

RESPECTING DIFFERENCES IN RELIGIONS & WORLDVIEWS

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.

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.

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.

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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