



TEACHING ABOUT RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

Issues and Resources

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Misconceptions

- About Earth-based spirituality, including American Indian spirituality?
 - About Hindus?
 - About Buddhists?
 - About Jews?
 - About Catholics?
 - About Protestants?
 - About Muslims?
 - About atheists and agnostics?
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Spirituality

Spirituality is

- the sense of a connection to the metaphysical, a reality greater than oneself
- a sense of well being
- a reverence for all life forms




Religion

- Religion ties people to the sacred and to one another with common beliefs




Religion answers questions such as:


- Why are we here?
- How did the world begin?
- What should we believe about a higher power?
- What is faith?
- How should we treat each other?



*The First Amendment to the
U.S. Constitution*


**Congress shall make no law respecting
an establishment of religion, or
prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or
abridging the freedom of speech, or of
the press; or the right of the people
peaceably to assemble, and to petition
the Government for a redress of
grievances.**





Why teach about religion?


“Knowledge about religions is not only characteristic of an educated person, but also is absolutely necessary for understanding and living in a world of diversity.” (NCSS, 1998)



“Omission of facts about religion can give students the false impression that the religious life of humankind is insignificant or unimportant.” (cited in Haynes & Thomas, 2001)



Building Understanding



“If we want students to feel safe and cared for at school and if we want to respect their families’ hopes and beliefs, it is important that we know about their deepest convictions and values. Teachers and students need to move beyond the idea of tolerance toward an active attempt to understand the other.” (Green & Oldendorf, 2005)