

## Unit 1: Journey Filipinas

### Lesson 6: Diversity of Religion

Developed by Farzana Nayani

---

#### Background

In addition to the wide range of languages, cultures, and ethnic groups in the Philippines, there is also diversity of religion present in this country, due to contact with different peoples throughout history. Beginning with animism (native spiritual traditions), one can also find Roman Catholicism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and other forms of Christianity such as the Iglesia Ni Cristo (Protestant sect of the Church of Christ) present in the Philippines. Despite differences in customs, traditions, outward expressions of beliefs, and even the presence of conflict, there are many similarities in the values of each faith and the purpose of religion in everyday life.

#### Connections to NCSS Standards

*Culture:* The students will understand the multiple perspectives that derive from different cultural and religious vantage points.

*Time, Continuity, and Change:* The students will examine various moments in history and connect past events and thinking with present perspectives on society and the community.

*Individual Development and Identity:* The students will explore how human behavior, institutions, individual identities and social processes have foundations in ethical and moral principles of different cultures.

#### Lesson Objectives

The students will be able to:

- Learn about the major religions in the Philippines, their values and origins

- Understand the concepts of: religion, faith, diversity, pluralism, morals, and ethics
- Explore the differences as well as similarities between religions in the Philippines
- gain an appreciation perspective when considering world conflict with regard to religion and events in one's own life

**Time:** 5-6 one-hour sessions

#### Materials

Teacher

- butcher paper
- creation stories from: Philippine legends as well as the religions of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Sikhism.
- Newspaper articles about religious conflict in the Philippines

Student

- pencils
- markers

#### Procedure

##### A. Opening: Legends of Creation and Religions in the Philippines

1. Ask the students to brainstorm ideas about "how the world started" or any "legend of creation" that they have heard of, read about, or were taught while growing up.
2. Have students volunteer to briefly summarize their stories and share with the rest of the class. Teacher writes storylines in point form on butcher paper.
3. Ask students, "where does each story come from?" or "who taught you these stories?" and "what do they have in common?". Teacher makes notes of the sources of the legends mentioned by students, and also similarities amongst each story.
4. Teacher reads out one "Legend of Creation" from the Philippines.

5. Ask students: “what values is this story trying to teach?” Have a short class discussion to probe ideas about religions and beliefs and discuss concepts and vocabulary related to religion (e.g. diversity, religion, morals, ethics, faith, culture, pluralism, atheism, etc.)
6. Assign a story of creation from each religion in the Philippines to small groups. Have each group read it and discuss the values evident in the story.
7. Have students create a venn diagram on butcher paper, of each religion / culture that they thought of, showing the similarities and differences between the storylines and values of their group’s religion story, and the Philippine legend of creation. What values are found in both stories?
8. After their group work, have the students share their venn diagrams with the rest of the class.
9. Have a group discussion noting the similarities amongst religions and later display these charts around the classroom.
10. Explain to students that although many people have different beliefs, perspectives, and expressions of religion, there are many values that are shared by people around the world.

### **B. Contact, Conflict, and Cooperation Among Religions**

1. Challenge the students by asking: “Why does conflict occur between people of different religions?” and “why is religion a sensitive topic to discuss?”
2. Describe history of contact of religious influence in the Philippines (use diagram from [Asian Reflection](#) website as a visual aid). Explain to students how contact through trade and travel impacted the Philippines and brought religions to the islands.
3. Ask students to bring in a newspaper article about a religious conflict within the

Philippines (or from elsewhere in the world), or select from those provided by the teacher.

4. In pairs, students to rewrite the story in a personal voice, from the perspective of each side of the conflict. The pair of students can then compare and discuss their perspectives and brainstorm a solution. Students summarize their solution in writing, incorporating the perspectives of each side, as well as the values from the religions represented.
5. Probe students to consider: “is there a right or wrong in a given situation?”
6. Teacher debriefs this activity with students, encouraging students to recognize the values similar and different within each news event, and discussing the solutions presented by the students.
7. Ask the questions: “Is cultural and religious diversity a good thing?” and “when having a conflict, how is perspective important?”
8. Newspaper articles, stories, and solutions can be bound in a class book for display to other classes, parents, and teachers.
9. News articles and solutions can be written to be shared in dramatic form, through a reader’s theater event.

### **C. Closing: A United World**

1. Invite the students’ families and school body (student and faculty) to watch the class perform reader’s theater skits and readings about the religions and values found in the Philippines, as well as religious conflict and solutions for a united world.
2. Challenge the students consider others’ perspectives when facing conflicts in their own lives or observing events in the media.
3. Display the bound book and photos from the reader’s theater event within the classroom and share with the rest of the school.

## Suggested Assessment

Examine the venn diagrams related to the students and how they reflect and utilize concepts of religion, diversity, and other new vocabulary.

In the solutions to religious conflict brainstormed by students, assess their ability to capture the idea of comparing religions, pluralism, and perspective.

## Enrich/Extend

Discuss and compare Filipino creation stories from different regions.

Encourage students to research and compare other religions such as the Baha'i faith, Shintoism, Daoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, native American mythology, Hawaiian mythology, and others.

## Resources

### Online

1. Wikipedia. "Religion in the Philippines" [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion\\_in\\_the\\_Philippines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_the_Philippines)
2. Asian Reflection: Religion in the Philippines
3. <http://www.asianreflection.com/philippinereligion.shtml>
4. "Country Studies" <http://www.country-studies.com/philippines/religion.html>

### Print

5. Let's Discover People and Customs. Raintree Publishers.
6. Barnabas, & Anabel Kindersley. Children Just Like Me. DK Publishing.
7. Michael Molloy. Experiencing the World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge, and Change, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Mayfield Publishing.
8. Cordova, T. & Espiritu, P. C. Pinoy Teach: Multicultural Curriculum, 4th Ed.
9. Francisco R. Demetrio, S.J. "Filipino Universe: The Early Filipino Myths Speak". Filipino

Heritage: The Making of a Nation, Vol.1. Stone Age in the Philippines: The Search for Early Man. Lahing Pilipino Publishing Inc. p. 29-31.

10. E. Arsenio Manuel. "Origin Myths of the Manuvu". Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation, Vol.1. Stone Age in the Philippines: The Search for Early Man. Lahing Pilipino Publishing Inc. p. 1-7.
11. Eric S. Casino. "Filipino Universe: The Early Filipino Myths Speak". Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation, Vol.1. Stone Age in the Philippines: The Search for Early Man. Lahing Pilipino Publishing Inc. p. 32-33
12. Miguel de Loarca. "The Creation of Man in Philippine Myths". Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation, Vol.1. Stone Age in the Philippines: The Search for Early Man. Lahing Pilipino Publishing Inc. p. 80-81.