

[Teacher's Notes]

A day in the life of a believer

Before doing this task, it's effective to discuss this question

Why is it important to study about religion and culture?

Why? A few ideas:

- It helps us understand our neighbor's/ friend's actions!
- It helps us understand local culture when we travel
- It helps us to be "culturally literate" along with other North Americans.
Many communities in North America are multicultural and people learn about each other naturally. As well, many North Americans travel to other countries and learn about these practices.

Alternative Plans:

The categories are on single pages in case you want to create an info-gap task.

1) If you have more mature adults or people who are firm in their beliefs and practices, have them write up the descriptions about topics/ categories they choose.

2) An exercise like this can be designed as a final quiz/task after the students conduct interviews and/or present religion research reports. The students can supply the items or you can use notes you took from their presentations/ posters

Suggested Answers

Food

Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism
7 10	2 4	5 6	1 3 5	1 8 9

How to live

Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism
1 8 11	2 9 14	3 7 8	4 5 10 12	2 3 6 13

Religious life

Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism
6 13	2 7 12	3 4 8 10	1 4	5 9 11

Death and Life after Death

Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism
1 2 5 8	3 10	2 4	6 3	7 9

The next page is the introduction notes for the ELLs.

A day in the life of a believer

- In culture, there is a lot of behavior that is connected to religious beliefs.
- Even people who are not very faithful believers do some of these actions.
- Based on your experiences and observations, match the behaviors/ practices with the religions.
- Please remember, these are not ALL their behaviors.
- Some actions/ practices are part of more than one religion.

Instructions: Write the number of the behavior in the box(es) below. (#1 is an example)

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A Day in the life of a Believer: Food

1/ Devout believers do not eat pork nor drink alcohol. They also cannot eat meat that is butchered (killed) by someone who is not from their religion. **(Islam and Judaism – see box)**

2/ Believers say a “thank you prayer” to their God before they eat every meal. It might be a memorized prayer or a prayer in their own words.

3/ During a 4- week religious holiday, these believers cannot eat nor drink anything between sunrise and sunset, so restaurants may not be open for tourists. However, they can eat after the sun sets and before the sun rises. They have lots of parties at this time.

4/ At the place of worship, believers eat a piece of bread and drink a little wine or juice to remember the last meal their leader ate before he was killed. Some “take communion” every time they worship, whereas others just do it at special times.

5/ People use the fingers of their right hand to eat. The left hand is for unclean work (in the bathroom, etc.).

6/ It is believed that meat is the “common bond of all living creatures,” so eating meat is not allowed.

7/ Dedicated believers are vegetarians who do not eat meat nor any animal products (milk, cheese, etc.).

8/ Strict believers do not eat shellfish (shrimp, lobster, crab, clam, oyster, etc.).

9/ While cooking, faithful believers keep the meat apart from anything that has eggs or milk in it. Different pots and spoons are used.

10/ In many Asian countries, the monks (males) and nuns (females) live a very simple life and often beg for food in the community near their “home.”

Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism
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Instructions: Write the number of the behavior in the box(es) below. (#1 is an example)

A Day in the life of a Believer: How to live

- 1/ There are 5 main ways to act in life: Do not kill, steal, have abusive sex, tell lies nor drink alcohol.
- 2/ There are 10 basic rules they follow: Do not believe in other gods, do not have idols, do not use their God's name unkindly, keep the holy day as a day of rest, respect your parents, do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not lie, and do not envy other people's things.
- 3/ There are 4 duties of life: love and family, wealth, religion and salvation.
- 4/ In some countries, the religion and the law are very connected. For example, a thief will get his hand cut off (a serious religious punishment).
- 5/ Strict female believers are not allowed to look at any males, except for their father, brothers or husband.
- 6/ Men will wear a little hat called a *yarmulka* (skull cap). They wear this in their holy place. Strict believers wear it all the time. Covering their head shows humility.
- 7/ A person's job usually depends on which caste (level) s/he was born into. For example, soldiers and administrators are *kshatriyas*. They cannot change to another level.
- 8/ People work hard to be good because if they are good in this life, they believe they will have good luck in their next life (*karma*). If they harm people in this life, they will be punished in the next one.
- 9/ Their holy book suggests that believers should give 10% of their income to help poor people or for their religious group.
- 10/ Everyone should give money to help the poor during their 4 week holy holiday.
- 11/ Their holy book says, "Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful."
- 12/ Their holy book says, "No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself." (from Sunnah)
- 13/ Their holy book says, "What is hateful to you, do not do to another. That is the entire law, all the rest is commentary." (from Talmud)
- 14/ Their holy book says, "Here is a simple rule of thumb for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you; then grab the initiative and do it for them!" (Luke 6:31, Message)

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Instructions: Write the number of the behavior in the box(es) below. (#1 is an example)

A Day in the life of a Believer: Religious life

1/ The believers should pray 5 times a day. On Friday, the men meet together in the holy place to pray, but women do not join them.

2/ Singing music is an important part of their worship time. Music has changed with the culture, so there is adjective rock, rap, and pop music as well as more formal music.

3/ Believers will not encourage others to join their religion because people can't be converted (change into) into the religion. If they marry someone from "outside", that person can join.

4/ Because the family is important, it is very difficult to leave the religion the family believes in. Sometimes families will divide if someone changes to another religion.

5/ The New Year is celebrated in fall (usually late September). Believers go to their holy place to pray for several days or evenings. They pray to be forgiven for the wrong things they did in the past year, so they can start the New Year "clean and pure."

6/ At New Year's, the believers ring a large bell to welcome in the new year (in Japan).

7/ On the first Friday of March, women believers all over the world hold a "World Day of Prayer". They pray about many topics. It has happened every year since 1927.

8/ Dancing, music and acting out religious stories is a very important part of their religious life.

9/ A boy celebrates his religious maturity when he is 13 years old, so he can read from their holy book (*bar mitzvah*). Some groups celebrate the girls turning 13 also (*bat mitzvah*).

10/ The *Holi* festival is held to give thanks for the spring wheat harvest. People throw colored water and colored powdered over other people for good luck.

11/ Families celebrate for 8 days to remember what their God did for them. They give small gifts to the children each day! They light a different candle each day.

12/ They believe anyone who believes in their God and accepts their God's love can join their group.

13/ The most important holiday is the Day of their Founder. It celebrates his birth, enlightenment and death. This religion is in many countries, so the celebrations are different in each culture.

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Instructions: Write the number of the behavior in the box(es) below. (#1 is an example)

A Day in the life of a Believer: Death and Beliefs about Life after Death

1/ If they go to a funeral, they take a gift of “incense money” in a special envelope with black and white strings. When they leave, the family gives them a short thank you note (or gift) and a small packet of salt. They sprinkle the salt on themselves before they go back into their own homes. (Japanese)

2/ The cremation (burning) of the dead person is an important religious ceremony.

3/ There are only two places that a soul can go after death – either heaven (paradise for the good people) or hell (for the bad people).

4/ They believe if a person was bad in life, they will stay in the hell only for a short time. After a while, the soul will be reborn and move to a different life (reincarnation).

5/ In daily life, people do not put their chopsticks standing up in the rice bowl. This is only done at a funeral or a memorial service (in Taiwan & Japan).

6/ At the very end of time, there will be a final “Judgement by God”. All the souls will have to walk along a “straight path” which is very narrow. The faithful believers will have no problems walking on this path, but the sinners (bad people) will have a hard time and fall into the fires of hell.

7/ Life after death isn’t really important in the beliefs or behaviors of the followers. Their focus is in how to live in this world.

8/ They have a festival which honors the spirits of their ancestors (dead relatives). Living family members welcome the spirits by cleaning their grave and the path from their graves to their former homes. They also set up altars with food to welcome the spirits. They burn fires to welcome and send away the visiting spirits.

9/ The dead person is remembered every year on the anniversary of his/ her death. Special prayers are read.

10/ These believers are not afraid of death. They believe their leader died, rose from the dead, and lives in heaven. When they die, they will live with their God forever.

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