachings of virtuous people, and the conscience.	Right and wrong become known when individuals stop striving.	Shintoism is not concerned with ethics. It is concerned with maintaining harmony with nature and with the kami. Shintoists may follow Buddhism or Confucianism in ethical matters.
Truth	Truth is found through meditation, which brings about clear thinking.	Confucius was very interested in learning and wisdom, but he did not enter into metaphysical discussions of truth.	Whatever the Vedas say is truth.		Shintoism does not tend to deal with philosophical issues like the nature of truth.
Evil	Evil is the pain and suffering that exists in the world and whatever causes this pain.	Evil is not acting in ways that are fitting, good, or righteous.	Evil is anything that goes against the Vedas or other sacred writings. A person’s evil will result in his being reincarnated as a lower life form (such as a worm or a bug) or being reincarnated into a lower caste.	Evil is separation from the Tao through custom and reason.	Evil results from mistakes made in ignorance.
Where do laws come from?	Law is not a major Buddhist concept. The Five Virtues sound like commandments, but they are actually promises a Buddhist makes to himself.	Confucius did not propose an external set of laws. Rather what is fitting might differ with the circumstances.	Laws come from the Vedas and higher caste members, such as priests or rulers.	Taoism is not law oriented.	Shintoism is not concerned with ethics, but laws concerning government and ritual are found in the Engishiki.
Can miracles happen?	Yes, but they are not highly valued.		yes		

	Buddhism	Confucianism	Hinduism	Taoism	Shintoism
<b>What is the meaning of human history?</b>		Confucius did not address this question, but he respected wise men of the past and traditions.	Hindus regard space and time as things that should be escaped. They do not necessarily have meaning.		
<b>How does man get to know God?</b>	Buddhists are agnostic about God, so they do not attempt to know Him.		Yoga unites the human with the divine (Brahman).	Many Taoists do not believe in gods.	Shintoists communicate with the kami, but they do not come to know their gods personally.
<b>What is a human being?</b>	a chimera—a mere emotional, mental, and physical event (In the last analysis there is no such thing as a person.)	not a concern of Confucianism Many followers hold to Buddhist ideas.	an emanation of Brahman like the rest of the universe	an individual self Some Taoists believe the individual is subsumed into the Tao at death.	a part of nature that may become a kami but has little of the kami nature to begin with
<b>Are humans basically good or evil? How bad is the flaw?</b>	Despite surface differences of good or bad, all persons are pure deep down and thus have the potential to transform to goodness.	Humans have flaws, and they need to cultivate virtues.	Humans can be good or evil, but there is no major flaw. If a person does evil in this life, he will be punished in the next. If he does good things in this life, he will be rewarded in the next.	Religious Taoists say that human nature is evil and must be redeemed. Philosophical Taoists teach that humans are already one with the Tao and therefore are good.	Humans are basically good; but the kami is not great in them, and they may not be in harmony with nature.
<b>Is it possible to know anything at all?</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes  However, Shintoism does not concern itself with epistemology (the study of knowledge).
<b>What is real?</b>	reality viewed as a constantly changing process	not a concern of Confucianism	Brahman	the Tao	nature and the kami
<b>Origin of what is real</b>			The physical world emerged from Brahman, who reentered it as the world soul.  Hinduism contains many creation stories and views creation in a cyclical fashion.		Most of the kami and visible world were created through the procreation and other actions of the goddess Izanami and the god Izanagi.
<b>Other facts, beliefs, or practices</b>	The Eightfold Path includes right knowledge, intentions, speech, conduct, livelihood, right effort, mindfulness, and meditation as ways to free oneself from desires.  Some say that all religions are blended into Buddhism, meaning all religions are basically the same.	Confucius emphasized loving and honoring one's parents and ancestors.	Some Hindus shave their heads, wear orange robes, and beg for money or food in the streets as a way of atoning for sins. Many Hindus still worship false gods made of wood or stone in their temples. Yoga is important as a means of meditation.  Hinduism is the basis of New Age religions and transcendental meditation.	During the Qingming Festival, a yearly festival held in April, people offer food to spirits of the dead and celebrate the renewal of nature.	Even today international Japanese companies, such as Toyota, will perform rituals on their buildings and cars to cleanse them from evil spirits.

# Christianity and Religions: Philosophies and Religious Systems

	Atheism	Epicureanism	Pantheism	Polytheism	Stoicism	Zoroastrianism
Founder, date, location, and key information		Epicurus, ca. 307 BC, Italy			Zeno of Citium, third century BC, Athens	Zoroaster, sixth century BC, Persia
Key writings		"On the Nature of Things" (poem by Lucretius), writings by other Epicurean philosophers			writings of Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, Seneca; Diogenes Laertius's "Life of Zeno" in <i>Lives of the Eminent Philosophers</i>	Avesta
Who is God?	There is no God.	There are many gods, but they have physical, not spiritual, bodies. They do not influence or care about human life. They did not create the universe.	God is infinite, but He is not personal. "All is God; God is all." Humans, trees, animals, and stars are all God, as everything else is God.	There are multiple gods.  Usually only one or two gods are seriously worshiped. In return for worship, the gods protect humans and offer special benefits for their followers.	God is a force active in all of nature. This force may also be called fate. Stoicism is closely related to pantheism.	Ahura Mazda is the good god who struggles against an equally powerful evil being, Ahriman.
Who is Jesus?	Jesus of Nazareth is a historical figure.	Jesus is not part of Epicureanism.	Jesus is not part of pantheism, except in the sense that everything is part of God.		Jesus is not part of Stoicism.	Zoroastrianism predates Jesus and so does not have a view of Him, though today many Zoroastrians are willing to see all or many religions as valid paths to God.
Who is the Holy Spirit?	The Holy Spirit does not exist.	The Holy Spirit is not part of Epicureanism.			The Holy Spirit is not part of Stoicism.	The Holy Spirit is not part of Zoroastrianism.



	Atheism	Epicureanism	Pantheism	Polytheism	Stoicism	Zoroastrianism
Salvation	There is no need to be saved since there is no God, heaven, or hell.	Since there is no life after death, there is no need to be saved.	Pantheists have various views about what salvation is (if it exists) and how it can be obtained.	Different polytheistic religions have various methods of salvation.	The only thing to be saved from is wrong emotions. A Stoic believes he can control his own will so that he is happy in any situation.	Salvation is achieved by being a righteous person.
What happens after death?	Death is permanent; there is no afterlife. At death a person simply does not exist anymore.	There is no life after death.	A person is either reincarnated or absorbed into God.	A person's soul goes to the "place of the dead."	Souls of all men, according to some Stoics, or of wise men, according to others, live on after death until the end of all things.	After death, people face judgment with the righteous being admitted to heaven and the wicked consigned to hell.
How do people know right from wrong?	People know right from wrong by using their minds to observe their experiences and the world around them.	What is right is what brings peace of mind and pleasure. What is wrong brings pain or displeasure and troubled thoughts.	Right and wrong do not exist—they are only mental concepts.	People know right from wrong by using their minds to observe their experiences and the world around them or by revelation from the gods.	Appropriate actions are determined through reason.	Right and wrong are learned at least in part from the Avesta.
Truth	Humans make their own truth, mainly through science and reason. Truth is whatever the best explanation is.	Truth corresponds with reality and is discerned by reason.	Truth is an illusion; it does not really exist.	Ultimate reality is truth.	Truth is the nature of things, which is to be accepted with objectivity.	Zoroastrians are dualists, and this implies some view of truth and falsehood, but modern Zoroastrians may also be relativistic when it comes to religion.
Evil	Evil is anything that is destructive.	Evil is anything that brings displeasure or pain.	Evil does not exist. It is an illusion.	Evil exists, but it is possible to overcome it.	Evil is only a product of human ignorance of the reason in nature.	Evil originates from Ahriman and is always in a struggle against good.
Where do laws come from?	Humans make laws.	Laws are just rules made by man, but they should not be broken because punishment would cause pain and unhappiness.	Laws are human made, but since the whole world is just an illusion, they are not important.	The gods/goddesses decide what the laws are.	Laws come from nature.	Law is not a focus of Zoroastrianism.
Can miracles happen?	no	no	Yes, but they are an illusion.	yes	no	not an aspect of Zoroastrianism

	Atheism	Epicureanism	Pantheism	Polytheism	Stoicism	Zoroastrianism
What is the meaning of human history?	History continues to repeat itself but has no significant meaning.	Epicureans were not concerned with the meaning of history.	History is an illusion and has no significant meaning.	The purpose of history cannot be known.	All that happens is preordained by fate.	History shows the struggle between good and evil.
How does man get to know God?	There is no God to know.	The gods are not interested in knowing man or man's knowing them.	God is all and all is God, so to know God, a person should look both within himself and at the world around him.	Each deity can be known by reverencing its worship system.	God is another name for the spirit that is in nature. Man gets to know nature by reason and observation.	Zoroastrianism does not stress personal knowledge of God.
What is a human being?	a highly evolved life form	a physical being made of atoms	the essence of God	a creation of the gods	a product of nature	Humans have a body with a soul.  The soul will live forever in heaven or hell.
Are humans basically good or evil? How bad is the flaw?	Humans may be either good or bad, but evil in humans can be amended.	People are basically good. If they know what is good, they will do it.	Humans are basically good; however, they may be confused by the illusion of the world and become flawed. The flaw is also an illusion.	Humans can be either good or evil, but there is no basic flaw.	Humans are basically evil because they are born ignorant. Logic and reason can remove evil from a person.	Humans struggle between good and evil tendencies. They must choose the good to be saved.
Is it possible to know anything at all?	Man can only know what he uses his mind and reasoning to know.	Yes, man can know things through reason.	The only thing that is real is man's recognition of godhood. Nothing else is real—just an illusion.	Man can know things by using his mind to observe his experiences and the world around him and by receiving revelation from the gods.	Yes, man can know things through reason.	Epistemology is not a major concern of Zoroastrianism.
What is real?	what one can see and know through science and observation	the material world	only God  Everything else is an illusion.	the gods and the cosmos	nature and what is observable	both the spiritual and physical world
Origin of what is real	Atheists believe in evolution and the big bang theory. Eventually the universe will implode in some way, and everything will cease to exist.	The material world has always existed.	God is the only thing that is real.	There are many stories and myths about where things came from.	The earth always was. It was not created or suddenly came to be.	Good spirits and good things in the world were created by Ahura Mazda. Bad spirits and bad things in the world were created by Ahriman. Ahura Mazda and Ahriman are both eternal.
Other facts, beliefs, or practices		The objective of life is to seek true happiness.				