RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

FOR

STANDARD 5

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WAYS IN WHICH PEOPLE SPEAK TO EACH OTHER

People speak to each other to communicate different messages.

The message can be sent in different ways such as by speaking to each other or using gestures.

WAYS PEOPLE SPEAK TO ONE ANOTHER

- Through face-to-face
- Through conversations
- Through letters
- Through phones
- Through emails
- Through TVs
- Through whistles
- Through drums.

HOW GOD SPEAKS TO PEOPLE (Exodus 19:20-22; Quran 19:9-47)

- Through direct communication
- Through angels
- Through ancestral spirits
- Through dreams
- Through visions
- Through blessings
- Through miracles
- Through disasters
- Through print and electronic media
- Through preachers in churches and mosques

Direct communication

Just as people communicate in different ways, God also uses different ways to communicate with people. According to different holy books, God spoke directly to Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:20-22; Quran 19:52, 20:9-47). God invited Prophet Muhammad and gave him instructions on prayer (Quran 17:1).

Through angels

God uses words to speak to people through prophets and angels. For example, in both the bible and the Quran, the Angel Gabriel spoke to the Virgin Mary on the birth of Jesus Christ (Quran 19:16-21, Quran 3:45-47, Luke 1:26-38). He also brought the whole Quran to Prophet Muhammad (Quran 81:19-20, 53:1-6)

Through ancestral sprits

In African traditional religions, God is believed to communicate to people through ancestral spirits, blessings and natural disasters.

Other ways

Nowadays, God speaks to people in various ways such as dreams, visions, bressings milacles, natural disasters, print and electronic media and preachers in churches and mosques.

UNIT 2 RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AND ARTEFACTS

RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AND ARTEFACTS

A symbol is something that stands for something else

A religious artefact is an object that is made by people and has some historical interest.

Symbols can take many forms such as actions, words, letters, abbreviations, pictures, sounds, colours and objects.

Symbols and artefacts are used during prayers in different religions.

Sometimes they are hung in churches and mosques.

There are different types of symbols in different religions.

Examples of symbols include:

- Actions, for example, kneeling or bowing, making the sign of the cross and washing hands and feet.
- Words or language such as **pbuh** (peace be upon him), CCAP (Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, RC (Roman Catholic), ZEC (Zambezi Evangelical Church)
- Words like *amen*, *hell, paradise, hallelujah, sin* and *heaven*
- Titles of religious leaders, for example, pope, bishop and sheikh
- Names of animal, for example, owl, lamb in the thicket, snake in the garden of Eden and python in shrines
- Stories, proverbs, miracles, parables, similes and metaphors
- Dresses and colours, for example, when women dress either in black, white robes, cloaks, robes, turbans, wedding dresses or head gears

These symbols and artefacts are used to communicate different messages

UNIT 3 RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS ON HIV AND AIDS

RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS ABOUT HIV AND AIDS

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

HIV is the virus responsible for causing AIDS.

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

Being HIV positive (+) means that the human immunodeficiency virus is present in a person's body.

HIV weakens the immune system. This means that one can easily catch diseases such as TB because the body is not strong enough to fight against infection.

HIV and AIDS is an infectious disease. Which means, it can be passed from one person to another through many ways.

Different religions have different teachings on HIV and AIDS.

Most religious groups these days have a positive attitude towards HIV and AIDS after realizing that HIV and AIDS can also be transmitted by other means.

According to religious leaders, HIV and AIDS can be prevented through abstinence and mutual faithfulness between spouses.

This is also supported in the Quran 17:2 and also in the Bible, 1 Corinthians 7:2-3.

Initially, most religious groups had a negative attitude towards people living with HIV and AIDS.

They thought that the disease was only transmitted and spread through immoral acts.

This was from holy books such as Hadith which states, ‘If fornication should become widespread, you should realize that this has never happened without new diseases befalling the people which their ancestors never suffered from.’

Also Deuteronomy 28:20-24 states ‘If you do evil and reject the Lord, he will send diseases on you.’

In the Bible as well as Quran, there are several teachings on how people took care of the sick (Luke 10:25-37; Quran 39:53).

At present, religious groups can take care of people living with HIV and AIDS in different ways.

HOW RELIGIOUS GROUPS ASSIST PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV AND AIDS

- Giving them spiritual guidance and counselling
- Giving them food
- Giving them clothes
- Looking after them when they are sick
- Giving them messages of hope
- Mixing freely with them

UNIT 4 TEACHINGS ON HONOURING GOD

HONOURING GOD IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS (Psalms 100:103, 111, 113 and 118, Quran 14:32-33)

People respect each other in different ways.

Respect shows that one cares and trusts one another.

God is honoured in different ways and in different situations.

The holy scriptures have different teachings on how to honour God.

God is honoured because of all the good things he did or does to people (Psalms 100, 103,111, 113, and 118, Quran 14:32-33).

He is also honoured because:

- He is the creator and owner of all things (Psalms 24:1, and Colossians 1:16, Quran 39:5, Quran 10:3, 1 Samuel 2:8)
- He is the King of all the earth (Psalms 47:7, Quran 39:44)
- He is the loving God and shows kindness by giving people rain, food and fills their hearts with joy (Acts 14:17, Quran 2:21-22).

Members of African traditional religions honour God in different ways such as offering sacrifices and calling God with different names such as Namalenga, Mphambe and Chisumphi.

IMPORTANCE OF HONOURING GOD (Genesis 22 and 32; Quran 37:101-113)

- God blesses those who honour him
- God protects those who honour him
- God gives long life to those who honour him
- For good things God does for them

UNIT 5 RESPONDING TO GOD

HOW PEOPLE RESPOND TO GOD IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS (Exodus 3:5-6; Quran 20:8; Isaiah 6:8; Genesis 22:1-9)

God speaks to people in many ways.

For example, God speaks through miracles, natural disasters, visions and dreams.

When God speaks to people, they respond in different ways according to their religions.

For example, people may repent their sins or assist those in need of help.

In many holy books, there are examples of how people respond to God.

For example, Isaiah responded to God when he was called (Isaiah 6:8).

Also Abraham was willing to give his son as an offering when God told him to do so (Genesis 22:1-9).

Moses responded by taking off his shoes when he was told by God (Exodus 3:5-6 and Quran 20:12).

REASONS WHY PEOPLE RESPOND TO GOD DIFFERENTLY IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS (Genesis 6-9; Acts 5:1-11; Daniel 3:1-30; Daniel 1:1-23; Quran, Sunna 12:22-29)

- When people are in trouble, they may see it as God is forsaking them. They may therefore show rejection
- They may show humility and willingness, for example, the story of Abraham and his son. Ezekiel in chapter 37 of the Bible, and the Bible story of Noah and the Ark in Genesis 6-9
- They may be unwilling to do what God has asked them to do, for example, Sapphira and Ananias in Acts 5:1-11
- They may show a strong belief in God as in the story of Joseph and Pharaoh's wife; the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Bible, Daniel 3:1-30) and also Daniel in the lion's den (Daniel 1:1-23 and Quran, Sunna 12:22-29)
- They may hope that they will benefit something, for example, in the stories of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10, and Naaman in 2 Kings 5:14-15

UNIT 6 GENDER AND RELIGIONS

WHAT DIFFERENT RELIGIONS TEACH ABOUT GENDER (Ephesians 5:24-25; Colossians 3:18-19).

Different religions expect their believers to perfom various traditional roles according to their sex although some of the practices are changing.

One of these roles is leadership in the family.

In Christianity, husbands must love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. Christianity also states that wives must submit completely to their husbands as the church submits itself to Christ. Ephesians 5:24-25; Colossians 3:18-19).

An example is given of Sarah who obeyed her husband and called him her master (1 Peter 3:6)

In Islam, men are urged to treat women with equity or kindness (Quran 9:71).

However in inheritance, a son receives more than a daughter because of his responsibilities (Quran 4:11-14).

In addition, women must seek the permission of their husbands if they want to voluntarily fast, except during the month of Ramadan when all Moslems are expected to fast.

In African traditional religions, male gods or deities are seen to be more powerful than goddesses.

Ancient Egyptians gave goddess Isis Nut motherhood roles.

In Malawi, more male ancestors than female ones are recognised.

Mbona in Nsanje, Bimbi in Mangochi, Chikang'ombe in the northern region are male ancestors, while Makewana in Lilongwe is the only recognized female ancestor.

In addition, men lead in ceremonies such perfoming magic and offering sacrifices to gods.

The male deminance is also evident in other religions.

For instance, Jesus founded Christianity. Most bishops and priests in Christianity are male.

In Islam, both learned Muslim men and women can work as *mualims*.

However in swalat, a learned Muslim woman does not lead a congregation composed of Muslim men and women.

She can only lead her counterparts.

GENDER ROLES IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS (1 Peter 3:7; Quran 9:71)

Most religions expect men to provide the needs of the home.

Islam urges men to maintain their wives by providing them with lodging, clothing and food.

Women are mostly confined to housekeeping, motherhood and childcare.

The Quran appeals women to be modest.

The women have no financial responsibilities in Islamic families.

In the bible, it is stated that women are weaker than men (1 Peter 3:7).

Joseph, the carpenter, provided the needs of Mary and Jesus.

CHANGES IN GENDER ROLES IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

Despite these traditional roles, most religions are changing their perceptions and practices on gender roles.

Education and democratization are partly facilitating the changes.

Among Christians, there is a trend which advocates for women to play more significant roles in churches.

Hence, there is a trend towards the ordination of females in some churches.

Women are becoming priests and preachers.

UNIT 7 WAYS OF HONOURING GOD IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

HONOURING GOD IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS (Matthew 6:9-13; Quran 2:270-271; Malachi 1:6-8)

Every day there are new situations in which God revealed and respected in different religions.

When people say the Christian Lord's Prayer; “Our father… Hallowed be thy name…" (Matthew 6:9-13), they are honouring God.

Other ways of honouring God are:

- praising God through songs and prayers
- wearing appropriate clothes
- Constructing different structures for prayers such as mosques, churches and shrines
- Decent language used during prayers
- Caring for people who are sick and bereaved
- Assisting those in need (Quran 2:270-271)
- Taking off shoes when entering mosques
- Thanksgiving and offerings (Malachi 1:6-8)
- Caring for the environment
- Caring for religious artefacts, clothes and materials

RELEVANCE OF THE WAYS OF RESPECTING GOD IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS (Genesis 8:20; Judges 6:24)

In the old days, people also showed honour to God. For example, in the book of Genesis, Noah built an altar for God because he was favoured (Genesis 8:20). Also Gideon built an altar where he met God's messenger (Judges 6:24)

UNIT 8 THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AND ARTEFACTS

HOW RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AND ARTEFACTS ARE USED IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS (Exodus 3: Matthew 3:16-17)

From pre-history to date, people all over the world have used words, body movements and natural and artificial things to represent different abstract ideas.

For example, red lights at crossroads stand for a traffic order to stop.

In Exodus 3, the burning bush at Mount Horeb represented God, while the dove that descended on Jesus in Matthew 3:16-17 symbolized the Holy Spirit.

In ATRs, fires are symbols of puberty or death.

In Islam, ablution symbolizes preparation for prayers (Quran 5:6).

Water, the sun, the rainbow and other creatures can be used as symbols in different religions.

Symbols are used in different ways. For instance, they can influence the shape of religious structures, the way people pray, for example, the words used in prayers, objects used and actions and positions.

They can also affect the way people think about God and how God is described to others, the way people put across their ideas in music, songs, dances and stories; and the rituals or actions that are performed.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AND ARTEFACTS

Religious symbols and artefacts are important in different ways:

- They communicate messages or ideas to people about God and what is going on in the environment.
- They express difficult or abstract concepts and make the understanding of such concepts easier.
- They express something about God

GLOSSARY

Ablution – washing parts of the body in preparation for prayers

Amen – an expression used during Christian prayers meanings 'let it be so' to express acceptance of what has just been said

Amin – an expression used during Muslim supplications meaning agreed upon

Artefact – an object of special importance, for example, a cross or a crescent

Baptism – a ceremony in which water is poured on a person's head or is submerged in water briefly to show membership to Christianity

Cloak – a loose outer piece of clothing without sleeves which fastens at the neck and is worn in place of a coat

Communication – method of sending and receiving information

Hell – a place of punishment for the wicked after their death

Honour – to treat someone with special respect

Miracle – an act or event that does not follow the laws of nature and is believed to be caused by God's power

Mualim – a teacher

Paradise – a place preserved in heaven as a reward for the righteous after death

Respect – to admire someone because of their knowledge, skills and so forth

Sin – any evil deed

Swalat – a Moslem prayer

Symbol – a word or body movement which represents what people believe about the nature and qualities of God or His messengers

Symbolic action – an action performed to mean something

Turban – a head covering for a man worn especially by Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus

REFERENCES

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TYPESETTING AND COMPILATION BY ZIKOMO MASESE BANDA