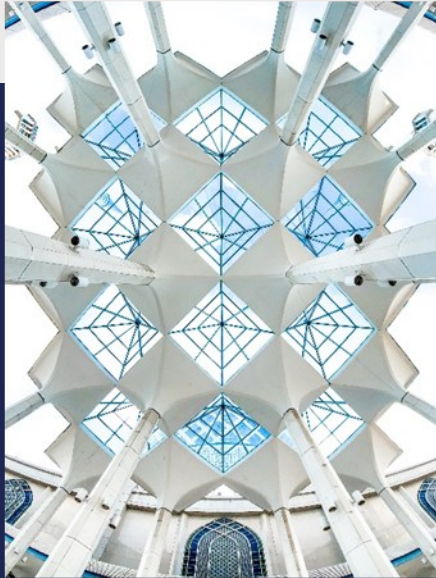




Educators' Toolkit: Civic Religious Literacy

For middle and high school educators

Created by:

Dr. Sabrina Jafralie, Dr. Arzina Zaver, Dr. Erin Reid (2019),

With updates from Dr. Sivane Hirsch and Dr. Hicham Tiflati (2025)



About this Guide

Welcome to the Educators' Toolkit published by
the Centre for Civic Religious Literacy (CCRL).

This guide is meant for secondary-level educators working to support
their own and student understanding of how to live and work in diverse
and pluralistic settings.

The goals of this toolkit are to do the following:

- Build awareness of the skills and tools needed to live and contribute meaningfully in an increasingly diverse and pluralistic world;
- Gain knowledge on how to foster a tolerant, accepting, and pluralistic outlook amongst students; and,
- Increase understanding of how to become a religiously literate citizen.

This toolkit is for teachers who aim to do the following:

- Evolve their teaching and learning practices in order to provide powerful and necessary learning opportunities for students to recognize their own bias;
- See diversity and difference as opportunities for relationship-building; and,
- Learn more about other cultures, faith traditions, and diverse religious beliefs.



The Centre for Civic Religious Literacy (CCRL)

CCRL is a non-religious organization that develops civic religious literacy in order to promote the public understanding of religious, non-religious, and spiritual perspectives and communities across Canada. Our team consists of award-winning educators and academics across Canada who specialize in matters of civic religious literacy.

Our mission is to do the following:

1. Recognize, and help all citizens in Canadian society recognize and understand
 - The multiplicity of religious, spiritual, and non-religious identities, traditions, and worldviews of peoples in Canada and throughout the world, and;
 - The internally different traditions in each religious and non-religious tradition, through research-based approaches and;
2. Promote religious literacy through education initiatives in work-based, school-based, and community-based contexts.



Overview

The Centre for Civic Religious Literacy is dedicated to upholding the values of diversity whether it be religious, racial, cultural, and non-religious perspectives. Our mission is to provide concrete research-based resources to help both educators and students explore their pluralistic society equipped with practical tools. As researcher-educators ourselves, we believe that educated teachers and students are key agents of change to ensure an inclusive and accepting society.

This toolkit is designed to help you discover how to teach about the potentials of pluralism and understand the need for intentional dialogues that strive to look at a multitude of views. The toolkit is not the only answer to teaching about pluralism but rather a beginning in order to allow educators and their students to investigate and wrestle with these vital concepts.

We aim to equip you to understand and recognize one another's differences as valuable contributions towards society, to navigate through these differences, and gain comfort in raising questions or speaking about religious, spiritual, and non-religious identities in public environments.

For further information on our organization please visit our website at <https://ccrl-clrc.ca/>.



With this guide, you will find information on:

- How to introduce key definitions in a student-friendly language,
- Approaches to teaching about topics such as basic religious knowledge, Islamophobia, recognition and respect for gender and sexual orientations,
- How to move beyond mere tolerance to respect,
- Recognize bias,
- Guidance on accommodations for students,
- How to foster core competencies and skills, and,
- A sample lesson guide and sample assessment for yourself as an educator and your student.

Table of Contents

Overview	4
I. Student-friendly definitions	6
II. Addressing Important Topics	13
• Basic Religious Knowledge	14
• Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism	16
• Tolerance vs Respect	18
• Recognition of Bias	20
• Accommodation in Schools	21
• Religion and Conflict	22
III. Core competencies and skills	24
• Empathy and Compassion	26
• Critical and Creative Thinking	27
• Pluralistic Outlook	28
• Purposeful Civic Dialogue	29
IV. Sample Scope and Classroom Sequence	30
• Sample Lesson	31
• Sample Evaluation Rubric/ Assessment	40
V. Further Reading and Resources	41



I. Student-Friendly Definitions

Agnosticism*	Native spiritualities*
Atheism*	"Nones" or "spiritual but not religious"*
Buddhism*	Pluralism
Christianity*	Radicalization to violence
Civic	Religious bullying
Civic religious literacy	Religious literacy
Confucianism*	Shintoism*
Daoism*	Sikhism*
Diversity	Spirituality*
Hinduism*	Terrorism
Humanism*	Violent extremism
Islam*	Zoroastrianism
Judaism*	



*These traditions are diverse in their specific beliefs, practices, and how they express their affiliation to the group. Some differences exist in sects, denominations, or are not formally categorized in any way and vary depending on geography or individual basis.



Agnosticism*:	the view that the existence of God, of the divine or the supernatural is unknown or unknowable.
Atheism*:	the disbelief or lack of belief in the existence of God or gods.
Buddhism*:	encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs, and spiritual practices largely based on original teachings attributed to the Buddha and their resulting interpreted philosophies. Buddhism originated in ancient India sometime between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE, spreading through much of Asia.
Christianity*:	is an Abrahamic monotheistic religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, believed by Christians to be the Son of God, and part of the Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Civic:	pertains to something related to or of benefit to an individual citizen that is connected to their town, city, or other level of government. People often say that it is your <i>civic duty to vote</i> .
Civic religious literacy:	is the knowledge, skills, and lens that equip citizens to understand religions, spiritualities, and non-religious groups, their internal diversity, to recognize the role these worldviews play in the lives of individuals and communities, and to understand how they affect and influence various aspects of society for the purpose of living and engaging with others in society more harmoniously.



Confucianism*:

is a system of ethics devised by the Chinese scholar K'ung Fu-tzu (Latinised to Confucius) in 6th century BCE China. It includes teachings such as filial piety that influences all East Asian cultures.

Daoism*:

is a Chinese philosophy based on the writings of Lao-tzu (fl. 6th century BCE), advocating balance, spontaneity, and harmony with the natural world. The teachings and symbol of yin-yang are based on Daoist teachings.

Diversity:

is a concept that encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These differences can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.

Hinduism*:

is a major world religion originating from the Indian subcontinent characterized by its ability to encompass an enormous range of diverse philosophies and beliefs, gods and goddesses, and rituals and practices. Unlike many religious traditions, it does not have a founder. It can be seen as polytheistic as it contains multiple deities, such as Krishna, Shiva, and Vishnu, although these can also be seen as manifestations of the Absolute (Brahma).

Humanism*:

a philosophical and ethical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually, and collectively. It generally prefers critical thinking, rationalism, and empiricism over acceptance of dogma or superstition.



Islam*:

is an Abrahamic, monotheistic, universal religion teaching that there is only one God (Allah), and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. The Qu'ran is its foundational text.

Judaism*:

Judaism is one of the oldest monotheistic religions in the world, originating over 3500 years ago in the Middle East. It is an Abrahamic religion and the Torah is its sacred text.

Native or Indigenous spiritualities*:

are at the core of being and identity for many Indigenous Peoples. It refers to the meaning given by the Indigenous person to all aspects of life including relationships with one another and the environment. There is a kinship with the environment.

“Nones”, “spiritual but not religious”, or “spiritual but not affiliated”*:

is a growing description that refers to a life stance of spirituality that may take issue with organized religion as the sole or most valuable means of furthering spiritual growth. Recently, the term also places emphasis on the well-being of the "mind-body-spirit."

Pluralism:

is the recognition and acceptance of diverse views in society and sees multiple views and traditions as a source of enrichment to society. Pluralism aims to move beyond tolerance to seeing diversity as a strength.



Radicalization to violence:

Radicalization is a process of changing your ideas or beliefs so that it challenges what most people believe or do in society. It can be positive or negative. One person who radicalized to make a positive change in Canada was Viola Desmond, a Black Nova Scotian. In 1946, she radically challenged the norms of racial segregation in Nova Scotia when she refused to leave a “whites-only” part of a theatre. Another person is water advocate, Autumn Pelletier. In 2017, when she was 13-years-old, she spoke with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. She challenged all the leaders to do more to protect sacred waters and lands for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. In comparison, radicalization is negative when it leads to violence physically, emotionally, or psychologically. One example of this is the killing of six Muslims in Quebec City in January 2017. Negative radicalization can begin based on racial, financial, gender, political, or religious injustice, among others, in society.

Religious bullying:

is bullying that happens to someone based on their actual or assumed religious or non-religious belief, identity, or how they choose to express it in practice or dress. For example, a Christian student can bully an atheist student, or the other way around, because they do not believe the same thing. A Hindu student could be bullied because someone thinks that Hindus believe in many gods. Bullying can also happen between people of the same religion, just as among Sunni and Shia Muslims, because they may practice or express their belief differently.



Religious literacy:

is generally understood as knowledge about the major world religions, spirituality, and non-religion, and the ability to understand that each worldview is internally diverse. It goes beyond just knowing information, but rather recognizing the fundamental role that these worldviews play in the lives of people and how they impact and influence various aspects of society (i.e. political, economic, social, cultural). Becoming religiously literate is a skill that allows one to develop the ability to see worldviews through these multiple lenses and understand the impact each worldview and their practices have in one's life.

Shintoism*:

is the Indigenous religion of Japan characterized by diverse beliefs and ritual practices to worship 'kami,' or spirits, and nature-worship. It has no founder, no established doctrine, and no established sacred texts. It is polytheistic and generally focused on creating a good life in the present rather than in the after-life.

Sikhism*:

is a monotheistic religion that originated in the Punjab region in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent around the end of the 15th century. A major teaching is the equality of all people.

Spirituality*:

is a broad concept that allows many perspectives. In general, it includes a sense of connection to something bigger than ourselves, and it typically involves a search for meaning in life.



Terrorism:

is the process of creating fear among people. The fear can be about losing a person's food, their job, their ability to vote, voicing their ideas, choosing their belief, or even losing their life. There is no single definition for this idea. Some believe that terrorism only occurs among individuals; however, terrorism can be initiated or perpetuated by individuals, society, parts of culture, institutions, and governments.

Violent extremism:

Extremism is the rejection of other ideas, beliefs, or values coupled with the belief that your perspective is superior to everyone else's. Violent extremism is the use of physical harm to spread the belief that your perspective is the best.

Zoroastrianism:

is one of the world's oldest religions that is still practiced today, originating in 6th century BCE. It is a monotheistic tradition, following the teachings of Zoroaster whose teachings centered in a dualistic cosmology, or a battle between the forces of good and evil. Distinctive religious practices include fire ritual.





II. Addressing Important Topics

1. Basic Religious Knowledge
2. Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism
3. Tolerance vs Respect
4. Recognition of Bias
5. Accommodation in Schools
6. Religion and Conflict



Basic Religious Knowledge

Teachers may lack confidence to engage with religious issues in their classrooms because they fear that they do not know enough about religion. Teachers coming out of the Canadian K-12 public school systems may have learned very little about religious diversity themselves and may feel ill-equipped. You cannot become a religious literacy expert overnight, but by learning some basic facts about various religions, worldviews, or spiritual beliefs, and practices of various traditions, you can start to fill this knowledge gap.



Here are two frameworks to help build this basic religious knowledge:

1. ABCDs of religions (Joshi, 2007)

Architecture

- Are there particular buildings or types of structures associated with the tradition?

Books

- What are the central texts, if any?

Cities

- Do certain cities hold special significance?

Days

- What are significant days in this tradition?



Basic Religious Knowledge (continued)



2. Three Bs framework (Marcus, 2017)

1. *Beliefs*
2. *Behavior*
3. *Belonging*

This framework means that you cannot assume that you understand a student who practices a particular religion just because you know a bit about the basic beliefs of that tradition (e.g. the Four Noble Truths in Buddhism). A student may identify with a tradition or worldview primarily as a place to build community (belonging), more than a belief system that guides their behavior, for example.

Frameworks are useful for thinking about how we engage with religious diversity in the classroom, but there are many websites where teachers can find resources related to teaching and learning about religion. You will find these resources in our Further Reading and Resources section at the end of this document.



Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism

Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are forms of hostility and discrimination towards others based on their religious background. Shared between these two forms of religiously-based discrimination is the belief that a religious tradition is one monolithic entity, rather than understanding the diversity that exists within and between those who belong to a religious group such as Muslims or Jews.

For teachers, addressing these topics can be uncomfortable for various reasons, including not wanting to single out students who may be part of those faith backgrounds.

We suggest the following guidelines:

- **Understand** that religious minority youth, specifically Jewish and Muslim students, may experience discrimination other students do not.
- **Commit** to creating a safe space for all students, including those from religious minorities.
- **Recognize** your own biases and how these may contribute to your perceptions of Muslim or Jewish students.
- **Educate** yourself, your students, and your colleagues about anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.



Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism (continued)

Islamophobia is a hostile attitude or practice toward Muslims based on their actual or perceived Muslim identity.

Since a person's Muslim identity can be based on their religious beliefs and practices, culture, ethnicity, race, or dress, it is a form of intersectional discrimination.

It can take the form of:

- actions,
- behaviors, or
- words that target individuals

at the personal, community, or systemic level.

For more details, we encourage educators to consult the definition of Islamophobia in [the Canadian Guide to Understanding and Combating Islamophobia: For a More Inclusive Canada](#).

Anti-Semitism is a hostile attitude or practice toward Jews or discrimination against them based on their actual or perceived Jewish identity.

This includes hostility and discrimination toward Jews and Jewish institutions.

Since a person's Jewish identity may be linked to their ethnic identity, religious identity, cultural values and/or practices, or nationality—or all of these aspects of identity at the same time—anti-Semitism is also an intersectional form of discrimination.

It is complex and can be based on prejudices:

- religious,
- political, and economic, as well as
- racial prejudices.

For more details, we encourage educators to consult the definition of antisemitism in the Montreal Holocaust Museum's [A Brief History of Antisemitism in Canada](#).



Tolerance vs. Respect

Tolerance and respect can be seen as concepts that are on a spectrum of inclusion and acceptance.

To be tolerant of another is often considered a weaker form of respect, where there is less effort spent to understand and deeply listen to the other.

Respect, on the other hand, can be understood as a more demanding form of acceptance, where the goal is to truly understand the other's point of view.

In most cases, teachers will want to always work toward setting the ground rules at the beginning of the year to ensure a respectful environment, and inviting students to help create those guidelines is an excellent way to get everyone on board. It is useful to discuss the difference between tolerance and respect with students, with the goal of moving towards the respect end of the spectrum. However, at times it may be necessary for teachers to promote the weaker version of tolerance. This is because teachers may find that students come to the classroom with very rigid views or values that may be at odds with the majority, or with what is considered acceptable in Canadian society.

An example of this could be if a student expresses discriminatory views towards 2SLGBTQ+ students. In this case, high school teachers will need to balance the need to allow a safe environment for all students to feel heard with the need to maintain a safe space for all students. So, given that they live in a pluralistic society, students with very polarized views may agree to tolerate views they find distasteful without fully respecting them.



Tolerance vs. Respect (continued)

Some practical tips for teaching students acceptance through tolerance and respect include the following:

- **Listen carefully** to all students' views and provide space for diverse perspectives.
- **Embrace discomfort**, be willing to ask awkward questions, and allow yourself to be vulnerable with your students.
- **Develop** your students' skills in critical thinking and dialogue.
- **Model** respect by showing this to all your students.
- **Discuss and demonstrate** the advantages to having diverse perspectives.



Recognition of Bias

Bias is the preference of something or some person over another type of thing or person. Unconscious bias, also known as implicit bias, is a kind of social stereotype about a certain group of people, in this case, those who are religiously different. Unfortunately, we all have unconscious

bias, and because it is unconscious it can be difficult to address. For teachers, it is especially important to understand the consequences of this hidden bias to ensure that all students are treated equally. Here are strategies that can help you do this:

1.

Acknowledge that you have unconscious biases.

We are all biased and must work to uncover these biases. In particular, notice how you perceive those students from religious backgrounds.

2.

Recognize what these biases are.

You may consider using a tool such as:

[Project Implicit](#).

3.

Educate yourself about your own unconscious biases, particularly around religious identities.

Attend workshops offered by your school or teachers' association, or request a workshop.

4.

Change your own behaviour.

Recognizing your unconscious biases is an important starting point, but it should lead to a shift in your behaviour.

Start by noticing which colleagues you tend to associate the most - often these are the ones most similar to ourselves. Actively work to get closer to colleagues who are different from you. To become aware of our religious or non-religious biases, the next step is actively cultivating friendships with those who come from different religious backgrounds. The same is also true for our relationships with students. Research shows that teachers'

unconscious biases can and does impact how they treat students in their classrooms, so it is vital to actively ensure that you give all students equal and/or equitable attention.



Accommodation in Schools

One of the ways religion commonly comes up in school contexts is in requests for religious accommodations. While many schools may have policies governing how to respond to such requests, such as [Ontario's Policy Statement on Religious Accommodation in Schools](#), it is not uncommon that teachers may be uncertain of how to proceed when faced with such requests.

Along with your district or provincial guidelines, here are a few general considerations to keep in mind:

REMEMBER that the Canadian school and work week were established to accommodate Christian holidays. While many Canadians from Christian backgrounds today may no longer go to church on Sundays or practice Christianity at all, the vast majority do not find their main family holiday times in conflict with the school calendar.

ACCOMMODATE religious requests as much as possible as long as these do not interfere or cause undue hardship to the rest of the class.



EDUCATE yourself about your rights and responsibilities to all your students.

BALANCE the need to respect religious requests for accommodation with the need to ensure and protect the human rights of all your students. Thus, requests from parents to refrain from including 2SLGBTQ+ issues in classroom discussions should not be accepted because that would infringe on the rights of 2SLGBTQ+ students as outlined in the Canadian Charter of Human Rights.



Religion and Conflict

One of the most commonly cited reasons for teachers to refrain from engaging with religious issues in the classroom is a fear that it will lead to conflict in their classroom. This is an understandable reaction given that religion can be a very personal and integral part of both students' and teachers' identities and values. While acknowledging that issues surrounding conflict and religion in the classroom may never be simple to resolve, teachers can take steps to address potential conflict in the classroom by following three general guidelines.

1. Balance the need to create a culture of acceptance and belonging for all students with the right for freedom of expression and freedom of belief.

Creating class guidelines for a safe learning environment that respects *everyone's* human rights should be done in collaboration with students at the beginning of the year to set the right tone. And if a student does express a discriminatory view, instead of just shutting down the student, a teacher might say, "Well, that may be one perspective, but that is a view that doesn't respect the Canadian Charter of Human Rights, which tells us to value diversity and show every person the same amount of respect. It doesn't respect others in our classroom/ community/country either." In a high school context, it may be appropriate to use it as an opportunity to remind the class that there is great diversity of opinions within traditions, thus not everyone who practices that faith will hold the same beliefs.



Religion and Conflict (continued)

2. Communicate.

Teachers should discuss any conflict or potential conflict around religion with school administration to understand what school policies are in place and what their own legal responsibilities are. In addition, communicating directly with the parents to understand why a particular issue is important to that family is crucial. Finally, teachers should always discuss the issue with the student/s involved to understand their perspective.



3. Educate yourself.

Teachers have a responsibility to educate themselves about their own rights and responsibilities and those of all their students. Of course, educators can never be fully prepared to deal with every tension that may arise in their classes – including those related to religious views. However, even a bit of religious literacy will go a long way in building understanding of religiously diverse students, just as understanding your legal responsibilities as an educator will give you confidence to address discriminatory views in your class. And finally, developing skills in civic dialogue and debate is a cornerstone to creating an equitable classroom that is inclusive of all forms of diversity.





III. Core Competencies and Skills

1. Empathy and Compassion
2. Critical and Creative Thinking
3. Pluralistic Outlook
4. Purposeful Civic Dialogue



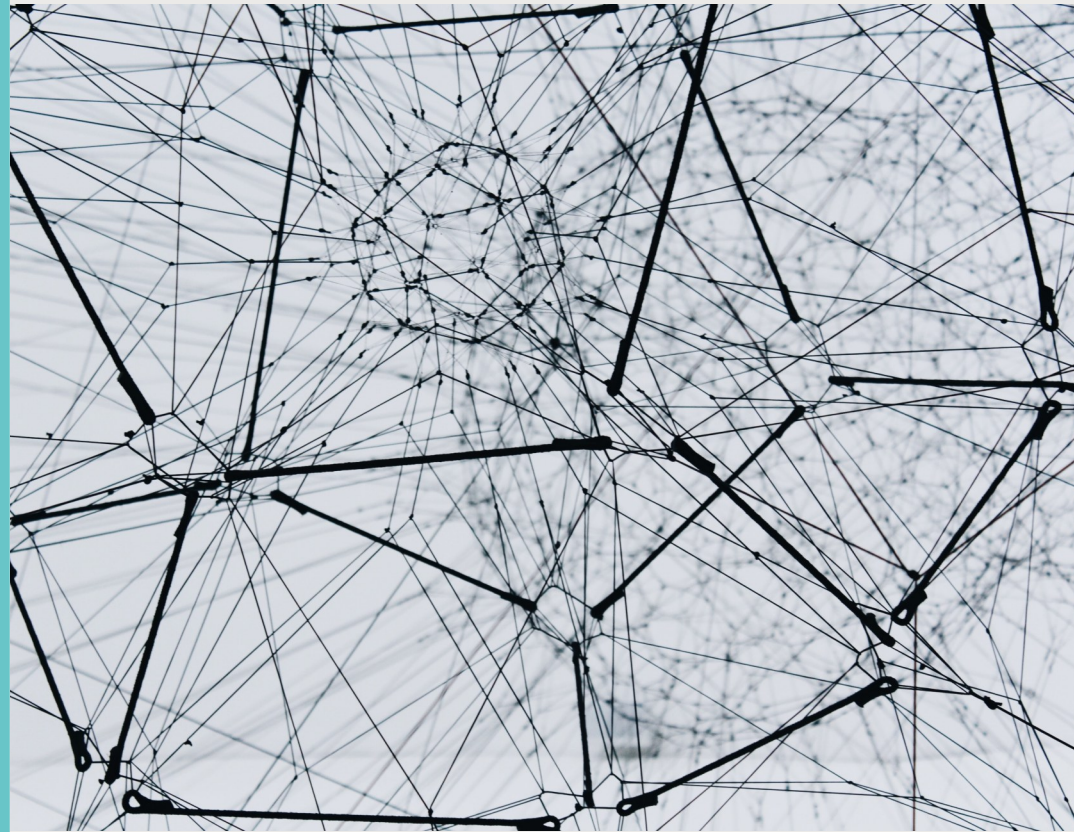
Core Competencies

Core competencies are a set of skills and abilities that equip students with intellectual, personal, social and emotional proficiencies needed to become engaged and contributing global citizens.

This toolkit focuses on the development of four core competencies among students:

1. Empathy and Compassion
2. Critical and Creative Thinking
3. Pluralistic Outlook
4. Purposeful Civic Dialogue

These competencies are **spiralling and interconnected**, meaning they build upon each other and cannot be taught in isolation.



COMPETENCY 1:

Displays and enacts Empathy & Compassion

Focus of the Competency

In a society where there exists a multitude of viewpoints, diverse traditions, beliefs and values, we must go beyond mere acceptance to understanding. Encompassed within this understanding is a sense of empathy and understanding for the histories and multiple narratives people come with. Empathy and compassion also allow us to bring stronger relationships with others, foster a heightened sense of awareness of our actions and words, reduce bullying and build social skills that translate into all aspects of life. Additionally empathy and compassion promotes the open-mindedness needed for us to move beyond tolerance to a deeper sense of engagement with those around us.

Evaluation Criteria

- Student is able to see things from another's perspective
- Student willingly wants to work with others and learn from their experiences
- Student is able to display open-mindedness in discussions
- Student is able to ask reflective questions and respond to others with empathy and compassion



Key Features of the Competency

- The ability to put aside judgement
- The ability to connect with others
- The ability to understand other perspectives & viewpoints
- The ability to communicate your understanding





Key Features of the Competency

- The ability to think of new ways of solving challenges
- The ability to analyze and critique a position, source and process
- The ability to work collaboratively to explore new ideas and solutions
- The ability to adapt in the face of change



COMPETENCY 2: Demonstrates Critical & Creative Thinking

Focus of the Competency

In a world that is growing increasingly more complex to navigate the ability to apply critical and creative thinking is essential. Creative thinking promotes resiliency and equips students to think outside the box, using problem-solving techniques to find solutions to new challenges. Critical thinking applies the process of analyzing, applying and evaluating decisions that is the basis of problem solving. Together this competency allows students to deal with a world of rapid change and unknowns.

Evaluation Criteria

- Student is able to come up with various thought-out solutions to a problem and/or challenge
- Student is able to distinguish between facts and misinformation and apply a critical lens to information presented
- Student values collaboration as a way to learn and grow
- Student is able to plan for unexpected challenges, and propose various viable solutions to a single challenge

COMPETENCY 3:

Embodies a Pluralistic Outlook

Focus of the Competency

Globalization has brought waves of immigration, and information about others at an increasingly pace. Now, more than ever, we are interconnected as global citizens. While previously we defined ourselves by what we weren't, we need to shift away from this divisiveness to build bridges with others. A pluralistic outlook is crucial to move towards understanding and seek ways to find unity amongst us all. As cultures and religions influence and inform all aspects of life (social, political, economic) the ability to respond with a confident, generous and empathetic outlook is needed.

Evaluation Criteria

- Student shows knowledge and respect of other beliefs, values, traditions and perspectives
- Student is able to hold their own viewpoint and perspective while simultaneously recognizing other views and perspectives exist
- Student is aware of the diversity in and between religious, spiritual, non-religious, moral and other worldviews among individuals, groups and traditions
- Student can explain the connections between forms of religious expression and elements of the social and cultural environment



Key Features of the Competency

- The ability to acknowledge multiple perspectives exist
- The ability to celebrate differences and see diversity as a value-add
- The ability to learn from, listen to, and respect other ideas and perspectives
- The ability to recognize the non-static nature of religious, spiritual, non-religious, moral and other worldview traditions





Key Features of the Competency

- The ability to recognize there are multiple approaches and best practices
- The ability to engage and dialogue meaningfully about difference
- The ability to willingly listen to others
- The ability to respond to criticism, and misinformation with patience, positive intention and respect



COMPETENCY 4: Purposeful Civic Dialogue

Focus of the Competency

In alignment with the other competencies, and in keeping with a Competency 3 (Pluralistic Outlook), there is a need to participate with readiness in with others and engage in dialogue that seeks to inform. Constructive, as opposed to destructive communication is required to foster personal and professional relationships.

Purposeful civic dialogue requires a positive intention, patience and a willingness to listen.

Evaluation Criteria

- The student displays pride in one's identity while also participating in dialogue that helps them understand the identity of others
- The student is able to articulate how difference and diversity are a source of strength in society
- The student respectfully listens and responds confidently to divergent viewpoints
- The student acquires knowledge through interacting with those with different experiences and backgrounds



IV. Sample Scope & Classroom Sequence

1. Sample Lesson
2. Sample Evaluation Rubric/ Assessment

A starting foundation for all teachers that can be further developed for the dynamics and age of their students.

*Disclaimer for page 32. When a teacher engages with topics on religious practices and beliefs, it is important to note that students are not representatives of the entire faith. They are not a "faith expert." They solely represent their experience within the religion. This also applies to invited guests such as priests, rabbis, imams, or any other religious authority figure. Please ensure students are aware that meeting one person of faith does not mean they have engaged with everyone from that faith. One believer is one representation of the faith.



Sample Lesson

LESSON PLAN 1	DURATION: 60 minutes Grade: 6-10	TOPIC: Confirmation
Objective	- Students will know what the confirmation ceremony consists of. - Students will understand that confirmation is a religious expression of Catholic tradition. - Handout has the steps and objects used (oil, priest, family gathering) to reform their sentences and illustrate it in their own way. - Worksheet words jumbled up and they have to step 1-2-3-4-5-6. Definitions on one side and the words on one. Have them match it up.	
Assessment	This lesson takes place in the middle of the unit, so no summative assessment will be needed. No formal assessment or evaluation will be required for this lesson seeing as it is primarily for introductory and theoretical purposes. An informative assessment with a quick review worksheet at the end to reinforce the information they learned will be asked.	
Materials	- Sheets of lined paper (loose-leaf) or class note-book for note-taking - Helping Handout - Worksheet - Bristol board - Markers - Pencil crayons - Paper reinforcers - Pencil/Pen/Eraser - Confirmation picture book - SMART board (If available)	

Sample Lesson

	LESSON PLAN 1 (Duration: 60 min)
Back-ground	Confirmation is one of the main practices in Catholicism. While Roman Catholic churches see confirmation as a sacrament, with the ceremony serving as a means of delivering grace to the one being confirmed, Protestant churches see confirmation as having a more symbolic purpose and therefore consider it to be more of a rite. For the purpose of this lesson, we will not be discussing the slight variations among specific Catholic denominations regarding confirmation seeing as it is a Grade 8-10 group and the allotted 60 minute period does not give sufficient time to divulge into these disparities. The goal of this lesson is for students to familiarize themselves with and understand the significance of confirmation, how it acts as a manifestation of Catholic beliefs. The teacher is expected to have solid knowledge of the confirmation ceremony in the event that any students may have certain questions. This considered, multiple resources will be made available for further information and consultation prior to giving a lesson on confirmation.
Hook (10-12 min)	To begin the class and get all of the students' attention, the teacher can ask all students to bring their chairs to the front of the class, in a clustered semi-circle around them. Once all students are calm and seated, the teacher can read a short excerpt from, "Tell Me About the Catholic Faith: From the Bible to the Sacraments" which includes colorful and engaging illustrations that list and briefly explain the steps of the confirmation process. The book includes additional information regarding aspects of confirmation; however, for the purpose of the lesson plan, the steps and general process of confirmation is the focus. The steps are listed as follows: 1) Participant stands before the bishop 2) Sponsor puts one hand on participants shoulder and speaks the confirmation name 3) The bishop anoints the participant by using oil of Chrism to make the sign of the cross on the forehead while saying the confirmation name and "be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit"

Sample Lesson

	LESSON PLAN 1 (Duration: 60 min)
Hook (cont'd)	4) Participant responds "Amen" 5) The bishop then says, "Peace be with you" 6) Participant responds with, "And with your spirit" or "And also with you" Once the short excerpt has been read and the 6 steps of confirmation have been read out to them, the teacher can ask them what they remember about the first step, second step and so on, as well as asking who the important figures are. If the classroom is primarily Christian, the teacher can also use this time to ask students if they themselves have seen a confirmation ceremony performed before (perhaps an older brother or sister) and consequently ask for their thoughts or comments on the ceremony*. Students will can be encouraged to ask questions at this time. If the students do not appear to be restless, the teacher could let them sit in a cluster while discussing the themes with them. If not, the teacher should ask them to go back to their assigned seats after the reading of the short excerpt to have the discussion.
Lesson Intro (20 min)	The classroom already has a seating plan, in which all students desks are placed in 6 groups of 4. The teacher will explain to the students that each one of the pre-assigned 6 groups will get one assigned step from the 6 confirmation steps covered in the short excerpt. The teacher will pass out a bristol board to each group and they will each be asked to draw a picture of their understanding of the assigned confirmation step. They can use markers and or pencil crayons. In addition to the drawing, each group will be asked to write 2-3 short sentences, in their own words, about their assigned step.

Sample Lesson

LESSON PLAN 1 (Duration: 60 min)	
Intro — cont'd	After having explained the task, the teacher can pass out the handout provided (see Appendix A) which includes the 6 steps of confirmation as well as a few photos relating to confirmation. Students will be allowed to refer to this handout as an aid for the rest of the class period.
Body (10-15 min)	Once the groups have drawn out their assigned step on their 1/2 bristol board, they will each get the opportunity to present their step to the rest of the class. Each group will get about 2 minutes. The teacher can collect the bristol boards from each group once they have finished presenting. Any questions by the students can be answered by the teacher between presentations.
Lesson Closure/ Activity (10 min)	Once all steps have been revisited, the teacher can pass out a worksheet (see Appendix B) that the students can be assigned to do it individually. This worksheet serves as an formative assessment as opposed to a formal one, simply to reinforce the material. Students will be allowed to consult the handout given to them to complete their bristol board drawing. On the worksheet, the 6 steps of confirmation will be listed in the correct order on the left hand side of the sheet. However, on the right hand side, the 6 descriptions will not be in the correct order and the students will be asked to draw a line from the step to the appropriate description. The teacher should explain to the students how to complete the worksheet after handing it out to them. Once all students have completed the worksheet, students will be asked to put their handouts and worksheets in their duo-tang folder. The teacher can conclude the lesson by asking the students if they have any final questions. The teacher can also take a moment to briefly mention the topic of the upcoming class. If the lesson turns out to be too long and there is limited time, the teacher should stop at an appropriate time, such as at the end of a discussion, and make sure that there is overview of the material and some closure before students move on to another class. If the lesson turns out to be too short, the teacher can show a short video of the confirmation process (see Appendix C). If certain students are finished the worksheet ahead of others, the teacher can give them a word search activity with some keywords from the lesson to work on quietly while the other students finish their worksheet (see Appendix D). Once the class is over, the bristol boards that the students have created can be displayed on one of the walls in the classroom.

Sample Lesson

Differentiation

When planning the lesson, it is important to make it inclusive to all students from the very start of the lesson instead of simply creating multiple versions for different disabilities.

ADHD:

The activity planned within the lesson allows for all students to move from their desks and interact with other students. In addition, the inclusion of a class reading, class discussion, hands on group work as well as oral presentation have all been included so as to benefit students with a shorter attention span making them less likely to act out. If a student does act out, they can be asked to do 10 squats or 10 jumping jacks so as to dispense of their extra energy and focus their attention back on the assigned task.

Weighted lizards can also be used for students who tend to fidget. This helpful tool gives students the impression they are holding something valuable and tends to diminish other distractions that may be present in the room.

Autism spectrum:

Student on autism spectrum that is high functioning is very sensitive to noise and so the teacher can provide this student with noise cancelling headphones when necessary.

This student also tends to be fidgety and so the weighted lizard can also be used to prevent this.

Dyslexia:

The reading of the excerpt is done by the teacher to the students and the handout and worksheet that is given to every student is written in clear Comic Sans print, in an appropriately big enough size to accommodate those with dyslexia. These students can also be assigned the task of drawing when put into groups to create their bristol board so as not to make them feel excluded.

Sample Lesson (Appendix A)

Confirmation Handout

Confirmation: A Christian rite of passage



Step 1: Person who wants to be confirmed stands in front of the bishop.

Ceremony takes place at Mass. The person who wants to be confirmed stands in front of the bishop with the sponsor, who is there as a witness of the confirmation ceremony.

Step 2: The sponsor puts one hand on the shoulder and speaks the confirmation name.

A confirmation name is chosen for the person who wants to be confirmed.

Step 3: The bishop anoints the person being confirmed

Using the 'oil of Chrism' the bishop makes the sign of the Cross on the forehead using his finger or thumb while saying the person's confirmation name and also saying, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit"



Sample Lesson (Appendix B)

Confirmation Worksheet

Confirmation: A Christian rite of passage

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Person stands in front of the bishop | The person who wants to be confirmed stands in front of the bishop with a sponsor. |
| 2) The sponsor puts one hand on the shoulder and speaks the confirmation name | The confirmation name that is chosen for the person being confirmed is stated by the sponsor. |
| 3) The bishop anoints the person being confirmed | Bishop makes the sign of the Cross on the forehead using his finger or thumb while also saying, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." |
| 4) "Amen" | The person being confirmed approves of the confirmation ceremony. |
| 5) "Peace be with you" | The bishop says a religious phrase that is used to greet or say goodbye to others. |
| 6) "And with your spirit" | The ceremony is complete. |

*This worksheet will be made in larger print for students with reading learning disabilities such as dyslexia.

Sample Lesson (Appendix C)

Confirmation

YouTube Video

[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=Wro4cjCR89U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wro4cjCR89U)



Sample Lesson (Appendix D)

Confirmation

Word Search

AMEN
BIBLE
CEREMONY
CHRISTIAN
CONFIRMATION
CROSS
PRIEST
RITE
SPIRIT
SPONSOR

Z	J	S	D	V	T	K	E	J	O	B	C	F	B	B
V	Q	N	A	S	H	L	O	K	L	O	I	C	Q	N
Q	I	A	E	M	L	D	E	N	N	R	F	B	G	O
I	A	I	L	K	R	N	K	F	F	O	J	M	L	T
U	R	H	H	F	K	V	I	Q	F	S	H	Q	X	E
P	Q	K	R	H	G	R	W	E	R	N	F	A	Y	D
Q	J	I	H	J	M	Y	R	H	Q	O	C	E	D	N
I	T	C	P	A	L	T	N	Q	E	P	O	F	Z	X
E	G	X	T	X	K	D	G	O	E	S	N	E	M	A
F	H	I	I	K	E	R	S	F	M	I	T	B	M	U
R	O	M	Y	F	E	X	B	B	I	E	P	Z	P	C
N	Z	C	B	S	Y	N	F	J	A	R	R	X	X	R
N	Y	G	N	A	I	T	S	I	R	H	C	E	B	O
Z	Z	C	U	C	Z	Z	O	Z	D	P	Y	M	C	S
S	P	I	R	I	T	A	C	H	A	R	I	W	N	S

Sample Evaluation Rubric/Assessment

CSPA (Content-Skills-Pedagogical Approach)

A starting evaluation grid for educators & students

Content	Skills	Pedagogical Approach
Religious literacy is organic and a constantly evolving and growing knowledge <u>Basic Knowledge:</u> A budding religious knowledge of the major world religions and new religious movements. The familiarity and recognition of Indigenous culture and values. The learning and recognition of internal religious diversity and its impact on beliefs, practices and actions. <u>Growing Knowledge:</u> Intermediate and more intimate knowledge of religious traditions and their internal diversity. A continued growing knowledge of Indigenous culture and their role in Canada. Learning how the internal religious diversity shapes and forms the growth of a religion and the adherents beliefs. The understanding of one's bias and how it shapes how one receives knowledge.	• Dialogue with intention • Contextualization • Open approach to learning • Recognition of bias and their impact Learn how to address and manage one's bias. The use of Culturally Relevant Teaching and its use in the class.	• Exclusive Neutrality • Exclusive Partiality • Neutral Impartiality • Committed Impartiality • Circumstantial Impartiality (see Kelly, 1984; Jafralie, 2017; and Zaver, 2014, 2015 for more details)

Further Reading and Resources

Contextualization

This is a great site to go to for background knowledge about many religious traditions: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/>

The Centre for Civic Religious Literacy shares a *Thought Corner* to contextualize the discussion of religious literacy in Canada: <https://ccrl-clrc.ca/thought-corner>

The *Pluralism Project* website has many resources including an excellent section on religious timelines: <http://pluralism.org/>

The *Religion and Public Life Project* at *Harvard Divinity School* has created resources for Educators. Note that these are developed for the US context : <https://rpl.hds.harvard.edu/programs/religious-literacy-education/resources-educators>

Classroom Resources

The Centre for Civic Religious Literacy recommends and creates classroom resources. They are both available here: <https://ccrl-clrc.ca/religious-literacy-resources>

This UK site has lesson plans and modules about multiple subjects, including religion: <https://www.tes.com/>

The Religion and Public Life Project also has a series of excellent videos for teaching about religious diversity: <https://rpl.hds.harvard.edu/programs/religious-literacy-education/videos-teaching>

The Tannenbaum Centre has a wealth of resources including this page of websites, videos, and handouts for teaching religious diversity. <https://tanenbaum.org/about-us/what-we-do/education/religions-in-my-neighborhood/resources>

The United Religions Initiative has created lesson plans for teaching about religious traditions: <https://uri.org/kids>



References

Resources mentioned in this toolkit:

Khyati Joshi's ABCDs and other tips for teaching:

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/fall-2007/because-i-had-a-turban>

Benjamin Marcus's 3 Bs Framework in greater detail:

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/summer-2017/a-matter-of-life-and-death>

The Canadian Guide to Understanding and Combating Islamophobia: For a More Inclusive Canada:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/combating-islamophobia-canada/resources/guide-combating-islamophobia.html>

A Brief History of Antisemitism in Canada: <https://museeholocauste.ca/en/activities/brief-history-antisemitism-canada/>

Detail about the different forms of neutrality are discussed in:

- Kelly, T. E. (1986). Discussing controversial issues: Four perspectives on the teacher's role. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 14, 113-138.
- Jafralie, S. (2017). The challenges of teaching the religion component of the ethics and religious culture program: a study of secondary teachers in the Montreal area. McGill Dissertation.
- Zaver, A (2015). "The Complexities of Neutrality in Teaching Religious Education: The Ethics and Religious Culture Program as Case Study." *McGill Journal of Education*. 50(1).
- Zaver, A (2014). "Teaching Between the Lines: The Space Between Teacher Neutrality and Teacher Identity." *The Elements Experience Journal: Religion, the Secular and Public Spaces*, 1(2). University of Toronto Online Journal.

Images in this toolkit are Open Access images taken by:

(Listed in correspondence with the order of images starting from the Title Page)

[Anh Vy](#), [Tiago Felipe Ferreira](#), [Charles Postiaux](#), [Nathalie SPEHNER](#), [Paulo Evangelista](#), [Guilherme Romano](#), [Toa Heftiba](#), [U. S. Embassy Jerusalem](#), [Niko Lienata](#), [Markus Spiske](#), [Ian Schneider](#), [Toa Heftiba](#), [DDP](#), [Ksenia Makagonova](#), [Thomas Drouault](#), [Warren Wong](#), [Daria Nepriakhina](#), [Duy Pham](#), [Alexis Brown](#), [Thomas Tucker](#), and [Glen Carrie](#).



About the Authors

Dr. Sabrina Jafralie is a teacher, course lecturer, interfaither, co-founder of the CCRL, founder of the Bold Disruptor podcast, and community activist. Sabrina is a recognized specialist on the Quebec Ethics and Religious Culture course and has over 17 years of teaching experience at the secondary and university levels with experience in the Canadian and British educational systems. This teaching experience and her research on teachers' challenges in teaching religious literacy bring a wealth of knowledge. Sabrina is a long-time community activist and adamant interfaither. In 2018, she was awarded the Prime Minister's Teaching Award of Excellence.

Dr. Arzina Zaver is a Training and Development Specialist and Educator. Arzina has over a decade of teaching experience at the primary, secondary and post-secondary levels. She has held teaching, mentorship and leadership positions in Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Trinidad and Tobago. Her scholarly interests and contributions are in the field of teacher education, the politics of teacher identity, and multicultural education. She served as the Regional Director of the CCRL for British Columbia and works in the field of training and

development, specifically supporting preservice and in-service teachers in their teaching practice for various educational institutions and non-profit organizations.

Dr. Erin Reid is an educator with more than 15 years of teaching experience in a variety of settings, from K-12 to post-secondary, and was the 2015 recipient of McGill's Award of Distinguished Teaching in the School of Continuing Studies. She is an Assistant Professor of Education at St. Mary's University (Calgary), where she draws on her years of experience as an educator to prepare student teachers for the complex diversity they will encounter in their future classrooms. As Regional Director for Alberta at CCRL, she aims to promote a better understanding of religious diversity in the public sphere.

Dr. Sivane Hirsch is a Professor in the Department of Education at Laval University and co-director of LEDIR (Laboratory for Education and Diversity in the Regions in Quebec). With a PhD in sociology and education, she focuses her research and writing on issues related to cultural and religious diversity in the education system. Her recent studies analyze teachers' approaches to dealing with sensitive political issues in their classrooms and the challenges

of addressing diverse experiences in history teaching, the impact of the "intercultural climate" of schools on the success of immigrant students, and the documentation of the implementation of a home schooling support center within an Orthodox community. She teaches in the teacher training program on ethics and religious culture in Quebec and in the postgraduate program on ethical and political issues in education.

Dr. Hicham Tiflati is a renowned academic and professor of humanities at John Abbott College in Quebec. He is also a subject matter expert at the CCRL. His work focuses on religion, politics, and secularism, with a particular interest in radicalization, disengagement from violent extremism, Muslim identities, and Islamic education. For more than ten years, he has worked on issues affecting Muslims in the West and has interacted with families and friends of Canadians who have joined ISIS. His work focuses on topics such as Islamophobia, the links between religion, politics, and secularism, and Muslim issues in the West. He also creates interactive courses and workshops that explore the relationship between Muslims and areas such as diversity, social justice, and anti-discrimination.

ccrl-clrc.ca

If you would like to make a donation for this free resource, please visit this website [here](#).



CENTRE FOR
CIVIC RELIGIOUS
LITERACY

LE CENTRE
DE LITTÉRATIE
RELIGIEUSE CIVIQUE

