



critical media project

Lesson Plan: Religion

This lesson plan should be used in conjunction with the [media examples](#) and the various resources, including [diy activities](#). Please also see the provided example worksheet that can be printed and handed out for students to write their responses on the religion of their choice. See [CMP website](#) for ideas.

PURPOSE & LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Students will be able to critically analyze a range of media examples and their representations of religion.
- Students will be able to learn how to “read” media texts (film, television, streaming content, Internet, radio and recording, news, social media, etc.) and identify patterns and stereotypes.
- Students will be able to explain in written and oral forms the way religion takes on varied meanings in different media contexts.
- Students will be able to explain how the media’s representations can potentially impact how they understand their own and other identities.

GETTING STARTED:

- Ask students to think about how they see or understand themselves (what part of their identity is most important to them).
- Ask students to assess how many of their peers cite “religion” as fundamental parts of who they are.
- Ask students to list media and other stereotypes of specific religions (see accompanying worksheet).

KEY IDEAS & CONCEPTS: (see longer overview on [CMP website](#))

- In media, religions are often used to create certain types of characters, tell certain kinds of stories, and promote certain value systems.
- Religious traditions and expressions are often represented inaccurately by the media; a single religion often contains a great deal of diversity in how it is conceived and practiced, but is often presented as a single set of beliefs, practices and representations.

- Historically, we can point to progress in dealing with some religious discrimination and representations of religions, but inequality and injustice still remain for specific religions in all regions of the world
- The media is a key site where religious stereotypes persist and may also be challenged.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: (use [media examples](#) & [diy activities](#))

- Can students see and identify patterns in the representation of specific religions in the media?
- Can students critically question and challenge the representations and stereotypes they identify?
- Can students critically question their own ideologies (ways of seeing) tied to specific religions and the role media plays in shaping those ideologies?



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Worksheet: Media Representations of Religion

Name: _____ Class: _____

Class Discussion:

1. List any stereotypes (in media and everyday life) of religious identity that you can think of.
2. Are there any patterns that you identify on your list?
3. How would you characterize these representations? Are they positive? Negative? Neutral? Why?
4. Do you agree with these representations? Do they seem true or accurate? Why?

Your Thoughts/Notes:

Small Group Discussion (after viewing media examples from website):

1. What types of representations of religion do you see in these media examples?
2. Are the representations of religion based on how the individuals look? What they wear? What they say? How they speak? What they do?
3. Are the individuals of different religions stereotyped, one-dimensional or complex?
4. If they are stereotypical, what kinds of stereotypes do you notice?
5. Are they protagonists or antagonists? Heroes or villains? Are they violent or peaceful? Secretive or trustworthy? What characteristics would you associate with the individual representations you see?
6. Do the representations of certain religions relate to political ideologies, historical or current events?
7. What do you think the potential impact of such representations is on people who regularly view them?

Reflection: Should we try to change or challenge these stereotypes in the media? Why? How?
