Jerusalem: A Holy City
The city of Jerusalem is the focal point of this lesson on religions and cultural landmarks.

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Grade Level
6-8
Duration
1 class period

National Geography Standards
ELEMENT TWO: PLACES AND REGIONS
4. The physical and human characteristics of places
6. How Culture and Experience Influence People's Perceptions of Places and Regions

Arizona Geography Standards
Grade 6
Strand 4 Geography
Concept 2 Places and Regions
PO 5 Describe the physical and human characteristics of places and regions of a Middle Eastern country.
PO 4 Explain why places and regions serve as cultural symbols (e.g., Jerusalem as a sacred place for Jews, Christians, and Muslims).
PO 3 Describe the interactions of people in different places and regions.
Grade 7
Strand 4 Geography
Concept 2 Places and Regions
PO 1 Describe the human and physical characteristics of places and regions.
PO 3 Compare the historical and contemporary interactions among people in different places and regions.
Grade 8
Strand 4 Geography
Concept 2 Places and Regions
PO 3 Examine relationships and interactions (e.g., Middle East Conflicts, NATO, European Union)

Other Arizona Standards
Strand 2 World History
Grade 6
Concept 3 World in Transition
PO 1 Describe aspects (e.g., geographic origins, founders and their teachings, traditions, customs, beliefs) of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Concept 8 World at War
Grade 8
PO 14. Describe the following events in the Middle East during the 20th and 21st centuries:
a. creation of Israel
b. conflicts between Israeli and Palestinian governments
c. Camp David Peace Treaty
d. Persian Gulf War
e. Iraq War

Concept 9 Contemporary World
Grades 7 and 8
PO 3. Analyze how world events of the late 20th century and early 21st century (e.g., terrorism, globalization, conflicts, interdependence, natural disasters, advancements in science and technology, environmental issues) affected, and continue to affect, the social, political, geographic, and economic climate of the world.

Reading Standards for 6-8 for Literacy in History/Social Studies
Key Ideas and Details
6-8.RH.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
Craft and Structure
6-8.RH.6 Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Jerusalem: A Holy City

Overview

The ancient city of Jerusalem is still a very important city in today's world. Why has Jerusalem remained one of the most visited and revered cities? It is because three major religions consider Jerusalem to be a holy city.

Purpose

In this lesson, students will learn which three religions consider Jerusalem a holy city. They will also learn what cultural landmarks can be found in the city and what cultural symbols each religion uses.

Materials

- Reading called “Jerusalem: A Holy City"
- Student Worksheet
- Teacher Answer Key to Worksheet
- Map of Israel
- Map of Jerusalem

Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Identify which religions consider Jerusalem a holy city.
- Identify cultural landmarks in Jerusalem.
- Identify cultural symbols used by Jews, Christians, and Muslims.
- Identify the author’s purpose in writing this informational text.

6-8.RH.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

6-8.RH.10 By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

- Make inferences based on the literary selection
- Draw conclusions based on the literary text

Procedures

Prerequisite Reading Skills: Determining author's purpose

Prerequisite Writing Skills: Identifying the main idea and the conclusion of a written work

1. Set: Have students list famous cities and their landmarks. Some examples are:
   - Paris--Eiffel Tower
   - San Francisco--Golden Gate Bridge
   - Vatican City--St. Peter's Church
   - Salt Lake City--LDS Temple.
   Then discuss which of these landmarks are secular and which have a religious meaning. Do we feel differently about secular landmarks than we do about religious landmarks? Now mention Jerusalem if it has not been already mentioned.

2. Have the students find Israel and then Jerusalem on the maps provided.

3. Have the students read silently the reading selection entitled Jerusalem: A Holy City. As they are reading have them examine the map of Jerusalem and locate the landmarks cited in the reading.

4. After students have completed the reading, lead a class discussion of the information. Why is Jerusalem important? How does this fighting make you feel? Why do you think people might disagree? Do you think that (1) people with different values (example--people who park cars in the front yard versus those who disapprove of parking cars in the front yard), (2) people with different racial backgrounds (Native American, Black, Hispanic, White, or Asian), or (3) people of different economic status (example: rich/poor) might disagree? Is it tough to have all people agree? What can be done?
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5. Students will complete the assessment worksheet to test for comprehension of geography knowledge as well as practice language arts skills that are measured by state-mandated tests.

Assessment

Assessment Worksheet Items 1-4 and 6 assess social studies knowledge. (5 items) Items 5, 7, 8 and 9 assess reading standards in an objective test format. Mastery is considered 80% or higher.

Extensions

Certainly a key point to understanding Jerusalem is how conflict between the religions has been critical in its history. Explain the current situation: Palestinians displaced from their homelands and their subsequent loss of power to rule the area. Then have students collect newspaper articles and analyze the current events of the area. A sample article is provided.


Students could create a timeline showing the changes of control relating to the three religions.

Sources


Damrel, D. Department of Religious Studies. Arizona State University.


National Geographic Society. Map of Holy Land, Order # 620044F, $10.99

National Geographic Society. Physical World Geography PicturePak. Transparencies of Jerusalem.


Trapido-Lurie, B. Department of Geography. Arizona State University.