

Subject

Social Studies / Comparative Religion

Context

To be included as part of study on comparative religion

Objective(s)

- To explore issues surrounding religious persecution
- To examine ways in which religion can provide a spiritual basis for human rights

Resources required

- Article 18 poster
- Copies of the "Map of religious freedom, 2000", enough for one between two students (To get the map, [go here](#).)
- Poster paper, enough for one between two students
- Glue sticks
- Access to the Internet. If this is not possible, provide resources detailing religious persecution in different countries of the world over the past 50 years. See the following websites:

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/religion/>

http://www.religioustolerance.org/rt_overv.htm

http://home.about.com/religion/index.htm?IAM=vpn000444_5

- **Handout 6** (in PDF) - Religion can provide a spiritual basis for human rights

Introduction

1. Use the "UDHR Introductory Lesson" to acquaint the students with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
2. Ask the students to look at the poster illustrating Article 18 of the UDHR -- Everyone has the right to freedom of religion, and read aloud the information in the top left-hand corner.

People should be able to practice their religion wherever they live and have the right to change their religion if they want to. No one should be persecuted because of their religious beliefs.

Teach

3. Point out that perhaps the most well-known case of religious persecution was the extermination of the Jews during the Holocaust of World War 2. The Universal

Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was created in 1948 to provide a clear and uniform definition of fundamental human rights in order to help prevent atrocities such as the Holocaust from ever happening again. However, despite the existence of the UDHR, religious persecution continues to be an issue in many different countries around the world today.

4. Divide students into pairs and distribute a copy of the map of religious freedom and poster paper to each pair (see Resources section). Have the students study the map carefully. Point out that religious persecution may take place anywhere around the world, even in those countries described on the map as religiously "Free" or "Partly Free."
5. Ask each pair to glue their map of religious freedom to the center of the poster paper. Explain that they are to use the Internet (or the paper-based resources if Internet access is not available) to research instances of religious persecution in various countries around the world over the past fifty years.

They should annotate the map with the findings of their research, using arrows to link the information to the relevant countries. They will then have a concise information source for display.

Close

6. Display the completed maps. Have the students examine the other maps to find instances of religious persecution around the world that they may not have included on their own maps.
7. Have the students perform an active listening exercise. In pairs the students should take turns talking about ways in which harmony between the religious groups living in their neighborhoods can be ensured. Each person speaks for 2 minutes while the other person listens carefully without interrupting. The students then reverse roles and the first person now listens while the second person talks. Encourage each pair to share their ideas with the class.

Further Study

Conflict can occur when multiple religious groups live within one geographic area. Carry out in-depth research about the religious conflicts that have occurred in one or more of the following countries: Bosnia, China, India, Indonesia, Northern Ireland, Philippines, Tibet.

Distribute **Handout 6** (in PDF) - Religion can provide a spiritual basis for human rights. Have the students take turns reading quotes aloud and then have them discuss in small groups the different ways in which religion can provide a spiritual basis for human rights.