

UNIT V: TAKING ACTION FOR FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

LESSON 17: ASSESSING FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF IN YOUR COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVES:

- To help students gain perspective on the freedom of religion or belief in their family and community.
- To recognize the difference between a **plural** and **homogenous community**.
- To recognize the difference between major religious groups and various denominations and sub-groups within the same religious group.
- To consider the implications of a plural or homogenous community.

TIME: Two 50 minute class periods.

MATERIALS: Chart paper and marker or blackboard and chalk, Handout 17: Autobiography of Religion or Belief.

To the Teacher: Be sensitive that acknowledging “alternative beliefs” within the family or friendship group may expose a participant to ridicule or embarrassment. In communities where religious persecution exists, you may choose to omit this activity altogether. In other communities, you may need to take great care to ensure that student information remains anonymous and that all information is treated with respect.

I. INTRODUCTION (2 minutes)

Explain that this unit turns from a general consideration of freedom of religion or belief to examine one’s own classroom, community, and country.

II. ACTIVITY: A SURVEY OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF IN THE COMMUNITY (time variable)

To the Teacher: This activity requires that in advance the teacher acquire specific and accurate data about religious groups that exist in the community.

Step 1:

Give students copies of Handout 17: Autobiography of Religion or Belief. Explain that they will make a survey in order to understand influences in the local community. Explain that everyone is to complete a handout about their family, their community, and themselves. What they write is to be strictly anonymous.

Remind students of the names of various religions. Urge them to distinguish between the major religious groups (Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Indigenous spiritualities, Jewish, Muslim, for example) and denominations or sub-groups within those groups (some examples of denominations and sub-groups are

Baptist, Mormon, and Roman Catholic Christianity; Tibetan and Zen Buddhism; Shia and Sunni Islam; Orthodox and Reform Judaism).

Remind students of the definitions of **atheist** and **agnostic**, defined in earlier lessons (see Lesson 3, “Defining Dignity, Religion and Belief”, p. 16). Not everyone, including participants themselves, may have a religion. For example, some people will describe themselves as **atheists** or **agnostics**. List these under “OTHER BELIEFS REPRESENTED IN THE COMMUNITY.”

Give these suggestions:

- If you don’t know the answer, just write “???” or “Don’t Know.”
- Give as much detail as possible when you mention a particular religious affiliation or belief.
- To preserve anonymity, don’t use your name or the names of others on your chart.

To the Teacher: You may want to include “OTHER” in the family boxes on Handout 17. The definition of “family” varies from culture to culture, so leaving an open box may give students more options to adjust the handout to fit their circumstances.

Step 2:

Have students complete Handout 17. This step is best assigned for homework to enable students to talk with family members, especially in a diverse community where members of the same family may come from different ethnic and faith communities.

Step 3:

When participants have finished the survey, collect them for redistribution. Before counting up the results, ask participants if they think their classroom or community is **plural** or **homogenous**. Remind them and explain what these terms mean:

A plural community includes many different religions or beliefs.

A homogenous community has one dominant religion or belief.

Write the word “**plural**” on one side of the blackboard, and the word “**homogenous**” on the other side. Leave these words for use in Step 4.

Step 4:

Shuffle the surveys and give each participant someone else’s survey. Make a chart like those below on the blackboard or separate sheets of chart paper. Ask students to come up and record the data they find on the autobiography they received.

- If only major religions (e.g., Islam, Christianity) are reported, they should be listed in the first column under “MAJOR RELIGIONS.”

- If a denomination or sub-group is given, it should be listed in the row next to the name of that religion (see examples below). It should be counted under both columns (e.g., a Roman Catholic would be counted once under “DENOMINATIONS/SUB-GROUPS” and once under “MAJOR RELIGIONS.”
- If a religion, sub-group, or belief is already listed, they should add a check mark or tally stroke.
- **Agnosticism** and **atheism** should be listed under “OTHER BELIEFS REPRESENTED IN THE COMMUNITY.”

To the Teacher:

- *Students may need help to determine what major religion certain sub-groups belong to.*
- *If reports are very general (e.g., “Protestant”) you may wish to ask for more information or just list it as a sub-group.*

RELIGIONS REPRESENTED IN THE COMMUNITY		OTHER BELIEFS REPRESENTED IN THE COMMUNITY
MAJOR RELIGIONS	DENOMINATION/ SUB-GROUPS	<i>Atheists 2 Agnostics 5</i>
<i>Islam 26</i>	<i>Sunni 16 Shiite 10</i>	
<i>Christianity 20</i>	<i>Roman Catholic 5 Baptist 5 Mormon 5 Russian Orthodox 5</i>	
<i>Buddhism 9</i>	<i>Tibetan Buddhist 1 Zen Buddhist 8</i>	

Ask participants to assist in tallying the results on these charts:

- Add up the number of reports for each denomination or sub-group.
- Add up the total number for each major religion.
- Post the results on the chart.

To the Teacher: *Exact figures are not as important as a general impression of the community diversity and general proportions of religions and beliefs represented.*

Step 5:

Discuss the results of the survey:

- Did any of the results of this survey surprise you?
- Were some parts difficult to answer? Why or why not?
- Is the class “homogenous” or “plural” regarding religion or belief?
- Is it possible to identify this class, community, or the country as either one or the other?

Suggest to students that the two extremes actually represent a continuum, and that most countries fall somewhere between the two extremes. To illustrate, draw a line connecting the two terms, **plural** and **homogenous** (written on the board

in Step 2), and ask students to speculate about where their country falls on that line. If students have knowledge of other countries, ask them to place those countries on the line as well. Discuss those placements.

Step 6:

Explain the terms **intolerance** and **discrimination**.

Step 7:

Discuss:

- Which type of community would probably be most likely to emphasize to citizens that they should express acceptance toward all religions and beliefs? Why?
- Which type of community would probably be most likely to have laws prohibiting discrimination based on religion or belief? Why?

To the Teacher: Some participants may conclude that a more plural community would emphasize “tolerance” and “acceptance” because of the many religions/beliefs represented – each individual may want to maintain his/her religious autonomy and rights, and all members of society may see great value in promoting “tolerance” and/or “acceptance.” In a homogenous community, many people may not feel the presence of other religions or beliefs, and therefore they may not place as much value on “tolerance.” Some students may conclude that a plural community may be more likely to have laws prohibiting discrimination based on religion or belief because there is a greater threat of such discrimination. In a truly homogenous society, it is more likely that there would be no discrimination based on religion or belief since nearly everyone adheres to the same beliefs. Challenge these assumptions, pointing out that conformity is likely to be encouraged in a homogenous society and non-conformity more acceptable in a diverse/plural society.

Step 8:

Discuss:

- How can you tell if a community is plural or homogenous?
- Could there be some religions or beliefs in the community of which they are unaware?
- Have they ever met an “**atheist**” (or some other group that probably exists in the community, but is not very visible)?

Suggest that **atheists** and **agnostics** may not generally “show” their beliefs outwardly. Others may practice their religion/beliefs secretly, particularly if the community is not tolerant of those beliefs or if discrimination based on religion or belief is not prohibited by law.

Step 9:

Ask participants to express their opinions in writing:

- Is this school, community, or country tolerant of diverse religions and beliefs?
- What are some of the results of this acceptance or lack of acceptance?

To the Teacher: This step could be assigned for homework.

Step 10:

After participants have had a chance to articulate their ideas in writing, open a discussion of whether this community is tolerant of diverse religions and beliefs. Where participants find intolerance and discrimination, ask what they can do to address it.

III. CONCLUSION (2 minutes)

Conclude by observing that this brief survey and their opinions about tolerance may not be the same for other parts of the country, the region, or the world. However, freedom of religion or belief is a universal human right and like all human rights is the same for all people everywhere.

HANDOUT 17

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

Complete this worksheet, which will provide a sense of the diversity of your community.

- Under “RELIGION” try to include sub-groups or denominations (e.g., some examples of denominations or sub-groups are Baptist, Mormon and Roman Catholic Christianity; Tibetan and Zen Buddhism; Shiite and Sunni Islam).
- Under “BELIEFS” include people who identify themselves as “**atheists**” or “**agnostics**”.
- Include stepparents, foster parents, guardians, or anyone who acts as a parent.
- If you don’t know, just put “???”. This includes your own religion or beliefs.
- To keep the survey anonymous, don’t use your or anyone else’s name
- If you run out of room, make your own chart like those on the worksheet.

ONE PARENT OR GUARDIAN’S FAMILY	RELIGION(S)	BELIEF(S)
Parent or guardian’s mother		
Parent or guardian’s father		
Parent or guardian’s sister(s) (maternal aunt)		
Parent or guardian’s brother(s) (maternal uncle)		
Others		

ANOTHER PARENT OR GUARDIAN’S FAMILY	RELIGION(S)	BELIEF(S)
Parent or guardian’s mother		
Parent or guardian’s father		
Parent or guardian’s sister(s) (paternal aunt)		
Parent or guardian’s brother(s) (paternal uncle)		
Others		

IMMEDIATE FAMILY	RELIGION(S)	BELIEF(S)
One Parent or Guardian		
Another Parent or Guardian		
Sister(s)		
Brother(s)		
Other		

FRIENDS/ CLASSMATES	RELIGION(S)	BELIEF(S)
Friend		

NEIGHBORS/ COMMUNITY MEMBERS	RELIGION(S)	BELIEF(S)
Community member		

YOU	RELIGION(S)	BELIEF(S)

UNIT V: TAKING ACTION FOR FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

LESSON 18: TAKING THE HUMAN RIGHTS TEMPERATURE OF YOUR PLACE OF WORSHIP OR ASSEMBLY *

OBJECTIVES:

- To connect the Right of Freedom of Religion or Belief to other international treaties and documents.
- To recognize tolerance, understanding, and respect for freedom of religion or belief in a place of worship or assembly.

TIME: 50 minutes – variable.

MATERIALS: Handout 18: Taking the Human Rights Temperature of Your Place of Worship.

I. INTRODUCTION

Step 1:

Explain that the right to freedom of religion or belief is included in numerous international treaties and documents such as:

- **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**
- **Declaration on the Elimination of All forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief (DROB)**
- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**
- **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)**
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**
- **Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**
- **Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups, and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (DRR)**
- **Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)**
- **Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)**

Of these documents, however, DROB is the only international human rights document specifically addressing issues of freedom of religion or belief.

Step 2:

* Ibrahim, Mohamed adapted this activity from Rudelius-Palmer, K. & Shiman, D.

@<http://www.hrusa.org/hrmaterials/temperature/temperature.shtm> (The Human Rights Resource Center, U. of Minnesota, MN).

Explain that the statements on Handout 18 are adapted from United Nations human rights documents. Most of these statements correlate directly to the basic right to religion or belief found in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):

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

*Article 18
Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

Step 3:

Note that when discrimination is mentioned in the statements below, it refers to a wide range of intolerance based on religion or belief as manifested in communities strongly influenced or sanctioned by a religious authority within a state. Such discrimination based on religion or belief is usually based on one of the following conditions:

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Disability
- Age
- Religious interpretation
- Bodily alterations or markings (e.g. female or male circumcision)
- Dress code
- Sexual orientation
- Social status
- Prohibition of some foods, drinks, substances and/or practices
- Moral and penal codes

II. ACTIVITY

Step 1:

Take the Human Rights Temperature of tolerance, understanding, and respect for freedom of religion or belief in your place of worship or assembly. Read each statement and assess, in the blank next to it, how accurately it describes your house of worship or place of assembly. When you assess, keep in mind all your community members, especially those in control of the temple/church/mosque/synagogue/etc.

RATING OF SCALE			
1	2	3	4
No/Never	Rarely	Often	Yes/Always

Get help from other people in your community. This will help in having a good comparative assessment.

Step 2:

At the end, sum-up your score to determine the degree of tolerance, understanding, and respect for freedom of religion or belief in your place of worship or assembly.

The results of this survey should provide a general sense of tolerance, understanding, and respect for freedom of religion or belief in the house of worship or place of assembly you are surveying.

III. DISCUSSION

Step 1:

Ask students to share their findings for each statement. You might do this by creating a chart and asking student to record scores for each statement. Ask students also to compare their overall scores.

Step 2:

Discuss those statements where the scores for a statement differ greatly. Why is there such disagreement? For example, are students considering different members of the community or interpreting the statement differently?

Step 3:

Ask students to consider which statement received the lowest scores.

- Of these, which seem the most serious problems regarding freedom of religion or belief?
- Of these, which could be improved?
- What would be the result if they were improved? Who would benefit?

Step 4:

What can be done to improve freedom of religion or belief in the school?

- What specific actions could help to bring about this improvement?
- Who could take these actions?
- How can improvement be evaluated?

HANDOUT 18

TAKING THE HUMAN RIGHTS TEMPERATURE OF YOUR PLACE OF WORSHIP OR ASSEMBLY

- ___ 1. My place of worship or assembly is a safe place for all people. (UDHR articles 18,19)
- ___ 2. In my house of worship or place of assembly, openly Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) people are welcome to attend the Service. (UDHR articles 1, 2)
- ___ 3. People of different religions are always welcomed in my house of worship or place of assembly. (UDHR articles 2, 18)
- ___ 4. Women have the same rights as men in my house of worship or place of assembly. (DROB article 2)
- ___ 5. Children in my house of worship have the right to freedom of thought/religion. (CRC articles 13, 14)
- ___ 6. The preacher in my house of worship or place of assembly does not promote intolerance against other racial/religious groups, directly or indirectly. (CERD articles 2, 4; and UDHR article 1)
- ___ 7. In my house of worship or place of assembly, women have the right to hold religious positions. (CEDAW articles 1-16)
- ___ 8. My house of worship or place of assembly provides equal access, resources, activities, and accommodations to liberal reformists of my religion. (DROB articles 1, 6; and UDHR article 2)
- ___ 9. In my house of worship or place of assembly, women have the same rights as men in regard to marriage. They can get married to men of other faiths. (UDHR article 16)
- ___ 10. In my house of worship or place of assembly, the leader does not make justification of torture and waging war in the past and current history. (CAT article 2)
- ___ 11. The community members in my house of worship or place of assembly will question/oppose any discriminatory acts practiced or advocated in their name. (UDHR articles 2, 29; and DROB article 1)
- ___ 12. When the leader in my house of worship or place of assembly is faced by a different interpretation of my Holy Book, s/he will listen and engage in dialogue with the person. (UDHR article 26)
- ___ 13. When a debate over religion or belief turns into a conflict in my house of worship or place of assembly, the Board will not take sides with the group that shares their opinion and punish the other one. (UDHR article 19; DROB article 2)

- ___ 14. The leader of the religion or belief in my house of worship or place of assembly always advocates for indiscriminating laws. (DRR article 3)
- ___ 15. Derogatory language is not used by conservatives against GLBT people in my house of worship or place of assembly. (UDHR article 2)
- ___ 16. Members of my community who are recognized by opposing a majority or minority political group are welcomed the same way as other groups. (ICCPR article 1)
- ___ 17. Parents are not encouraged by the leader in my house of worship or place of assembly to harshly discipline their children if they do not practice religion. (CRC article 19)
- ___ 18. Apostasy, infidelity, and heresy are words usually used by the leader in his/her weekly message to describe those who are not following the religion or belief. (CERD article 7; UDHR article 2)
- ___ 19. Diverse voices and perspectives, e.g. gender, race/ethnicity, language, physical or mental condition, age, and sexual orientation, are represented in the committees of my house of worship or place of assembly. (UDHR articles 2, 19)
- ___ 20. Special Interest groups (caucuses) are encouraged to be established without interference from the leadership of my house of worship or place of assembly. (UDHR article 19; CEDAW)
- ___ 21. Members of my house of worship or place of assembly can produce and disseminate publications without fear of censorship. (UDHR article 19)
- ___ 22. In my house of worship, the crime of slavery that was committed with the help of religious institutions in the past is condemned in the strongest words. (UDHR article 4; CERD article 2)
- ___ 23. Members of my house of worship or place of assembly have the opportunity to participate in democratic decision-making processes to develop policies and rules. (UDHR articles 20, 21, 23)
- ___ 24. The leadership of my house of worship or place of assembly donates money and offers assistance to needy people of other faiths or beliefs. (UDHR article 29)
- ___ 25. The leadership always engages in interfaith or interbelief dialogue to promote peace in the local and global community. (UDHR articles 2, 18, 19; DROB article 1).

The best score to get is **100** degrees of **tolerance, understanding, and respect for Human Rights and Freedom of Religion or Belief.**

UNIT V: TAKING ACTION FOR FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

LESSON 19: FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF AROUND THE WORLD AND AT HOME*

OBJECTIVES:

- To relate articles of the DROB to current events in the community and the world.
- To evaluate the degree of freedom of religion or belief in the community.
- To consider appropriate action to improve freedom of religion or belief in the community.

TIME: 50 minutes - variable, depending on whether assignments are done in class or as homework.

MATERIALS: Copies of the 1981 Declaration; magazines, newspapers, journals, and other materials for research.

I. ACTIVITY: IDENTIFYING RELIGIOUS AND BELIEF ISSUES AROUND THE WORLD AND AT HOME (30+ minutes, depending on the setting and the media used)

Step 1:

Divide participants into small groups for research and give each group a copy of the 1981 UN Declaration. Assign each research group a different set of articles from the Declaration to help them focus for their research and various forms of literature, (i.e. magazines, newspapers, journals, etc). Emphasize local and national materials.

Ask each group to search these materials to find examples of affirmation or violations of their assigned article. They may also bring in examples derived from other media (e.g., radio, television) if they can extract the basic information: country, situation, right denied, defended, or enjoyed.

To the Teacher:

- *Remind students that many times the exercise of a right is not obvious. For example, freedom of religion or belief might not be expressed in a news story but in an obituary, a wedding announcement, a cultural event, or a political meeting.*
- *This step could be assigned as homework.*
- *Variation: students could make posters that show the article and the materials they found related to this article.*

Step 2:

Have each group read its assigned article and present their findings to the larger group. Discuss ways that some of the violations could be eliminated and/or discuss the affirmations and how they can be spread to other countries.

* Adapted from *Human Rights Here and Now*, ed. Nancy Flowers (University of Minnesota, 1998) Activity 9, 59-60.

For each example, locate the country on a map and clarify the religion or belief involved in each case.

II. DISCUSSION: FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF IN OUR COMMUNITY (20 minutes)

Step 1:

Remind students of their work in Lesson 16, “Limits to Freedom of Religion or Belief”, pp. 62-63, in which they discussed legal limitations placed on freedom of religion or belief and identified those imposed in their own community.

Step 2:

Ask students to brainstorm affirmations and violations of the 1981 Declaration that occur in their own country and community. List these in two columns on a chart like that below.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF IN OUR COMMUNITY	
Rights Enjoyed	Rights Denied

Step 3:

What can be done to eliminate the rights identified as denied on this chart?

- Can participants think of any ways to eliminate some of their country’s own violations?
- Are there solutions that could work for not only their country but others as well? Is there a universal solution?
- Are any groups already working on any of these issues in the community? In the country? In the world?

Step 4:

Discuss to what degree their country has implemented the 1981 Declaration.

- Has your country implemented the Declaration to a large degree? Why or why not?
- Has it implemented some articles but not others? Which articles? Why or why not?
- Has the country made **reservations** about the 1981 Declaration?
- What are some consequences of implementing the 1981 Declaration? Of not implementing it?

Going Further:

Have the students pick one of their country’s violations and create a solution for it. Help them create a petition to bring to the local/state/national assembly by presenting their ideas to members of the community and gaining their signatures as means of support. The group could distribute copies of the 1981 Declaration to the people they speak to in order for knowledge of the Declaration to become more widespread. To help gain support, have the group explain a similar violation that occurred in another country and how that country solved its problem.

UNIT V: TAKING ACTION FOR FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

LESSON 20: THE STATE AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF*

OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the three main types of legal relations between state and religion/belief and the constitutional phrases that indicate them.
- To define constitutional principles concerning religion or belief.

TIME: 50 minutes

MATERIALS: Handout 20: Analyzing Governments

I. INTRODUCTION (1 minute)

Explain that the constitution or national legal code of almost every country has something to say about freedom of religion or belief, and that these statements are rooted in the community for which the Constitution is created. Explain that this lesson will examine the laws of many countries with regard to religion or belief.

II. PRESENTATION: TYPES OF CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS (8 minutes)

Step 1:

Describe the three main types of legal relations between state and religion.

State constitutions or legal frameworks almost always include principles related to religion or belief. These principles vary widely depending on the traditions, values, and ways of life of a country. Three broad categories define the relationship of a constitution or legal code to religion or belief:

1. Theocracy: (The word derives from the Greek word *theos* or “god” and *theokartia* or “the rule of god”). A theocracy is a government in which divine commandments are the civil laws, and God is regarded as the sovereign power.

2. State religion or belief: The term refers to countries where a state has declared a religion as its official religion or belief, with certain rights and privileges, usually associated with a monarch as the head of the state religion.

* Adapted from Amy Bergquist, South High School Teacher from Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, 2003.

3. Separation of religion and state: In some governments, constitutional principles explicitly proclaim complete neutrality and independence of the state in respect to religion or belief.

Step 2:

As you describe each system, ask participants whether they think it would be best suited for a plural or homogenous community. Then ask participants if they know which system their own country uses. If they are not sure, suggest that they look at schools for evidence. Explain that the following activity will help them to answer this question.

III. ACTIVITY: ANALYZING GOVERNMENTS (30 minutes)

Step 1:

Distribute Handout 20: Analyzing Governments, and ask participants to decide what kind of government is described by each item and put the corresponding letter(s) in the blank:

T = Theocracy

SRB = State religion or belief

SEP = Separation of religion and state

To the Teacher: These words may need defining: secular, secularism, Shari'a law. In addition, this step could be assigned as group work or as homework.

Step 2:

When participants have completed Handout 20, go over the answers and clarify any confusion.

Ask for other examples, historical or present, of states that:

- Are theocracies (e.g., Iran, early 21st century; New England colonies of North America under Puritanism [a Protestant Christian sect], 17th century; the city-state of Florence, Italy, under Savanarola, 15th century; the city of Geneva under John Calvin [a Protestant Christian reformer], 16th century).
- Have a state religion or belief (e.g., USSR under Communism; Denmark, England, Sweden, Thailand, early 21st century).
- Have separation of religion and state (e.g., Germany, Holland. India).

ANSWER KEY: 1=SRB; 2=SRB; 3=SEP; 4=SEP; 5=SRB; 6=SRB; 7= SRB; 8=SRB; 9=T; 10=SEP; 11= SEP; 12=SEP; 13=T.

IV. DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Step 1:

Which of these systems is best suited for a plural society? For a homogenous community? Why?

Step 2:

Suggest that schools often reflect the relationship of the state to religion or belief.

- What would they expect a school in a theocracy to be like?
- In a country with a state religion?
- In a country with separation of religion and state?

Step 3:

Remind participants of the community survey they made in Lesson 17, “Assessing Freedom of Religion or Belief in Your Community”, pp. 64-70.

- Do they consider their community to be homogenous or plural?
- Does their government have a theocracy, a state religion or belief, or separation of religion and the state?

V. CONCLUSION (1 minute)

Explain that Lesson 20 helped define kinds of constitutional principles concerning religion or belief. This lesson will help them understand the next lesson, which will look at their own constitution or legal code.

HANDOUT 20

ANALYZING GOVERNMENTS

INSTRUCTIONS: Decide what kind of government is described by each item and put the corresponding number in the blank:

T = Theocracy

SRB = State religion or belief

SEP = Separation of religion and state

KIND	COUNTRY
1. ____	Brunei: Section 2 of the Constitution of 1981 of this southeast Asian country states, "The religion of Brunei Darussalam shall be the Muslim Religion according to the Shafeite sect of that religion." Section 4 declares, "No person shall be appointed to be Prime minister unless he is a Brunei Malay professing the Muslim religion and belonging to the Shafeite sect of that religion."
2. ____	England: In 1534 Parliament named the English monarch as head of the state Church of England. The English queen or king remains the head of the Church of England.
3. ____	France: Article 2 of the 1958 French constitution states, "France is a Republic, indivisible, secular, democratic, and social. It shall respect all beliefs."
4. ____	Japan: Article 20 of the constitution of 1947 states, "Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity."
5. ____	Malta: Article 2 of its constitution states, "The religion of Malta is the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion. Religious teaching of the Roman Catholic Apostolic faith shall be provided in all State schools as part of compulsory education."
6. ____	Nepal: Article 4 of its constitution of 1990 states, "Nepal is a multiethnic, multilingual democratic, independent, indivisible, sovereign, Hindu and Constitutional Monarchical Kingdom. Article 27 add, "In this constitution, the words "His Majesty" mean His majesty the King for the time being reigning, being a descendent of Great King Prithvi Narayan Shah an adherent of Aryan Culture and the Hindu religion."
7. ____	Norway: Section 2 of its constitution of 1814 states, "All inhabitants of the Kingdom shall have the right to free exercise of their religion. The Evangelical-Lutheran religion shall remain the official religion of the State." Section 12 states, "The king himself chooses a Council of Norwegian citizens. More than half the number of the members of the Council of State shall profess the official religion of the State, as shall the King."

8. ____	Paraguay: Article 6 of its constitution states, “The Roman Catholic Apostolic religion is the state religion, without prejudice to religious freedom, which is guaranteed in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. Official religions with the Holy See shall be governed by concordats and other bilateral agreements.”
9. ____	Qatar: Article 1 of its constitution states that it is an independent sovereign Arab state and a member of the Union of Arab Emirates. Its religion is Islam and the Islamic Shari’a Law shall be a fundamental source of its legislation.
10. ____	Senegal: Article 19 of its constitution states, “The State guarantees that everyone shall have freedom of conscience, shall be free to teach and practice the religion of his choice. Religious institutions have the right to develop freely with no interference from the state.”
11. ____	Turkey: Article 136 of its 1982 constitution states, “The Department of Religious Affairs, which is within the general administration, shall exercise its duties prescribed in its particular law, in accordance with the principles of secularism, and be removed from the political views and ideas and seek national solidarity and integrity.”
12. ____	United States of America: The first Amendment to the US constitution, known as the US Bill of Rights, states, “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”
13. ____	Yemen: Article 22 of its constitution states, “Islam is the religion of the State, and Arabic is its official language.” Article 3 states, “The Islamic Shari’a is the source of all laws.”

UNIT V: TAKING ACTION FOR FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

LESSON 21: FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF AND THE CONSTITUTION*

OBJECTIVES:

- To examine how freedom of religion or belief is protected in the national constitution or legal code.
- To determine whether students live in a theocracy, a country with a state religion, or a country with separation of religion and the state.

TIME: 50 minutes.

MATERIALS:

- A copy of the country's constitution or legal code for each small group.
- One copy of Handout 21-A for each student, or note cards with copies of each point in Handout 21-A (one point on each card, for a total of 39 cards).
- One copy of Handout 21-B for each participant, or a copy of the grid on the classroom blackboard, or a transparency of Handout 21-B for use on an overhead projector.
- Blackboard and chalk, (Optional: an overhead projector and transparency of Handout 21-B).

I. INTRODUCTION (2 minutes)

Remind students that in Lesson 20, "The State and Freedom of Religion or Belief", pp. 78-82, they read articles from the constitutions or legal codes of many countries related to religion and belief. Explain that this lesson looks at how freedom of religion or belief is protected in the legal system in their own country.

II. ACTIVITY: CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM BINGO (40 minutes)

To the Teacher: This activity requires that in advance the teacher acquire specific and accurate information about the national constitution or legal code and religious groups that exist in the community.

Step 1:

Divide students into small groups and give each group a copy of the national constitution or legal code. Ask each group to identify the articles in this document that relate to religion and freedom of religion or belief.

* Adapted from Amy Bergquist, South High School Teacher from Minneapolis, MN, USA, 2003.

Advise students that although some articles will specifically mention religion or belief, others that are very important to religion or belief do not use those words (e.g., freedom of assembly, freedom of association, and freedom of speech).

To the Teacher:

1. *This step could be assigned for homework if enough copies of the constitution or legal code are available. To save time, the teacher could also identify these articles in advance and assign them to participants.*
2. *For a younger group, assign different articles of the constitution or legal codes that are related to religion or belief and have students explain how they are related.*

Step 2:

Explain that the following activity will help them to evaluate their country's type of constitutional system. Divide students into several small groups. Pass out copies of Handout 21-B. Go over the categories on the left-hand side to make sure that they are clear to participants.

To the Teacher: *If it is not possible to provide copies of Handout 21-B to all students, simply re-create the grid on the blackboard.*

Explain that each team will listen to a description that goes in one of the boxes in the grid, and teams will race to decide where that description belongs. Thirty-nine description boxes are provided in Handout 21-A.

To the Teacher: *You have several options for using the descriptions:*

- A. *Read each card out loud;*
- B. *Distribute an equal number of cards to each group, and students can read them out loud;*
- C. *Hand out cards one at a time, and ask students to read them out loud.*

Explain that each correct answer will earn 10 points, and each incorrect answer will result in a deduction of 5 points. If one team gives an incorrect answer, ask the other teams to try. If you like, you can declare a winner after one team gets 3 correct answers placed in a row on the grid (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally). Otherwise, just play until all cards have been used and tally the points. Number or name each team and create a score card that can be seen by the participants to keep track of the points.

Step 3:

Begin the game. When a description is read, give teams a chance to consult, if necessary. Then allow the first team that is ready with an answer to guess where the description belongs (see the answer key at the end of this lesson).

Once a description is correctly identified, tape it on the board in the correct box. Award points as described above. Continue playing until all descriptions are properly placed or until one team connects three correct answers in a line. If there is some controversy about a placement, ask participants to defend and explain their decisions.

Step 4:

After completing the game grid, ask students if they now have enough evidence to decide what kind of constitutional system their country uses. Ask them to use sections of their constitution identified in Step 1 to support their opinions.

To the Teacher: You will need to find a copy of your country's constitution. Then you will need to identify any parts of the constitution that talk about religion or belief. Then read to the class from those parts of the constitution. Based on what the constitution says about religion or belief, participants will check to see if their guesses were correct: Is their country a theocracy? Does it have a state religion? Or does it have separation of religion and state?

Explain that there is frequently some “overlap” between systems. If necessary, compare the wording of the constitution or legal code to the quotations from the constitutions listed in the introduction. Then go over the portion of the grid that applies to your country, and decide whether the description of education and schools seems to fit the country. If there are ways in which it is different, discuss those differences. Ask students to give examples from their own school or from other schools in the community.

Ask students what their school would be like if it were in a country with a different constitutional structure. What aspects of their school could stay the same? What things would need to be changed?

Step 5:

Ask participants the following questions and discuss their answers:

- Imagine you live in a mainly homogenous community, and you have a religion or belief that is held by the majority of the people in the community. Which type of system would you like the most? Why?
- Imagine you live in a mainly homogenous community, and you have a religion or belief that is **not** held by the majority of the people in the community. Which type of system would you like the most? Why? Would you be more likely to “hide” your religion or belief in some systems? Why?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each constitutional system?
- What does it mean to be a responsible citizen in matters relating to religion or belief in your country? How does that relate to the constitutional system that you have?

ANSWER KEY:

A = 9, B = 24, C = 32, D = 3, E = 13, F = 26, G = 29, H = 38, I = 4, J = 20, K = 10, L = 23, M = 39, N = 16, O = 35, P = 1, Q = 22, R = 36, S = 8, T = 28, U = 30, V = 21, W = 14, X = 17, Y = 25, Z = 34, AA = 6, BB = 19, CC = 37, DD = 27, EE = 18, FF = 33, GG = 7, HH = 11, II = 12, JJ = 31, KK = 15, LL = 5, MM = 2.

HANDOUT 21-A

<p>A. Non-religious schools get most of their money from the State, while religious schools get less money from the State. In some cases, the State will give no money at all to religious schools.</p>	<p>B. Teacher qualifications in State-run schools are secular. There are no requirements that teachers have any religious training.</p>	<p>C. The State religion may have an influence over what is taught to be “beautiful” in art class, but in many cases that will not prohibit alternative forms of artistic expression.</p>
<p>D. Students may initiate prayer or worship in State-run schools, but teachers may not direct those activities, and they are not part of the official school day.</p>	<p>E. In State-run schools, religion or belief is taught as the truth. It is assumed that all students accept the State religion. Religion may be an important part of all academic subjects.</p>	<p>F. Non-religious (secular) standards may be used to decide what can be taught about religion or belief in State-run schools. Preference will be given to the State religion.</p>
<p>G. When “modern” scientific beliefs conflict with the State religion, the State religion is given preference to determine what is taught to be “true” in science class, but there may be some allowance in the classroom for scientific views which contradict those of the State religion. Teachers may invite discussion about these conflicts.</p>	<p>H. Preference may be given to adherents of the State religion in providing educational opportunities, but the State religion’s values probably will not limit who has access to educational opportunities.</p>	<p>I. Students are taught about religion/belief in State-run schools, and one religion/belief is emphasized.</p>
<p>J. There may be a moderate level of variety in instruction of religion at a variety of schools. Most dominant will be the State religion, but there may be schools offering religious instruction for other religions.</p>	<p>K. The State religion is taught in State-run schools.</p>	<p>L. Some teachers in State-run schools may be mainly qualified on the basis of their religious training, but these teachers are most likely to teach religious subjects. Teachers of other subjects are more likely to have other, non-religious forms of teacher training.</p>
<p>M. Access to educational opportunities in State-run schools is probably not related to religion or religious values. Access may be based on personal merit or wealth.</p>	<p>N. State-run schools have the strongest and most intense religious instruction.</p>	<p>O. If politics is taught in State-run schools, some preference may be given to the views of the State religion on political matters, but other views may be presented and considered.</p>
<p>P. State-run schools include mandatory participation in prayer or worship services during the school day.</p>	<p>Q. Teachers in State-run schools may be mainly qualified on the basis of their religious training. Some teachers may have additional training. State-run schools may require that teachers have religious training.</p>	<p>R. If politics is taught in State-run schools, views presented will usually not be shaped by one dominant religious perspective.</p>
<p>S. Religious and non-religious schools may get money from the State, but the State may provide special additional funding to schools that support the State religion.</p>	<p>T. When “modern” scientific beliefs conflict with the State religion, the State religion is given preference to determine what is taught to be “true” in science class.</p>	<p>U. When “modern” scientific beliefs conflict with religious beliefs, the scientific beliefs are given priority over religious beliefs in the science classroom. Teachers may invite discussion about these conflicts.</p>
<p>V. If the community is plural, there is a great variety of religious schools teaching a wide variety of religions/beliefs.</p>	<p>W. In State-run schools, religion is taught as an academic subject, but it is distinct from other academic subjects. Only one religion is generally taught, and that is the State religion. Religious teaching may also include religious worship at school, but students may be allowed not to participate.</p>	<p>X. Religious instruction may be the strongest either at State-run or at other schools.</p>

Y. The standards of the State religion are used to decide what can be taught about religions/beliefs in State-run schools. Generally, only the State religion has a place in instruction about religions/beliefs in State-run schools.	Z. If politics is taught in State-run schools, the State religion will influence how political issues are presented.	AA. State-run schools may teach about religion/belief, and if they do, schools attempt to teach about all major religions/beliefs, rather than focusing on one.
BB. Most schools teach about the State religion, and if schools are run by religious associations, they are mainly run by the same religious association. There is little if any religious instruction for other religions or beliefs.	CC. Access to educational opportunities may be limited by values within the State religion. For example, the State religion may place emphasis on the education of members of a particular social group, or members of one sex.	DD. Standards of objectivity and neutrality are used to decide what can be taught about religion and belief in State-run schools.
EE. The strongest and most intense religious instruction is found in schools that are not run by the State.	FF. No particular views of “beauty” will be promoted above others in art classes, or, in some cases, views of what is “beautiful” will have secular roots.	GG. Religious schools get most of their money from the State. Non-religious schools do not get much financial support from the State. Also, schools run by religious groups that are not part of the State religion do not receive much, if any, financial support from the State.
HH. If religion is taught in State-run schools, it is the State religion. It is possible that State-run schools may not include much if any religious instruction.	II. State-run schools do not have religious instruction at all, or if they do, many different religions or beliefs are offered for study.	JJ. If the State religion has views about what is appropriate artistic expression, then art classes will use those views to assess and evaluate art. In some cases, the State religion may prohibit certain forms of artistic expression in schools.
KK. If religion is taught in State-run schools, it takes the form of an “objective” class in which one or more religions are studied, but not practiced. Worship is not part of studying religion in a State-run school.	LL. Students are taught about religion/belief in State-run schools, and one religion is emphasized, but other religions/beliefs may also be included in instruction.	MM. During the school day or on religious holidays in State-run schools, time may be set aside for worship or prayer. Students may choose not to participate.

HANDOUT 21-B

	Theocracy	State Religion	Separation of State and Religion
Is prayer allowed and/or encouraged in State-run schools?	1	2	3
If students are taught about religion/belief in State-run schools, is one religion/belief emphasized?	4	5	6
What schools get most of their money from the State?	7	8	9
What religion/belief is taught in State-run schools?	10	11	12
How is religion/belief taught in State-run schools?	13	14	15
What kinds of schools have the greatest degree of religious instruction?	16	17	18
Are there a variety of schools teaching a variety of religions/beliefs?	19	20	21
What are teacher qualifications in State-run schools?	22	23	24
What standards are used to decide what can be taught about religion(s)/belief(s) in State-run schools?	25	26	27
What is taught to be “true” in science class in State-run schools?	28	29	30
What is taught to be “beautiful” in art class in State-run schools?	31	32	33
What is taught about politics in State-run schools?	34	35	36
Who may have access to educational opportunities in State-run schools?	37	38	39

Answer Key for Handout 21-B

	Theocracy	State Religion	Separation of Religion and State
Is prayer allowed and/or encouraged in State-run schools?	P. State-run schools include mandatory participation in prayer or worship services during the school day.	MM. During the school day or on religious holidays in State-run schools, time may be set aside for worship or prayer. Students may choose not to participate.	D. Students may initiate prayer or worship in State-run schools, but teachers may not direct those activities, and they are not part of the official school day.
If students are taught about religion/belief in State-run schools, is one religion/belief emphasized?	I. Students are taught about religion/belief in State-run schools, and one religion/belief is emphasized.	LL. Students are taught about religion/belief in State-run schools, and one religion is emphasized, but other religions/beliefs may also be included in instruction.	AA. State-run schools may teach about religion/belief, and if they do, schools attempt to teach about all major religions/beliefs, rather than focusing on one.
What schools get most of their money from the State?	GG. Religious schools get most of their money from the State. Non-religious schools do not get much financial support from the State. Also, schools run by religious groups that are not part of the State religion do not receive much, if any, financial support from the State.	S. Religious and non-religious schools may get money from the State, but the State may provide special additional funding to schools that support the State religion.	A. Non-religious schools get most of their money from the State, while religious schools get less money from the State. In some cases, the State will give no money at all to religious schools.
What religion/belief is taught in State-run schools?	K. The State religion is taught in State-run schools.	HH. If religion is taught in State-run schools, it is the State religion. It is possible that State-run schools may not include much if any religious instruction.	II. State-run schools do not have religious instruction at all, or if they do, many different religions or beliefs are offered for study.

<p>How is religion/belief taught in State-run schools?</p>	<p>E. In State-run schools, religion or belief is taught as the truth. It is assumed that all students accept the State religion. Religion may be an important part of all academic subjects.</p>	<p>W. In State-run schools, religion is taught as an academic subject, but it is distinct from other academic subjects. Only one religion is generally taught, and that is the State religion. Religious teaching may also include religious worship at school, but students may be allowed not to participate.</p>	<p>KK. If religion is taught in State-run schools, it takes the form of an “objective” class in which one or more religions are studied, but not practiced. Worship is not part of studying religion in a State-run school.</p>
<p>What kinds of schools have the greatest degree of religious instruction?</p>	<p>N. State-run schools have the strongest and most intense religious instruction.</p>	<p>X. Religious instruction may be the strongest either at State-run or at other schools.</p>	<p>EE. The strongest and most intense religious instruction is found in schools that are not run by the State.</p>
<p>Are there a variety of schools teaching a variety of religions/belief?</p>	<p>BB. Most schools teach about the State religion, and if schools are run by religious associations, they are mainly run by the same religious association. There is little if any religious instruction for other religions or beliefs.</p>	<p>J. There may be a moderate level of variety in instruction of religion at a variety of schools. Most dominant will be the State religion, but there may be schools offering religious instruction for other religions.</p>	<p>V. If the community is plural, there is a great variety of religious schools teaching a wide variety of religions/beliefs.</p>
<p>What are teacher qualifications in State-run schools?</p>	<p>Q. Teachers in State-run schools may be mainly qualified on the basis of their religious training. Some teachers may have additional training. State-run schools may require that</p>	<p>L. Some teachers in State-run schools may be mainly qualified on the basis of their religious training, but these teachers are most likely to teach religious subjects. Teachers of other subjects are more</p>	<p>B. Teacher qualifications in State-run schools are secular. There are no requirements that teachers have any religious training.</p>

	teachers have religious training.	likely to have other, non-religious forms of teacher training.	
What standards are used to decide what can be taught about religion(s)/belief(s) in State-run schools?	Y. The standards of the State religion are used to decide what can be taught about religions/beliefs in State-run schools. Generally, only the State religion has a place in instruction about religions/beliefs in State-run schools.	F. Non-religious (secular) standards may be used to decide what can be taught about religion or belief in State-run schools. Preference will be given to the State religion.	DD. Standards of objectivity and neutrality are used to decide what can be taught about religion and belief in State-run schools.
What is taught to be “true” in science class in State-run schools?	T. When “modern” scientific beliefs conflict with the State religion, the State religion is given preference to determine what is taught to be “true” in science class.	G. When “modern” scientific beliefs conflict with the State religion, the State religion is given preference to determine what is taught to be “true” in science class, but there may be some allowance in the classroom for scientific views which contradict those of the State religion. Teachers may invite discussion about these conflicts.	U. When “modern” scientific beliefs conflict with religious beliefs, the scientific beliefs are given priority over religious beliefs in the science classroom. Teachers may invite discussion about these conflicts.
What is taught to be “beautiful” in art class in State-run schools?	JJ. If the State religion has views about what is appropriate artistic expression, then art classes will use those views to assess and evaluate art. In some cases, the State religion may prohibit certain	C. The State religion may have an influence over what is taught to be “beautiful” in art class, but in many cases that will not prohibit alternative forms of artistic expression.	FF. No particular views of “beauty” will be promoted above others in art classes, or, in some cases, views of what is “beautiful” will have secular roots.

	forms of artistic expression in schools.		
What is taught about politics in State-run schools?	Z. If politics is taught in State-run schools, the State religion will influence how political issues are presented.	O. If politics is taught in State-run schools, some preference may be given to the views of the State religion on political matters, but other views may be presented and considered.	R. If politics is taught in State-run schools, views presented will usually not be shaped by one dominant religious perspective.
Who may have access to educational opportunities in State-run schools?	CC. Access to educational opportunities may be limited by values within the State religion. For example, the State religion may place emphasis on the education of members of a particular social group, or members of one sex.	H. Preference may be given to adherents of the State religion in providing educational opportunities, but the State religion's values probably will not limit who has access to educational opportunities.	M. Access to educational opportunities in State-run schools is probably not related to religion or religious values. Access may be based on personal merit or wealth.