

ARTICLE 18 & THE 1ST AMENDMENT

United Nations Human Rights Declaration, Article 18

- “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change [their] religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest [their] religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

The First Amendment promotes religious freedom and pluralism

- “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.”
- The First Amendment is the basis for the academic study of religions in the United States.
- The academic study of religions (also called religious literacy education) means having a basic understanding of religions & worldviews, and of diverse interpretations within them. This includes their histories, central texts (if they exist), beliefs, and practices as they change over time, space, and social contexts.

**RESPECTING DIFFERENCES IN
RELIGIONS & WORLDVIEWS**

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EDUCATE

Know your perspective and assumptions

- Understand what's important to you regarding your religion or worldview.
- Ask yourself: What do I think? What do I actually know?
- Be aware of how family, friends, community, and other sources shape how you and others think.
- Explore how you and others are influenced by media, cultures, politics, and society.

Study many religions & worldviews

- Learn about the basic beliefs and practices of religions & worldviews.
- Be aware that there are many diverse identities among followers of religions & worldviews.
- Recognize that there are diverse interpretations within religions & worldviews and that they change over time and place.
- Understand that individuals believe and practice their religions & worldviews in their own ways.

Explore how religions & worldviews foster peace

- Analyze the First Amendment and its five freedoms, including: In the U.S. there is no established religion. Everyone has the right to practice the religion or worldview they choose or no religion at all.
- Explore the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights Article 18: Universally, everyone has the right to religious freedom.
- Learn about diverse people's contributions to society.
- Read and study diverse people's stories to imagine yourself in their shoes.

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RELATE

Listen actively

- Listen to understand, not to agree or disagree.
- Let people finish their thoughts without interrupting them.
- Assume that others are honest and respectful.
- Understand that each person and each religion or worldview is unique.

Speak respectfully

- Use kind words and a gentle tone.
- Ask respectful questions to understand what the other person is saying and what's important to them.
- Communicate politely about differences among people, their values, and their beliefs.
- Do not make jokes or use stereotypes, which are unfair and hurtful.

Act compassionately

- Be aware of the personal space that other people want and need.
- Remember that aggression and bullying take many forms in thought, words, and actions.
- Try to safely prevent or stop aggressive behavior and bullying or find adults to help.

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ENGAGE

Interact with people of different religions & worldviews

- Get to know or befriend people who have a religion or worldview different from yours.
- Work with people of different religions or worldviews in service, clubs, and sports.
- Learn about places and practices of worship or worldviews.

Challenge prejudice and discrimination

- Follow the Platinum Rule: Treat others how they want to be treated.
- Respect, support, and protect those who ask for help.
- Keep private things private. But if someone will get hurt, ask an adult for help.

Admit when you're wrong and apologize

- Recognize that everyone makes mistakes.
- Apologize and accept others' apologies.
- Learn from your mistakes so you don't repeat them.
- Repair the damage done by your mistakes.

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