

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Section: \_\_\_\_

## Religion

- **Big Idea:** Religion and cultural practices that emerged a long time ago have endured and continue to influence people today.
- **Think:** What is the purpose of religion? Record your ideas:
  - What is monotheism?
  - What is polytheism?

## Ancient Gods

From <https://mesopotamia.mrdonn.org/gods.html>

Imagine it is a dark and cloudy night. It is raining. You can't see the moon or the stars. When suddenly a lightning bolt explodes the tree a little way down the street. How do you feel? Now imagine you don't have the benefit of the science of weather that we have today, and you don't know what caused the lightning bolt. What might have caused it? If you lived in ancient Mesopotamia, you would probably think that some force greater than man had done it. You would call this force a god. The Mesopotamians had gods for everything. If you got sick one of the gods was mad at you. If your door stuck and was hard to open maybe you weren't paying enough attention to the gods. If two fields were side by side and one was growing with tall thick crops and the other full of weeds then the gods favored the one and disliked the other. You couldn't see the gods (at least normal people couldn't.) But the ancient Mesopotamian people believed that the gods ruled every aspect of their life.

The gods were unpredictable. You never knew what the gods might do. Thus, it was the responsibility of every individual to do everything they could at all times to keep the gods happy. Kings were not gods. Kings were mortals, just like the common man. In this, at least, all men were equal in ancient Mesopotamia. All men, including the king, were supposed to spend their time appeasing the gods.

**Ancient Sumer:** The ancient Sumerians were a very religious people. They believed that everything that happened good or bad was a result of their gods. They worked hard to make their gods happy. This was quite difficult since their gods, and they had hundreds of gods, were not a happy bunch. In fact, they were downright grumpy. So the Sumerians spent a lot of their time and effort seeking new ways to please their gods. This kept them very busy because they believed in super powerful gods, like the god of the sky and the god of the sea. They believed in little tiny gods, like the household god who watched over the broom in their house, or the god in the tree out back who watched over that particular tree. They believed everything had a god tucked into it or was responsible for it. Each of these magical creatures had special powers. They did not all have the same special powers, but they all had powers. These magical creature did have one thing in common. They were immortal, which means they could live forever. To the ancient Sumerians, it was vitally important to keep every single god happy - every single one - because the Sumerian gods could and did interfere in the people's lives every day.



From <https://egypt.mrdonn.org/gods.html>

Most ancient civilizations were afraid of angering their gods. This was not true in ancient Egypt. The ancient Egyptians were not afraid of most their gods. People prayed in the temples for what they wanted. But if they did not get it, they might give the temple statue a little whack with a reed, to let the gods know how disappointed they were. The ancient Egyptians were practical. They knew they could not get everything they wanted. They believed the gods were on their side, whether their wish was granted or not.



What made Egypt so different was that in ancient Egypt, everybody had a job to do. Gods were no exception. Gods had jobs. There were over 2,000 gods in ancient Egypt because there was a lot of work to do.

From <https://rome.mrdonn.org/gods.html>



The Romans had thousands of gods. They believed that there were spirits and guardian gods for everything. Trees, rocks, streams, bridges, everything had its own guardian spirit or god. There were guardian gods for your house and even for the different parts of the house. There was a kitchen god, [a door god](#), a bath god, and of course a sleeping god. The gods had a job - to take care of the people of the house, to watch over and protect them. If you or your family were forgetful about proper worship or the giving of sacrifices to the gods, then bad things would happen to you. The Romans blamed everything that went bad on people forgetting to worship the gods properly.

## Questions:

- 1) Why did the Sumerians want to keep the gods happy?
- 2) Why did the ancient Egyptians pray to the gods?
- 3) What was the job of the Roman gods, and why was it important to worship them and offer sacrifices?

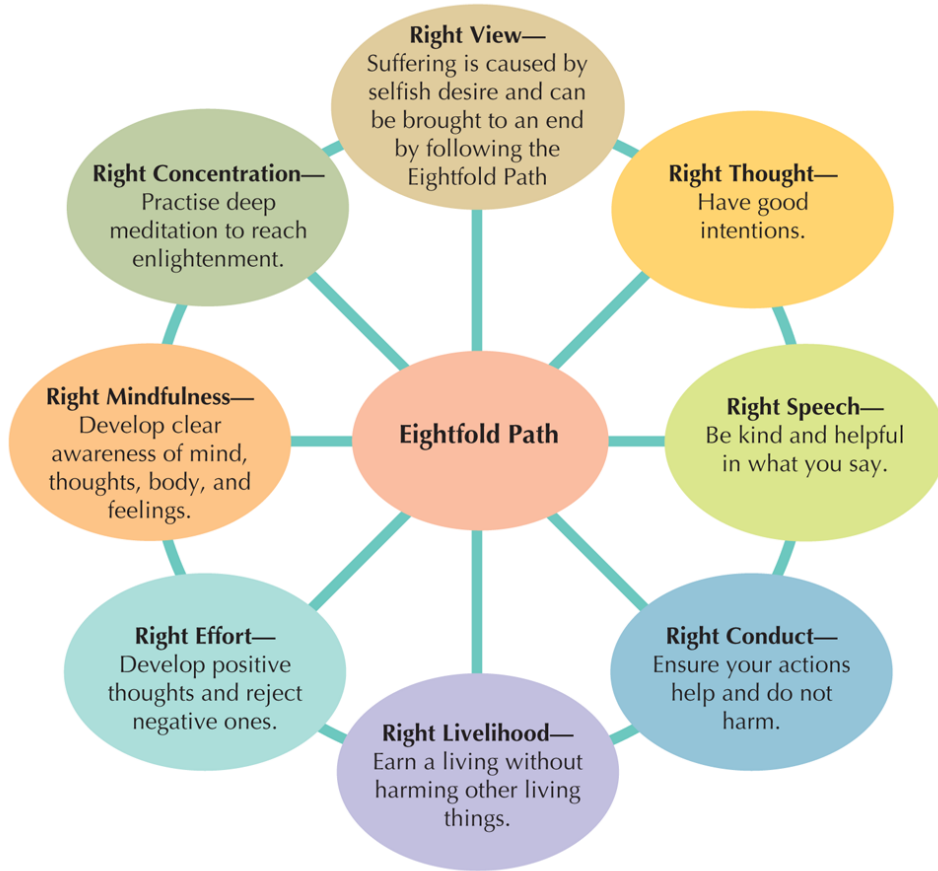
## Hinduism

- Brahman is described as...
- Brahman appears in thousands of divine forms, including a "trinity" of creator, preserver, and destroyer, known as \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- Hindus try to live by dharma, a divine law of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- Reincarnation is...
- Karma is...

## Buddhism

- Who was Buddha?
- One can achieve happiness by...
- Enlightenment is...
- Buddhists believed compassion and non-violence should...
- The cycle of rebirth can end when a person achieves \_\_\_\_\_.

The Teachings of the Ojibwe Seven Grandfathers are **Truth, Respect, Humility, Bravery, Wisdom, Love, and Honesty**. Do they align with Buddhism's Eightfold Path?



Religion typically encourages "right" living. Make a prediction: would it be EASIER or HARDER for a leader to rule a country if the people all followed one religion?

Do you think religion builds "community"? Explain.

Today, more than half of the world's population belongs to either Christianity or Islam. Both of these religions have roots in an even older one, Judaism. All three ancient religions emerged in the Middle East. They were monotheistic: they teach there is only one god.

## Judaism

- Their scripture is called the \_\_\_\_\_, which tells the Jews to worship \_\_\_\_\_.
- There are \_\_\_\_\_ commandments or rules for living, which guide behavior toward everything from loving kindness to the preservation of political freedom.
- God gave the prophet Moses \_\_\_\_\_, which was placed in \_\_\_\_\_.

**Activity:** reword these ancient Jewish teachings to communicate their main message. Describe possible situations in which these teachings would be helpful today.

Jewish teaching	In your own words...	How is this useful today?
<i>If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again.</i>		
<i>Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel.</i>		

## Christianity

- Their scripture is called the \_\_\_\_\_.
- They believe in \_\_\_\_\_.
- Started by \_\_\_\_\_, who followers believed to be \_\_\_\_\_.
- The message of the New Testament (part of the Bible), is that all people, through faith, can \_\_\_\_\_.
- Jesus urged his followers to spread his teachings to \_\_\_\_\_.

## Islam

- Started by \_\_\_\_\_
- They believe there is one true God called \_\_\_\_\_
- Their scripture is called the \_\_\_\_\_
- Believe in the teachings of the Jewish and Christian prophets, but believe Muhammad's revelations were most accurate.

