



Monotheistic Religions

Abrahamic Religions



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Grade Level	10th – 12th Grade	Time Frame	85 minutes
Subject	Social Studies	Duration	1 session
Course	World History		

Essential Question

How do the connections and distinctions between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam shape our understanding of history, belief systems, and cultural interactions?

Summary

Students take on the role of detectives and investigate the core beliefs, practices, and historical development of the three major monotheistic religions: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. During their investigation, students will uncover similarities and differences among these faiths, explore the cultural and historical impact of each, and present their findings as if solving a case. By piecing together evidence, students will gain a deeper understanding of the influence and impact of monotheism in world history.

Snapshot

Engage

Students activate prior knowledge by brainstorming everything they know about Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in a timed **Collective Brain Dump**, setting the stage for inquiry.

Explore

Students analyze case files and research assigned religions using a **Jigsaw** approach, piecing together historical and theological details to reconstruct missing information.

Explain

Students will jigsaw their research into a concise, visual one-slide summary, identifying key aspects of each religion and making connections across traditions.

Extend

Students apply their understanding by constructing a **Detective Board** using yarn and text connections, visually mapping shared elements and distinctions between the religions.

Evaluate

Students present their Detective Boards and reflect on their discoveries in a written **3-2-1** exit ticket, explaining the most surprising or impactful findings.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards (6-12)

CLR401: Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages

CLR402: Draw logical conclusions in somewhat challenging passages

IDT403: Summarize key supporting ideas and details in somewhat challenging passages

REL402: Identify clear comparative relationships in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: World History (9th through 12th grade))

WH.1.2: Describe the origins, major beliefs, spread and lasting impact of the world's major religions and philosophies, including Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, and Sikhism.

Attachments

- [Christianity Dossier.docx](#)
- [Christianity Dossier.pdf](#)
- [Islam Dossier.docx](#)
- [Islam Dossier.pdf](#)
- [Judaism Dossier.docx](#)
- [Judaism Dossier.pdf](#)
- [Key Notes Shared Slides.pptx](#)
- [Lesson Slides.pptx](#)
- [Monotheism Mission Briefing.docx](#)
- [Monotheism Mission Briefing.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson slides (attached)
- Case File: Comprised of Case Dossiers for each of the three belief systems and the Mission Briefing. Attached (one packet for each group of two or three students)
- Balls
- Poster-sized Sticky Notes
- Markers
- Tape/Thumbtacks
- Yarn (3 colors)
- Laptops or Chromebooks

5 minutes

Engage

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to facilitate the following lesson. Begin the lesson by showing **slides 2-4**, which introduce the title of the lesson, the essential question, and the learning objectives. Emphasize that the essential question will be addressed throughout the lesson.

Assign students to pairs or groups of three. Each group should choose a member to serve as the recorder and write down the group's ideas. Display **slide 5** explaining the directions for the [Collective Brain Dump](#) strategy. Play the embedded time tracker video for five minutes. The student pairs or groups are to brainstorm all they know about the religions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Then, each group will have a representative share out their ideas to the rest of the class.

Teacher's Note:

Use this activity to assess prior knowledge and prepare students for exploration.

15 minutes

Explore

Display **slide 6** to introduce the investigative premise: historical files on monotheistic religions have been stolen, and the students must recover the missing information.

Distribute Case Files to each group. Each Case File includes a **Mission Challenge** that tasks students with recovering lost historical details and making connections between different religious traditions. Explain their mission: to identify the similarities and differences of each religion. Groups may assign dossiers to each person in the group.

Students will now begin to [jigsaw](#) and take time to individually research their assigned religion using the information sheet in the Case File. Number off each group from 1 to 7. Display **slide 7**. Using the Dossiers as a primary source, each group will focus on one key aspect across their assigned religions (below):

1. Origins
2. Sacred Texts
3. Beliefs about God
4. Prophets and Key Figures
5. Practices and Rituals
6. Ethical Teachings
7. Historical Interactions

Teacher's Note:

Organize all resources into manila folders labeled "Case Files" containing Dossiers on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These will serve as the primary source document for students.

25 minutes

Explain

Students regroup based on their assigned Dossier (Judaism, Christianity, or Islam) and participate in a [Hot Potato](#) review activity. Display **slide 8**. The facilitator passes out a ball (hot potato) to a participant and calls out a number, assigning the first student to begin sharing key findings on a designated topic (e.g., Origins, Sacred Texts, Core Beliefs). After that student has shared their findings on their designated topic, they then pass the ball (the hot potato) to a peer, who adds relevant details or clarifications. Once this student has completed his contribution, the process continues until the facilitator introduces a new topic, prompting a new assigned student to start the discussion. After the review, groups synthesize their findings into a concise, visual on **Key Notes Shared e-Slide Summary** that highlights major takeaways.

Students will then return to their original group. Display **slide 9**.

Each group creates a *one-slide summary* to represent their religion's origins, sacred texts, beliefs, key figures, and practices visually. Students should also cite *at least two credible sources* to validate their information.

Provide adequate time for students to contribute to the shared slides document.

Teacher's Note:

Model how to link common components across the three religions (e.g., monotheism, shared figures like Abraham).

10 minutes

Extend

Transition to **slide 10** and introduce the instructional strategy [Detective Board](#). Ask if anyone has heard of a detective board before and allow time to discuss if they have. Then, provide a more foundational image of a detective board by showing students the "[Peter Makes and Evidence Board || The Amazing Spider-Man 2 \(2014\)](#)" clip.

Display **slide 11** and instruct students to return to their original groups. Distribute *Post-It Posters*, three skeins (bunch) of different colored yarn, markers, scissors, and tape.

Groups will then construct their *Detective Boards*, visually linking key religious concepts using text and yarn connections.

As they work, students will assign a group member to act as their "lead detective." The rest of the class designates one peer per group to act as a "prosecutor." Prosecutors will circulate and or listen to group presentations-in-progress and ask challenging questions, pushing groups to justify their choices and make deeper connections. They might ask questions like "*Why do you think Abraham is a central figure in all three religions?*" or "*How is your yarn connection between law and ethics across traditions supported by evidence?*"

Once the boards have been completed and discussions have occurred, each group should finalize and prepare to present their board in the next phase.

Teacher's Note:

As an alternative or supplement to the mock trial-style interaction, teachers may opt for a "**detective team discussion**" format. In this version, groups remain seated around their board and engage in a **collaborative debrief**, much like detectives around a case wall in a TV show or film. Students sift through their "evidence" (dossiers, quotes, concepts), debate theories, and justify decisions out loud. This format supports classroom dynamics where a mock trial may not be ideal, while still encouraging critical dialogue, teamwork, and the evaluation of claims.

10 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 12**. Students will present their detective boards, explaining their findings and key discoveries.

The teacher will assess learning through:

- Student presentations
- Detective boards as artifacts of learning
- Group discussions captured via *Swivl Multi-Mic Mode* for later review.

Finally, students will reflect on their learning via a [3-2-1](#) instructional strategy. Display **slide 13** and encourage students to respond individually to the following prompts:

- What are **3** things you learned?
- What are **2** things you are still considering?
- What was **1** thing you found most surprising or impactful during your investigation?

Teacher's Note:

A **3-2-1** handout is attached to this lesson, but you can also use sticky notes, half-sheets, or even whole sheets of scrap paper for the activity.

Resources

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- Wright, N. T. (2003). *The resurrection of the Son of God*. Fortress Press.