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**Sunday School**

# World Religions Teacher's Guide



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# World Religion Teacher's Guide

## World Religions Sunday School Lessons - Introduction

This is an eight lesson Sunday School series on World Religions. It is intended for students from age 12-16, but they can be easily adjusted for older individuals as well. The purpose of these lessons is to introduce different religions to students while seeking to anchor them in the truth of Christianity. We live in an increasingly global culture, which leads to greater exposure to world religions than in previous generations. These lessons are designed to stir up discussion and point students to the truth of the Gospel as taught in the Bible. These lessons do not dive deeply into other religions but gives basic information about different religions and how those beliefs compare with the teachings in the Bible.

You don't need to have prior knowledge about the religions covered in this series. The lessons provide you with enough structure and information to lead the class. It is likely that students will ask specific questions about religions, which you may not know the answers to. Feel free to let students know you don't know the ins and outs of each religion. The goal is not to fully understand each of the religions covered but to provide space for discussion and learning. As you teach this lesson series, keep in mind that it is by the grace of God we know Jesus Christ is *"the way, the truth, and the life"* (John 14:6). It is easy to look at others' beliefs and be critical or demeaning. This may also be the tendency of your students. Focus on how you can model a confidence in the truth of the Bible's message while also not demeaning others individual's beliefs.

Each lesson will center on answering how different religions answer four big life questions:

1. What is the origin of life?
2. What is the meaning of life?
3. What is right and wrong?
4. What happens after death?

The above questions provide a framework as you teach this series. In addition to the lessons, a Teacher's Guide is provided to help answer questions as well as additional directions for each lesson. The Teacher's Guide is meant only to be a guide so use as needed. If you are looking for a brief resource to assist you as you teach this series, consider *"World Religions: From a Christian Perspective"* by Walk Thru the Bible. Walk Thru the Bible also has very helpful charts comparing each of the world religions covered in this series at: [www.walkthru.org/wr](http://www.walkthru.org/wr).

### Lesson Overview:

Lesson 1: One Path or Many Paths to Life?

Lesson 2: The Good News: Christianity

Lesson 3: Is there Truth? - New Age Spirituality

Lesson 4: One God, No Jesus: Islam and Judaism

Lesson 5: Are they Christian? - Mormonism and Jehovah Witness

Lesson 6: Many gods: Eastern Religions of Hinduism and Buddhism

Lesson 7: Where They Stand: Comparing Religions

Lesson 8: Why are there so many religions? Living with Boldness and Humility



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## Lesson 1: One Path or Many Paths to Life?

Recommended Age/Class: 12-16 years old

### Objectives:

- There is one true path to restored relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
- Satan has deceived many into believing there are many paths that lead to God.
- Distinguishing between true and false paths to God.

### Opening Activity:

- How many answers are there to the equation  $5x=10$ ?
- How many wrong answers are there to the same equations?

### Teacher talk:

The gospel of Jesus Christ is offensive and seen as mean by some because it teaches Jesus as the only way to eternal life. Just like the math equation, if there is only one correct answer the math teacher should kindly and patiently help their students learn the correct answer not just allow any answer in an effort to make students feel good.

### Lesson Content:

- Two supernatural powers exist. God, who is the all-powerful righteous creator and Satan, who is a powerful created being full of wickedness. God and Satan are not equal in power, strength or authority. God is supreme over all things including Satan.
- Every person as they walk through life has an awareness either conscious or unconscious that “something is wrong.” We look around and see pain, suffering, fear, and try to explain why these things are present in our world and what the solution is for these challenges. The following eight lessons are designed to consider the ways different religions answer some of life’s most important questions such as:
  1. The origin of life.
  2. The meaning of life.
  3. What is right and wrong?
  4. What happens after death?
- God and Satan both desire the heart of man. God’s message is straightforward while Satan’s message is meant to distract us from truth. Satan gives the human heart lots of options and presents himself as the great liberator. He says “do good, follow your heart and you will enter heaven” whereas God says “follow me and I will give you rest”.

### Scripture:

*Matthew 7:13-20* “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. 15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

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## Discussion Questions:

1. What do people tend to pursue in life?  
Possible Answer: comfort, pleasure, happiness, connection with others
2. There are two ways identified in verses 13 and 14. What do these verses tell us is different about the two paths?  
Possible Answer: One is narrow one is broad. One leads to destruction and many will be on this path. One is full of life yet few will travel this path.
3. What do the paths in these verses represent?  
Possible Answer: There are two ways to live. We can live according to the rule of the Prince of this World, Satan or We can live according the to rule of God and His example in Jesus. These path's with two different master's (God and Satan), two different ways of living and two different destinations heaven or hell.
4. How do false prophets use people's desires (look at answers to question 1) to deceive them into staying on the path to destruction?  
Possible Answer: Give people a distorted version of these desires. These desires are not bad, in fact, they are God-given desires that are meant to lead us to Jesus. Satan sells a version of these desires that is temporary and ends with pain. False prophets tell individuals that comfort, pleasure, happiness and connection come from doing what feels goods and seems right in their own eyes. False prophets are good at convincing us we are justified in what we are doing and rather than teaching what is true even when it is difficult to hear. (Proverbs 12:15, 21:2)
5. When you travel, you will periodically come across signs telling you where you are going. Why would someone stay on a path that takes him or her in the wrong direction?  
Possible Answer: The signs are misleading or false. ("This way is fun or This way leads to Heaven...") Another reason for staying on the wrong path could be the individual is not paying attention, distracted, and not focused on their destination.
6. What are reasons someone would tell you the path they are traveling leads to eternity with God when it does not?  
Possible Answer: They are deceived. They are trying to trick you. Satan tells others and us these lies in an effort to secure our destruction.
7. How do you identify a false prophet? Or a path that leads to destruction vs. a path that leads to life?  
Possible Answer: Ask very specific questions about their belief about Jesus. Such as:
  - i. Is Jesus the Son of God?
  - ii. Is faith in Jesus' shed blood the only way to eternal life with God?
  - iii. Is Jesus God?
  - iv. Was Jesus created or has He always been?

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## Call to Salvation:

The Bible is clear-there is only one way to God. Jesus very clearly tells us in *John 14:6* that He is the only way to God. *John 14:6* "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Satan attempts to play off our desires to do what we want and still enjoy eternity in heaven. Satan presents this as a possible option but we must heed the warning in *Matthew 7* that the broad way, though inviting, leads to bondage in this life and eternal destruction. If we desire life and eternity in Heaven, it only comes through a relationship with Jesus Christ. He is the narrow path. It may seem restrictive but He actually gives abundant life.

1. What are common messages from culture and "the flesh" Satan desires to promote?  
Possible Answer: There is no false path. Your feelings and desires are what is most important. Be a good person. If you believe in one way to heaven, you are mean. Do what you want and you will be happy.
2. What false paths do you think Satan would use to deceive you and others who grow up in church?  
Possible Answer: He might try to convince you that being nice is good enough. (Ex: You are a good person. Just be nice and God will accept you. If you go to church, you are fine. Christianity is just a list of rules.) Alternatively, Satan might try to convince you God will not be able to love you. (Ex: You will never be good enough. You must be perfect before coming to Jesus. God is a distant, mean God who only loves good people.)
3. Where does "good fruit" and "evil fruit" come from? *Matthew 7:17-18*  
Answer: Fruit comes from the tree. *Matthew 7* reminds us we can look at the fruit of teachers to determine if they are pointing toward the path that leads to life or the path that leads to destruction. We must be aware only God is able to turn an evil tree into a good tree. We cannot behave our way into becoming a "good tree" nor does our behavior always display the nature of what kind of tree we are.

## Activity: Treasure Hunt

Your goal is to find the treasure in less than 10 minutes using no more than 15 questions. Once you think you know the location of the treasure, you can check the location. If you are correct, you can have the treasure. If you are incorrect, you can use the remaining time and question to continue looking. You can also only check three locations during the course of the activity.

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## Material:

- 2 “Treasures”
  - One Represents Life: Ex. candy, Bible, etc.
  - One Represents Death: Ex. bag of sand, dead flower, etc.
  - The teacher should decide what they want the treasure to be prior to the lesson. Then place the two treasures in different locations in the church building or classroom.
- Instructions: (For Teachers)
  - Teacher 1 should stand in front of the class giving instructions for the activity while Teacher 2 sits with the other students listening to the instructions.
  - Teacher 1 will tell the class they are doing a treasure hunt.
  - Teacher 1 tells the students they should work together to find the treasure. Students have 10 minutes and can ask 10 questions to help them find the treasure.
  - Teacher 2 will give answers and direction to the true treasure representing life. (Analogous to the truth and the narrow path)
  - Teacher 1 will give answers and direction to the false treasure representing death. (Analogous to the false prophet giving what appears to be helpful direction but does not actually lead to the treasure.)
  - The hope is the students will direct their questions to Teacher 1 since they are leading the activity.
  - Teacher 1 should time the activity and put a tally mark on the board to represent the number of questions the students have asked.
- Instruction: (For Students)
  - Your goal is to find the treasure in less than 10 minutes using no more than 15 questions. Once you think you know the location of the treasure, you can check the location. If you are correct, you can have the treasure. If you are incorrect, you can use the remaining time and question to continue looking. You can also only check three locations during the course of the activity.
- Discussion:
  - What are takeaways from the activity?
  - What would have been questions you could have asked to ensure you were on the path you wanted to be on?
  - What are questions you could ask to help discern your spiritual direction and if the path you are on is heading where you want to end up?
  - Discuss about how different world religions believe they are true but the Bible tells us there is only one true path to life and a right relationship with God.

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## Lesson 2: The Good News

Recommended Age/Class: 12-16 years old

### Objectives:

Five central realities of The Gospel:

1. Man is dead in sin.
2. Christ as the Rescuer.
3. Salvation through faith in Christ.
4. Faith producing fruit.
5. Eternity with the Lord.

### Opening Activity:

- Material: rock, living bug, plant, dead bug
- How do you distinguish between what is dead and what is alive?
  - o Signs of Life: grow, reproduce, respond to environment, use energy
  - o The point – Life is complex!
  - o The Gospel is a message of hope. The Messiah has come and has brought life to the spiritually dead.

### Lesson Content:

- The Bible teaches that humans are inherently evil because of “the fall” in *Genesis 3*. Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden of Eden has affected all generations since. Each of us have inherited a spiritually dead and desperately wicked heart. The evil we see around us originates from within us. This is not to diminish Satan’s evil influence on the world or individuals. He has played a role in the evil within us from the time he deceived both Adam and Eve. (*Genesis 3:1-8*) The reality of the human heart paints a hopeless picture. Man’s problem is our broken relationship with God because of our sin. We enter the world wicked and needing rescued from our wickedness.
- In the midst of this bleak picture, God provides a way to be in right relationship with Him through His son, Jesus Christ. A soul must recognize their brokenness, repent and turn to Christ. Through faith in Jesus Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, the unconverted heart is brought to life. The Believer, one who has faith in Christ’s work, is given Jesus Christ’s righteousness and through His righteousness is reconciled to God. . (*Philippians 3:9*) This reconciliation leads to living a sanctified life where we live more and more inline with Christ and His teachings. (*Romans 8:29* and *2 Corinthians 3:18*)
- The converted person grows in their love for and desire to honor God. Though converted, they continue to battle the flesh and will not obtain perfection in this life. Yet they strive to follow God’s instruction for life. This means they seek to be ruled by God’s law even where it is contrary to their own desires. As they walk with the Lord, their desires will come more and more in line with God’s desires.
- Due to Christ bringing life to the believer’s heart, they are to live as one in God’s Kingdom wherever they go through seeking their life as a reflection of Christ. The Gospel Message:
  1. Man is dead in sin and without hope.
  2. Christ lived a sinless life and gave us the perfect example of how to live. He brought God’s Kingdom to us so we can share it with others. He paid the debt of sin for those who believe in Him and rescued us from Satan’s grasp.
  3. Man is brought to life through faith in Jesus Christ’s work on the cross. (Justification)

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4. The “saved” live a life more and more devoted to God. (Sanctification)
5. Eternity in Heaven awaits the “saved”.

## Scripture:

*Ephesians 2:1-10* “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”

## Discussion Questions:

1. How does *Ephesians 2:1-3* describe the unconverted person?  
Possible Answer: Dead in trespasses and sins. Not considering what God wants but rather what they want. Being under God’s wrath and in bondage to Satan.
2. What do you notice in your daily life that shows the reality of man’s problem? (sin, tragedy, etc.)  
Possible Answer: Rebellion against authority: parents, teachers, laws. People treating each other in hurtful, disrespectful, mean ways. Living with a focus on the vanities of this world. Ruled by their own lust or selfishness.
3. What must happen for a soul to shift from death to life? (*Ephesians 2:4-9*)  
Possible Answer: God must be merciful and full of love. God must bring life to the dead soul.
  - i. “Quickened” from verse 5 means: “to make alive”. God must bring the spiritually dead soul to life.
  - ii. They must shift from living under Satan’s rule and authority to living under God’s rule and authority. For God’s wrath to be removed toward an individual and their sin the individual must place their faith in Christ. They must believe that Jesus Christ is God’s Son and paid the sin debt for them on the cross where His blood was shed and He died in their place. They must trust Jesus as their Messiah. This leads to the individual shifting from living under Satan’s rule and authority to living under God’s rule and authority. Only Jesus’s death can satisfy God’s wrath because Jesus is 100% righteous and not tainted with sin. (*John 3:36*)
4. What is God’s solution to man’s problem?  
Answer: Jesus
5. What keeps man from seeking this solution?  
Possible Answer: Dead people don’t see. (*Eph. 2:1*) The spiritually dead cannot see their sin or their need for Jesus. If by some miracle they are able to see their sin or need, they have no desire to shift from being ruled by their sinful desires. Man wants to live according to our own desires and ways rather than God’s.
6. How would you summarize what these verses say about right and wrong?  
Possible Answer: First, there is a clear distinction between right and wrong. What is right and wrong is not up for individual interpretation; rather right and wrong are defined by God. An individual is able to be right with God through submitting to His authority.

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7. What is the significance of salvation coming through faith and not of works?

Possible Answer: Verse 9 gives us a helpful clue here. Man tends to see life through a “if I do something, then I should get something”. In most of life this is relatively true. If you study hard, you are more likely to get a good grade on your test. If you complete your chores, then you can play. The Gospel works differently. What we need to be in right relationship with God is impossible so we must have this work done for us. We are entirely dependent on God to do in us what we cannot do. This should bring the converted soul to a place of gratitude and worship. Salvation being of faith and not works is of great significance because it keeps anyone from thinking they deserve or have earned salvation. No one deserves salvation and no one could ever earn salvation. It is a humbling thing to be given such an awesome gift.

8. What does this tell us about the Bible's teaching on where life originates?

Possible Answer: In this passage, life originates with and from God. This is true from the very beginning. God is the creator and sustainer of life.

9. What do verses 6 and 7 tell us about life in Christ?

Possible Answer: In Christ we are given life and a different focus. A focus on what God wants rather than what we want. The believer sees Jesus and the wonder of His grace and kindness toward us.

## Call to Salvation:

Christianity believes that sin separates man from God and this separation can only be removed through placing one's faith in Jesus Christ. Christianity teaches that life's ultimate purpose is to acknowledge our brokenness, turn to Christ for healing, and to live in communion with Him. (*Philippians 3:7-14*)

Jesus has paid the penalty for sin through living a perfect life and yet dying on a cruel cross.

- Why was Jesus' sacrifice necessary?

Possible Answer: God is holy and cannot accept or be in the presence of sin. Therefore, He was not able to be in communion with man. The only way man could be reconciled to God was if the penalty of man's sin was paid and man was rescued from the grasp of Satan. This means death had to occur either the death of all humankind apart from God or a perfect substitute for man had to be made. Jesus was this perfect substitute who was able to bear the penalty of man's sin because He was and is perfect. (*Hebrews 9:11-15*) Through Christ we are able to live as we were originally created to live, in harmony with others and God.

- The Greek word translated to Gospel means “the good news” - why is the Gospel good news?

Possible Answer: It is good news that man can be reconciled to God. The Gospel is good news because apart from Jesus rescuing us, we have no hope.

## Christian Worldview:

1. Origin of Life: Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Ghost as Creator of all things. (*Genesis 1:1*)
2. Purpose of Life: Glorify or bring Honor to God through yielding to Him and living according to His will. (*Isaiah 43:6,7, Ecclesiastes 12:13*)
3. Right from Wrong: Right and wrong are outlined and defined by God through the teachings of the Bible. (*Psalms 119:105*)
4. After Death: After death, there are two eternal destinations. Heaven awaits those who have been redeemed through faith in Jesus Christ and Hell awaits those who never turned to Christ. (*John 3:14-21*)

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## **Activity:** Death to Life

This activity is meant to show the miracle of salvation. Demonstrating how faith in Christ brings life to the lifeless heart. You will use a glove to represent the unconverted soul being unable to please the Lord. Then once you put your hand in the glove, the glove becomes full of life.

Material: one glove

### Instruction:

- Lay the empty glove on the floor or table and ask it to do something.
- Encourage the students to give the glove instruction as well, seeing if they can get it to do what they want without touching the glove.
- Once you have sufficiently demonstrated the glove is incapable of doing anything, then put the glove on.
- Then give it instruction and demonstrate how the glove now has ability because of the hand's presence. This represents what happens when God brings life to a dead heart and fills it with The Holy Spirit.

### Discussion:

- What are takeaways from the activity?
- Why do you think the Bible describes the human heart as dead and lifeless prior to conversion, even though unconverted people can do things, even seemingly good things?
- Do you think this is a good analogy for salvation and how faith in Christ brings life? Why or why not?

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## Lesson 3: Is there Truth? New Age Spirituality

Recommended Age/Class: 12-16 years old

### Objectives:

- New Age spirituality worldview - What do they believe?
- The appeal of this belief system.
- Dangers of this belief system.
- Where this worldview collides with Christianity.

### Opening Activity:

- Material: Connect Four Game (*If you do not have a Connect Four Game you could do something on the white board such as Hang Man.*)
- Ask for two volunteers to play the game. After they are finished, ask for two other students to play and ignore all the rules.
  - o Do rules constrict or provide freedom?

### Lesson Content:

- The New Age Spirituality belief system is difficult to define, as there are many different labels and nuances of beliefs. New Age Spirituality is not necessarily an organized religion. Someone holding to this view would likely be open to the existence of spiritual forces, yet they would deny anything as having absolute authority.
- A common belief is there is no “absolute truth”. No “absolute truth” means there is nothing that is true for all people at all times; instead, truth is what each individual deems as true. This leads to teaching tolerance and allowing each person to live, as they desire without pushing specific beliefs or views on someone else. Rather than focusing on what someone believes, they would focus on how someone is to live. One’s life goal would be to love others and find their true self. Finding your true self leads to living consistent with their desires and not be ruled by society or what others might desire for them.
- On the surface, this worldview can seem right and good. At times, it will even present itself as a form of Christianity. Some who ascribe to this view can appreciate the Bible’s moral teachings on loving and serving others. However, they would not believe in the Bible as the inspired word of God. Nor would they agree with all of the teachings of the Bible but would pick and choose what teachings they like and discard teachings they do not like.
- It is difficult to define what someone from this worldview believes because everyone’s belief would be somewhat different. Some believe in a God, where others do not. Some would value parts of the Bible, where others would not. This worldview says the most important thing is to be true to one’s self and show kindness to others.

### New Age Worldview:

1. Origin of Life: They are not sure and would say there are a lot of opinions so don’t worry about it.
2. Purpose of Life: Love other people and live in harmony.
  - a. Find your true desires and live them out.
3. Right from Wrong: Everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion about right and wrong as long as it does not interfere with someone else.
4. Life after death: Beliefs vary, but in general, most believe that all end up in a pleasant eternal home.

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## Scripture:

*Matt 22:37-40* "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

## Discussion Questions:

1. What might someone who agrees with the New Age Spirituality worldview agree with from *Matthew 22:37-40*?  
Possible Answer: They would agree with the second commandment to love others as yourself. They would see value in treating others well. They would do this because they value interacting with others in a kind way.
  - They might even agree with the first commandment to love God with heart, soul and mind. However, they would define God in a way that is outside of the Bible. They might say "I love and follow God", "God is Love" and "I love Him and others". The New Age Spirituality worldview agrees with the idea of being "moral" but they do not agree that God has defined what is right and wrong, sin, or God's punishment of evil.
2. In what ways does New Age Spirituality sound similar to Christianity?  
Possible Answer: In general, both worldviews call individuals to love. Being a nice person is ultimate goal of New Age Spirituality. This can sound similar to what Christians are called to be but the **motive** for loving other is vastly different. What it means to love is also vastly different. Ex: the Christian is to be motivated by a love for God and a desire to please Him. The New Age person is motivated by the desire to be nice. This leads to very different definitions of "love". The Christian defines love as helping people see, worship and submit to the God of the Bible. At times this will mean providing correction, warning, and chastisement. A New Age person defines "love" as accepting other people and their beliefs. They would say there is no "right" or "wrong" outside of being nice to others. A New Age person would also define love as helping others feel comfortable.
3. In what ways does this viewpoint sound appealing? (*Try to stay focused on what is appealing about this worldview without talking about what it wrong with it or why it is not consistent. This is the focus of the next question.*)  
Possible Answer: The appeal of this worldview is that there is nothing deemed as wrong other than being hurtful toward others. New Age Spirituality ascribe to tolerance and loving others. They are often very kind and genuine individuals who care about others. They don't judge other peoples' actions or beliefs; meaning they don't think they are in a position to tell someone what they should or shouldn't do. As you can imagine, this is very appealing for individuals because it gives people the freedom to do whatever they want, as long as they are tolerant of others.
4. Would you see any dangers in this worldview?  
Possible Answer: There is no truth. The very belief system this worldview is built on is a world where there is no right or wrong. New Age Spirituality would say truth is subjective and therefore can be different from one person to another. What is right for one person can be wrong for another. The ultimate goal is to live at peace with other people. This worldview leads people to pursue what is important to them rather than to pursue what God says/wants. The danger of the New Age worldview is it places man in the position of God and redefines God into a someone He is not.
5. Could someone follow this type of belief system and believe they are a Christian? How so?  
Possible Answer: Unfortunately, the answer is yes. Satan is very good at deception and he has been able to get many to move away from the Bible's description of God into viewing God as they want Him to be. This leads people to focus on aspects of who God is from the Bible while discarding others. This leads people to developing a picture of

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God and what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ which is not consistent with the Bible. Human beings don't like being told they are doing something wrong or that there is a law they must follow. The Bible tells us sin in real and sin is anything that separates us from God. The Bible also tells us we have sin within us and that we are drawn toward sin. The Bible tells us hell awaits for those who do not submit to His ways and His way is faith in Jesus Christ. This is a hard message for humans who want to be in charge so much that we will redefine truth.

6. What might someone who agrees with the “New Age Spirituality” worldview disagree with or have a different interpretation of from *Matthew 22:37-40*?

Possible Answer: They would likely have a difficult time with verse 37. If they didn't have a difficult time with this verse it would be because they have developed a view of what verse 37 means. For example, they may define God as “whatever you want it to be”. For them they would not care if you define God as family, a higher power, the god of Islam, The Christian God, love, money, .... Once you have redefined God into whatever you want Him to be then it redefines all four of these verses.

Possible Answer: They would also redefine what it means to love into trying to make sure you and others are comfortable. Which is nowhere close to the biblical definition of love. It redefines commandments into “good ideas to consider”. There is no space for laws or prophets which distinguish right from wrong. Redefining God unravels the whole Bible and life as we know it. While the concept of tolerance and no absolute truth is appealing, it is impossible in real life.

**If time allows:** read *Matthew 7* and circle what someone from a New Age Spirituality worldview would support. Then underline other parts of *Matthew 7* someone from the New Age Spirituality perspective would likely disregard.

- What do you notice from this exercise?

## Call to Salvation:

One of the fundamental teachings of Christianity is due to Adam and Eve's sin in *Genesis 3*, humans are inherently evil and need to be rescued from Satan and themselves. This core teaching in Christianity is in direct opposition to the New Age Spirituality worldview.

- Christianity Teaches: You are in need of being reconciled to God through placing your faith in Jesus Christ. Through faith in Christ we are reconciled to God (*Romans 3:23-28*) and then through God working in us we are to love and serve others. (*Ephesians 2:1-13*) Read the verses in *Matthew 22:37-40* and have students focus on the order: first love God and then love others.
- New Age Spirituality Teaches: First, you are a good person and then second, go love other people. New Age Spirituality removes the need for God or salvation and just tells the person to love others. Those who follow this worldview appear to be very nice, kind and loving people. They may do many nice things but they do not know or follow the one true God, which means they are still dead in their sin even though they do nice things.

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## Activity: No Rules

Ask Students:

- Have you ridden in a car recently?
- Why do so many people use vehicles as a way of transportation?

Answers may include: convenience, ability to travel quickly, and so on. Another reason driving is so popular is that it is *safe*. If they do not identify this as a reason for driving, bring it up and have them talk about what makes driving relatively safe.

Discuss how stop signs, stop lights and general rules of the road make driving a safe way of transportation. Then have them consider what would happen if everyone decided to do what they wanted and not force any driving rules on anyone else. Discuss the chaos and confusion that would ensue. While no rules on the road sounds fun it would lead to an increase in driving accidents and general frustration with driving.

Discuss how the New Age Spirituality is like living in a city without rules. This worldview argues that truth is in the eyes of each individual person. They would say that as long as you don't impose your beliefs on another, you are doing what is right. However, this very thought process is imposing a belief on others. While this worldview sounds freeing it leads to chaos, confusion, and in the end more pain.

# World Religion Teacher's Guide

## Lesson 4 - One God, No Jesus

Islam and Judaism

Recommended Age/Class: 12-16 years old

### Objectives:

- Islam, Judaism, and Christianity all believe there is one true God. However, these religions are vastly different from one another and each of these three religions worship a different God.
- Basic understanding of Islam and Judaism.
- Where these worldviews collide with Christianity.

Supplemental Resource: World Religions Chart - <http://www.walkthru.org/wr>

### Opening Activity:

The purpose of this activity is to help students understand the special qualities of God that exist because of the relationships that exist in the Trinity (between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit). To illustrate that God's qualities do not require mankind and that He is sufficient in and of Himself, a role play will be used to consider the quality that "God speaks."

- Ask for 1 volunteer to come forward.
- Explain to the class they should imagine this person is the only person in the world. No one else exists.
- Ask for the volunteer to say something. Ask the class to consider what purpose this speaking serves if no one was there to hear or respond to it.
- Now ask for 2 volunteers to come forward.
- Explain to the class they should imagine these are the only two people in the world. No one else exists.
- Ask the two volunteers to speak back and forth to each other. Ask the class to consider how speech has purpose when there is another person to hear and respond to it.

Conclude by making the connection that because of the Trinity (3 in 1) we have a God that has all of His wonderful relational qualities without mankind to be the beneficiary. For example, when God says He is Love, this was true long before humans were created. God is complete in Himself.

### Lesson Content:

#### Islam:

Islam is a monotheistic (belief in one true God) religion. While Islam and Christianity have very different beliefs, they have similar accounts of creation.

Muslims believe Allah:

- Is a merciful God who created the universe and everything in it.
- Forgave Adam and Eve for their transgressions in the Garden of Eden and there were no lasting impacts of their sin. They do not believe they became spiritually dead nor that this deadness was transferred to future generations. As a result, there is no concept of original sin in Islam.

Muslims believe Man:

- Is morally neutral at birth and can choose either to do good or evil.
- If someone chooses to do more good than evil, they will go to heaven. If they do more evil than good, they will go to hell.

# World Religion Teacher's Guide

So while Christians and Muslims have similar creation accounts, they have very different beliefs about Man, God and salvation.

	Christians Believe	Muslims Believe
<b>Man's Position Before God</b>	Man is born spiritually dead and needs to be brought to spiritual life.	Man is born spiritually neutral and can choose to do good apart from God's intervention.
<b>God's Posture Toward Man</b>	God desires an intimate relationship with man.	God is distant and unknowable for man.
<b>Salvation</b>	Through faith in Jesus Christ's work on the cross.	Through doing more good works than bad works. (Being good enough.)
<b>God</b>	Belief in one God who is distinct in three persons (Trinity): The Father, Son and Holy Ghost	God is one in essence and person.
<b>Scripture</b>	Holy Bible	Quran
<b>Jesus</b>	He is God. The Messiah who took on flesh and overcame sin and death.	A prophet.

- Muhammad is the central human figure of Islam. Muslims consider him The Prophet who exposed the truth about who God is and how to be His follower. At the age of 40, Muhammad (610AD) was praying and meditating in a cave when he received his first revelation. Muslims believe Muhammad continued to receive revelation about Allah and how to follow him over the course of Muhammad's life from Gabriel. Muhammad would memorize these revelations and then recite them to his followers. These revelations were compiled and today make up the Quran. The Quran contains Islam's teachings and beliefs. Much like the Holy Bible is to the Christian, the Quran is to the Muslim.

## Islam Worldview:

1. Origin of Life: Allah is the only god and he is creator of all things.
2. Purpose of Life: Submit to Allah.
3. Right from Wrong: Outlined and defined by God through the teachings of the Quran.
4. After Death: There are two eternal destinations. Heaven awaits those who have done enough good and Hell awaits those who have been bad.

## **Judaism:**

Judaism is a monotheistic (belief in one true God) religion.

- Their Bible called the Hebrew Bible or the Tanakh is very similar to the Old Testament portion of the Christian Bible. They also have what is call The Talmud: this is a Jewish rabbi's interpretation of how to live out the teachings from the Old Testament. For example, *Exodus 20:8* says "Remember the Sabbath Day". The Talmud would give Jewish Rabbi's interpretation of what this looks like to live out. The Talmud gives different Rabbi's views on topics without coming to a consensus on how to live out a teaching from the Hebrew Bible.
- Jews are waiting for the Messiah and do not believe Jesus was the promised Messiah. Jews believe the Messiah will be a political leader who will come with strong military power. Jews do not see Jesus as anyone important.

# World Religion Teacher's Guide

- Judaism is not as focused as other religions on trying to convert others to their view. Jews hold themselves to high standards regarding following the laws of the Torah - first five books of the Bible. Yet they believe all God requires of Gentiles is they follow the seven laws of Noah:
  1. No Murder
  2. No Sexual Immorality
  3. No Idolatry
  4. No eating animals from torn limbs
  5. No cursing God
  6. No theft
  7. Setting up a system of law

## Judaism Worldview:

1. Origin of Life: God as Creator of all things.
2. Purpose of Life: Obey God's law.
3. Right from Wrong: Outlined and defined by God through the teachings of Torah - first five books of the Christian Bible.
4. After Death: Jews are uncertain of what happens after death. Most would encourage living by the law and letting the afterlife take care of itself.

## **Scripture:**

*John 14:6-14 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."*

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. How would you respond to someone who says Christianity, Islam, and Judaism are the same?  
Possible Answer: Some people believe all religions to be the same but this is a misunderstanding. Not all religions are the same, in fact each religion is very different. Even though Christianity, Islam, and Judaism all believe in one God, they believe in different gods and have a very different understanding of central topics such as who is God and how someone enters into eternal life. Possible Answer: One example of the ways these religions are different is to consider how each looks at the Old Testament of the Christian Bible.
  - i. Judaism believes the Old Testament tells of a coming messiah to rescue God's people from their sin as well as others who persecute them.
  - ii. Islam believes the Christian Bible has been corrupted and therefore is unreliable. Muslims believe the Quran is the true Word of God. The Quran teaches, among other things, a very different path to God and paints a very different picture of man from the Bible.
  - iii. Christianity believes Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament and is the Messiah. Possible Answer: Declaring Christianity, Islam, and Judaism are the same is like saying apples, peaches, and pineapples are the same because each is a fruit and all grow on a tree.

# World Religion Teacher's Guide

2. Circle Jesus' claims about himself in *John 14:6-14*. How would these claims collide with the beliefs of Islam and Judaism?

Possible Answer: *John 14:6-14* "Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.**"

Possible Answer: Jesus is claiming to be "the way, the truth and the life" (vs 6)

- i. The Jew would not believe anything about this statement from Jesus.
- ii. The Muslim would see Jesus as a prophet but this statement from Jesus is claiming to be much more than a prophet, which the Muslim would not agree with.

Possible Answer: Through this passage Jesus is claiming a very close connection to God the Father. So much so that in seeing Him you also see God the Father. (vs 9) Jesus is claiming to be part of God the Father and God the Father to be part of Him. (vs 10,11)

- iii. The Jew would view this as completely false. They don't believe Jesus was or is important and they would certainly not believe Him being close to the Father much less a part of the Father or the Father being a part of Him.
- iv. The Muslim would agree with Jesus being an important prophet but would not agree that one sees God when they see Jesus. They would not agree with nor would they believe the claims made in vs. 10,11.

Possible Answer: Jesus is claiming that if someone believes in Him they will be able to do what He does. (vs 12)

- v. The Jew does not see value in anything Jesus said.
- vi. The Muslim would not believe there is power in believing in Jesus.

3. According to *John 14:6-14* how would you describe the relationship between Jesus and The Father?

Possible Answer: The relationship in *John 14:6-14* describes a very close relationship. So much so that in seeing Jesus, you see the Father. It like seeing an identical twin who not only looks the same but has the exact same character, interests, desires, and goals.

4. If you were talking with someone of the Islam or Judaism faith would you focus on helping them live a Godly life or knowing Jesus? Why?

Possible Answer: You would want to focus on helping them know Jesus. This may not be where you would start when you are interacting with someone from Islam or Judaism but this would be the place you would want to focus. In an ideal situation you would have time or enough interactions with the individual to have established some relationship before being able to help them know Jesus.

Possible Answer: Islam and Judaism both focus on living moral lives. In almost every case they will agree on the topic of how to live upright lives. Where there will be disagreement will be around the person and work of Jesus. If the Muslim or Jew is to receive salvation their understanding of Jesus will need to shift significantly.

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5. As we interact with individuals of differing beliefs we often find out they live in honorable ways. How would you help someone understand their need for a savior when they may not realize they need a savior?

Possible Answer: For all of us when we rightly understand God, we are better able to understand ourselves. The Bible depicts, among other things, God as both a loving and holy God. Helping ourselves and others see God rightly will go a long ways to helping expose both our and their need for the Savior.

## Call to Salvation:

In Islam, there is no need for salvation. They believe you get what you deserve based on how you live. In Judaism, salvation is needed but is coming from a future messiah. They would primarily see salvation occurring through following the law and trusting in the future messiah. Christianity differs from both Islam and Judaism in believing salvation is needed and is found through trusting in Jesus Christ's as Lord. Faith is central in all three of these religions but where each places their faith is vastly different. In Islam, faith is placed in an individual's actions. In Judaism, faith is placed in a future Messiah. In Christianity, faith is placed in the completed work of Jesus Christ.

## Activity:

This activity will focus on reviewing differing beliefs between Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Have your class divide into two teams. Also have them put the material from the lesson away so they cannot use it to answer questions. If you have more than 10 students in your class you may consider dividing into more than two teams. Each correct answer = 2pts.

1. Put Islam, Judaism, and Christianity in order from oldest to youngest religion?
  - i. Possible Answer: Judaism, Christianity, Islam
  - ii. Follow Up Question: What objection might a Christian have to someone who calls their religion younger than Judaism?
  - iii. Possible Answer: Judaism is the based on the Old Testament scirptures. The Christian sees the Old Testament as staring point of Christianity which is fulfilled through Christ. Therefore, the Christian would not see Judiasm as preceeding Christianity but rather Christianity as recognizing Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah.
2. Who would be the major figure in each of the religions from this lesson?
  - i. Possible Answer: Islam-Muhammad, Judaism-Abraham, Christianity-Jesus Christ
3. How is someone able to enter heaven according to Islam?
  - i. Possible Answer: Do more good than bad.
4. Christians follow the Holy Bible. What is the name of Judaism's main religious text?
  - i. Possible Answer: Judaism: Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)
5. What is the name of Islam's main religious text?
  - i. Possible Answer: Islam: Quran
6. Are Allah (God in Islam) and God in Christianity the same God? Why or why not?
  - i. Possible Answer: No. Christians worship the God of the Bible who is one in essence and three in persons. Allah and the God of the Bible are not compatible.
7. Are the God of Christianity and Judaism the same God? Why or why not?
  - i. Possible Answer: No. While the Christian and the Jew would agree on the sacredness of the Old Testament, they see God very differently. Jesus even teaches the Jews during the time He lived on earth that they don't know God if they do not know Him. Knowing God rightly would lead to knowing Jesus rightly.

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8. Use one word to describe each religion's belief about Jesus.
  - i. Possible Answer: Christianity: Savior, Islam: Prophet, Judaism: Unimportant
9. How would you respond to someone who says Jesus was a good man or a prophet but He was not the savior or God?
  - i. Possible Answer: Jesus does not give people the option of seeing Him as a mere prophet. He claims to be both God (*John 10:30*) and the Savior (*John 14:6*).
10. How would you respond to someone who says Jesus is unimportant?
  - i. Possible Answer: Even if you dismiss what the New Testament teaches about Jesus there is no way to deny that Jesus has had an incredible impact on the world. If you take into account what the New Testament teaches about Jesus, then you cannot say He is unimportant.
11. About when do Muslims believe Muhammad began receiving revelation from God?
  - i. 150 BC, 40 AD, 270 AD, or 610 AD
  - ii. Answer: 610AD
12. About when do Christians believe Jesus was born?
  - i. 100 BC, 50 BC, 5 BC, 10 AD A
  - ii. Answer: 4-6 BC
13. About when do Christians believe Jesus was crucified?
  - i. 25 AD, 33 AD, 40 AD, 47 AD
  - ii. Answer: 30-36 AD

# World Religion Teacher's Guide

## Lesson 5: Are they Christian?

Mormonism and Jehovah Witness

Recommended Age/Class: 12-16 years old

### Objectives:

- Mormonism and Jehovah Witness worldview (What do they believe?)
- The appeal of this belief system.
- Dangers of this belief system.
- Where this worldview collides with Christianity.

**Supplemental Resource:** World Religions Chart - <http://www.walkthru.org/wr>

### Opening Activity:

- Material: A real \$20 and a fake \$20.
- Which of these existed first?
  - The real always comes first.
- Which one ultimately will be used?
  - The real one will in the end be spent and used.
- Point: In talking about Mormonism and Jehovah Witnesses, it is important to recognize each religion can sometimes claim to be the same as Christianity but are very different once examined closely.

### Lesson Content:

**Mormonism:** (Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints)

History: Joseph Smith founded the Mormon Church in 1830 in Palmyra, New York. Joseph Smith claimed he received direct revelation from Jesus Christ who told him all churches were deceived and then shared the “true gospel” with him. In 1830, Smith’s beliefs were published in “The Book of Mormon”. Smith claimed to continue receiving revelation and compiled later revelations into another holy book for Mormons called “Doctrines and Covenants”. While many Mormons claim they are Christians, Joseph Smith claimed what he was told by God and Jesus that all Christian churches were wrong, their creeds were an abomination and their beliefs corrupt. Joseph Smith does not sound like he saw himself or what he believed as being in-line with other Christian denominations. He saw his beliefs and teachings as distinct from the Christian religion.

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	<b>Christians Believe</b>	<b>Mormons Believe</b>
<b>Man's Position Before God</b>	Man is born spiritually dead and needs to be brought to spiritual life.	Man is inherently good and living correctly can lead to man becoming a god in the afterlife.
<b>Salvation</b>	Through faith in Jesus Christ.	Through combination of faith, good works, Mormon baptism and laying on of hands.
<b>God</b>	Belief in one God who is distinct in three persons (Trinity): The Father, Son and Holy Ghost	Belief in multiple gods but one ultimate God "Heavenly Father", who was a man but became God through obedience. (They deny the doctrine of The Trinity)
<b>Scripture</b>	Holy Bible	Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, King James Bible: as far as it was correctly translated
<b>Jesus</b>	He is God. The Messiah who took on flesh and overcame sin and death.	A spirit baby of "Heavenly Father" and Mary. A God but a lesser God than "Heavenly Father".

## Mormon Worldview:

1. Origin of Life: Matter has always existed. Every person was once a "spirit baby" who became human.
2. Purpose of Life: Follow the Mormon teachings so you can become a God.
3. Right from Wrong: These are outlined and defined by God through the 4 sacred writings.
4. After Death: There are four eternal destinations. Celestial is the highest level of heaven where God and faithful Mormon members dwell. Terrestrial is the next highest level of heaven for those who do not accept the teachings of the Mormon Church but otherwise live honorable lives. Telestial is the lowest level of heaven for those who did not live good lives. The other eternal destination is called "outer darkness" which is where those who were once members of the Mormon church and walked away from it go.

## **Jehovah Witness:** (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society)

History: Charles Taze Russell was founder and first president of the Jehovah's Witness church. This church was originally called "Watchtower Bible and Tract Society". He created his own magazine in 1879 called "Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence" now called "The Watchtower". Joseph F. Rutherford was the second president and adopted the name "Jehovah's Witnesses" which is how they now identify themselves. While they identify themselves as a Christian church, they deny several core Christian doctrines and affirm several doctrines, which are outside of orthodox Christianity. For these reasons, they are distinct from the Christian worldview.

# World Religion Teacher's Guide

	Christians Believe	Jehovah Witnesses Believe
<b>God</b>	Belief in one God who is distinct in three persons (Trinity): The Father, Son and Holy Ghost	Belief in multiple gods but one ultimate God "Jehovah". (Deny the doctrine of The Trinity)
<b>Scripture</b>	Holy Bible	New World Translation (NWT) version of the Bible. They published this in 1961. Several passages they translated differently than other Bible translations to fit their doctrine.
<b>Jesus</b>	He is God. The Messiah who took on flesh and overcame sin and death.	Jesus is a God but a lesser God who was created by the ultimate God. In 1954, they stopped worshipping Jesus saying it was idolatrous to do so. They see Him as the first creation of God.

- The trinity is a foundation doctrine of the Christian faith. Instead of believing in one true God, JW believe in multiple gods who have different levels of superiority. While there are many differences between Christianity and JW, the difference of how they see God and Jesus are the core differences which is of utmost importance.
- Another difference between Christianity and JW is JW believe only 144,000 people will be allowed into heaven. These are referred to as the "anointed" and the 144,000 have all been accounted for by 1935 meaning no one born after 1935 will be allowed into heaven. However, they believe other good people will live on earth in its original created state (prior to the fall in *Genesis 3*).
- JW would say salvation comes through faith in Jesus'. They would see salvation as a gift from God but also place a high emphasis on works and being in good standing with the JW church as part of salvation. Some would say JW believe salvation is earned through good works. They do not believe in hell or that eternal punishment for sin exists. Those who die in their sin will just cease to exist.

## Jehovah's Witnesses Worldview:

1. Origin of Life: God is the creator of all things.
2. Purpose of Life: Obey God.
3. Right from Wrong: Outlined and defined by God in the New World Translation of the Bible.
4. After Death: There are two options -- heaven awaits those who have been saved and those who are not saved just cease to exist.

## **Scripture:**

*Isaiah 44:6-8 "Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. 7 And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. 8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any."*

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## Discussion Questions:

1. What does *Isaiah 44:6-8* teach us about God? How are these teachings similar or different from Mormonism and Jehovah Witnesses view of God?  
Possible Answer: He is the first and the last and there is no God besides Him. He is in control, He knows the future and His people need not fear because He controls the future and there is no God but Him.
2. How would you respond to someone who says Christianity and Mormonism are the same?  
Possible Answer: There are many differences between Christianity and Mormonism. One fundamental difference is their core belief about the nature and person of God. Christianity views God as an eternally existing, one in essence and three in person. Mormonism believes God became God. He was a man who achieved divine status and those who follow the Mormon teaching will become gods as well.
3. How would you respond to someone who says Christianity and Jehovah Witness are the same?  
Possible Answer: There are many differences between Christianity and Jehovah Witnesses. One fundamental difference is their core belief about the nature and person of God. Christianity views God as an eternally existing, one in essence and three in person. JW believes God is one in essence and person thus they deny the doctrine of the trinity. They believe there are many gods but one supreme God who eternally existed.
4. What are the differences in how Christians, Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses view Jesus?  
Possible Answer:
  - o Christians: Believe Jesus is one of the three persons of the trinity. They believe Jesus has eternally existed and is equal to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.
  - o Mormons: Believe Jesus is the offspring of God "Heavenly Father" and Mary. They believe Jesus is a created being.
  - o Jehovah Witnesses: Believe Jesus is a creation of God, not the Son of God. He is inferior to God and became the Messiah at his baptism. Died for mankind's sins, not for Adam's sin.
5. If you were talking with a Mormon or Jehovah Witness would you focus on helping them live a Godly life or know the God of the Bible? Why?  
Possible Answer: Help them know the God of the Bible. They are typically very moral individuals who live out many of the moral teachings of the bible.
6. Often the New Testament draws on the Old Testament to teach and bring into greater focus the truths in the Old Testament. *Hebrews 1:10* is drawing from *Psalms 102:25*. Read *Hebrews 1:6-12* and *Psalms 102:24-27*. How might these verses be used to help expound the truth about who God is to a Mormon or JW?  
Possible Answer: In *Psalms 102:25*, the author is clearly referring to God; the author in Hebrews uses these verses when speaking of Jesus. It is clear that the author of Hebrews saw Jesus and God as the same and on the same level.
7. Read the chart comparing Christianity, Mormonism, and Jehovah Witnesses beliefs. What differences stand out to you?  
Possible Answer: Answers vary.

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## Call to Salvation:

Among other things, Mormons and Jehovah Witness' have very different views on hell from Christianity. Mormons believe only those who have walked away from Mormon church will go to hell while Jehovah Witnesses believe there is no hell. The Bible clearly teaches there to be two eternal destinations, Heaven and Hell. Heaven is the eternal dwelling place for all who place their faith in Jesus Christ. Through faith in Jesus Christ, His righteousness is given to the believer (*Philippians 3:9, 2 Corinthians 5:21*). Faith in Jesus Christ is the only hope for heaven. (*Romans 5:1*)

## Activity: God and His creation

- Tell the students to divide into three groups:
  - o One group (3+ students) will act out what God would have been like prior to creation and how the creation story would look according to biblical Christianity.
  - o The second group (1-3 students) will observe and point out where those from the Mormon faith would disagree with the Christian story line.
  - o The third group (1-3 students) will observe and point out where those from the Jehovah Witness faith would disagree with the Christian story line.
- Instructions:
  - o Tell the first group of students they are to act out how the story line of the Bible describes God prior to creation.
    - Group one should depict God as a unified trinity having always existed.
    - Group two should object because the Mormon belief is that God was a man who became God. They should also object with the idea that Jesus and the Holy Spirit have existed from eternity past.
    - Group three should object with the depiction of God being one in essence and three in person. The JW belief is that God eternally existed but Jesus was God's first creation who then helped create the rest of the creation.
    - Try to stir up discussion of why these are important differences and how these differences affect a person's understanding of God, Jesus and Man.

# World Religion Teacher's Guide

## Lesson 6: You Get What You Deserve

Eastern Religions - Hinduism and Buddhism

Recommended Age/Class: 12-16 years old

### Objectives:

- Hinduism and Buddhism worldviews (What do they believe?)
- The appeal of this belief system.
- Dangers of this belief system.
- Where this worldview collides with Christianity.

**Supplemental Resource:** World Religions Chart - <http://www.walkthru.org/wr>

### Opening Activity:

- What would it take for a rotten tomato to become edible?
  - A miracle. There is no way for a rotten tomato to become edible apart from a miracle.
- Point: Hinduism and Buddhism are both grounded on the assumption that humans are good and can do what is right apart from divine intervention.

### Lesson Content:

#### Hinduism:

Hinduism does not have central doctrines or creeds to which its followers all agree on. For this reason, Hinduism is considered the least dogmatic of the major world religions. They believe truth is eternal and there are many ways to truth. They believe in many gods but one ultimate god called Brahman who created everything and is in everything. All gods can be worshiped and there is no right way to worship these gods. Individuals pick which god or gods they will worship and be devoted to. They then seek to become one with these gods, which they believe will make them one with Brahman, who they consider to be the ultimate god.

In Hinduism, humans are believed to be immortal and going through endless cycles of reincarnation. They believe you are reincarnated according to how you lived in your previous life. If you live well you will be reincarnated into higher class while if you live wrongly then you will be reincarnated into a lower class. The process of being reincarnated according to how you live is called Karma. The goal of life in Hinduism is to break out of the endless cycle of reincarnation. Each individual has to live their life according to their own dharma, which is the way of righteousness. Part of life is discovering this way of truth and how to live according to it.

#### Hinduism Worldview:

1. Origin of Life: There is no beginning but rather many beginnings.
2. Life Mission: Live according to your dharma. Dharma is each person's right religious and moral law.
3. Right and wrong are outlined and defined in sacred scriptures, which focus on living morally and religious devotion, but there is no one right way to live.
4. After death, you are reincarnated. As you live rightly, you are progressively reincarnated into higher levels of the caste system. As you progress, you will ultimately break free of the cycle of reincarnation and become one with Brahman.

# World Religion Teacher's Guide

## **Buddhism:**

Siddhartha Gautama is the founder of Buddhism. He grew up in a royal family and was sheltered from the outside world. One day he was able to leave the palace and for the first time came across the reality of suffering in the world. He was also intrigued by the happiness he saw in a poor beggar. Siddhartha Gautama was amazed that the beggar's happiness in spite of his circumstance. Through seeing life outside of the palace, he decided to leave his privileged life to seek understanding and spiritual enlightenment.

During this time of searching, he was meditating near the Ganges River where he learned what he called the "Four Noble Truths":

1. All life is suffering.
2. The cause of suffering is desire.
3. Eliminating desire is the way to eliminating suffering
4. Desire can be eliminated by following the Eightfold Path.

This understanding led to Siddhartha becoming Buddha or the "the enlightened one". Buddhism believes you must find truth within one's self. Buddhism does not focus on a god or gods; the focus is on disconnecting from desire or attachment so you can escape suffering. This in turn leads to being able to experience true happiness. A saying that captures this idea in Buddhism is "you first must lose everything to have anything". One of the central ideas in Buddhism is that how your life goes depends on you. You do not need to look to something outside of yourself for hope or strength. Rather you need to look within and take responsibility for your life.

## Buddhism Worldview:

1. Origin of Life: No specific teaching on this.
2. Life Mission: Eliminate suffering, gain enlightenment & follow the Eightfold Path:
  1. Right Understanding
  2. Right Thought
  3. Right Speech
  4. Right Action
  5. Right Livelihood
  6. Right Effort
  7. Right Mindfulness (concentration)
  8. Right Meditation
3. Right and wrong: Knowledge of right and wrong come through self-awareness and self-understanding. (Generally: Avoid killing or harming living beings, Avoid Stealing, Avoid Sexual Misconduct, Avoid Lying, Avoid Alcohol and Intoxicating Drugs)
4. After death: Believe in the cycle of death and rebirth. Through right living "nirvana" can eventually be reached. Most Buddhists believe that when "nirvana" is reached, the individual dies and are not reborn.

## **Scripture:**

*Romans 3:9-18 "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes."*

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## Discussion Questions:

1. What does *Romans 3:9-18* teach us about man? How are these teachings similar or different from Hinduism and Buddhism's view of man?  
Possible Answer: All are under sin; no one is righteous; no one understands; no one seeks after God; man has gone out of the way; man has become unprofitable; no one does good; they lie and hurt with the words they speak; they are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are their ways; not peaceful; They don't fear God.  
Possible Answer: Hindus and Buddhist both agree that man does evil but they would say man is intrinsically good and men can look within themselves to find peace and engage good behavior.
2. How would you respond to the following objection of *Romans 3:9-18*? "*Romans 3:9-18 seems to be saying no one does anything good. I see many non-Christians who do good things. Therefore, what Romans 3 is teaching must be inaccurate.*"  
Possible Answer: One of Paul's points in *Romans 1-3* is that man is separated from God because of sin. All of humanity has sinned and therefore is out of right relationship with God. Paul is driving home the point in *Romans 3:9-18* that all of humans have sinned and therefore are unrighteous in God's eyes. Paul goes on to say in *Romans 3:23-28* that for man to be "justified" or in right relationship with God this can only be accomplished through faith. The main point of *Romans 3:9-18* is that man has sinned, this sin separates them from God, and only faith in Jesus Christ is able restore relationship with God.
3. What changes a person according to each of the following religions? Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity?  
Possible Answer:
  - a. Hinduism: Devotion to religious rituals and moral living changes a person.
  - b. Buddhism: Individual effort changes a person. Namely, eliminate desire by following the "Eightfold Path" so you are able to live with acceptance and reach nirvana.
  - c. Christianity: Faith in Jesus Christ, which brings a person from being spiritually dead to spiritually alive.
4. If you were talking with a Hindu or Buddhist, would you focus on helping them live a Godly life or know the God of the Bible? Why?  
Possible Answer: You would want to point them to the God of the Bible. The Hindu and Buddhist religions advocate moral living. Therefore, you would want to help them know and turn to the God of the Bible.
5. Read the chart comparing Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism beliefs. What differences stand out to you? World Religions Chart - <http://www.walkthru.org/wr>  
Possible Answer: Answers may vary.

## Call to Salvation:

- According to the Bible, we are spiritually dead and unable to generate anything good of ourselves. We need the work of Christ on the cross to transform us, giving us a new heart and bringing spiritual life. Through faith we are rescued, transformed and to live through the empowerment of God being in us. (*Galatians 2:16-20*)

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**Activity:** Which leader sounds more appealing to follow?

**Instructions:** Have three different students (or teachers) read one of the depictions of a leader below. Then have the other students in the class pick which leader they would follow.

- I will bring you life, joy, peace and happiness. I am everywhere and in everything. You can worship me however you wish and I will accept you and help you see how powerful you are. I have created you and put my goodness and power in you. I don't have rules for you to follow but I want you to reach your full potential by finding and enjoying the life that resides within you. I will lead you and help you enjoy life without restricting you. I only want to help you find the path of life that best fits you so we can become one in the way that fits you best.
- I know life is difficult and I am here to help free you from the pain and difficulties of this life. I don't have a specific path for you to follow. You can live how you want. If you want to escape the pain and suffering of this world then I will help you disconnect from the things of this world so you can be free from pain and suffering.
- You are sick and will die if you don't take action. Your sickness keeps us from being able to interact in the way I desire. I have a cure for your sickness but it will require sacrifice and pain to be healed. Healing will bring inner life but will also bring persecution. Once cured from your sickness I will require you to become my servant. I am a good master who loves and cares for my servants but I do require that you will live, think and believe in a way that is honoring to me. My way of life will feel restrictive but it is meant to be protective.

## Follow Up Questions:

- o Which leader matches to what religion?  
**Answer:** First depiction could represent Hinduism. Second depiction could represent Buddhism. Third depiction could represent Christianity.
- o Engage the students in discussion on what would be appealing or difficult about following each of the leaders.

## Other questions to consider:

- Why would it be unhelpful to tell a Buddhist that faith in Jesus Christ brings eternal life?
  - o **Possible Answer:** In the Buddhist faith, their goal is to break out of the cycle of reincarnation so to promise them eternal life would be like promising eternal pain and suffering. You would be better off focusing on how Christianity offers escape from the pain and suffering of this world.
- What might be appealing about Hinduism? Buddhism?
- Those from a Hinduism or Buddhism might object to Christianity by saying Christianity bring guilt and shame. They might also object to the brutality of Jesus being crucified. How would you respond to those objections or beliefs?

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## Lesson 7: Where They Stand: Comparing Religions

Recommended Age/Class: 12-16 years old

### Objectives:

- Review key differences of world religions compared to Christianity.
- Highlight key Christian beliefs.

### Opening Activity:

- How would you get to know someone you would never meet in person?
  - **Possible Answer:** Write them letters asking questions and read letters they send back. Communicate via technology (phone, video, etc.)
  - **Point:** If we are to know and follow what God wants, we need ways to determine what He is like and what He wants. If your goal is to get to know someone you will never meet then it seems wise to read what the individual wrote about himself or herself. We have the Bible as God's letter to us so that we can know who He is and what He desires from us. The Bible is our way of knowing God and what He desires for and from us.

### Lesson Content:

The past five weeks have been focused on giving a brief introduction to eight major world religions. There are three main areas where other world religions disagree with Christianity. Some world religions disagree with Christianity on all three points some disagree with Christianity on only one of the three points below.

1. There is One God
  2. Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit
  3. Jesus as Equal with God and Eternally Existing (not created)
- Which religions would agree with Christianity that there is one God?  
**Possible Answer:** Islam and Judaism agree with Christianity on this point. They see God very differently than Christians but they would agree that there is one God.
  - Which religions would agree with Christianity that there is: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit?  
**Possible Answer:** Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons would agree with Christians about the existence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They would hold very different views of the Trinity and the persons of the Trinity.
  - Which religions would agree with Christianity that Jesus (and the Holy Spirit) are co-equal, co-eternal with God the Father?  
**Possible Answer:** Only Christians believe Jesus is co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

### Scripture:

*Philippians 2:5-11* "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

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## Discussion Questions:

1. Who is exalted in these verses?

Possible Answer: From man's perspective, Christ empties Himself so that He could die on the behalf of humankind. From God's perspective, Christ is exalted and given a name above all other names. Jesus is called Lord and worshiped.

2. What do these verses tell the reader to do?

Possible Answer: "Let this mind be in you" verse 5; worship Jesus (v 10-11)

3. Why is it so important to understand who Jesus is?

Possible Answer: In *John 14:6* Jesus tells us that He is "the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Since Jesus is the way, the truth and the life it is essential to know who He is and how we are to think of Him. Knowing Jesus then will lead to following Him and seeking to live more like Him each day.

4. What is one word or short phrase each world religion covered in these lessons might use to describe Jesus?

Possible Answers:

- o Islam: Prophet
- o Judaism: just another Rabi
- o New Age Spirituality: teacher
- o Mormonism: created Savior
- o Jehovah Witness: created Savior
- o Hinduism: moral teacher
- o Buddhism: moral teacher
- o Christianity: God and Savior

5. What do these verses (*Philippians 2:5-11*) tell us about Jesus?

a. Possible Answer: He is God and Equal with God (vs 6); He took on flesh/became a man (vs 7); He died a cruel death on a cross (vs 8); He is Exalted, Every Knee Should Bow To Him, He is Lord (vs 9-11)

6. How do these things either align or go against what other world religions believe about Jesus?

Possible Answer: These verses certainly elevate Jesus beyond a mere man, teacher, or prophet. They also elevate Him above a created being. The only world religion in the world that views Jesus as these verses describe Him is Christianity.

## Call to Salvation:

Focus the students on the most important question of life being "Who is Jesus?" and representing Him well if we come to know Him as our Savior. Speak into the human tendency either to deny our need for a savior or to look down on others who don't believe as we do.

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## Activity:

Read the description below one sentence at a time. After each sentence, ask the students to identify which of the eight religions could be described by the statement.

- Be kind to others.
  - Answer: All eight world religions teach this.
- Do good to others.
  - Answer: All eight world religions teach this.
- Believe there is a God.
  - Answer: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, JW, and Mormon. Some Buddhist and some New Age Spiritualist believe there is a god but not everyone in these two religions believes there is a god.
- Have specific “Holy Scriptures” adherents to the religion believe and follow.
  - Answer: All except New Age Spirituality.
- Believe man is born into sin and needs rescued from their sin.
  - Answer: Christianity, Judaism, Mormon, Jehovah Witnesses
- Believe man is divine and must look within themselves to bring their full potential to awareness and life.
  - Answer: Hinduism, Buddhism, New Age Spirituality
- Have a clear teaching regarding a desirable afterlife such as Heaven for those who are faithful or follow right action.
  - Answer: Christianity, New Age Spirituality, Islam, Hinduism, JW and Mormons
- Have a clear teaching regarding an undesirable afterlife such as hell for those who are unfaithful or don't do what is right.
  - Answer: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism; JW and Mormons believe there is a hell but only for those who were once followers of JW or Mormonism and then walk away from the religion.
- God has always been and will always be.
  - Answer: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism. Jehovah Witnesses
- Jesus is the Son of God.
  - Answer: Christianity, Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses
- Jesus is God and Has always Existed
  - Answer: Christianity
- God is triune. One is essence - three in person.
  - Answer: Christianity
- Jesus is God but a lesser God who was created.
  - Answer: Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses

## Call to Salvation:

In the Gospel according to *Matthew 16:13-15* Jesus asks His disciples two questions: “*Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*” and “*But whom say ye that I am?*” This is the central question everyone will answer. We must first answer this question for ourselves and then humbly acknowledge that if we come to faith in Jesus, our faith has come about by God revealing it to us. (*Matthew 16:17*) This should humble us and lead us to patiently point others to Jesus Christ. He is the Great I Am, God incarnate who is co-equal, co-eternal with God the Father and has purchased eternal life through His willing sacrifice.

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## Activity: Religion Match

**Instructions:** Divide the class into small groups of 2-4 students. Make enough copies of the chart below for each of the groups to have a copy. Then cut the chart apart and have the students try to match the world religion with the correct description.

<b>Christianity</b>	Belief in one God. Time is linear. They see the need for salvation and believe salvation is achieved through faith in God's work.
<b>Islam</b>	Belief in one God. Time is viewed as linear. They see the need for salvation and believe salvation is achieved by devotion to God's instruction.
<b>Judaism</b>	Belief in one God. Time is viewed as linear. They are waiting for the coming messiah.
<b>Jehovah Witness</b>	Belief in one God who is above all other gods. Time is viewed as linear. Through devotion to the beliefs and behaviors of this religion, eternal bliss awaits.
<b>Mormonism</b>	Belief in one God who is above all other gods. Time is viewed as linear. Through devotion to beliefs and behaviors of this religion, eternal bliss awaits. The faithful will become gods and reign over their own kingdom in eternity.
<b>Hinduism</b>	Belief in one God who is in and connected to everything. Time is viewed as cyclical and the goal is eternal bliss. Religious devotion and living rightly lead to freedom from the cycle of life, death, and rebirth.
<b>Buddhism</b>	Don't focus on a God or gods but strive to find and live according to the true nature of life. Time is viewed as cyclical and the goal is to detach from desires so the cycle of life, death, and rebirth can be escaped.
<b>New Age Spirituality</b>	Believe in a spirit world but focus on living true to one's self and caring for other people. Time is viewed as linear. Life beyond this life is a mystery.

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## Lesson 8: Why are there so many religions?

Living with Boldness and Humility

Recommended Age/Class: 12-16 years old

### Objectives:

- Help students consider what they believe about Jesus.
- Help students wrestle through the reality that there are many different worldviews.

### Opening Activity:

- What are examples of questions where there is only one correct answer and questions where there are many different possible answers?
  - Examples of questions with one answer:
    - What does 2+2 equal?
    - What is the temperature in our room today?
    - Will a pencil drop to the floor if I let go of it?
  - Examples of questions with many different answers:
    - What is your favorite food?
    - What is the best weather?
    - What is your favorite thing to do after church?
- Point to consider: Is the question, Who is God?, a question with one correct answer or a question with many possible answers?
  - The Bible clearly teaches that there is one God and knowing Him comes through the revelation of the Holy Spirit, reading the Bible, and spending time with Him. If God exists we should seek to know Him as He is, not as we would like Him to be.
  - If you are going to meet someone you have never met or go to a place you have never seen, does the place/person end up being or looking like you expect?
    - Should we let our imagination create God or should we let God tell us about Himself?
- We should let God reveal Himself to us through the Bible and have our view of Him come in line with what He says about Himself.
- What are examples of questions where there is only correct answer and questions where there are many different possible answers?

### Lesson Content:

*"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."* Genesis 1:1 God created a perfect world and gave man the position of having dominion over the earth and the other creatures God had created. (Genesis 1:26) God gave man the privilege to rule over His created world but man had to trust Him and live under His authority. In Genesis 2:17 God tells man they are not to eat of the tree of *"the knowledge of good and evil"* and this was the only restriction God placed on Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

At this point in the biblical account, creation and life in God's created world is perfect. Man is given the authority to rule the earth and its inhabitants. There is a perfect relationship between God and Man and there is no confusion about who is God and who is not. The world is not void of evil but its presence and impact is limited such that it is not even mentioned until

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chapter 3 verse 1 where this evil is called “*the serpent*”. We do not even realize the serpent is evil until we realize the serpent seems to be challenging God’s message and heart toward Eve. To this point in the story, Eve fully trusts God and is willing to live within the structure God has created.

Now, the serpent begins to challenge Eve’s assumptions about God and suggests God is not telling her the whole story. He wants Eve to doubt God and rebel against His authority by eating of the tree of “*the knowledge of good and evil*”. In doing so, evil shifts from being present with minimal effect to becoming a powerful force able to corrupt man’s heart, the created world, and man’s relationship with God. Adam and Eve’s rebellion against God changed the world and specifically change man’s relationship with God. Essentially, man decided to dissolve his relationship with God in hopes of finding a better deal.

Since then man has been on a journey for a “better deal” than what God offers. This has led to the creation of many false gods and many false religions. Man continues to rebel against God’s message. Instead, man desires to create our own path for life. This ultimately leads man away from the true path of life into creating a false path that either feels better, looks more appealing, or makes more sense to man’s corrupted mind. The message of living under the authority of the good and trustworthy God of the Bible is distorted by the continual work of “the serpent” whose work is to cast doubt constantly on the goodness of God.

## Scripture:

*Genesis 11:1-9* “And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. 3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. 4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. 5 And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. 6 And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. 7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. 8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. 9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.”

## Discussion Questions:

1. If you look just at *Genesis 11:1-4* what is the people’s plan? Do you think the plan sounds good, bad, or neutral?  
Possible Answer: make bricks, build a city and tower that reaches to the heaven. Make a name for themselves and stay in their current location.  
Answer: Considering these verses only it is difficult to see anything wrong with their plan. Yet if you consider the plan carefully, you begin to wonder if they saw themselves as self-sufficient and in charge of their own lives.
2. Reading verses 5-9 what does God think of their plan? Why does He intervene so their plan is not able to happen?  
Possible Answer: From His actions we can conclude He does not like their plan and stops it from happening. Answer: Verse 6 indicates that God is concerned that the people will be able to accomplish whatever they desire. Why would God see this as a problem? This is only 11 chapters into the Bible but the clear thread through these chapters is God’s desire for the people to be His children and the people’s desire to do what they want rather than what God wants. The people, left to their own desires, would clearly lead to them rebelling against God and believing themselves to be god, which would only lead to further perpetuation of evil and destruction.

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3. Identify words you would use to describe God from *Genesis 11:1-9*.  
Possible Answer: A sceptic might say words like fearful, unreasonable, bully  
Possible Answer: A believer might say powerful, interested (in what the people are doing), loving, invested
4. Identify words you would use to describe man from *Genesis 11:1-9*.  
Possible Answer: together, hardworking, motivated, ambitious, stubborn, pawns, weak, confused
5. How would your view of God or man change if you also consider God's instruction to Noah two chapters earlier in *Genesis 9:1*?  
*Genesis 9:1 ~ "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."*  
Possible Answer: God's instruction to Noah in *Gen. 9:1* echos the same instruction He gave Adam in *Gen. 1:26-28*. God desires that man fill the earth and be a caretaker of the world God has created.
  - i. This adds to the view of God as being: consistent, patient, ...
  - ii. This adds to the view of Man as being: rebellious, intent on their own desires, ...
6. How would your view of God or man change if you also consider *Genesis 6:5-8*?  
*Genesis 6:5-8 ~ "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."*  
Possible Answer: View of God - He feels emotions, gracious, ...  
Possible Answer: View of man - wicked, continually evil, ...

## Call to Salvation:

Early in the Bible man rebelled against God's authority. Evil took root in the heart of man and all of creation was corrupted as a result. The Bible is a story of God relentlessly pursuing a rebellious people. As we walk through life, it can be easy for Satan to convince us the God does not care for us or that we should be able to follow whatever path we desire. The reality is God is our creator and we need Him. He loves and cares for us far greater than we deserve and we are to live as grateful children to almighty God. We are to seek to know and follow Him even when, in our brokenness, we naturally rebel against being under His authority.

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**Activity:** Why is the God of the Bible \_\_\_\_\_?

The goal of this activity is to stir up discussion on how to interact with individuals from other religions and how to view others given that many of them are very nice people trying to do the right thing. Divide the class into groups of 2-4 students. Give each group one of the bullet points below. Have them discuss what questions they would want to ask someone who came to them with what the bullet point says. Then have them identify how they would respond in a way that was able to be kind and patient while not wavering on truth.

- All religions are the same and worship the same God.
  - o Questions:
    - What makes you believe that?
    - What do you know about different religions?
    - What do you believe about God?
  - o Possible Responses:
    - If you look at how each religion describes god they are actually very different from each other.
    - The Bible teaches there is one God and many of the other religions teach that there are many gods.
- As long as you are a good person it doesn't matter what you believe about God.
  - o Questions:
    - Who decides who is a "good person"?
    - What if you are wrong?
    - Who decided that was true?
    - How would you describe a "good person"? Why?
  - o Possible Responses:
    - God created the world and everything in it so He gets to decide what does and does not matter.
    - What we believe about God will dramatically affect how we live our lives.
    - What we believe about God is the most important thing in life to get right.
- Why is the God of the Bible so mean?
  - o Questions:
    - What makes you believe that?
    - What do you know about the God of the Bible?
    - What if you don't have a full understanding of the God of the Bible?
  - o Possible Responses:
    - There are things in the Bible I don't understand but the overwhelming picture of God in the Bible is one of Him being merciful and kind.
    - The Bible describes God as being full of grace and truth. When we hear "truth" it can seem mean but if it is true, then it is ultimately very loving to share the truth even if it is a hard message.