

TEACHING TOLERANCE



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WEBINAR TRANSCRIPT

Religious Diversity in the Classroom: Applications for Middle Level Educators

MARISA FASCIANO

Hello. Thank you for attending *Religious Diversity in the Classroom: Applications for Middle Level Educators*. This webinar is the fourth of a five-part series that will take place through this April. It is a collaborative effort by the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding and Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Many items on our agenda today will require input from you. We'll be using the chat window and poll features of the webinar to gauge your responses. We'll let you know when it's time to either take a poll or type in your responses. Also, for one of our activities, you'll need to have paper and a pen or pencil handy. We're really happy that you joined us today.

I'm briefly going to tell you a little bit about Tanenbaum's work. Our programs bridge religious differences and combat prejudice in schools, healthcare settings, workplaces and areas of armed conflict. Today's webinar is part of our education program, which trains K-12 teachers in creating inclusive learning environments that promote respect for religious differences. Here are the presenters. I'm Marisa Fasciano. I'm the education program associate here at Tanenbaum. My co-presenter will tell you about herself and Teaching Tolerance. Sara?

SARA WICHT

Thank you, Marisa. Thank you to all of you who have joined us virtually this afternoon. My name is Sara Wicht, I'm the senior manager for teaching and learning here at Teaching Tolerance. Teaching Tolerance has been around since 1991, when it was founded by the Southern Poverty Law Center. We're dedicated to reducing prejudice, improving intergroup relations and supporting equitable school experiences for our nation's children. You can find more information and a large array of teacher resources, classroom resources, school climate resources at tolerance.org as well as additional—the previous webinar recordings from this series. Marisa's going to talk about the series of central questions and then some specifics of today.

MARISA FASCIANO

Here are the guiding questions that frame the content of the entire series. First of all, why is it important to include religious diversity in classroom content? What preparation do teachers need in order to address religion and religious diversity in classroom content? This webinar is the second of three that cover grade-specific classroom application. Here



are the essential questions for this particular webinar: How can I help my students understand, discuss and appreciate religious diversity? How can I integrate discussions of religious diversity into academic content? Please keep these in mind during our time together.

This brings us to our objectives. After participating in this webinar and using the related resources, you'll be able to incorporate the topic of religious diversity into existing classroom content in ways that meet Common Core State Standards, implement lesson plans that enable students to express their own identities while learning about diverse religious and nonreligious beliefs, and view the variety of resources to explore common themes among different religious traditions. Now, Sara will tell you some things to consider during this webinar.

SARA WICHT

There are a few items for participants to consider throughout our time together. As you view and participate in today's event, you have the freedom to arrange the slides and add-on windows in whatever configuration makes you comfortable. You will notice that there is a widgets dock at the bottom of your screen, and any of these icons can be opened and minimized to your liking. We encourage you to keep the slides open throughout the webinar since this is from where we will share today's information. The Q&A widget provides a way for you to communicate with us and each other, and the small file icon is from where you can download today's after-session pack and other materials related to this webinar's objectives that we have compiled for you.

Immediately after this live event, you will receive a prompt to complete an evaluation. We greatly appreciate you taking three to five minutes required, as your feedback influences our programmatic decisions. Additionally, after completing 55 or more of our 60 minutes together, you will receive a certificate of completion to download and print for your professional portfolio. This fourth webinar in our series of five focuses on practical ways that middle level educators can integrate discussions of religion and religious diversity into academic content.

Broadly speaking, middle level can refer to grades 5-10. The Common Core State Standards are broken down into standards for grades K-5 and 6-12. Teaching Tolerance's classroom resources are leveled K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12. During our time together today, we will provide examples in the mid-range and adaptations for younger and older grades. Additional information about middle level applications are available in the after-session pack and related resources list. Specific grade-level and academic recommendations for grades 9-12 will be provided in the next and final webinar in this series, when we discuss religion and academic content for high school classrooms.

There are a few ground rules that we would like to go over. We just want you to participate from your interest. We hope that you will take notes. We hope that you will have fun. We hope that you will utilize the materials after the training. We certainly hope that you will share what you learned with your colleagues. We have identified an agenda for our time together and we will periodically revisit this agenda throughout the webinar to assist our learning. As you can see, we finished the welcome and the introductions. Marisa's going to take us into religion and Common Core State Standards.



MARISA FASCIANO

Thank you, Sara. I hope you can see the slide. I'm having a little bit of a delay on my computer. There it is. As educators, you're probably familiar with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy, in History, Social Studies, Science and technical subjects. As you know, the overarching goal of these standards is college and career readiness for the 21st-century classroom and workplace, settings in which people from awfully widely divergent cultures and who represent diverse experiences and perspectives must learn and work together.

How does teaching about religion and religious diversity fit in to this goal? The idea behind the Common Core is to create and approach education that's content-rich, text-based and critical. The answer is that, teaching about religious beliefs and practices fit in very well with this approach. According to the standards, students who are college and career ready actively seek to understand other perspective and cultures through reading and listening. They're able to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds and they evaluate other points of view critically and constructively. Through reading great literature, representing a variety of periods, cultures and worldviews, students can vicariously inhabit worlds and have experiences much different from their own.

The grades 6-12 anchor standards for reading and writing emphasize the use of materials from a broad range of cultures. The ones for speaking and listening emphasize preparing students to participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners. Exposing students to materials related to diverse religious beliefs and practices is an effective way to fulfill these standards. It allows for rich, age-appropriate lessons on religion's role in literature, history, culture, philosophy, politics and current events, and it prepares them for participation in an increasingly multicultural global workforce. During our time together today, we'll be modeling a number of middle-level lesson plans. Please take note of the way they align with the Common Core. Now, Sara will talk about three shifts that are called for by the Common Core.

SARA WICHT

In addition to the college and career anchor standards, we also know that with the adoption of Common Core by the majority of our states, there are three specific shifts called for by the Common Core State Standards when it comes to English Language Arts and Literacy instruction. Those three shifts are building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction; reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from text; regular practice with complex text and its academic language. Using content-rich text on religious and nonreligious beliefs while grounding students' reading, writing and speaking with specific textual evidence will aid building knowledge and academic vocabulary.

Let's get started with one of our first examples of an activity that you might be able to use with your students—thinking about visible and invisible identity. This is where you will need a piece of paper and something to write with. I'd like us to do some thinking about our own identity. Create a two-column chart and for each statement, offer one to three



different endings. For example, if the statement begins with “I am,” you can complete the sentence by saying, “a teacher,” “happy,” “a runner,” “a woman.” Allow a couple of minutes right now to complete each item on the chart.

Now let’s look at this list of 14 or so statements about your identities and how you self-identify. All of these contribute to your own personal identity. These are all important pieces of who you are. Now, add a third column to your chart. Identify if each statement is visible, invisible or both. How many of the characteristics you included in your list fit neatly into one of the following categories: gender, ethnicity, race, religion, socio-economic status, language, sexual orientation, education, career or relationship status? An exercise like this introduces the concept of identity and what influences our identity. Let’s use the poll feature to review considerations for this type of activity in our classroom.

I belong to visible identity groups. Click “yes” or “no,” and then “submit.” Let’s see what we have. A hundred percent of our audience said that they belong to visible identity groups. I am sometimes incorrectly labeled because others can’t see my invisible identity groups. Select “yes” or “no,” and then “submit.” Let’s see. A hundred percent, I am sometimes incorrectly labeled because others can’t see my invisible identity groups. Last question. I have made assumptions about my students’ identity groups. Again, a hundred percent.

In starting some thinking about our own identities and how that might look for our students, we know from work in prejudice reduction, that when we like and know who we are and are comfortable talking about ourselves and our families and describing those various identity groups both visible and invisible, it leads us to be more comfortable with being ourselves in a diversity of settings. Marisa’s going to talk about another potential classroom activity dealing with identity, visible and invisible, that you could use with your students.

MARISA FASCIANO

Here’s a fun and effective activity that examines visible and invisible identity, and can be found in your related resources list. It’s called “Put Me In Coach.” It’s a role-play lesson from our World Olympics curriculum. It increases students’ awareness of stereotypes based on visible identities and helps to prevent prejudice. It asks the students to take on the roles of players, coaches and observers. One of two volunteer coaches must select players for an academic quiz team and the other has to select players for a multi-sport athletic team.

The players are given cards, like the one here, which list their physical, visible traits on one side and their non-physical traits on the other. Here’s an example of a card for a player named Amana. The coaches at first can only see the front of the card and they’re asked to select players for their teams based solely on the physical traits that are listed there. In addition, students who are waiting to be chosen for one of the two teams are directed not to look at the backs of their cards. Once the teams are selected, the coaches are asked why they picked those players. Then the players have an opportunity to express whether or not they’re happy with their team. The team members who are chosen also have a chance to



share their feelings about the process of being picked for one of the two teams. Eventually, the cards are turned over and the players' non-physical traits are revealed to everyone.

This lesson provides a rich opportunity for your middle school students to discuss and explore how assumptions based on visible identities, including the religious identities, can harm both the individual who's being judged and the people who surround that individual. They learned that when invisible identities are taken into account, the result is a more effective and happy team. The team metaphor can be extended to any of life's activities that require cooperation and mutual support.

Let's check in with the agenda. Now, Sara will address how text might help us explore the connections between religious literacy and diversity and global citizenship.

SARA WICHT

Thank you, Marisa. For the next activity, we want to remind ourselves that text can be literary and informational written text as well as images and multimedia. We're going to use an image, this 2012 political cartoon from Emad Hajjaj. We'd like to use the chat feature, so locate where your chat feature is in your console. We ask if you could just type in to that chat window what visible identity groups are present. At the same time, while you're thinking about what visible identity groups you observe in this political cartoon, we feel that it's important to provide a working definition of extremism. We would like to say that extremism is the belief in and support for ideas that are very far from what most people consider correct or reasonable.

I see some of your observations of visible identities. I see "Christians, Muslims, and extremist," "religious identity is evident in clothing," "Christian," "Islamic," "male," "alleged Muslim," "Jewish and atheist," "both Christians," "both males." It's very interesting that we think about some of our own assumptions that might be coming to the surface and the types of visible identities that we assume are present in this image. I want to change the question this time, and then using the chat window, still, type in an answer to the following question. What is your interpretation of this text? Joanna is adding the question into the group chat box for us. What is your interpretation of this text?

"Extremist drive people apart." "Both are Christians and males." That was from the other ... There we go. "Extremist viewpoints separate good people." "Religions would stand side-by-side, if not for extremism." Some of the possible interpretations of this text and what we're seeing in the chat windows, that we have two religious groups making an effort to understand one another, but perhaps are being kept from doing so by the fear of extremism. Maybe there are two religious groups with an existing understanding and relationship, and then being torn apart by extremism. Extremist groups possibly create that conflict. Along those same lines. Thank you so very much for your answers in the group chat.

When we use text to explore different identities, students are less likely to be made token representatives of a particular belief system and in the way in which we've looked at this



particular text and presenting questions without definitive answers, allows the text to speak for itself and encourages students to respectfully share some of the beliefs or understandings that they have acquired to this point in their experiences and in their education. This is a way that you could promote mutual understanding with students in your classroom. It is also important to continuously reflect just to ensure that neither you nor your students are doing any kind of proselytizing in your answers. Using essential questions to explore religious and nonreligious diversity is another option, and I'd like for us to maybe look at what that might look like as a way to help us remain neutral when we're talking about various religious and nonreligious beliefs.

We could take the same text, and using the two essential questions here, ask students or facilitate a conversation among students about what are the benefits and challenges of living in a diverse society. Or, how can we celebrate what we have in common while also honoring our differences? Remembering back to the three core shifts with the adoption of Common Core State Standards, requiring that students use specific textual evidence to support their dialogue and their conversations about the text, is meeting the demands of the Common Core. This also encourages the development of critical thinking and it embeds your religious and nonreligious content within your already identified academic goals.

Thinking about these questions and how they might enable a discussion about that previous cartoon could show the benefits and challenges to students, of living in a diverse society as well as celebrating what we have in common while honoring our differences and all of that leading to an understanding of connections between religious literacy and awareness of religious diversity and global citizenship. It's always important to note that communication with families is critical to the exploring of different belief systems in the classroom, reminding parents that indoctrination is not the goal, but that instruction stems from big ideas and essential questions, allow students to apply that understanding to themselves and the world around them.

Let's take a look at another text example. The "Sikh Eyechart for America" was created by Vish Singh in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 and it's published on his website sikhtoons.com. Let's use the chat feature again to share what you see this text says about identity. Joanna is entering for us that question into our chat window. I'm giving people a moment or two to read the text as well. Floating to the surface is lots of "making assumptions based on visible identity." Thinking again about the exercise we did when we began today and thinking about our own visible and invisible identities and our students' identities. "But there is deeper truth when we investigate and try to understand." A very long-standing "Don't judge a book by its cover." "Easy to judge surface."

We can see that using a text to facilitate an exploration of common understanding among different religions and then to facilitate discussions about prejudice and stereotype is one way that you could include religious content in your academic subject to identify that there are many common goals and understandings, that there are shared ideals at times or traditions among different religions. To teach about those differences and develop students'



foundational skills in critical literacy is meeting the education and academic goals that are required, and it's necessary to include a diversity of window and mirror for your students in the text that they see and in the text that you use.

In lessons about responding constructively to difference that can provide a context that, for later discussions. In the cases of stereotyping or prejudice and bullying when it's a personal situation for a student if they've been given the opportunity to learn some of the conversation strategies and dialogues with one another, may be a way to build that foundation for later and minimize some of the instances of bullying or religious conflict within your community. There's a blog post about discrimination against Sikhs in terms of a supplemental additional text for this text from Tanenbaum that can be found in the after-session pack in the related resources section. Next, I'm going to turn it over so that Marisa can talk further about text-to-world connections and other ways that you can use text to include religious content in your classrooms.

MARISA FASCIANO

Thank you, Sara. When making text-to-world connections, here are some things to keep in mind. First, use primary resources. This allows students to form their own well-supported opinions, and also, primary resources support the Common Core State Standards. We can find a great example from a recent event: President Obama's speech at the National Prayer Breakfast earlier this month. If you remember this event or heard about it and the news coverage surrounding it, what I'd like you to do is just type in some words and phrases that come to mind. I've lost my chat connection apparently, so I'm going to ask Sara if you would be able to read back some of the responses.

SARA WICHT

Absolutely. Can you restate the question, Marisa?

MARISA FASCIANO

Sure. What words or phrases come to mind when you think about the National Prayer Breakfast?

SARA WICHT

Thank you.

MARISA FASCIANO

It was in the news a lot, so some of you may have some opinions or memories from it.

SARA WICHT

I'm seeing, "Thoughtful, silent, meditative." "Bowing in prayer." "Said terrorism was not about religion, but this seems too simplistic." "Founded in a certain religion, but I think that many faiths can participate." "Praying together, maintaining unity."

MARISA FASCIANO

Thank you. That's great input. There were some opinions in there. There was a great deal of



buzz surrounding his speech and some controversy. Giving your students the opportunity to read the primary source allows them to engage in critical thinking, get ideas for further research and draw their own conclusion. We've provided a link to the speech in the after-session pack that you can use with your students. A second thing to keep in mind when making text-to-world connections is to present multiple perspectives on a particular issue or belief system. There's been a lot of news coverage of atrocities committed in the name of religion, which can lead students to make generalizations about particular belief systems and even to bully classmates who are perceived as representing those belief systems.

One of the best ways to counteract such stereotypes and hateful behavior is to present positive images and voices that display the diversity and compassion within each religious tradition. For example, this photomontage was taken from a letter in the *New York Times* entitled "What Can Muslims Do To Reclaim Their Beautiful Religion?" It was signed by Muslim leaders around the world who asserted their duty to affirm and promote universal human rights, including gender equality and freedom of conscience. This would be a great statement to share with your students. Again, a link to the letter and a related article is in after-session pack.

Finally, it's helpful to make connections across time and space. Current events related to discrimination and abuse against particular identity groups provide an ideal opportunity to teach students about past injustices and human-rights movements. Exploring the role of religion both as a negative and positive force in the struggle for equality can help students develop a more sophisticated understanding of the complex role that religion plays in society. Examples can be found in the history of the African-American struggle for freedom and equality.

This slide shows a picture of multi-state support during the civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery as well as members of the clergy participating in the recent protest in Ferguson, Missouri. Events like this provide a great opportunity to spark discussion in your classroom. Students will gain a deeper understanding of history if they know that religious figures have joined both sides of historic debate and struggles. For example, in the era of segregation, some voices justified Jim Crow laws as the embodiment of God's will, but many others were inspired by their faith to join the civil rights movement and demonstrate for racial unity. Now, Sara will discuss how you can find other text related to religious diversity.

SARA WICHT

Thank you, Marisa. Just briefly, as we think back to the text that were shared, the two political cartoons are both a part of the anthology that can be found in our K-12 curriculum and as you see in the slide that you're looking at now, you could filter for specific grade level and specifically for religion. In addition to those visual text that we shared with you today, you could register to use *Perspectives* and then look through the Central Text Anthology to find these grade-leveled texts related to religion where Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary has been identified to ensure that you are meeting the demand of your academic content, but



also including that diversity of voice within what students are seeing. Let's take a look real briefly here at our agenda. We've looked at exploring diversities through texts and we're going to move on to looking at discovering similarities between religions. To do this, I would like to introduce Cihan Tekeli, who is interning with us here at Teaching Tolerance from the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. Cihan.

CIHAN TEKELI

Hi, everyone. Thank you, Sara. This activity helps acknowledge and learn about differences that in themselves from people's uniqueness and the right to express yourself, but also focusing on similarities that can help build bridges and nurture mutual understanding and respect for one another. Though one has to be aware to stay away from a competitive approach when putting two or more belief systems together. In the after-session pack after this webinar, one can find additional information and resources as well. When we look at the steps for this activity, students can be asked in the first place in pairs or in small groups to choose and explore features about various belief systems. In the second step, we bring together different groups or pairs to explore their findings, how were answers similar, how were they different, why did you decide to use these sources you chose to use?

Additional to this activity, there's a graphic organizer that you can see here. With this graphic organizer, students can be helped to take the steps of choosing the two belief systems, how they are alike, how they are different. This can be filled in by giving examples of features to compare. One can think of examples such as rituals, sacred books, holy places, important figures, major celebrations, primary beliefs or important symbols. Finally, the last step will be to ask about the source of the information. This will be an important element in the reflection part as well.

Here's an example of a graphic organizer that is filled out with the examples of Islam and Christianity given. As we can see, on the top, we see Islam in one block, Christianity in another block. The similarities are to be found also in the important figures. It states that Islam has Muhammad, Christianity has Jesus. Though another similarity could be also that Jesus is an important figure in both religions, but a difference would be that they have different meanings in both religions. Another comparison could be made where a similarity is the major celebrations, the major holidays with Easter in Christianity and Eid al-Fitr in Islam.

A difference would be in the use of symbols. In Islam, for example, it's believed by the majority of the Muslims that one cannot portray any figures and especially not Muhammad or God. God being called Allah in Arabic and Islam, and the Kaaba and Mecca being an important place for Muslims all over the world. In Christianity, on the other hand, the Christian cross is a very important figure for most Christians, and the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem being an important place. Finally, we see two examples of sources where one can find this information.

We come back to the reflection questions in this activity, the third part, the third reflection



on the following questions in your group, where in the groups, the students can discuss the following questions: What new or surprising information did you learn? Where did you find the information? Can you trust the source? What factors play a role in shaping our thoughts about religious and nonreligious beliefs? An extra note here can be to use quickwrite. Quickwrites are often an effective way to provide time for students to consider a question or topic before sharing with their peers. Here, you can think of a five-minute quickwrite on the question: What is religion? From here, I'll pass it on to Marisa to talk about Stendahl's three rules of religious understanding.

MARISA FASCIANO

Thank you. When you're leading students in comparing religions, you may find it helpful to keep in mind the rules developed by Krister Stendahl, who is a Swedish theologian. He is very well-known for these rules. When you're trying to understand another religion, you should ask the adherents of that religion and not as enemies. Don't compare your best to their worst, and leave room for holy envy. By holy envy, he meant that we should be open to finding attractive or truthful elements in other religions that aren't necessarily our own. These rules provide a very simple and effective framework for students as they compare religion.

We've come quite far. We're going to now review some school-based scenarios to help you see in very concrete way how some of the ideas we've been talking about apply to the classroom. I'm going to read the scenario and in some cases, give an opportunity for you to respond and then provide some recommendations. In the first scenario, for show and tell, Joi brings a picture of her family on a church camping trip. "My family goes camping a lot. I like camping," she says. "I'm a Christian, and sometimes my family goes camping with the church. I'm also a big sister, so I have to help my parents take care of my little brother, especially when we go camping." Use the chat window to explain what did we learn about Joi's visible and invisible identities. What did you learn? What are some of the visible and invisible identities that she shared in that scenario? Sara, again, I want to ask you to just read a few of those if you don't mind.

SARA WICHT

Absolutely, Marisa. Your answers are starting to come in. I'm seeing "visible," "girl," "sister," "older," "invisible," "Christian," "big sister," "daughter," "camper," "family." "She's a sister and a girl. Those are visible."

MARISA FASCIANO

She revealed a lot about her identity in a relatively short amount of time. This scenario is a good example of a student sharing respectfully and without proselytizing. It's the kind of constructive sharing that as teachers, you can reinforce. Let's go to the next one. Omar's mother is serving as a chaperone on her son's field trip. On the bus ride, the teacher, Ms. Robins, overhears a conversation between Omar and Peter. "What is your mother wearing on head?" Peter asks. "It's called a hijab," Omar replies. "Many Muslim women wear them." "Why?" "My mom wears the hijab to show modesty and humility."



The way I just read it, it would seem that Peter is expressing respectful curiosity, but if he had used a different tone, he may be expressing contempt. For example, “*What is your mother wearing on her head?*” A situation like this is, it does appear to be disrespectful interaction. It would be a good opportunity for you to refer back to any previous lessons that you provided about the ground rules for respect. We have some in the after-session pack for you. Depending on the tone of Peter’s question, this may present an opportunity for reminding and re-teaching or simply put praise in reinforcement.

Also, keep in mind that whether Peter’s intention is good or not, it’s very likely that Omar gets this question a lot, that he’s experienced this before. He may have an emotional reaction to it, so just be prepared for that. The scenario also provides a great opportunity to discuss diversity within a religious tradition. Some Muslim women wear hijabs, some don’t. Different Muslim women wear it for different reasons. That’s a great opportunity to discuss diversity within diversity, as we call it.

We have one more scenario. This year in Mr. Sanderson’s social studies class, Patrick has been learning about the world’s different belief systems. Patrick’s parents want to meet Mr. Sanderson to discuss why Patrick has to study about different religions. They consider requesting Patrick be excused from his classes. Patrick enjoys the company of friends from different religions and is interested in their beliefs and practices, and he’s afraid being removed from class will result in being ostracized by his friends. He’s also concerned about disappointing his parents.

Here at Tanenbaum, we monitor the news about religion and education and we find incidents like this in the news all the time. We know that some parents are concerned about their children learning about different religions. Please use the chat window to answer this question: What can Mr. Sanderson do to support Patrick and address his parents’ concerns? What are some ideas that you have? Then I’ll provide some recommendations as well. Sara, if you wouldn’t mind one last time reading me that.

SARA WICHT

Absolutely. No problem, Marisa. For our participants, it seems for whatever reason, Marisa’s having a hard time seeing your chat responses, so this is partnership and collaboration, supporting. What could Mr. Sanderson do to support Patrick?

MARISA FASCIANO

Also address his parents’ concerns. You could answer either or both.

SARA WICHT

One of our participants, Susan, says that social studies standards in her state require the study of religion as global study, depending on the course. The state, I guess, might be required. “It is important to study other people, to be respectful of their religion.” “Invite his parents in to discuss the curriculum objectives and lessons and discuss the goal of Teaching Tolerance.”



MARISA FASCIANO

I'm going to pick it up from there because we think that inviting parents in for a discussion is a great idea. The scenario illustrates the importance of communication with parents and if possible, it's better to communicate with them before you begin the lessons on religion and before concerns arise. Just to emphasize that their children will be learning about religious differences and not being indoctrinated in a different religion. What we recommend is, rather than just relying on your own opinions when talking with parents, to use data to back up what you're saying about the value of learning about religious diversity.

For example, there's a study in Modesto, California, of a world religion course that was required of all ninth-graders, and the study found that the course led to students' increased support for the rights of others, a greater understanding of the major world religions and a fuller appreciation of the moral values shared across differences. Most importantly, for this scenario, they found that learning about various religions doesn't encourage students to change their own religious convictions. A link to this report, the report on this study, can be found in the after-session pack. One of the participants mentioned requirements. You can emphasize that learning about religious diversity fulfills Common Core State Standards.

But keep in mind that parents do have a right to excuse their children in this situation. You may not be able to persuade them to let their son participate, so you can ask them what is possible to do with their son. Maybe there's some sort of mid-ground that you can find. If it ends up that the child does have to do something separate while the rest of the class is participating in this lesson, with Patrick's permission, Mr. Sanderson could explain to the class that there are students of different belief systems here, and so not everyone will be participating in the same thing, and it's also a good time to review the classroom rules of respect before that happens. Now, we're on to the conclusion. We're almost at the end of our time together. I'm going to turn it back to Sara, who will finish up for us.

SARA WICHT

Great. I'd like to direct your attention back to your visible and invisible identity chart. Just to answer a question that appeared in the group chat regarding this resource, this activity comes from a module on identity that can be found on tolerance.org. Joanna, kindly put that full URL into the group chat for us. Someone had asked where they could find this chart and the directions for the activity; you can find them there. Looking again at our visible and invisible identity chart, I want you to think about times when maybe you had to highlight certain elements of your identity, and what if you had to eliminate items on that list. Mostly, think about that in terms of how it applies to your students.

Thinking about those elements of your identity, in particular, those that are invisible, consider how using one or more of the activities in today's webinar with your students, after you've spent some time talking about visible and invisible identity, might help them to increase their own self-celebration of all of their identity groups. As well as providing an opportunity for them, students, to explicitly talk about their own identities, including religious and nonreligious beliefs within an academic content. Really, in terms of support-



ing students' full self and social emotional as well as academic development.

In review of our objectives, I think it's also important for us to remember that the middle years are a time of great individual exploration and that it is a time when the capacities for individual thought and self-reflection begin to take stride. The age of opportunity by explicitly promoting respect for differences among students is a ... it's heightened in these middle years. We would love for you in the next week to choose at least one activity from this event or in the materials from the related resources and after-session pack to use with your students.

Before you do that, we want to give you an opportunity to ask any remaining questions that we perhaps didn't answer during our time together so far. We would like to address every question, but we also know that we might not be able to, given time constraints and number of participants with us. If you enter your question in to the group chat, we're able to look at that and then we can respond to these questions by way of blog both on tolerance.org and tanenbaum.org. I see this has been a pattern for us in this series. If you have any remaining questions. I'm just going to read a few of these, knowing that Marisa might not be able to see what's coming in so that she's privy to them as well. "What is the best visual way to show that extremists are a minority?"

Feel free to keep adding questions into the group chat as we walk through our final slide. Again, we will address those by way of blog and follow-up information for our participants. Let's wrap up our time by revisiting this enduring understanding. We hope that the strategies we covered during this hour, along with the materials in the after-session pack, will help you to incorporate teaching about religion and religious diversity in your classroom content and embedded within your lesson plan. Our enduring understandings for this afternoon are: When addressing religious diversity, it is important to develop the language and knowledge necessary to accurately describe people's similarities and differences; and learning that includes religious diversity builds critical social justice skills, such as analyzing cause and effect, conducting research, recognizing multiple perspectives and bringing evidence to support one's point.

After the webinar, we hope that you will be able to utilize items from the related resources that are found here. Share this webinar recording with your colleagues. By the end of the week, we will have the link to this recorded version online. The great thing about the recorded version of our platform is that your colleagues who come are still able to participate in the in-the-moment polls and we still are able to collect responses in the chat window, so that continues to influence our programmatic decisions here at Teaching Tolerance and at Tanenbaum.

Right after our time together today, you will be prompted to take a post-event evaluation. This is a very short, maybe three to five minutes, giving us feedback about today's event, and we greatly appreciate you taking the time to complete that. Again, your responses help us to make programmatic decisions. Right after that evaluation, as long as you've been here



for at least 55 of our 60 minutes together, you will be prompted with the option to download a certificate of completion for your professional portfolio. As we mentioned at the beginning of our time together, that this is the fourth of a five-part series in collaboration and partnership between Teaching Tolerance and Tanenbaum.

Our fifth and final event in this series, *Religious Diversity in the Classroom: Applications for High School Educators*. We will offer that event at 3:30 Eastern Time on April 29th and 6:30 Eastern Time on April 30th. We try to provide a couple of times that adhere to and cater to both our friends and colleagues on the West Coast as well as the East Coast. If this time is a little too early for your school day, you could attend the second day, which is always a little bit later.

At the same time, if you have friends out west, make sure you share with them that we have the encore presentation of tonight's webinar tomorrow at 6:30 Eastern Time. A link to the registration for that webinar is found in the related resources, both the encore for today as well as this in the series that will happen in April. I think that takes us to almost the end. I know we've been able to do this series with the help and generosity of a sponsor on Tanenbaum's side. If, Marisa, you could just say a couple of words of thanks to that sponsor and I will...

MARISA FASCIANO

We're very grateful for the Stavros Niarchos Foundation for funding our portion of this webinar series.

SARA WICHT

Excellent. Thank you very much. There's contact information for me on the screen as well as Marisa. We thank you for your participation and engagement. Please share and use the materials provided. Thank you.

MARISA FASCIANO

Thank you. Bye.