

# Sharing the World's Religious Holidays with K-5 Students

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# Why Does Religion Matter?

Religious Literacy and its Importance to Civic Literacy and  
Global Competence

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#globalcompetence,  
#civilliteracy,  
#digitalliteracy,  
#religiousliteracy

# 4 REASONS TO TEACH ABOUT RELIGION IN THE CLASSROOM



## Civic

Schools must have a common ground. We need to learn to listen to and respect each other on deeply held understandings.



## Liberal Education

Students should be learning about and from religions to gain a deeper awareness, reflectivity, and understanding of themselves and others.



## Constitutional

Schools should remain neutral, meaning religiously neutral, neutral among religions, and neutral between religion and nonreligion.



## Global Competence

Knowledge of religions is essential as we globalize in the twenty-first century. An understanding of religions will allow students to interact with others successfully.

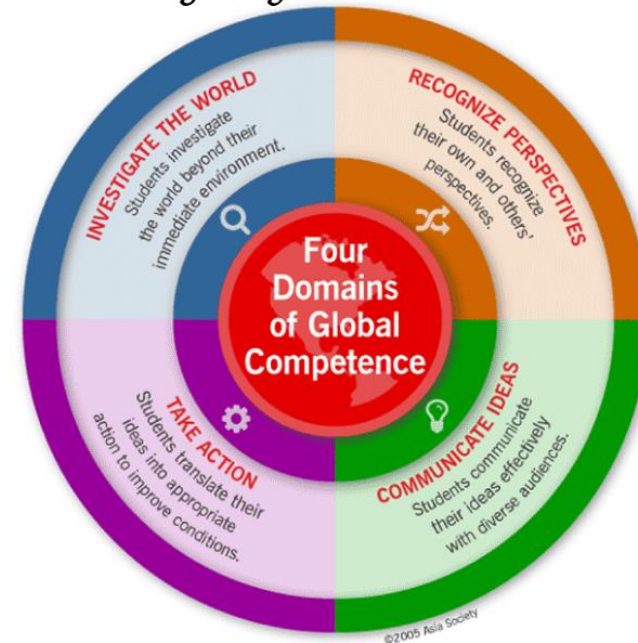
[Read more about it at Religion Matters Blog: Why Should Religion Be Part of the Curriculum?](#)  
Source: Warren A. Nord and Charles C. Haynes, *Taking Religion Seriously Across the Curriculum* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 1998).

GLOBAL COMPETENCE IS THE CAPACITY TO **EXAMINE GLOBAL AND INTERCULTURAL ISSUES**, TO TAKE **MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES** UNDER A SHARED RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, TO ENGAGE IN **OPEN, APPROPRIATE AND EFFECTIVE INTERACTIONS** WITH PEOPLE FROM **DIFFERENT CULTURES** AND TO ACT FOR **COLLECTIVE WELL-BEING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**.

THE OECD PISA GLOBAL COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK: PREPARING OUR YOUTH FOR AN INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE WORLD



— Navigating Shared Futures —





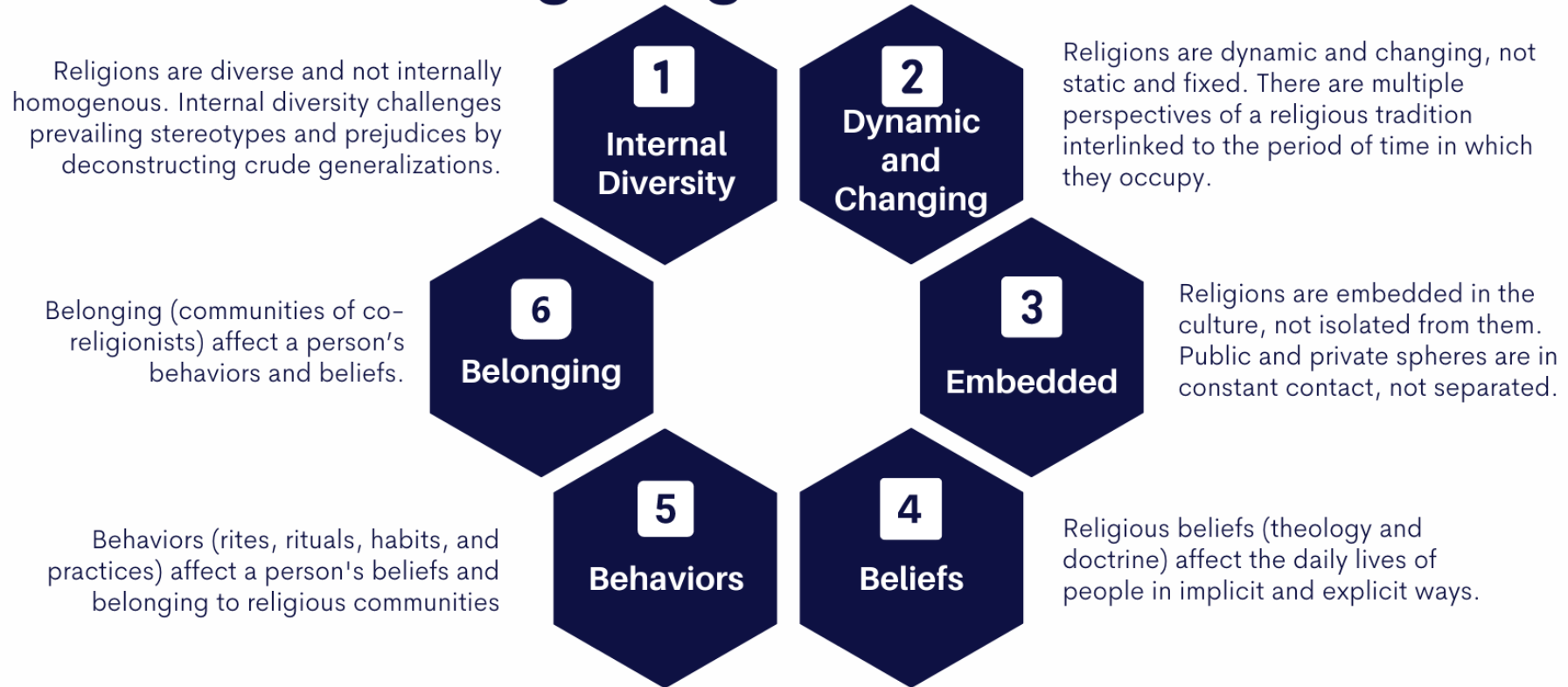
# GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION IN THE CLASSROOM

- Teachers should be **academic**, not devotional in their treatment of all religions.
- Teachers should only teach for **awareness** of religions, not an acceptance of religion.
- Teachers should only teach **about** religion, not practice religion in the classroom.
- Teachers should **educate** students on the diversity of religious views and not impose a particular viewpoint.
- Teachers should **not promote or denigrate** religions.
- Teachers should only **inform** about beliefs, not seek to make students believe.\*



Read more about it at [Religions Matters Blog: What are the Guidelines for Teaching about Religion?](#)  
Source: First Amendment Center: *Finding Common Ground*

# Six-Point Framework for Teaching Religion in the Classroom



Source: Benjamin Marcus, "Chapter 1: Teaching About Religion in Public Schools," in Haynes, Charles C., ed. Teaching about Religion in the Social Studies Classroom.

# Why Religious Holidays?

- Tangible, hands-on options
- Often celebratory
- This is how adults in all faith traditions teach kids
- Avoids tenets and texts



# Power of Narratives

- Perfect fit for human nature
- Holds attention and improves learning/memory
- Connects us to others
- Allows us to incorporate culture and history





# Narrative Traditions - Examples

## Indigenous

- Creation myths

## Hinduism

- Deity tales
- Tales of the Panchatantra

## Buddhism

- Stories told by/about the Buddha
- Jataka tales

## Judaism

- Stories in Hebrew Bible/Old Test.
- Stories by/about Rebbes

## Christianity

- Stories from the Christian Bible/New Testament

## Islam

- Stories referred to in Qur'an/Hadith
- Stories about Muhammad's Life

# Lesson Plans

- Hindu – Diwali
- Islam – Ramadan/Eid
- Indigenous Creation Stories





Comments?

Suggestions?

Questions?

Concerns?