



Building Bridges Across Religious Divides

Founder/Content Creator
Rev. Vicki Garlock, Ph.D



About her market

- Families of one faith, multiple faiths, or no faith
- Schools of all types (public, private, parochial, charter)
- Faith communities of any religious tradition
- Preschools & Pre-K programs
- Grandparents

About Vicki

Vicki, an award-winning kids' book author, develops non-devotional, constitutionally-appropriate resources to help families and educators teach kids, aged 3-12, about the world's religions.

She earned her Ph.D. in Psychology with dual specialties in neuroscience and cognitive development, writing her dissertation on the early predictors of later reading ability in 4- to 8-year-olds.

After serving as a full-time professor for over a decade, she became the Curriculum Specialist at a progressive-type Christian church where she developed a multi-year, multi-age, multi-faith curriculum for kids in Preschool through 8th grade. ABCs of the World's Religions is her 3rd kids' book.

[photo credit: Audrey Goforth]

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Vicki also writes for...



RECORD



HOLDER



Record Title: Most Places of Worship Visited in One Month

Place/Date: Chicago, September 2025

Number of Places Visited: 185

Previous Record: 111

Required Verification: time-stamped selfie, video, witness form

Places were associated with all the major world religions and dozens of different denominations/faith movements.

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I have hundreds of photos. Make a request
if you have something in mind!

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if you have something in mind!



G is for GURUS {GOO-rooz},
who are very wise teachers.
These spiritual masters
help their students think deeper.

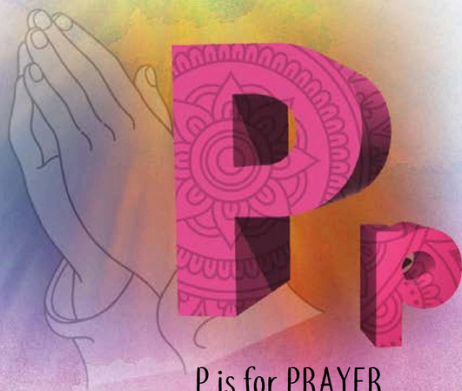


Gurus are particularly important in the Sikh {sik} tradition which is based on the teachings of 10 human Gurus. Their sacred text, the Guru Granth Sahib {sah-heeb}, is their final Guru. Gurus are also important in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism.



H is for HIJAB {hee-JOB},
which covers one's hair.
Some Muslimahs avoid
having heads that are bare.

Muslim women always wear hijab in a mosque and some women wear hijab whenever they are in public. Head coverings, especially in sacred spaces, are also common in the Sikh tradition, for both men and women, and in the Jewish traditions, particularly for men.



P is for PRAYER,
which comes in all forms.
Although there are guidelines,
there aren't many norms.



Prayers are found in many religious traditions — including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity — and devout Muslims pray five times a day. Prayer can include speaking aloud, thinking to one's self, meditating, or chanting. Prayer postures also vary widely.

Additional Head Shots/Images/Captions



Photo Credit: Audrey Goforth



Photo Credit: Audrey Goforth



Personal Photo



Teaching about Vishnu, Nandi, and the Hindu traditions at Sri Somesvara
Photo Credit: Audrey Goforth

Additional Head Shots/Images/Captions



Exploring
Ramadan
with
1st-graders
at Francine
Delany New
School for
Children

Personal
Photo



Exploring
Diwali
with
1st-graders
at Francine
Delany New
School for
Children

Personal
Photo

Additional Head Shots/Images/Captions



Teaching about Hanuman and the Hindu traditions at Sri Somesvara
Photo Credit: Audrey Goforth



Discussing Buddhist practice with Dorje Lupon Dr. Hun Lye,
Founder, Urban Dharma, Asheville, NC
Photo Credit: Audrey Goforth

Additional Head Shots/Images/Captions



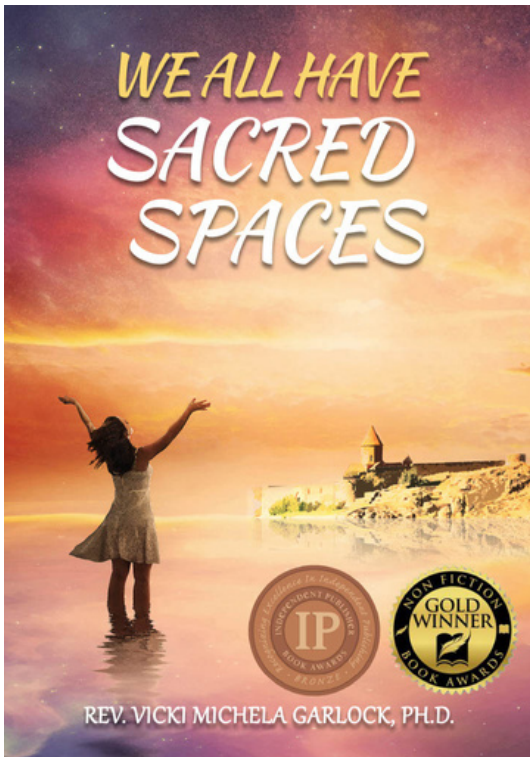
Presenting to faith leaders at the Creation Care Alliance Symposium
Photo Credit: Audrey Goforth



Presenting to K-12 Social Studies teachers: Teaching World Religions in Schools
Personal Photo



About We All Have Sacred Spaces



Ever wonder about the inside of an Islamic mosque or a Sikh gurdwara? Ever wonder what the first worship spaces were like? Do you know which religions usually require removing shoes or wearing head coverings?

Travel around the world and explore the ins and outs of sacred spaces from seven of the world's major faith traditions - all in one volume. The similarities and differences might surprise you!

*Indigenous, Hindu, Buddhist,
Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Sikh*

- **Publisher:** Eaton Press
- **Publication Year:** 2020
- **Language:** English
- **Genre:** Multicultural, Religion, Nonfiction, Educational
- **ISBN:** 978-1947486164
- **List Price:** \$12.99

**Gold Winner - Nonfiction
Authors Association**

**Bronze "IPPY" Award
Multicultural Non-Fiction Juvenile/YA**

**Finalist: Best Book Awards for
Children's Religious & Nonfiction**

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5-Star Readers' Favorites

All 5-Star Reviews on Amazon

This is the Crystal Mosque found in Malaysia.
Can you count the domes and minarets?



Can you also see the crescent moons,
a symbol of Islam, on top of the minarets?

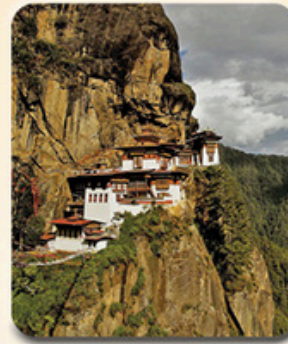
Minarets broadcast the Islamic call to prayer five times a day. Whenever devout Muslims hear the call, they stop what they're doing and pray – either at a mosque or anywhere else they happen to be.

The precise prayer times are determined by the sun's position in the sky. In this way, Islam is closely connected to nature, just like the Indigenous and Hindu traditions.



3

Like Hindu *mandirs*, many Buddhist temples are set in awe-inspiring locations. This temple in Bhutan was literally built on the side of a mountain.



Paro Taktsang (pah-roh tahkt-sahng) is also known as Tiger's Nest, but the actual translation of "taktsang" is "tigress lair." According to legend, a famous Buddhist teacher flew on the back of a tigress to the mountain cave that lies within the temple.

Dome-like towers, called *stupas* (stoo-puhs), are another common feature of Buddhist temples. This Golden Pagoda in Burma (Myanmar) consists of one large stupa surrounded by several smaller ones.



Some *stupas*, like this one, hold sacred objects that have been preserved for a long time. These relics, which might include hair or teeth, are highly respected in some Buddhist traditions.

3

Thought Questions

Nature is very important for sacred spaces in Indigenous, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions. Is there a place in nature that's special to you?



In Hindu temples, Buddhist temples, Islamic mosques, and Sikh gurdwaras people remove their shoes in respect.

Have you ever done that in a sacred space?
Would you like to try it?



In Islamic mosques and Sikh gurdwaras people often cover their heads as a sign of respect. What do you think of that idea? If you covered your head, what would you wear?



Do you think the domes on the different sacred spaces are similar or different? What about towers, stupas, minarets, and steeples/spires?

Which is your favorite sacred space? Why?

3

"Profusely illustrated throughout with full-color photography, *We All Have Sacred Spaces* is impressively informative and thoroughly 'kid friendly' in organization and presentation, making it an ideal and unreservedly recommended addition to family, daycare center, preschool, Sunday school, elementary school, and community library collections." - **Midwest Book Review**

"I've learned so much from this book. The photographs are stunning....I especially appreciated being given the proper pronunciation of the many unfamiliar words and phrases she introduces in her work....It's a marvelous book and well worth reading for children and their caregivers alike....most highly recommended". - **Readers' Favorite**



About Embracing Peace: Stories from the World's Faith Traditions



- **Publisher:** Eaton Press
- **Publication Year:** 2021
- **Language:** English
- **Genre:** Multicultural, Religion, Nonfiction, Educational
- **ISBN:** 978-1947486195
- **List Price:** \$20.00

Every world religion offers lessons on how to live in harmony with both Earth and one another. Embracing Peace represents a deep dive into peace-related tales that have been shared with children all over the world for centuries. My versions of these 16 favorites come from eight different traditions (Sub-Saharan African, Native American, Hindu/Sanatana Dharma, Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic). Read one at a time for bedtime, quiet time or a peace lesson. Special features include:

- Full-color, full-page illustration for each story
- Unique formatting that keeps kids engaged
- Informational boxes about each tradition
- Thought questions for deeper exploration

*Finalist: Best Book Awards –
Children's Religious*

5-Star Readers' Favorites

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World Religions for Grownups

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Varaha Brings Peace to the World

 Allow me to introduce myself. I am Vishnu (VISH-noo). My job is to preserve and protect all of creation. As you might imagine, this keeps me very busy! It's almost impossible to draw a picture of me because I am a god, but people still try. Sometimes, you'll see me floating on an ocean.
  Sometimes, you'll see me sitting on my large snake, Shesha (SHESH-uh). In many pictures, I'm holding various objects. The four most popular ones are:
 



A shankha (SHAHN-kuh), or conch shell, to remind people that I live on the sea and that my heart is pure.



A padma (PAHD-muh), or sacred lotus flower, which reminds people that I bring beauty to the world.



A gada (GAH-duh), or mace, which reminds people that I am powerful and smart.



A chakram (SHAHK-rum), or discus, which reminds people that I overcome darkness with light. Round like the sun, it's also a weapon to destroy evil.

You might be wondering how I hold all those objects. Well, that's where my four arms come in handy!!

The Peace Treaty at Hdaybiyyah

Muhammad had now lived in Medina for six years. Deserts, as you know, get very little rain, but Medina was different. It was a bustling oasis with rivers, streams, and wells full of water. That meant lots of plants, lots of animals, and lots of people.

Muhammad had mostly grown up in Mecca, but he had visited Medina as a boy. Back then, it was called Yathrib.

Do you have aunts, uncles, or cousins?

Muhammad had lots of relatives there. In fact, he and his mother had visited them once. Muhammad met all his aunts and uncles, and he had a wonderful time swimming and flying kites with his cousins.



The trip had been fun but, on the way home, tragedy struck. Muhammad's mother fell sick and died. His father had died before he was born, so Muhammad was now an orphan. That's also how he ended up being raised by some of his relatives.

When Muhammad grew up, he became a successful businessman. He had a wife and children, and he provided them with a very nice life.

Muslims call their sacred spaces "mosques" instead of "synagogues" or "churches."

Many quail gasped at this dreadful news.



"I recently witnessed one of these hunting expeditions," Quail King continued, "and I noticed something very interesting. Each captured quail tried to escape the net by working alone. This will never do. I have devised a different plan that will save all of us if everyone agrees to it."

The quail listened attentively.



"The next time a group is captured, you must work together. You'll never free yourselves by working alone.

Instead, raise your necks at the same time and fly away with the net.

Carry it, all together, to a thorn bush and then drop it. The net will get tangled on the bush, giving you plenty of time to get free."



"Ah. This is a very good plan," the flock members thought as they nodded to one another hopefully. This way, they could outsmart the hunter instead of trying to fight him.

Can you think of a time when people worked together, and the outcome was better as a result?

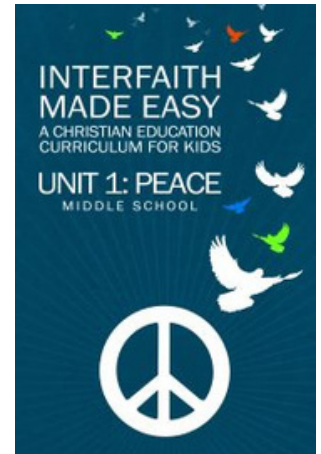
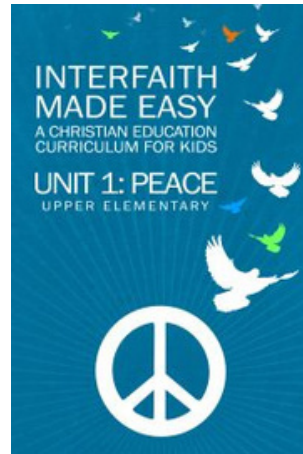
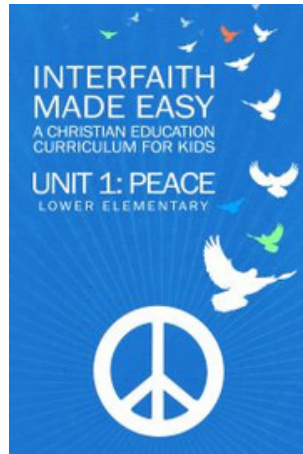
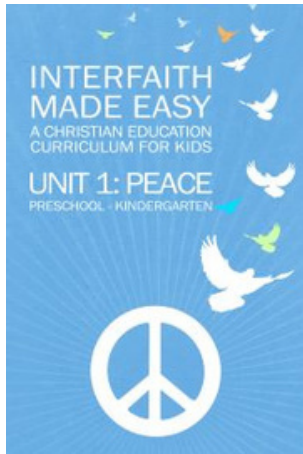
The meeting ended, and the quail dined on a most delicious feast before returning to their homes. It had been a productive day, and everyone was exhausted.

President & Founder, United Religions Initiative (URI), Right Reverend William E. Swing

"Having been part of numerous gatherings of religious leaders, theologians, and grassroots practitioners trying to discover their common ground, something always seemed to be missing. Vicki Garlock's Embracing Peace unearths the missing ingredient. Stories. Beautifully illustrated and fun, these stories lay the foundation for peace in a religiously diverse world by speaking to the soul and imagination of the child in all of us. Highly recommended."



About my Interfaith Peace Curriculum



A theologically progressive alternative for families and educators using the Christian Bible as a jumping-off point for learning about the world's faith traditions.

- 15 lesson plans (1/2 from the Christian Bible, 1/2 from other faith traditions)
- Lesson plans include age-appropriate teaching prompts, story, craft, supply list, & activity
- Available for 4 age groups (Preschool-Kind., Lower Elem., Upper Elem., and Middle School)
- Suggestions for opening rituals, closing rituals, & community service projects
- Beta tested on dozens of kids in each age group
- Available in hard copy and digital formats
- Used by churches in at least seven different Christian denominations (including Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, UCC, Unitarian Universalist, & Unity)

"We just finished our interfaith unit! We combined the Peace unit of your curriculum with materials from the World Peace Village. Each week we looked at a different religious tradition, comparing a lesson of peace from that tradition with a lesson of peace from Christianity. We found the story pairings in your curriculum very helpful!"

- **Rev. Caroline Hamilton-Arnold, Transitional Associate Minister, Newtown Congregational Church**

"Vicki, thanks for sending us some of the lessons plans from your youth curriculum. We've had some good success with it and the kids like it a lot. We even did a whole Sunday morning using one of the lessons for the whole congregation and they LOVED it!"

-**Candace Chellew-Hodge, Jubilee! Circle, Columbia, SC**