

# “Religious Intolerance in Afghanistan”

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Preservice Teachers: Social Studies

TITLE: Religious Intolerance in Afghanistan

OVERVIEW: Religious intolerance is a major cause of conflict in the world. In the lesson, students learn about the destruction and planned demolition of Buddhist artifacts in Afghanistan by the Islamic Taliban government. After researching the issue, students hold a mock-summit to decide how to solve the conflict.

SUBJECT AREA/ GRADE LEVEL: History, Civics and Government, 9-12

STATE CONTENT STANDARDS/ BENCHMARKS:

- Analyze an event, issue, problem, or phenomenon from varied or opposed perspectives or points of view.
- Propose, compare, and judge multiple responses, alternatives, or solutions, then reach a defensible, supported conclusion.

OBJECTIVES: The students will demonstrate the ability to..

- analyze the events surrounding the conflict that is currently happening in Afghanistan between the Taliban Islamic government and Buddhist people.
- appreciate that artifacts are of great importance to both the Buddhist people as well as humanity in general.
- articulate the point of view of the Taliban government, the Buddhist people, and the United Nations.
- have a better understanding of why religious intolerance occurs and how people are affected by it..

MATERIALS:

- Video copy of a news clip of recent destruction of the ancient giant Buddhas in Afghanistan.
- TV and VCR
- Access to a library and the Internet.

PRESENTATION STEPS:

- 1) Ask the students to imagine the following scenario: The class is asked to bring the oldest and most valued photos that they have of their family. These pictures were placed in a plastic trash bag and taken to the dump. This was necessary because there was only one important family and that was the teacher's. Discuss how would they feel if this had really happened?
- 2) Explain that in Afghanistan the government has ordered the destruction of statues and artifacts dating back to the third century. Explain the religious and historical significance of these items. Also explain why the Taliban wants these demolished.
- 3) Show a short news clip of these statues being attacked by orders of the Taliban government.
- 4) Divide the class into three groups. One group will represent the Taliban, the second group will represent the Buddhists, and the third group will represent the United Nations. Each student will have a defined role within his or her group to encourage full participation.
- 5) The class will have time in the library and on the Internet to research the perspective of each group.
- 6) The class will hold a summit to decide on what to do about the statues. Each group will have a spokesperson. The goal is for these three sovereign interests to come to an agreement?
- 7) The class will have a discussion about religious intolerance. Teacher will encourage them to think of historical examples and ask the question of whether or not it happens in the United States today.
- 8) To finish off the topic each member of the class will think of one artifact from their life that they will want to live on for as long as possible. The

students will all be expected to write a short paper describing why they chose their artifact.

**ASSESSMENT:** Students will be assessed on their participation in gathering information. They will also be assessed on the completion and effort that goes into their paper.

**ADAPTATIONS:** The visuals of the video will help students of limited English proficiency. Group work will allow for each students to choose the assignment that best plays to his or her own strongest intelligences..

**EXTENTIONS:**

- Students can choose to follow the events as they happen during the school year.

This would be a good beginning for a thematic history unit about religious intolerance.