

Colleen Morrissey
Unit: Spirituality
High School

Lesson One: Spirituality is cross-cultural

Objectives: Students will create a definition of spirituality. In groups students will gather information on a cultural spirituality. Students will demonstrate their knowledge by answering question on their culture and presenting the information to the class.

Material: poster board, copy machine, markers, and glue.

Instructional:

DAY ONE:

Upon arrival to class students will be put into groups of 3-4 they will know what group they are in by the color of the card on their desk.

Student will be asked to quietly find the other students with the same color card, sit together and wait for instruction.

Each group will then be given a card containing the name of a country.

Students will then be instructed on how they will be doing research on culture they have received and that cultures spirituality.

They will then as a class put together a working definition of what spirituality is?

What to you is spirituality?

Where does it come from?

Does it have to be a community thing or can be individual?

Where do people practice spirituality?

How can spirituality differ?

Students will be asked to write down what the teacher is writing on the board in response to the questions so that they have something to refer to when they are doing their research.

Students will then be taken to the library where they will be given a sheet of paper with questions to focus on while they are doing their research. This will make it easier for each student in the group to have a specific task. The questions will focus on are...

1. What are the major religions of its people?

Is that the only type of spirituality that exists in the culture?

2. What type of rituals are associated with this religion or spirituality?

What symbols are used as a part of your cultures spirituality?

3. What types of spiritual or religious buildings are associated with the cultures spirituality?

If there are none, where do people practice their spirituality?

4. What are the major deities of the country if there are some?

What do the deities stand for?

Students will be told that they must pick a number one through four and those will be the questions that they will be responsible for answering for their group.

Each student will also be responsible of finding a piece of artwork from the culture they were assigned that reflects what they learned by answering their question.

Students will then be given time to use the resources in the library and computer lab to research their question.

DAY TWO:

After researching these questions the children will be asked to get back into their groups and make a poster using the facts that they have gathered.

Finally the students will present their country and its spiritual culture to the class.

They will give a brief description of the culture and then present their art works.

They will be asked to point out what about the piece make it a spiritual reflection of the culture if there are any important symbols, colors or people that make it spiritual.

Each child in the group will have to speak during the presentation to gain full credit.

Each student will present the information they acquired.

Each student will have to turn in his or her part of the research at the end.

Students will be asked to take notes on their class mates presentations to use as a reference in the lessons to come.

MAY SPILL OVER INTO A THIRD DAY

Assessment: The students will be assessed on the quality of the research that they did to help the group and the information that they choice to give as part of their presentation.

Interdisciplinary:

History

Art History

Lesson Two: Spirituality as Identity

Objectives: As a class students will interpret the artwork of Alex Grey. Students will construct a collage of their own personal spiritual layers from magazines. Students will write an analysis of the meaning behind each layer of their collage.

Artists: Alex Grey

Material: Alex Grey images, notebooks and pens for journaling, magazines, scissors, glue sticks, construction paper.

Instructional:

Students will look at images from the artist Alex Grey that will be projected on a screen. In a group discussion students will talk about what about Alex Grey work makes it spiritual and how it deals with identity.

What initial feelings do you get from looking at least works of art?

What emotions do you feel?

Do you think they are beautiful and meaningful?

What do you think he is trying to say with his images?

Why do you think he strips away the outside layers of the people he paints?

Do the colors add to the spiritual feeling of the work?

What do you think his color choices mean?

What do you think the spiritual connection between body mind and spirit are?

What are the people are doing in the paintings?

How do their positions and actions make the work spiritual?

Students will then journal about what they think make up their spiritual layers

Teacher will give kids a hand out with the following on it.

What makes you up spiritually? List at least 3 things.

Think about what you do, who you love? Do you believe in a religion?

How are you spiritual, what could symbolize that? Does it have to do with family, religion, a hobby, and a place, what makes up you? Think about the definition we can up with for spiritually yesterday.

Students will then be given the studio assignment they will be asked to find images and word in magazines that they think represent their spiritual selves. They will be asked to hold on to their journal entry and use that as well as the definition we have come up with for spirituality and the class discussion as tools to do this.

They will be asked to think about what colors in Grey's work affected them and how they could use color in their work. They will also be asked to think about where they are placing the images and if they think that adds importance.

Students will then be given a paper with the outline of a person on it, magazines, glue, and scissors and asked to collage the person to represent the layer of their personal spirituality. They will be asked to mat the work on the construction paper.

Students will clean up their areas and then be asked to write at the bottom of their journal entry about what each part of their collage means.

Journal Entry will be turned in with the images at the end of class. Images may be hung if time and space provide

Assessment:

Students will be assessed on their journal entry and collage

9 points for first part, 3 points for each thing listed

6 points for second part completion and full description of items in collage, points will be deducted for major parts of the collage that weren't described in journal.

5 points for completion of collage and matting

Interdisciplinary:

Psychology

Lesson Three: Spirituality and Nature

Objectives: In groups students will describe what elements of landscapes make them spiritual. Students will brainstorm about places where they find spirituality. Students will construct their own spiritual landscapes. Students will interpret their landscape in a journal entry.

Artists: Thomas Cole, Fredric Edwin Church, Nancy Holt, Alan Sonfist, and Richard Long

Materials: Images, large white paper, markers, magazines, glue sticks.

Instruction:

Students will have pictures of nature on their tables, photographs, paintings, prints, from all different parts of the world. If their desks don't create groups number them off and give each group their images.

Students will then be read, by the teacher a excerpt from Thore's Walden and asked to think about it and how it made them feel.

The definition of spirituality that we can up with on day one will be projected for the kids to look back at

In groups students will answer the question, what components of these pieces give them a spiritual feeling? Think about Thore.

This will be verbally stated and written on the board for reference.

They will write their answers down on a large piece of paper provided and put up on the wall.

Once all students have complete and all works are hanging on the wall each group will pick a spokesperson to present the information they have come up with.

As a class we will look at all the answers and discuss; Teacher should write any information that wasn't put up by the kids on a sheet of paper on the board.

What is similar between all the answers?

(Ex.) Do they all mention beauty? What about beauty makes you think of spirituality?

(Ex.) Do they all mention color? What colors make you think of spirituality? Why?

What did you feel when you were looking at the works? What emotions did you feel? Why?

Do you think the pictures portray the same feeling as the really thing? Why or why not?

So you think there is anything that we forgot to add, or something you just thought of?

Why do you think that artist from so many years and in so many cultures has drawn inspiration from nature?

How do you think nature connects us as a universal people spiritually?

The teacher will then verbally ask the students to think about a place where they find spirituality in nature. It can be anything from your backyard to the beach to fishing with your dad, running anything.

They will be given paper, magazines, oil pastels, markers, paints construction paper
They will be asked to create in some way a collage of the place or places that they find spirituality in nature. Please think about the discussion we just had.

The definition of spirituality will be left up as well as the answers they came up with for why the landscapes they looked at were spiritual so the students can look back.
Students will be asked to mount their work on construction paper when completed
After studio students will take time to clean up area.

Students will journal about what place real or make believe location they chose
answering questions that will be handed out to them.

Why did you choose this location? How is it spiritual for you personally?

What elements (name at least 3 for discussion) give your work a sense of spiritually for other viewers?

Do you think you were successful in creating a spiritual work of art? Why?

Students will turn in artwork with their journal entry.

Assessment: Students will be assessed on their personal reflection of the work they created and whether they created meaning in their work.

6 points for question 1 in journal

9 points for question 2 (3 pts for each example)

5 points for question 3

10 points for completion of studio (3 of that for mounting work)

Interdisciplinary:

Geography

Language arts

Lesson Four: Art as a form of meditative and healing spirituality

Objectives: Students will understand the meaning behind Buddhist mandalas. Students will brainstorm and create symbols that something in their life. Students will construct their own mandala using their own symbols and colors. Students will identify the meaning of their mandala, symbols and colors in a journal entry.

Artists: Buddhist Mandalas

Materials: Paper, markers, colored pencils, oil pastels, tins can, matches, and water.

Instruction:

Students will be given a hand out about Buddhist mandalas, their meaning and their importance. Students will then either volunteer or be chosen to read this out loud to the class.

Then students will watch a short video about Tibetan mandalas

(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oS6eQ_4PyHk&feature=related).

As a class a discussion will be held about how spirituality through art can be a form a meditation and healing.

How can creating art be a form of meditation?

How do you feel when you are creating art?

What other activities can be form of meditation?

How about reading? How?

What about running or sports? How?

What about meditation makes it spiritual?

The students will then be given a sheet of paper containing information about what each color symbolizes.

Color symbolism is used in a wide variety of fascinating ways in Buddhist art and ritual. In Buddhism, especially in Tibetan Buddhism, each of five colors (pancha-varna) symbolizes a state of mind, a celestial Buddha, a part of the body, a part of the mantra word Hum, or a natural element. (Blue and black are sometimes interchangeable. It is believed that by meditating on the individual colors, which contain their respective essences and are associated with a particular Buddha or bodhisattva, spiritual transformations can be achieved.

They will also be given examples of a few important Buddhist symbols used and what they mean.

The students will be given time to read over and study the information.

The students will then be asked to brain storm about something in their lives that they think needs healing or something in their lives that they would like time to meditate about.

Think about things at home, school, friends, pets

Students will then create their own mandala.

They will be given two pencils each, a spool of yarn will be at each table, as well as a ruler and markers.

Students will be given a piece of paper. They will be asked to create a perfect circle like the monks. A handout will be handed out to them on what is expected of their mandala

Measure 10 inches of yard.

Measure one inch in on each end and mark the spot with a marker the extra inch on both sides is for tying.

Tie each end of the yard to a pencil making sure your marker is right on the edge of the pencil so you yarn should be exactly 8 inches long. (re-measure)

Use a ruler to find the middle of your paper, make a small pencil mark.

Now while holding one pencil on the dot in the center pull the string taught and create a circle by moving your pencil with the string always taught around the middle pencil.

Your circle should be 16 inches in all directions.

Once you have your circle you may begin creating you mandala.

**** THERE WILL BE NO TALKING WHILE STUDENTS ARE CREATING THEIR MANDALA, IF SO POINTS WILL BE DEDUCTED...THIS IS TIME TO MEDITATE ON YOUR WORK AND YOUR LIFE*****

Create at least three symbols that represent what you are meditating about.

You must also use at least three different colors.

When complete on a separate piece of paper create a chart.

Your chat will have a list of the colors you used and the meaning you gave to them.

Your chart will also include your symbols and what each one means.

Students will hand in mandala and their chart at the end of class.

Assessment:

5 points if their circle is 16 inches in each direction

5 points if student is silent during mandala making

9 points for color chart and description 3 points for each

9 points for symbols chart and description 3 points for each

12 points for completion of mandala

Interdisiplinary:

History

Math

Lesson Five: Spirituality and Religion

Objectives: Students will describe how spirituality is shown in religious art works. Students will interpret the meaning of a piece of art from the renaissance. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the art by answering questions about the work, and presenting the work to the class.

Artists: Leonardo DeVinci, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, and Rubens

Materials: Flash cards with art and information, renaissance background information sheets, question sheets, paper, pens, projector.

Instructional:

Students will come in and the teacher will recap on what we have learned in the last four lessons.

Teacher Introduction:

We have learned that spirituality is something that people of all cultures experience. We have learned about our personal layers of spirituality. We have learned about how nature and the world around us can inspire spirituality. We have learned about how meditation can be a part of spirituality and how we can meditate or reflect while we are doing many things,

Today we are going to learn about how spirituality is many times linked with religion.

I know that all of you have or might not have your own religious views

You may follow what your parents have taught you or you might be on your own path.

However you are you are perfect. We are going to learn about religion in art today. One of the biggest art movements come out of Europe it was called the Renaissance and most of the work from this period was based off religion.

Thinking about the past lessons and what you have learned how is this religious art show spirituality?

What might be present in the work that would make it spiritual?

Think about what made the mandala spiritual.

Think about what made different cultures art show spirituality.

Think about what made the landscapes spiritual.

Students will then look at a few slides of renaissance art and the teacher will talk about light and dark, contrast, perspective, and color and how they add to the feeling of the painting.

Students will be given a handout with the definitions of the new terms.

Students will then each be given an image of a religious renaissance painting.

On the back of each card there will be facts about the artist the painting, including symbols in the work and their meaning, important figures in the painting, and other important facts about what makes the work a religious work.

There will also be a short history of what the Renaissance was.

The students will be given time to read and study each work. Then the students will be given a list of questions to think about and answer like...

1. Are there figures in the painting, what significance do they have?
2. How does the use of lights and darks in the painting have an effect on the feeling of the painting? Does this add to the feeling of spirituality, how?
3. How does the perspective have significance or make the painting more dramatic? Does this add to the feeling of spirituality? How?
4. Do you see anything that might be a symbol in the painting?
What? What could it mean or symbolize?
5. What do you think is going on in the painting?
6. What do you think the artist trying to say?

One by one the images will then be projected and each student will get a turn to present, with their card, the artist and the painting.

They will introduce the artist by name

The name and dates of the painting

Then using a pointer the student will point out symbols, people, and anything else that is significant in making the painting religious.

They must address each question from the handout in their presentation.

Assessment:

Students will be assessed on their presentation and the questions they answered.

They must demonstrate that they can identify what elements make up and add to the meaning of a work of art.

Students will receive 5 points for every question answered during their presentation.

Interdisciplinary:

Art History

World History

Religion (if at a parochial school)

Speech and Public Speaking

Lesson Six: Spirituality and Locations

Objectives: Students will identify and describe places of spiritual gathering. Students will construct with pencil and paper a building for their own spirituality using personal symbols from past lessons. Students will assess the meaning of their building by answering questions about it in a journal entry.

Artists: Taj Mahal, The Vatican, Kandariya Mahadeva Temple, Shah Mosque, Temple of Acropolis, and Parthenon

Materials: paper, drafting pencils, slides and projector

Instructions:

Teacher Introduction:

We have learned so much about spirituality so far in our lessons. We learned about how people can find spirituality in many different ways. And that spirituality is many times linked with religion. Today we are going to combine our knowledge. Many spiritual people pick places or building as a place to practice their spirituality. Their places are very different for different people and different cultures we are going to learn about a few of them today.

Why do you think that people of similar spiritual beliefs or practices tend to congregate together?

Do you think it is important to do this? Why?

Students will be shown slides of spiritual locations (Zen gardens, cathedrals, Buddhist temples, mosques, temples, ect) some will be famous and some will be not so famous.

As we look through the slides we will take about things that they have learned in past lessons.

We will use our knowledge and research of spiritual culture to generate discussion about why certain religious building or places are they why they are; we will talk about symbols and what they mean.

Why do you think that so many of the spiritual building are very grandiose?

How does what the building or location looks like effect what we think about it?

Are there colors present that might have meaning? If so what might they stand for?

Call on the students that have already studied certain cultures help answer some of your questions, test if they are retaining knowledge.

Are there symbols on the building? What might they mean? If not what might that symbolize?

After this the students will be given a sheet a paper and a pen and will be asked to brainstorm about if they had to create a spiritual building that would represent them spiritually. The building is to be built next to the school in the courtyard.

Students will be given exact dimensions of the courtyard.

They will also be given a picture of the space.

Students will be given questions to answer about the building? Extra points will be rewarded for students who refer back to past lessons.

What would it look like?

How big would it be (give dimensions)? Make sure it fits with the dimensions of the courtyard.

How tall (how many stories)?

What symbols would be present? What would they be and what would they stand for? Must have at least 2

What colors would be present? What would they stand for? Must have at least two.

Would it be built just for you, or for the whole community? Why?

Where would it be located if it wasn't in the courtyard? Why?

****Think back to the colors and symbols that you have used in pervious assignments, do they work in this one too?**

Then given white paper and pencils they will draw a draft of what their spiritual building will look like.

All symbols and colors mentioned in the questions must be present.

If the students are unable to draw the symbols they have chosen they will be allowed to look for images online and in magazines.

Students will cut out their building when they are done and place it on the picture of the courtyard.

Assessment:

Students will be assessed on their completion of every question.

3 points per question. They will also get one point extra for every reference to a previous lesson from the unit.

6 points (3 each) for the use of symbols

6 points (3 each) for the use of color

5 points for mounting the work on the picture of the courtyard.

Interdisciplinary:

Architecture

Math

World History

Geography

Lesson Seven: Spirituality in our contemporary world

Objectives: Students will reflect on and describe how spirituality plays a role in our contemporary world. Students will examine and interpret artist who blend cultural spiritualities. Students will construct a world deity using images of different cultures spiritual figures. Students will evaluate what they have learned about spirituality, and the meaning of the figure they have created in a journal entry.

Artists: Shahiz Sikander, Caiguo-qiang, Nahum Zenil, Shirin Neshat, Maurizio Cattelan,

Materials: images of deities, construction paper, scissors, glue

Instruction:

Students will be asked to reflect on everything we have learned in the past lesson. We have learned that spiritually is a part of all of us whether we are religious or not. Spirituality is something that can happen anywhere and for anyone. It is cross-cultural; it is something personal or something that we share with a community.

Can you think of any way that spirituality has had a negative effect on our world?

How can spirituality cause discrimination?

How can spirituality or religion create events like war?

Do you think that this is right?

Have any of you ever feel anything negative towards you due to your spirituality?

Why do you think people are so afraid of what is different?

Do you think the world would be better if everyone was the same?

Students will then look at slides of artist who would have combined images from different spiritualities and religions.

Students will be asked:

What symbols, objects, people, or colors do you see in the art that we have learned about in past lessons?

How is understanding, and acceptance the key to tolerance?

Do you think that the blending of cultures is the key to understanding and tolerance?

Students will then receive a pile of images. The images will be of different spiritual deities and symbols from many different cultures.

They will be asked to mix and match to create a being or a symbol that is a world symbol. Containing bits and pieces from all the images.

Students must make sure to draw and add at least one symbol (from previous assignment) to represent them as part of the spiritual world.

This will be the symbol of spiritual understanding and tolerance. It will show that we are all people and just because we are different in our personal spiritual lives we are all one.

Students will then be asked to do one final journaling.

They will be given a handout with questions to answer:

What have you learned in the past unit about spirituality? (list at least 5 things)

Do you think that learning about others and your own spirituality has made you more understanding, why?

What meaning do you want people to take from the image you have created today?

Students will turn in journaling along with image.

Assessment: Students will be assessed by their journal entries about the affects of spirituality, and the completion of the studio.

10 points for question 1, 2 points for each example

5 points for question 2

5 points for question 3

10 points for the completion of the studio

Interdisciplinary:

World Culture/History

Social Studies