

SOURCING FREEDOM:
TEACHING ABOUT THE HISTORY OF
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Charlie Hersh
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Examining Committee Members:

Hilary Iris Lowe, Advisory Chair, History Department
Seth Bruggeman, History Department
Timothy Patterson, College of Education

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores best practices in teaching religious history in public schools using primary sources. Lesson plans on specific sites and themes within the history of religious freedom in Philadelphia contextualize and celebrate the religious diversity that the city has known since its inception. By understanding how this diversity developed over time and through obstacles, students will be more willing and motivated to do their individual part to maintain and protect religious liberty. This goal is emphasized through the use of primary sources, which bring gravity, accessibility, and engagement to a topic that might otherwise be considered controversial, distant, or unnecessary.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1681, William Penn began a “Holy Experiment.” Previously in England, he had been imprisoned multiple times for professing his Quaker beliefs. Now, in possession of land that would later become Pennsylvania, Penn strove to provide the kind of religious freedom that was denied to him in England. His Frame of Government balanced an absolute freedom of worship with the rights he already had enjoyed in England. While Pennsylvania’s “Holy Experiment” did not necessarily achieve the success Penn expected, it set a precedent for how different religious groups could coexist peacefully.

Today, a recent poll by the Association of Religious Data Archives accounted for 236 distinct religious groups in Philadelphia.¹ The religious liberty that makes this possible has been influenced by a variety of legal and societal actors, including William Penn's founding vision, the First Amendment, and specific congregations and individuals. This thesis comprises a set of lesson plans to examine these factors and answer the question: "How has religious liberty been achieved in the past, and how can we protect it for the future?"

By creating a set of lesson plans on the history of religious liberty in Philadelphia, I seek to celebrate Philadelphia’s diversity by putting it into a historical context. Students will come to understand that a society is not necessarily tolerant by default; each freedom has been fought for and won by individuals and groups in the past. I expect that learning

¹ Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies. “Religious Traditions, 2010 - Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania.” *2010 U.S. Religion Census: Religious Congregations & Membership Study*. http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/r/c/42/rcms2010_42101_county_name_2010.asp

about this topic will also inspire students to do their part to continue to build and maintain a religiously tolerant society in Philadelphia, such as by learning about unfamiliar religions and helping to educate others.

Additionally, these lesson plans will benefit the larger public history community by further exploring how to teach about potentially controversial and political topics. For the past few years, public historians and institutions have grappled with the debate on whether the interpretation of history should be politically neutral or not. Especially in a national political context in which expressing religious acceptance is a political stance, my thesis will explore how to navigate these topics in a balanced way.

I frequently face these complex factors in my work at the National Museum of American Jewish History (“NMAJH”). As the Education Coordinator, I help to welcome over 10,000 students to NMAJH each school year. These students range from preschool to 12th grade and most them are not Jewish — in fact, we encounter many students who have never met a Jewish person or learned about Judaism. In these cases, a tour at NMAJH becomes a way to learn about American history from a minority perspective and an opportunity to create cross-cultural bridges between students’ lives and the lives of American Jews throughout history. Conversations with students on tours frequently become politically charged, especially when discussing topics relevant to current events, such as immigration at the turn of the twentieth century or how to reconcile one’s religious and national identity.

My thesis continues these themes by presenting lessons on specific historical examples of when religious liberty was either called into question or defined that also ask students to consider how they personally relate to the concept of religious liberty,

regardless of their background. Additionally, these lessons focus on using primary sources to explore the topic at hand. Not only does this build students' historical skills, but it also helps to emphasize the gravitas of religious liberty: when students encounter artifacts from those who have struggled with religious liberty in some way, it helps them to understand that this is not a philosophical or rhetorical debate but a real issue many Americans, both religious and secular, face.

To complete this thesis, I initially met with the social studies curriculum specialists for the School District of Philadelphia, Shaquita Smith and Yaasiyn Muhammad. They helped me see how religion fit into the social studies curriculum at Philadelphia public schools and how my lessons could help to fill those gaps. To develop my list of lesson topics, I looked towards Temple University's course, titled "Religion in Philadelphia," which teaches the religious history of Philadelphia. I also spoke with several of the course's creators and instructors, including Elizabeth Alvarez and David Watt. This was followed by meetings with staff at several historical institutions, including the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Presbyterian Historical Society, and NMAJH. They assisted me with research and with developing my interpretive approach.

Initially, I planned to match each lesson up with a relevant local historical institution. The lesson would primarily use artifacts from that institution's collections, and classes could choose to follow the lesson with a pre-established tour or classroom lesson provided by that institution. Additionally, once I make the lessons available for teachers, I planned to have the institution offer the lesson on their website as well as the landing page I create. However, this ended up being difficult to arrange: primarily, to provide a full picture of the topics being discussed, I could not limit myself to a particular

institution's collections. I was unsure of the ethics of using one institution's documents to promote and support a different institution, without an agreement between the two institutions. I plan to investigate this in the future, and for now, offer the lessons as stand-alone resources.

As a whole, the thesis offers lesson plans in addition to several sections that provide a larger context for understanding issues of teaching about religion and objects. Section 1 explores how religion and religious history have been taught in schools, if at all. Philadelphia public schools use a curriculum that builds off of Common Core, developed in 2010. In this curriculum, world religions are taught as part of a geography course across 6th and 7th grade, but religion is only offered as an optional module for high school social studies classes. Additionally, this section explains why teachers can be reluctant to teach about religion or religious history in the classroom.

Section 2 focuses on object-based learning, one of the primary pedagogies used in the lessons. It outlines the different way that historical institutions use artifacts to teach students and also reveals several obstacles in doing so. This section explores the differences in teaching with artifacts versus replicas and facsimiles, and in teaching with religious versus irreligious or secular objects.

Section 3 contains two fully-developed lessons that can be downloaded and taught by teachers. The first lesson looks at how religious liberty has been defined historically in Pennsylvania, from the 1682 Pennsylvania Charter to the 2002 Religious Freedom Protection Act. Students compare these definitions by using them to rule on several Supreme Court cases concerning religious liberty. The second lesson focuses on the life of Rebecca Gratz (1781 - 1869), a Jewish philanthropist who founded the first Hebrew

Sunday School as a way to claim space for religious minorities and promote Jewish identity among youth in a culture of Evangelical proselytization. Each lesson also contains several worksheets and religion fact sheets, which can be found in the appendices.

Section 4 lists six proposed lessons, which can be fully developed at a later date. These lessons would teach about other events and people relevant to the history of religious liberty, such as the Bible Riots of 1844 and John Gloucester, founder of the First African Presbyterian Church. In addition to providing a brief historical overview, each lesson description offers a project for students to complete with the lesson, such as collecting oral histories or redesigning Philadelphia's grid system.

My conclusion outlines my future plans, including developing the proposed lessons and making them available for teachers. Through these lessons, I hope to both help students appreciate the history and role of religious liberty in their lives and communities, and help teachers gain confidence in discussing topics relating to religion in the classroom.

CHAPTER 2

RELIGION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Nothing in the United States is truly secular. With the influences of the Protestant Reformation and colonialist interactions with non-European cultures, religion – and lack thereof – came to be defined in relation to Protestant Christianity.¹ This sometimes unconscious practice continues in the United States, where Americans have continued to debate the country’s relationship with religion. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Americans have, for just as long, debated about religion’s role in public schools.

Early schools in the United States were private schools that catered to and were supported by specific local communities. Many of these schools catered specifically to the local community’s religious interests. For example, in Massachusetts, the Old Deluder Satan Act of 1647 required communities larger than 50 people to install schools with the expectation that they would teach and defend the principles of Protestantism in the face of increased immigration and potential negative influences. While most parents insisted on retaining the right to educate their children and thus distrusted these schools, many historians point towards the community-run and -funded aspects of these schools as early examples of public schools.²

By the nineteenth century, public schools were used to create a “common republican culture.”³ However, these public schools included daily devotional readings

¹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, New York: Scribner, 1958, as referenced in Janet R. Jakobsen, Ann. Pellegrini, and Taha. Parla. *Secularisms*, (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2008): 2.

² Patrick Michael O’Donnell, “Old Deluder Satan Act” in *Encyclopedia of Educational Reform and Dissent*, edited by Thomas C. Hunt, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2010), 675-676.

³ Kent Greenawalt, *Does God Belong in Public Schools?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 13-

from the Bible, privileging Protestant students during a time of anti-Catholic nativism.⁴ This practice declined towards the end of the nineteenth century, when Renaissance ideas about classical education began to replace religion-based “character” education. Religion became a private matter, and schools began to focus on defined content areas such as science and literature. Later in the twentieth century, after the decline of Bible usage in public schools, this secularization became codified through a series of Supreme Court decisions that banned school prayer, the promotion by teachers or school officials of one religion over another, and other rulings that helped define the secular role of religion in schools.

However, as religion has moved back into the public sphere in the past few decades, the gaps left in these Supreme Court rulings have become a matter of debate. Each state can determine what specifically its public schools teach. Thus, each state can decide, for example, whether to teach abstinence or safe sex. Naturally, these state-based curricula have led to disparities in how subjects are taught in public schools. State-specific curricula often cater to religious-based preferences and beliefs. As one high-profile example, some Christian-dominated states like Alabama have tried to place stickers into science textbooks that situate evolution as a “controversial theory” and doubt its scientific viability.⁵ These disparities often intersected with other inequalities in the public school system, such as economic stratification in schools funded by property taxes and schools impacted by segregation laws and their legacies.

Towards the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first,

14.

⁴ This tension, which peaked in Philadelphia during the Bible Riots of 1844, will be explored further in Section 4: Proposed Lessons.

⁵ Jason Borenstein, “Textbook Stickers: A Reasonable Response to Evolution?” *Science & Education* 17, no. 8/9 (November 2008): 999-1002.

multiple reports about the intellectual levels and achievements of high school graduates began to spur educational reform, primarily through the institution of standards-based curricula.⁶ Attempts at reform such as the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 sought to impose standardized testing onto public schools in exchange for federal funding. Disagreement about a one-size-fits-all approach and public fears about the federal government getting involved in education effectively shut down the No Child Left Behind Act.⁷ In the midst of this controversy and arising out of a conference in 2009 to address these issues in disparate quality of education, the Common Core State Standards Initiative (“Common Core”) aimed to create benchmarks for skills-achievement in literature and math. Instead of having the goal of reforming the entire educational system within the United States, teachers using Common Core prepare students with basic skills needed for college and to help them compete with students in other countries.⁸ To mitigate criticisms of the No Child Left Behind Act, Common Core instructs states to adopt the standards in whole, then make any adjustments that would help to serve the specific needs of the students in each respective state.

Forty-six states initially adopted Common Core, and several of them rolled out the new standards over the following few years. Additionally, several states renamed the standards to something state-specific, potentially to prevent some of the negative

⁶ For example, the 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, illuminated American adults’ falling literacy rates and lower levels of testing in comparison with other countries, and the 2004 report, *Ready or Not*, compared college and career expectations of high school graduates to students’ actual levels. National Commission on Excellence in Education. *A Nation At Risk: the Imperative for Educational Reform: a Report to the Nation And the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education*. Washington, D.C.: National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; American Diploma Project, *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts*, 2004.

⁷ Julie Hirschfeld Davis, “President Obama Signs Into Law a Rewrite of No Child Left Behind,” *The New York Times*, 10 December, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/11/us/politics/president-obama-signs-into-law-a-rewrite-of-no-child-left-behind.html>

⁸ Robert Rothman, *Something in Common: The Common Core Standards and the Next Chapter in American Education* (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2011), 10-11.

feedback that Common Core has garnered since its development. That said, a few states, including Pennsylvania, rescinded their acceptance and halted the use of Common Core standards. In 2013, Governor Tom Corbett ordered a delay of Common Core implementation, requesting modifications of the standards as well as state-specific standardized tests that are required of high school graduates.⁹ The Pennsylvania Department of Education fulfilled this request by adding standards for subject areas beyond math and literature as well as other state-specific needs.¹⁰

In one example of how Pennsylvania's standards expands upon Common Core, the state adopted the College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies State Standards (C3), developed by the National Council for the Social Studies.¹¹ Building upon the structure of Common Core, C3 lays a foundation for grade-based goals for skills-achievement in areas such as civics, economics, history, and geography.¹² Because C3 emphasizes skill over content, it does not advise teachers to include specific topics in their curricula; in Philadelphia, the school district instead employs Curriculum Specialists in a variety of subject areas to assist teachers in creating lesson plans, using external materials, and meeting C3 and Common Core criteria.

Because C3 focuses on skills over content, it gives no position on the inclusion of

⁹ Jan Murphy, "Corbett orders delay in Common Core academic standards' implementation," *Penn Live*, 20 May, 2013. www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2013/05/corbett_orders_delay_in_common.html

¹⁰ Lindsey Murray, "Pennsylvania Common Core Brings Controversy Among District Community," *Philadelphia Neighborhoods*, 6 January 2015. <https://philadelphianeighborhoods.com/2015/01/06/education-pennsylvania-common-core-brings-controversy-among-district-community/>

¹¹ Founded in 1921, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) is a professional organization that supports teachers and advocates for social studies education. NCSS accomplishes this through annual conferences, an academic journal, online resources like lesson plans, and their curriculum supplements like the C3 Framework. "About Us," *National Council for the Social Studies*, <https://www.socialstudies.org/about>

¹² National Council for the Social Studies, *Social Studies for the next Generation : Purposes, Practices, and Implications of the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) : Framework for Social Studies State Standards* (Silver Spring, Maryland: National Council for the Social Studies, 2013), 12.

religion in social studies classrooms. Depending on the abilities and interests of specific teachers, religion might be discussed in the context of other social studies topics. For example, a World Cultures and Geography class, which is taught during sixth and seventh grades, might discuss the particularities of Judaism while discussing Jewish immigration to the United States at the turn of the twentieth century.¹³ If teachers want a more explicit discussion of religion, C3 offers an optional framework for teaching about sociology in the classroom, which includes religion alongside race, gender, family structures, and other elements for understanding a given society. In this framework, students would learn to analyze religious factors and aspects of inequality instead of, for example, the beliefs and rituals of world religions.¹⁴

The issue of skills versus content aside, it is not uncommon for social studies curricula to leave religion out of the picture. Educators may think that religion is too controversial to discuss in the classroom, or that they are not adequately trained to discuss it fairly. They may worry about what to do when personal beliefs enter the conversation, whether through students sharing their own religious experiences or through questions about a teacher's personal faith. Additionally, many educators think the Establishment Clause in the First Amendment, which outlines the relationship that the government can have with religion, states that public schools cannot discuss religion at all.¹⁵ In fact, the Establishment Clause states that the government can promote neither an official religion nor a lack of religion, which many interpret to mean that by ignoring

¹³ "6th Grade World Cultures and Geography - Western Hemisphere," Curricular Unit Description, provided by School District of Philadelphia Social Studies Curriculum Specialists.

¹⁴ National Council for the Social Studies, *Social Studies for the Next Generation*, 73-76.

¹⁵ Warren Nord and Charles Haynes, *Taking Religion Seriously Across the Curriculum* (Alexandria: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 1998), 5-6.

religion, public schools end up promoting nonreligion.¹⁶ During the 1963 Supreme Court case that barred state-sponsored religious exercises in schools, Justice Tom Clark emphasized that teachers should include academic studies of religion in order to form well-rounded curricula.¹⁷

Warren Nord, a historian who studies religion and public schools, and Charles Haynes, historian and founding director of the Religious Freedom Center, present several solutions for how to better teach about religion in public schools, and they focus primarily on preparing teachers and students to have discussions about religion. According to Nord and Haynes, religion should be taught with the purpose of building common ground and respect between students, and lessons involving religion should strike a constitutional neutrality between religious and nonreligious stances. To achieve this, schools should strive to infuse religious liberty into all aspects of the school, including student life. This includes fostering attitudes of respect and fairness both between teachers and students of different religions, but also between religious and nonreligious teachers and students. This directive was codified in 1995, in a set of guidelines called “Religious Liberty, Public Education, and the Future of American Democracy: A Statement of Principles,” written by several religious, legal, and educational organizations. Drafted in the midst of intense culture wars that sought to define the relationship between religion and government, organizations such as the American Center for Law and Justice, National Education Association, and Council on Islamic Education came to a consensus on concepts such as the universality of religious freedom, the responsibility of parents in guiding their children regarding religion, and the

¹⁶ Ronald D. Anderson, *Religion and Teaching*, Reflective Teaching and the Social Conditions of Schooling, (New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2008), 3.

¹⁷ Nord and Haynes, *Taking Religion Seriously Across the Curriculum*, 25.

importance of civil debate.¹⁸ By following these guidelines, creating a civil atmosphere in school, and incorporating religion and anti-bias education into teacher training, Nord and Haynes argue that public schools will cultivate an atmosphere that will better equip students to discuss religion in a civil, respectful, and enriching manner.

Emphasizing that there is no right or wrong way to teach about religion in the public school classroom, professor of education Ronald D. Anderson invites teachers to reflect on their own attitudes towards religion and education, acknowledging that opinions regarding religion are as diverse as religious beliefs themselves. He presents three main approaches to incorporating religion into public school curricula: an irreligious approach where religion is ignored, a religious approach where religious values are promoted as a significant part of history and current society, and a personal pluralistic approach which finds a compromise between the two. While he leaves room for teachers to come to their own conclusions, Anderson favors the personal pluralistic approach, encouraging teachers to help students construct their own understanding based off of their respective worldviews and religious beliefs.¹⁹ He draws a parallel between the approaches that ignore or promote religion and the current divide between “red” and “blue” states, which he acknowledges as an exacerbating force in the debate about religion in public schools. In that vein, Anderson holds his personal pluralistic approach as a way to bridge the gap between these two stances. He also emphasizes that, when education about religion becomes personal, it also becomes more meaningful.²⁰

¹⁸ "Religious Liberty, Public Education, and the Future of American Democracy: A Statement of Principles," *The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University*, March 1995, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED387420.pdf>; Nord and Haynes, *Taking Religion Seriously Across the Curriculum*, 202; 15-17.

¹⁹ Anderson, *Religion and Teaching*, 92.

²⁰ Anderson, *Religion and Teaching*, 103-108.

Linda K. Wertheimer, a journalist specializing in school-related issues, takes a different approach to preparing teachers to include religion in their curricula. Meditating on a variety of controversies regarding religion in the classroom, such as a 2013 incident where a Texan classroom doing a dress-up activity with burqas had parents accusing the teacher of Islamic indoctrination, she outlines several precautions for teachers to prevent any potential misunderstandings by parents or the public. These precautions include staying away from activities that could look like students participating in religious activities, such as visits to a place of worship. She also stresses the importance of communication with parents and guardians, primarily as a way to set expectations and to warn parents.²¹ She models her advice after a World Religions course that has been successfully taught in Modesto, California since 2000, and that relies on extensive training for teachers, a tight rein on what can be taught, specific efforts to include students' own religious experiences, and an avoidance of potential controversies.²²

Emile Lester, a political philosopher specializing in religion, also focuses on the World Religions course in Modesto in his exploration of religion in public schools, but he comes to a different conclusion. Like Anderson, Lester concerns himself with the religio-political divide in the United States which in Modesto manifests as tensions between evangelical Christian and Sikh residents. While Anderson focuses on the individual learning process to bridge the gap in this divide, Lester focuses on demographic groups' attitudes, recommending that curricula involving world religions balance their exploration of minority religions with a particular emphasis on exploring evangelical

²¹ Linda K. Wertheimer, *Faith Ed: Teaching About Religion in an Age of Intolerance*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), 185-199.

²² Wertheimer, *Faith Ed*, 159-184.

Christianity.²³ Acknowledging that most controversies regarding religion being taught in public schools stems from evangelical Christians fearing an assault on their beliefs, Lester argues that truly inclusive education about religion should work to alleviate those fears.²⁴ That said, Lester also writes about the importance of what he calls a “good faith” attitude, to ensure that religion classes are effective in their attempts at inclusivity. He defines good faith as taking at face value attempts by religious believers at balancing their sectarian beliefs with secular and other religious claims. Lester states that when all parties – teachers, students, parents, and third-party organizations – engage with each other in good faith, a compromise between everyone’s needs is best met.²⁵ It should be noted that a significant amount of scholarship regarding religion and education focus on schools in California and Texas, states that often represent a pluralistic and Christian-focused approach to religion respectively. Most states fall somewhere in between these two approaches. In fact, Pennsylvania serves as an appropriate setting for this thesis due to both its religious diversity and range of attitudes towards religion.

Our societal relationships with religion and public schools have had many shifts that have been hard to define or codify. These relationships have also been impacted by disparities between schools in different states. While educational organizations have attempted to rectify these disparities with national curriculum standards such as Common Core, these standards have done little to address the place of religion within curricula. Thus, it is up to teachers to address religion in their classes, and by doing so help their students to develop a well-rounded education. While there are many ways that teachers

²³ Emile Lester, *Teaching about Religions: A Democratic Approach for Public Schools*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 3-6.

²⁴ Lester, *Teaching About Religions*, 10-11.

²⁵ Lester, *Teaching About Religions*, 90.

can accomplish this, such as by cultivating a civil atmosphere in school or avoiding all potential controversies, teachers must overcome their common fears about addressing religion in the classroom. Not only will doing so help students to better understand historical and cultural topics that involve religion, but they will develop a respect and knowledge for cultures and backgrounds other than their own.

CHAPTER 3

TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES

In their book *The Presence of the Past*, Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen analyze interviews with over 1,500 Americans from a diverse range of locations, ages, genders, religions, and ethnicities, to understand how they related to the past. Respondents spoke about a range of activities, including going to museums, watching documentaries, participating in national traditions, researching their genealogies, and speaking with elders. Most respondents, however, spoke poorly of history classes. They accused their lessons of being constructed by unattached third parties, their teachers of only teaching from the textbook and their curricula of being completely unrelatable. The most common adjective they used was “boring.”¹

How can this be remedied? Since the culture wars of the 1990s, history teachers and curriculum developers have attempted to rectify these faults. Alongside the educational reforms discussed in the previous section, this has included revisions in standard textbooks, a greater inclusion of underrepresented histories within curricula, and incorporation of primary source materials into lessons to create more engaging, inquiry-based learning.

In fact, this interest in primary sources as a part of history curricula dates back to the late nineteenth century, where some educators believed that the analysis of primary sources, often including religious texts, engaged higher-level skills than reading.

¹ Roy Rosenzweig and David P. Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 111.

However, this interest rarely translated into lessons that were actually taught.² More recently, such as with the Document-Based Question (DBQ) activity introduced in A.P. United States History courses in 1973, primary sources are being used in more and more history classrooms — with the help of historical institutions such as archives and museums.³

The increasing integration of primary source learning into history curricula is a winning situation for all involved. Students see improvement in skills relating to historical thinking, reading comprehension, and factual knowledge.⁴ Teachers bring a degree of gravity and excitement to history education by exploring the past through objects and documents that have a direct and material connection with the time in question. Furthermore, archives and museums benefit through increased usage and an opportunity to fulfill their missions.

Partnerships between historical institutions and K-12 teachers often take the form of educational outreach programming and lessons that take place within the classroom. Such programs not only allow archives and museums to increase their audience and provide a wider access, but they provide a way to connect with schools who may not be able to take field trips to their institution. There are three main forms of this programming, all of which have students interact with and learn about primary sources in different ways.

First, teachers can invite archivists and museum educators directly into the

² Abby Reisman, "Reading Like a Historian: A Document-Based History Curriculum Intervention in Urban High Schools," *Cognition and Instruction* 30, no. 1 (2012): 86.

³ Jon Rehm, "An Examination of the AP United States History Exam Free Response Section," in *Proceedings of the 12th Annual South Florida Education Research Conference*, edited by M. S. Plakhotnik and S. M. Nielsen (Miami, FL: Florida International University, 2013), 173-80.

⁴ Reisman, "Reading like a Historian," *Cognition and Instruction*, 102.

classroom. Here, the museum or archival educator might bring a small number of primary sources, either the originals or facsimiles, for students to engage with and analyze in a structured setting. These programs may come in the form of a single lesson, a weeks-long project, or an entire class based around primary sources. For example, through the National Archives branch in Philadelphia, an archivist can visit classrooms to speak about the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which includes studying documents related to an incident in a Germantown school in 1921.⁵

Second, teachers can obtain physical primary sources and lesson plans from archives or museums to teach directly to their own students. Teachers receive training or other support from archivists or museum educators, and teachers then adapt the lesson plans to more directly relate to their students or their curricula. In these programs, archives or museums often ship replicas of artifacts to the classroom. For example, the African-American Museum in Philadelphia can mail the Traveling Trunk, which acts as an extension of their core exhibition, “Audacious Freedom: African Americans in Philadelphia 1776-1876.” After receiving the trunk and going through a training preview session, teachers can use the replicas, including a painting and a blanket made with coded designs, however they see fit.⁶

The third main form of off-site programming is a variant on the second, which has teachers using digitized materials from archives or museums to teach their students. In this form of programming, instead of receiving physical materials from an institution, teachers can download lesson plans and other resources online. This form of

⁵ “Philadelphia Student Visits,” *National Archives* <https://www.archives.gov/education/student-visits/philadelphia.html>

⁶ “Trailblazers to Freedom Traveling Trunks - Frequently Asked Questions,” *African American Museum in Philadelphia*, http://www.aampmuseum.org/uploads/2/2/2/0/22207152/traveling_trunk_faq_-_final.pdf

programming increases accessibility at the cost of authenticity. While the second type of off-site programming similarly uses facsimiles, the use of physical objects nonetheless creates an illusion of gravitas and historical connectedness that is lost when looking at a digitized image. However, this arrangement makes lessons accessible regardless of geographic location and avoids the stress of needing to receive physical materials through the mail. This thesis project develops lesson plans that fit into this category.

A primary goal of these programs is to teach primary source analysis to students and familiarize them with the collections of specific historical institutions. These skills and institutional familiarity help to prepare students for college and improve critical thinking skills, but also might fulfill the stipulations of grants or other types of funding obtained by archives and museums, which typically require the institution to reach a certain number of students.⁷ Additionally, these skills improve informational literacy, critical thinking skills, and students' relationship with and enjoyment of history.

The goal of teaching students how to use primary sources as historical evidence also represents a major skill included in the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework developed by the National Council for the Social Studies. As outlined in the C3 Framework, at young ages, students learn basic skills like how to identify different types of primary sources and the different ways one can use them. Students build upon these skills so that by high school, they can compare secondary sources with the primary sources they cite and analyze primary sources for biases and other limitations.⁸ Not only

⁷ Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland, Yasmin B. Kafai, and William E. Landis, "Integrating Primary Sources into the Elementary School Classroom: A Case Study of Teachers' Perspectives," *Archivaria* 48 (Fall 1999): 93.

⁸ National Council for the Social Studies, *Social Studies for the next Generation : Purposes, Practices, and Implications of the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) : Framework for Social Studies State Standards* (Silver Spring, Maryland: National Council for the Social Studies, 2013), 48.

do educational programs with museums and archives help students to achieve these goals, but teachers are more able and willing to use external programs that apply directly to building grade-appropriate standards.

Additionally, educational outreach programs, whether located in the classroom or in a historical institution, help to create a meaningful learning experience. Within the vein of John Dewey's educational theory, such "experiences" help give students building blocks on which to build knowledge and personal connections. While not every encounter with a primary source guarantees to be an experience, it can still be an effort to reduce the boredom and disconnectedness reported in Rosenzweig and Thelen's study.⁹ By associating primary source study with an interesting and engaging learning experience, students learn that historical institutions can be fun and are more likely to visit them outside of school.

While the vast majority of teachers and archivists agree on the importance of including primary sources and archival literacy in the K-12 classroom, several different pedagogies exist for how to structure the actual education of archival literacy and primary source familiarity. These pedagogies include different preferences regarding facilitation and may expect students to have differing levels of skills before the program even begins.

To introduce students to archival skills involved in understanding primary sources, and prepare teachers to teach them, Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland, Yasmin B. Kafai, and William E. Landis propose a model that prepares fourth and fifth graders to take on the historian's role in handling primary sources. In the first phase of this model, archivists and teachers pre-select primary sources. In their example, they use selections

⁹ Gilliland-Swetland et al, "Integrating Primary Sources," 92.

from the papers of Donald Ryder Dickey, a naturalist from the earlier twentieth century, that will particularly appeal to younger students, such as photographs and field notes. Their students then replicated these sources themselves by documenting field trips to local wetlands. In the second phase, students preserve and create metadata for the notes and photographs they reproduce, while simultaneously analyzing and creating metadata for the pre-selected documents.¹⁰ Students responded positively to the activity, and their comments indicated that students easily understood how scientific materials and methodology had changed since the early twentieth century.¹¹ Not only do these teacher-archivist partnerships enhance lessons, but they strengthen relationships that lead to additional projects using historical institutions, such as research papers that require primary sources.¹²

Abby Reisman focuses on how teachers can incorporate primary sources into the curriculum independently, as opposed to partnering with a museum or archives, although she encourages partnering with such institutions to find appropriate primary sources. With her case study curriculum, “Reading Like a Historian,” Reisman strives to interrogate and reconcile primary sources, similar to how a historian would approach them, instead of simply accepting and memorizing them. For Reisman, primary sources are not artifacts but pieces of evidence, and her curriculum helps students to use these pieces of evidence to answer pertinent questions about the past. Students first review any needed background information regarding the content area. The teacher then presents students with a research question, which students must solve by reading several primary

¹⁰ Gilliland-Swetland et al, “Integrating Primary Sources,” 96-101.

¹¹ Gilliland-Swetland et al, “Integrating Primary Sources,” 112.

¹² Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe and Christopher J. Prom, *Teaching with Primary Sources*, Trends in Archives Practice (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2016), 78.

sources from different and possibly contrasting sources and perspectives. The lesson ends with a class discussion on how students would answer the question. “Reading Like a Historian” tries to account for teachers’ possible unfamiliarity with primary sources by building structured pedagogies into the lesson.¹³

Text-based documents are typically easier to incorporate into a lesson plan or curriculum, given their resemblance to traditional teaching tools and longer history as being used in classrooms. Objects require a different set of pedagogies to account for students’ lack of familiarity in learning from objects.

That said, objects act as valuable teaching tools because of those differences from documents, not in spite of them. Objects easily capture students’ attention. Objects are not age-specific, and anyone can relate to them, regardless of background and literacy skills. Additionally, objects tell the stories of ordinary people and easily open the door to studying the histories of those often left out of history textbooks.¹⁴ As one example of how objects can make up for the faults of documents, Gilliland-Swetland, Kafai, and Landis found that their students had difficulty reading Dickey’s handwriting, which presented a major obstacle in understanding his writing.¹⁵ Studying objects, which frequently have no writing involved, removes barriers such as cursive.

One of the primary methods for studying objects is called “See / Think / Wonder,” developed in 2015 by Project Zero at Harvard University. This pedagogy has many similarities with the work of art historian Jules Prown, considered by many to have

¹³ Reisman, “Reading Like a Historian,” *Cognition and Instruction* 86-112.

¹⁴ John Hennigar Shuh, “Teaching yourself to teach with objects,” *Journal of Education* 7.4 (1982): 80-91.

¹⁵ Gilliland-Swetland et al, “Integrating Primary Sources,” 112.

standardized a primary form of material culture methodology in 1982.¹⁶ “See / Think / Wonder” breaks the study of objects down into three simplified steps, which teachers can expand upon however they choose. First, students *see* the object, naming as many evident observations as they can. Second, students *think* about those observations, coming up with theories and personal connections to the object. Finally, students *wonder* about the object in the form of follow-up research questions.¹⁷ For example, students might see a miniature Torah scroll from the mid-eighteenth century. They might conclude that it is small, so it can be easily transported. They might then wonder why the Torah scroll’s owner would want to carry it from place to place, and what other religious objects the owner would also want to transport as well.

Barbara Stripling takes a more complex approach, using Dewey’s theory of constructivism — that students must use their own ideas and base experiences to construct an understanding of a topic — as a guiding force. Thus, the Stripling Model of Inquiry uses a cycle of goals to help students make connections with an object and with themselves. Students *connect* the topic to themselves and to previous knowledge, and then *wonder* about theories and research questions. They use the object or resource to *investigate* the questions and *construct* new understandings and hypotheses. They *express* these new understandings by applying them to the situation and *reflect* on the learning process. Students repeat this cycle as much as needed, coming to new conclusions each time.¹⁸ Using this method, students might look at a passport from the early-twentieth century and compare it to their or their parents’ passport. By identifying similarities and

¹⁶ Jules David Prown, “Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 17 no. 1 (Spring 1982), 7-10.

¹⁷ “See / Think / Wonder,” *Project Zero*, 2015. <http://pz.harvard.edu/resources/see-think-wonder>

¹⁸ Barbara Stripling, “Inquiry: Inquiring Minds Want to Know,” *School Library Media Activities Monthly* 25, no. 1 (2008): 50-52.

differences between the two, students can develop conclusions about how travel and immigration policy has changed since then.

John Hennigar Shuh advocates for using objects as teaching tools in a variety of situations but does not present a structured pedagogy for doing so as did Project Zero and Stripling. Instead, promoting the idea that objects are fascinating and accessible, he harnesses human curiosity to analyze an object and naturally come to conclusions. In one example, Shuh writes how he brought several different turtle species to an elementary school class. He notices how one student has been playing with a turtle in the corner of the class, and he ends up discovering a trait in the turtle that Shuh and his colleagues had never noticed. If needed, Shuh describes how teachers can walk students through the study of an object through a series of questions, focusing on specific details and then broadening to larger issues. He demonstrates this with a Styrofoam cup, using its size, composition, and disposal to approach issues of capitalism, automation, and human waste.¹⁹ While turtles, unlike Styrofoam cups, are not objects but living things, Shuh demonstrates how similar methods can be used with all non-text-based learning tools.

With the many approaches to primary source education for K-12 students, debates have arisen where good teaching practice has come into conflict with archival or museum best practices. These debates essentially ask: which should be prioritized, the best possible learning experience or object and document preservation? These debates center around questions such as scans versus transcriptions and originals versus facsimiles, particularly around text-based documents.

Gilliland-Swetland, Kafai, and Landis write about the importance of students

¹⁹ Shuh, "Teaching yourself to teach with objects," 80-91.

being able to visually pair primary documents with secondary information provided by the teacher. Particularly for younger students, the visual nature of documents as they were originally written creates a larger experience distinctly different from reading a transcript in a book or print-out. For curricula, such as the lessons about Dickey, where students learn about the historical process through actually going through the process itself, handling artifacts that distinctly look old helps to create a more immersive experience, which in turn will be more memorable and thus more fun.

Meanwhile, Reisman prioritizes content over visual appearance, encouraging high school teachers to use transcriptions of documents for primary source studies, as a way to remove barriers for students struggling with reading. Reisman recommends selecting a short excerpt that can fit on a single, one-sided page in a large font, with a citation and brief context at the bottom of the page. With fewer and fewer students learning how to write in or read cursive, handwritten documents become increasingly difficult for students to read. Additionally, Reisman advises against difficult words; instead, in certain cases, difficult or outdated words should be replaced with more familiar synonyms, unless analyzing the document relies on the difficult word. Reisman observes that if students have difficulty reading or understanding a document, they will become turned off from historical research altogether.²⁰

Teachers who do not prefer transcriptions can choose between two options: focusing their lessons around facsimiles of primary sources or allowing students to interact directly with the original artifact. Of course, the physical state of the artifact should be the most important factor in this decision: if an object or document is

²⁰ Abby Reisman, “‘Reading Like a Historian’: Using Documents in History Class,” Presentation, National Educators Institute: The Art and Science of Teaching Jewish History in America from the National Museum of American Jewish History, Philadelphia, PA, July 12, 2016.

particularly fragile or rare, it is preferable to use a facsimile to reduce potential damage.

In the interests of creating an impactful learning experience, students will almost always find the ‘real’ object more meaningful than a copy. For example, staff from the Special Collections Library at The Claremont Colleges write about an eighth grade student who was “completely flabbergasted” by holding an original 1811 copy of George Washington’s Farewell Address.²¹ When trying to teach students about the materiality of the past by interacting with sources from that time period, handling the original copies of those sources makes the experience much more visceral, and even approaches the concept of an educational experience as outlined by John Dewey.

However, the logistics of this, beyond the physical condition of the respective artifact, can make this difficult. First, if the lesson is being led by a teacher, rather than an archivist or museum educator, it may be difficult to obtain the artifacts in the first place. Teachers typically find it significantly easier to obtain primary sources to use in the classroom via digital repositories, rather than picking up or receiving via mail the primary sources needed. Additionally, it could be difficult to keep track of artifacts when students are handling them, especially with large classes and with younger students.²² The facilitator might focus on teaching instead of watching out for the care of the artifact. In this case it is preferable for facsimiles to be used, to prevent potential damage to original artifacts. Especially in cases where objects are being shipped to the teacher to use, there might be legal or preservation restrictions on who the object can be shipped to. Replicas sidestep these restrictions, as well as the ramifications of any damage.

²¹ Amy Chen, Lisa L. Crane, Melanie Meyers, Charlotte Priddle, and Abby Saunders, "Developing K-12 Outreach Methods for Special Collections Centers" in Lynne M. Thomas and Beth M. Whittaker, eds, *New Directions for Special Collections: an Anthology of Practice* (Oxford: Pearson Education, 2016), 41-42.

²² Chen et al, "Developing K-12 Outreach Methods," 40.

In my lessons, I use primary sources as a way to access the past and particularly to illuminate a variety of perspectives on religious identity. While all three methods described above are used, I most often employ Shuh's method of object analysis, by focusing on small details of an artifact and then expanding to a larger issue. This allows students to identify clues that add up to a larger understanding of a particular artifact and its historical context. Additionally, my second lesson, on Rebecca Gratz, uses a variation on the Stripling Model of Inquiry. With each artifact studied, students are asked to create a series of captions from different perspectives: the author's perspective, another party's perspective, and their own perspective. This allows them to visualize different points of view, including their own, and through discussion discover the different factors that result in each point of view.

Given that these lessons use digitized resources, most artifacts used are text-based documents, including legal documents, letters, and books. Because digitizing two-dimensional text-based documents is easier and cheaper than digitizing three-dimensional objects, many collections often have increased availability of text-based documents over objects. Additionally, with the content focus of the lessons fully developed for this thesis, text-based documents typically proved more useful than objects. Several of the proposed lessons described in Section 4, when fully developed, will involve more objects and visual artifacts, including political cartoons, art, and buildings.

Notably, these lessons do not involve studying any religious objects, except for one hymn. While the removal of a religious object from its cultural context and placement within an artificially-constructed context robs it of its religious identity, the use of a religious object in the classroom may invite anger and misunderstanding from

parents.²³ Religious objects might require certain forms of respect, including who can see or touch it, where or around what it can be stored or displayed, what can be done to it, whether it needs to be actively worshipped to maintain its status, and whether it can be replicated or digitized at all. This depends on factors including the specific religion or culture and whether it is a sacred or ritual object.²⁴ It would be difficult to ensure requirements of respect are met by teachers and students without additional training for teachers.

Fortunately, these debates and opinions on each side ultimately provide many options to teachers to customize lessons based on their classes and other needs. With the increasing use of primary sources in K-12 classes comes increasing opportunities to teach about primary source literacy, analysis, and research. Not only do these skills introduce to students a familiarity with archives and museums that will become useful once they begin doing primary source research in college and beyond, but interacting with primary sources in fun and meaningful ways will imbue an interest in history into students.

²³ Crispin Paine, *Religious Objects in Museums: Private Lives and Public Duties* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 14-15, 21.

²⁴ Paine, *Religious Objects in Museums*, 58-60.

CHAPTER 4

LESSON PLANS

LESSON 1

DEFINITIONS OF FREEDOM

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Essential questions:

- What is religious freedom?
- How did the definition of religious freedom evolve over time?
- How does our understanding of religious freedom affect our interpretation of court cases?

Learning objectives:

In this lesson, students will:

- Summarize William Penn’s founding of Pennsylvania and plans for a ‘Holy Experiment’
- Compare and evaluate numerous legal definitions of religious freedom
- Apply religious freedom laws to real court cases concerning religious freedom in Pennsylvania
- Understand that religious freedom can be interpreted in many different ways and can be challenged

Big idea:

In the United States, religious freedom is typically defined by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which promises that all citizens have freedom of religion and that the government will not establish a federal religion. But how else has religious freedom been defined in the United States? This lesson gives students the opportunity to see how different groups have defined religious freedom over time. By applying these definitions to real court cases, students will see the nuances between definitions and develop an understanding of how fragile religious freedom is. The lesson concludes with a discussion of how religious freedom can be defined and defended outside of state and federal law.

Time:

1 – 2 class periods

Materials:

- Definition 1: Frame of Government, 1682
- Definition 2: Declaration of Rights, 1776
- Definition 3: Religious Freedom Protection Act (PA), 2002
- Case 1: School District of Abington Township, PA v. Schempp (1963)
- Case 2: Murdock v. Pennsylvania (1943) OR Case 3: Braunfeld v. Brown (1961)
- Religion Fact Sheet: Jehovah's Witnesses (Case 1)
- Religion Fact Sheet: Orthodox Judaism (Case 2)
- Religion Fact Sheet: Quakerism (optional)

Standards:

PA Standards

- CC.8.5.9-10.F - Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
- CC.8.5.11-12.A - Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- CC.8.5.11-12.B - Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- 5.1.12.C - Evaluate the application of the principles and ideals in contemporary civic life.
- 5.1.12.D - Evaluate state and federal powers based on significant documents and other critical sources.
- 5.3.12.F - Analyze landmark United States Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its Amendments.
- 8.2.12.A - Evaluate the role groups and individuals from Pennsylvania played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development of the US and the world.

C3 Framework

- D2.Civ.5.9-12 - Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level.
- D2.Civ.12.9-12 - Analyze how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania

Before William Penn became the founder of what would become Pennsylvania, he was a young Quaker living in England. He converted from Anglicism at the age of 22, after which he wrote and preached about his new beliefs. Because Quakerism, which promoted nonhierarchical equality among all humans, went against the Church of England, Penn suffered hardships, including being expelled from Oxford and being imprisoned.

Penn's father, Sir William Penn, was a naval admiral and later a politician in the House of Commons. After Sir Penn died in 1670, King Charles II moved to pay back debts owed to the admiral. As his father's beneficiary, William Penn accepted the repayment in the form of land, rather than money. That parcel of land in the American colonies, which now covers Pennsylvania and parts of Delaware, was named "Pennsylvania," or Penn's Woods, in honor of his father. And in reaction to his imprisonment and poor treatment in England due to his religion, he drafted his "Holy Experiment" — planning Pennsylvania as the religious haven he and other non-Anglicans needed.

At this point, Pennsylvania was not the first or only colony with a policy of religious acceptance. Rhode Island had a similar charter, written in 1663 by founder Roger Williams, that designated the colony as a haven for religious dissidents. However, Pennsylvania's policy of religious freedom was planned in advance; William Penn wrote his Frame of Government on his voyage to Pennsylvania in 1682, while Williams wrote his charter from immediate need after being expelled from Massachusetts Bay Colony for treason.¹

The Frame of Government established freedom for all those who believed in a Higher Power: a departure from the rest of the American colonies, most of which had established state religions funded by residents' taxes. By the 1770s, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia all had established Anglican churches. Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and New York had established churches that were not Anglican but still Protestant. Only Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Delaware, and New Jersey had no established church.²

Stating that "force never yet made a good Christian," Penn enforced a freedom of conscience where individuals could decide their religion for themselves. That said, he ignored non-Christians in his Frame of Government: all Christians would have complete freedom of religion, and the Pennsylvanian government would uphold a Christian morality.³ However, the separation of church and state and the lack of sanctioned proselytizing still led to the colony being a religiously diverse haven. The arriving

¹ David M. Krueger, "Penn's 'Holy Experiment': The vision and Reality of Religious Pluralism in Colonial Philadelphia," *Religion in Philadelphia*, edited by Elizabeth Hayes Alvarez (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2016), 75.

² John J. Patrick and Gerald P. Long, *Constitutional Debates on Freedom of Religion: A Documentary History* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999), 7.

³ Patrick and Long, *Constitutional Debates on Freedom of Religion*, 4.

Quakers lived mostly peacefully with the existing Lenape population, soon joined by immigrants from throughout Europe. The settlement at Germantown had a particularly diverse population, including Lutherans, Mennonites, Moravians, Dunkards, Calvinists, Catholics, Presbyterians, and Jews.⁴

Penn's "Holy Experiment" did not succeed for long. His "top-down" approach to organizing Pennsylvania's government led to disproportionate resources and power that favored Quakers over others. The lack of time he spent in Pennsylvania — he only lived in the colony 1682-1684 and 1699-1701 — compounded this issue, as he attempted to enforce laws that did not reflect the real needs of Pennsylvanians.⁵ Additionally, Penn's beliefs regarding religious freedom could not hold racism and other discriminations at bay: enslaved Africans were restricted from practicing their traditional religions and often forced to attend slave owners' churches, and some Protestant Philadelphians protested the erection of a Catholic "Romish Chapel."⁶

Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776

After the Declaration of Independence was signed, newly-declared states began writing individual constitutions in order to outline how the state will be run. Many of these state constitutions, as in the case of Pennsylvania's first constitution, eventually influenced and inspired the United States Constitution.⁷ Additionally, many scholars like Richard Beeman regard Pennsylvania's first constitution as being the most "radically democratic" of its time, for reasons such as its protection the five freedoms eventually included in the First Amendment.⁸ In addition to outlining how the state will be run, Pennsylvania's constitution included a Declaration of Rights which includes securing freedom of religion, a practice initiated by Virginia's Constitution and accompanying Declaration of Rights.

Following the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, Pennsylvania's Declaration of Rights states that "all men are born equally free and independent." Similar to the 1682 Frame of Government, it declares that all men have the right to worship God in their own way, indirectly excluding atheists, polytheists, and other non-Abrahamic faiths. Atheists are also excluded from the right to hold citizenship. Additionally, Article 10 of the Pennsylvania Constitution required a religious test which only allowed Christians to hold public office. This test was later expanded in the next Constitution, written in 1790.⁹

⁴ Krueger, "Penn's 'Holy Experiment,'" 76-79.

⁵ Jessica Choppin Roney, *Governed by a Spirit of Opposition: The Origins of American Political Practice in Colonial Philadelphia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 14-20.

⁶ Krueger, "Penn's 'Holy Experiment,'" 78.

⁷ Robert F. Williams, "The State Constitutions of the Founding Decade: Pennsylvania's Radical 1776 Constitution and Its Influences on American Constitutionalism," *Temple Law Review* 62, no. 2 (1989): 541-542.

⁸ John Gilbert McCurdy, "The Origins of Universal Suffrage: The Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776," *Pennsylvania Legacies* 8, no. 2 (2008): 6.

⁹ Patrick and Long, *Congressional Debates on the Freedom of Religion*, 38-39.

The First Amendment

In the first years of the newly-formed country, the United States was guided by the Articles of Confederation. This document drew a lot of ire, partially for its lack of protections for individual rights.¹⁰ While Alexander Hamilton disagreed that individual rights needed to be written into the Constitution, other delegates led by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison argued for including them, and ten of the twelve proposed amendments were ratified in 1791.

The First Amendment includes two clauses concerning religion, known respectively as the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause.

The Establishment Clause states that the government will pass no laws establishing an official religion in the United States. This clause typically has two interpretations: on one side, separationists believe that the government should not be involved in religion or religious organizations; on the other side, accommodationists support government involvement in religion, as long as that involvement is neutral and does not give preference to one religion over another.¹¹

The Free Exercise Clause states that the government will pass no laws interfering in the free exercise of religion. However, the earliest First Amendment cases made a distinction between religious belief and religious action. In *Reynolds v. United States* (1879), which banned Mormon polygamy, the unanimous decision clarified that the First Amendment protects religious belief, but the government can still ban religious action that goes against public interest.¹²

Religious Freedom Protection Act

In 1993, Congress passed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), which stated that the government should not burden the free exercise of religion without compelling reason.¹³ This law acknowledged that religiously neutral laws can still burden the free exercise of religion: for example, in *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990), two members of the Native American Church were fired after ingesting peyote, a hallucinogenic drug, as part of a religious ceremony. The state denied their unemployment claims due to illegal drug use, and public backlash eventually led to the passing of the RFRA.¹⁴ As in *Smith*, the RFRA especially attempted to protect minority religions from being burdened,

¹⁰ John R. Vile, "Articles of Confederation," *Encyclopedia of American Civil Rights and Liberties: Revised and Expanded Edition, 2nd Edition* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2017), 54.

¹¹ Patrick and Long, *Constitutional Debates on Freedom of Religion*, 137.

¹² "Reynolds v. United States," *Oyez*, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1850-1900/98us145>

¹³ 42 U.S. Code § 2000bb-1(a).

¹⁴ "Employment Division, Department of Human Resources of Oregon v. Smith," *Oyez*, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1989/88-1213>

as it is harder to assert one's religious needs with smaller numbers and less influence.¹⁵ However, in 1997, when this law was later used in a clash between an archbishop wanting to enlarge his church and local historic preservation laws, the Supreme Court ultimately deemed RFRA unconstitutional. They argued that Congress overstepped its reach into both state jurisdiction and judicial power.¹⁶

Despite the unconstitutionality of RFRA, court cases continue to cite it, most notably in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores* (2014), which asked whether employers can deny coverage of contraception on religious grounds.¹⁷ Nevertheless, many states responded to the 1997 decision by passing their own versions of the RFRA, including Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania passed the Religious Freedom Protection Act in 2002, which similarly sought to prevent any burden on individuals' religious freedom, especially for minority religions. This succeeded in the first interpretation of the law, for a case in which a Muslim firefighter was fired for refusing to shave his beard.¹⁸

While many religious groups supported the new law, others did not think it would be effective. One law professor from Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law argued that the law was too blunt, and that it should instead deal in specific exemptions that could be debated.¹⁹ The ACLU also questioned the structure of the law, calling it "flawed" and pointing out that it would not protect, for example, a Muslim woman refusing to remove her headscarf for a driver's license photo.²⁰

Supreme Court and Religious Freedom

Since the writing of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the Supreme Court has periodically interpreted, redefined, and shaped U.S. law. This process did not truly begin with laws about religious freedom until the early twentieth century; the First Amendment referred to the federal government, and each state wrote its own laws regarding religious freedom, such as Pennsylvania's Declaration of Rights (1776). This changed after the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868 and the development of the incorporation doctrine around the 1920s, which allowed for the use of the First

¹⁵ Gary S. Gildin, "Coda To William Penn's Overture: Safeguarding Non-Mainstream Religious Liberty Under the Pennsylvania Constitution," *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law* 4 (2001): 81-82.

¹⁶ "City of Boerne v. Flores," *Oyez*, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1996/95-2074>; "Congress, Courts and Churches," *The Washington Post*, June 26, 1997. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/supcourt/stories/062697b.htm>

¹⁷ "Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores," *Oyez*, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2013/13-354>

¹⁸ "Pennsylvania Judge Upholds Muslim Firefighter's Religious Liberty in ACLU Lawsuit," *ACLU*, June 1, 2005. <https://www.aclu.org/news/pennsylvania-judge-upholds-muslim-firefighters-religious-liberty-aclu-lawsuit>

¹⁹ "Pennsylvania Lawmakers Pass Religious Freedom Bill," *Church & State* 56, no. 1 (2003): 22.

²⁰ Joshua Runyan, "Bill Is an 'Arrow' in Synagogue's Fight," *Jewish Exponent*, December 05, 2002.

Amendment to limit the power of state governments.²¹

As with all Supreme Court cases, rulings on religious freedom cases reference previous cases that serve as precedent, in addition to U.S. laws themselves.

The Supreme Court has ruled on cases concerning religious freedom including topics such as teacher-led prayer in public school (*Engel v. Vitale*, 1962²²) and the display of the Ten Commandments in public spaces (*McCreary County v. American Civil Liberties Union*²³, *Van Orden v. Perry*²⁴, both 2005). One landmark case, *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971), in which the Supreme Court ruled it was unconstitutional for the state to reimburse religious school teachers who use secular textbooks and other secular materials, led to guidelines defining a constitutional government action concerning religion. Known as the Lemon Test, a government action must pass three tests:

1. The government's action must have secular purpose;
2. The primary goal of the action cannot be to advance or inhibit religion;
3. The action cannot excessively entangle government with religion.²⁵

The Supreme Court continues to grapple with the role and definition of religious freedom in the United States. For example, the Court recently decided that the Department of Corrections cannot dictate staff's appearance when it conflicts with staff members' sincerely-held religious beliefs (*Holt v. Hobbs*, 2015²⁶), and that it is unconstitutional to exclude religious organizations from secular and neutral aid programs (*Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Inc. v. Comer*, 2017²⁷).

Murdock v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1943)

Jehovah's Witnesses, a denomination of Christianity, places great importance on sharing pamphlets and speaking with non-Witnesses about their faith. This often involves distributing materials in a public place or going door to door. Sometimes Witnesses ask for a donation in exchange for the materials, and sometimes the materials are free.²⁸ This became a problem in Jeannette, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh, which had instituted laws requiring anyone distributing materials or selling merchandise to purchase a license. Jehovah's Witnesses, who had been fined and arrested for distributing materials without a license, protested the law. Robert Murdock, one Jehovah's Witness who was

²¹ Arlin M. Adams and Charles J. Emmerich, *A Nation Dedicated to Religious Liberty: The Constitutional Heritage of the Religion Clauses* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 33.

²² "Engel v. Vitale," *Oyez*, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1961/468>

²³ "McCreary County v. American Civil Liberties Union," *Oyez*, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2004/03-1693>

²⁴ "Van Orden v. Perry," *Oyez*, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2004/03-1500>

²⁵ "Lemon v. Kurtzman," *Oyez*, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1970/89>

²⁶ "Holt v. Hobbs," *Oyez*, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2014/13-6827>

²⁷ "Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Inc. v. Comer," *Oyez*, <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2016/15-577>

²⁸ Katherine Kempfer, "Abstracts," *Michigan Law Review* 41 no. 6 (June 1943), 1197.

convicted for distributing pamphlets without a license, led the case.²⁹

At first, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania upheld the convictions, arguing the Witnesses needed to purchase licenses. The case was brought to the Supreme Court of the United States, which, in a narrow decision of 5-4, reversed the decision, ruling that the town's law was unconstitutional.

The majority decision, read by Justice William O. Douglas, makes a distinction between commercial and religious distribution. He characterizes the Jehovah's Witnesses' distributionary practices as a major component of their religious beliefs, as opposed to simply giving out materials or preaching. He argues that a tax on a religious practice effectively limits that practice. Whether it does limit the practice or not does not matter; Justice Douglas argues that "a state may not impose a charge for the enjoyment of a right granted by the federal constitution."³⁰ The defendants had argued that the law did not target Jehovah's Witnesses, and that others might find the materials provocative or offensive. However, Justice Douglas responds that the original licensing law did not intend to protect others in the community from the Jehovah's Witnesses.³¹ He adds that the distributors were not charged with disorderly conduct or otherwise breaching peace in the community, indicating the Jehovah's Witnesses' acceptable behavior.

In the dissent, Justice Felix Frankfurter reframes the issue around the tax itself, as opposed to the activity being taxed. He gives several examples of religious activities that are taxed, such as income tax for religious clergy. Additionally, he characterizes a tax as the price for something used, as opposed to a baseless acquisition of money by the government. In this case, he points towards how Jehovah's Witnesses distributing materials use roads, health services, and other public resources that are funded by tax dollars.³²

Braunfeld v. Brown (1961) and Sunday Laws in Pennsylvania

In many states, Sunday laws or blue laws act as a restriction on commercial activities to promote a day of rest, specifically on Sundays. For example, this is why the postal service does not deliver mail on Sundays. In Pennsylvania, laws have restricted legal activity on Sundays since Penn's Frame of Government in 1682.³³ In 1959, a new law was passed that restricted business owners from doing "any worldly employment or

²⁹ Patrick and Long, *Constitutional Debates on Freedom of Religion*, 88.

³⁰ Justice William O. Douglas, Decision on *Murdock v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, as quoted in Patrick and Long, *Constitutional Debates on Freedom of Religion*, 89-90.

³¹ "Constitutional Law — Right to Impose a License Tax Upon Dissemination of Religious Literature — *Jones v. Opelika* Reversed," *Michigan Law Review* 42 no. 1 (August 1943), 165.

³² Justice Felix Frankfurter, Dissenting decision on *Murdock v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* as quoted in Patrick and Long, *Constitutional Debates on Freedom of Religion*, 90-91.

³³ Stanley A. Smith, "Constitutional Law - Pennsylvania Constitution - Equal Protection - Pennsylvania's Sunday Trading Laws Violate the Equal Protection Provision of Pennsylvania's Constitution," *Villanova Law Review* 24 no. 5 (1979): 994.

business whatsoever” on Sundays.³⁴ Another restriction specified the banning the sale of clothes, toys, musical instruments, jewelry, and other goods. Exceptions were only made for souvenirs, novelties, and antiques.³⁵

In 1960, Abraham Braunfeld challenged this law. As an Orthodox Jew, he closed his clothing and home furnishing shop in Philadelphia on Saturdays in accordance with *shabbat*, the Jewish day of rest. His store did not fall under the Sunday laws’ exceptions, so he also had to close his shop on Sundays. He argued that the Sunday laws hurt his business, as he needed to be open six days a week, but the law in addition to his religious practice prevented him from doing that.³⁶

Braunfeld’s complaints were initially dismissed by the court. On appeal to the Supreme Court, a 6-3 ruling upheld that decision, ruling against Braunfeld and declaring Pennsylvania’s Sunday laws constitutional.

The majority opinion, written by Chief Justice Earl Warren, argued that the state’s Sunday laws were not religious in nature, and instead only sought to establish a uniform day of rest for Pennsylvanians. The First Amendment refers to religious beliefs, not religious acts; for example, religious support cannot legalize acts like child labor or polygamy. Warren continues that the laws do not force Orthodox Jews to convert or abandon their religion, and that it is possible for them to change professions in order to still observe *shabbat*. Additionally, due to the religious diversity of the United States, he posits that it might be impossible to enact laws that would inconvenience no one.³⁷

The dissenting justices largely agreed that Pennsylvania’s Sunday laws were constitutional but disagreed that it did not place a burden on Braunfeld’s religious freedom. Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. argued that the First Amendment should protect individuals’ freedom, instead of trying to fulfill collective goals. He continued that there is no compelling need to uphold Pennsylvania’s Sunday laws, as they do not protect the public’s interest, as in bans on religious child labor or polygamy. Justice Brennan characterized the laws as being convenient, which he did not think was a good enough reason to make Braunfeld and other Orthodox Jews choose between legally operating their business and their faith.³⁸

Despite losing, this case still influenced Pennsylvania law. In 1967, a provision was added that made an exception to this law for those who close their business for a religious day of rest on a day other than Sunday.³⁹ By 1978, *Kroger Co. v. O’Hara Township* ruled these Sunday laws unconstitutional, arguing that so many exceptions had been added that the laws no longer make sense.

³⁴ 18 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 7361(a).

³⁵ 18 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 7363(a), (c)(1).

³⁶ “Braunfeld v. Brown,” *Oyez*. <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1960/67>

³⁷ Chief Justice Earl Warren, majority opinion on *Braunfeld v. Brown (1961)* as quoted in Patrick and Long, *Constitutional Debates on Freedom of Religion*, 98-100.

³⁸ Chief William J. Brennan, Jr., dissenting opinion on *Braunfeld v. Brown (1961)* as quoted in Patrick and Long, *Constitutional Debates on Freedom of Religion*, 100-101.

³⁹ 18 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 7363(c)(2); Smith, “Constitutional Law,” 996.

Some Sunday restrictions continued past the 1978 decision, such as limits on the sale of alcohol on Sundays. In 2016, the Liquor Control Board announced a relaxation of these laws, particularly in the interests of meeting consumer needs and generating increased revenue for the state. The announcement made no mention of the religious origins of the restrictions.⁴⁰

School District of Abington Township, Pennsylvania v. Schempp (1963)

In Abington, Pennsylvania, public schools began the day with announcements broadcast into each classroom. The announcements included a fun fact, the Pledge of Allegiance, and a student reading ten Bible verses of their choice, along with a recitation of the Lord's Prayer. A teacher had to be present for the announcements, and if they refused, they risked being fired. The Schempps, a Unitarian Universalist family, objected to the practice and found their children confused and bothered by the Bible readings.⁴¹

A primary argument in the case revolved around the religious nature of the Bible itself: the school argued that they were teaching secular moral lessons from the Bible, in addition to the literary benefits, while the Schempps countered that one could not separate the moral lessons from their religious origins.⁴²

In the lower courts, the Schempps won the case. The school appealed, and in between trials, instituted a policy allowing students to be excused from the Bible readings. However, the Schempps still objected, saying they would not excuse their children from the announcements, as it might damage their relationships with teachers and classmate.

At the highest level, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Schempps in an 8-1 decision. Writing the majority opinion, Justice Tom C. Clark agreed with the religious nature of the Bible, and that it violated the Establishment Clause to require it be read in public schools. He also cautions against these types of exercises being a slippery slope; that mandatory reading from the Bible is a minor offense against the First Amendment but risks morphing into a larger violation in the future. Justice Clark also clarifies that this decision does not condemn the Bible or establish a "religion of atheism" in schools, and that the study of religion should be included in curricula, as long as it does not become a religious exercise.⁴³

As the lone dissenter, Justice Potter Stewart questioned the definition of neutrality. With the possibility for students to be excused, he characterized the announcements as the optional opportunity for religious expression. Thus, disagreeing with Justice Clark, he

⁴⁰ Tim Holden, Mike Negra, Michael Newsome, "Written Remarks Submitted for the Record on Behalf of the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB)," November 16, 2016.

http://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/TR/Transcripts/2016_0172_0004_TSTMNY.pdf

⁴¹ "School District of Abington Township, Pennsylvania v. Schempp," *Oyez*,

<https://www.oyez.org/cases/1962/142>

⁴² Patrick and Long, *Constitutional Debates on Freedom of Religion*, 165.

⁴³ Justice Tom C. Clark, majority opinion on *School District of Abington Township, Pennsylvania v. Schempp*, as quoted in Patrick and Long, *Constitutional Debates on Freedom of Religion*, 166-167.

said that ruling in favor of the Schempps sends a message that the Bible does not belong in schools, which itself violates the First Amendment. Furthermore, he did not find any evidence that students were coerced into participating.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Justice Potter Stewart, dissenting opinion on *School District of Abington Township, Pennsylvania v. Schempp*, as quoted in Patrick and Long, *Constitutional Debates on Freedom of Religion*, 167-169.

PROCEDURE

1. Complete warm-up activity.
 - a. Ask: “Do you think religious freedom in the United States is perfect or imperfect?”
 - b. Discuss briefly in pairs and ask for volunteers to report out.
2. Lecture briefly as needed on the founding of Pennsylvania as a religious haven (see “William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania” and “Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776”).
3. Introduce the activity.
 - a. Contextualize by lecturing briefly on how contemporary religious freedom has been shaped by the Supreme Court since the drafting of the Bill of Rights (see “Supreme Court and Religious Freedom” in Historical Background.)
4. Practice ruling on a case with students.
 - a. Distribute or project the text of the First Amendment. Review the language, distinguishing between the Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause (see “The First Amendment” in Historical Background). Have students paraphrase the text in their own words and explain their choices.
 - b. Distribute Case 1: *Abington v. Schempp* worksheet. Ask for volunteers to paraphrase the situation and each argument in their own words.
 - c. Using the text of the First Amendment, discuss with students who should win the case. Model how to defend one’s position using the text of the First Amendment.

For example, a student might agree with the School District because, since the Bible reading was optional, no official religion was established. Alternatively, a student might agree with the Schempps because, since the Bible verses confused the Schempp children, the exercise interfered with the family’s free exercise of religion.

- d. Reveal the outcome and see if any students have questions (see “*Abington v. Schempp* (1963)” in Historical Background).

(Note: If breaking this lesson into two periods, this is a good place to stop.)

5. Begin the activity.
 - a. Divide students into three groups (or multiples of three). Explain that each

group will receive a different historical definition of religious freedom. Have students read their definition and answer the accompanying questions.

- b. Choose one of the two suggested Supreme Court cases. Distribute the same chosen case to all groups. Each group needs to complete the case worksheet and, using their definition, decide the outcome of the case.
 - c. Circulate the room and answer questions as necessary.
6. End the activity and ask one representative from each group to report their answer.
 7. To conclude, reveal the outcome of the case and discuss the following questions:
 - a. “Do you agree with the Court’s actual decision? Why or why not?”
 - b. “Did anything surprise you about this activity?”
 - c. “How can we affect the way that religious freedom is understood by the Supreme Court today?”

If students are stumped, remind them they will soon be able to vote, and their elected officials can appoint judges who will affect positive change. Also, each court case was started by a plaintiff who saw unfairness and pointed it out.

- d. “What else can we do to affect the role of religious freedom in our everyday lives?”

Answers might include: learn about other religions, be kind, stand up for those in need, etc.

HOMEWORK

- Distribute all three definitions. Ask students to write a journal entry, answering the following questions:
 - How do you define religious freedom? Which historical definition lines up the most with your personal definition? Why?
 - What is the difference between religious tolerance and religious acceptance?
 - How do you demonstrate your personal definition of religious freedom in your everyday life?

LESSON 2

REBECCA GRATZ

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Essential Questions:

- How can a person reconcile their sincerely held religious beliefs when they infringe on another's personal freedoms?
- What did it mean to be "American" in 19th century Philadelphia? How religion factor into this?

Learning Objectives:

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Consider the growth and significance of the Second Great Awakening.
- Appreciate the various needs of different religious communities and the complexities of balancing peaceful coexistence between them
- Explore the life, philosophies, and philanthropy of Rebecca Gratz

Big Idea:

Within popular memory of Philadelphia Jewish history, Rebecca Gratz (1781-1869) remains a beloved figure. She devoted her life to philanthropy, building bridges of friendship to her Christian neighbors, and taking care of her orphaned nieces and nephews. The historical backdrop of her life features the Second Great Awakening, a major wave of Jewish immigration to the United States and reactive nativism, and a mainstream culture of philanthropy that prized proselytizing as a social service. By untangling these conflicts, students will appreciate the preciousness of a pluralistic society and the role of education in maintaining it.

Time:

1 – 2 class periods

Materials:

- Document 1: Religious Camp Meeting
- Document 2: Hymn #11
- Document 3: Report of the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society, 1835
- Worksheet 1: Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz, Feb 18, 1837
- Worksheet 2: The Teachers' and Parents' Assistant
- Worksheet 3: Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz, Oct 28, 1833

Standards:

PA Standards:

- CC.8.5.11-12.A - Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- CC.8.5.11-12.B - Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- CC.8.5.11-12.I - Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.
- CC.8.6.11-12.H - Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- 8.2.12.A - Evaluate the role groups and individuals from Pennsylvania played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development of the US and the world.

C3 Framework:

- D2.Civ.10.9-12 - Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.
- D2.His.1.9-12 - Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.
- D2.His.16.9-12 - Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.
- D2.Soc.12.9-12 - Explain the social construction of self and groups.
- D2.Rel.8.9-12 - Interpret how beliefs, behaviors, and experiences of belonging to various communities affect and are affected by other social, political, and cultural forces

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Jews in the Early Republic

By 1800, there were around 3,000 Jews living in the United States. The Jewish community in the United States included both Sephardic Jews, or Jews from the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa, and Ashkenazi Jews, or Jews from Central and Eastern Europe.¹ As a city with one of the largest Jewish populations at the time, Philadelphia still only had an estimated 500-1,000 Jews by 1830, out of a population of 80,000.² Philadelphia was home to two synagogues: Mikveh Israel and Rodeph Shalom, which today are located at 5th and Market Streets, and Broad and Mt. Vernon Streets, respectively.³

Despite these small numbers, Philadelphians were not wholly unfamiliar with Jews. As a religious minority, Jews continued to face anti-Semitic attitudes that were brought to the United States from Europe. In a society that was going through the process of defining and establishing a national identity, Jews represented the Other. For example, Federalists used anti-Semitic imagery in the 1790 Pennsylvania election to paint their opponents as “other.” On stage, a place seen as a public “school of virtue,” Jewish characters were only celebrated, accepted, or even seen as American citizens if they assimilated according to their Gentile companions.⁴ By the election of Thomas Jefferson in 1801 and the decline of the Federalist Party, the president’s deism encouraged a more accepting attitude towards religious minorities, particularly within popular and political culture. However, shortly after, a rise in Jewish immigration brought back anti-Semitism in the form of nativist anti-immigrant sentiment.

Second Great Awakening (1790s-1840s)

After the Revolutionary War, the majority of Americans were Protestants — specifically Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians. After the Second Great Awakening, by the Civil War, the Protestant population in the United States was dominated by Methodists and Baptists.⁵ The size of Christianity itself grew as well: as one example, in 1775, there were around 1,800 ministers in the American colonies; by 1845, there were

¹ Tobias Brinkmann, "Jews, Germans, or Americans?: German-Jewish Immigrants in the Nineteenth-Century United States," in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, edited by K. Molly O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 111-112.

² 1830 Census, *U.S. Census Bureau*, <https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab06.txt>

³ Murray Friedman, “Introduction: The Making of a National Jewish Community,” in *Jewish Life in Philadelphia 1830-1940*, edited by Murray Friedman (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1983), 2.

⁴ Heather S. Nathans, "A Much Maligned People: Jews On and Off the Stage in the Early American Republic," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 2, no. 2 (2004): 319-323.

⁵ Elizabeth Hayes Alvarez, “Philadelphia, Reform, and the Second Great Awakening,” *Religion in Philadelphia*, edited by Elizabeth Hayes Alvarez (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2016), 213.

almost 40,000.⁶ Named in relation to the First Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century, this movement saw a rise in evangelism and camp meetings across the country.⁷

Continuing the emphasis on freedom of conscience that inspired much discourse during the country's founding, leaders within the Second Great Awakening hosted "camp meetings" in many locations. During these meetings, which were often held outdoors, preachers would speak to the crowd about rejecting sin, accepting salvation, and creating a fair and just society.⁸ The preachers came from a wide variety of backgrounds but mostly associated with the Baptist and Methodist movements.

The majority of attendees were already Christians who wanted to convert or commit to being more devout. During this movement, going to church and being a good person was not enough to achieve salvation: one had to have the emotional and spiritual experience of receiving God's grace or the presence of the Holy Spirit. Camp meeting organizers set aside special sections of seating for those looking to convert, and lay people would join preachers onstage to express their spiritual journeys. Revivalist messages were also disseminated through print materials, such as pamphlets or magazines, which could be distributed to non-devout Christians and those of other faiths.⁹

Rebecca Gratz

Rebecca Gratz was born in 1781 to a prominent and wealthy Jewish family in Philadelphia. Her father, Michael, her uncle, Bernard, and her grandfather, Joseph, built their wealth through establishing business contacts outside of Philadelphia's small Jewish community, including trading with local Native American communities and establishing outposts in the burgeoning American West.¹⁰ Gratz was one of twelve children, ten of whom survived past adolescence. In 1808, Rebecca's mother, Miriam, passed away, and Gratz became the primary caretaker for her family.¹¹ Subsequently, when her sister, Rachel, died in 1823, Gratz took her six nieces and nephews into her care.¹²

The Gratzes remained a religiously observant family, in a time and location where it took extra effort to follow Jewish law. The small Jewish population in the United States, with

⁶ Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 4.

⁷ For more information on evangelism, see [Religion Fact Sheet: Evangelical Christianity \(Lesson 2\)](#).

⁸ This is called postmillennialism, a belief in which Jesus will return and bring about the end of days after everyone converts to Christianity and makes the world a better place. This contrasts with the premillennialism made popular in the *Left Behind* series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, where proponents believe the state of the world will drastically decline before Jesus returns and the world ends. Alvarez, "Philadelphia, Reform, and the Second Great Awakening," 215.

⁹ Alvarez, "Philadelphia, Reform, and the Second Great Awakening," 214.

¹⁰ Dianne Ashton, "Rebecca Gratz, 1781-1869," *Jewish Women's Archive Encyclopedia* <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/gratz-rebecca>

¹¹ Edward Wagenknecht, *Daughters of the Covenant: Portraits of Six Jewish Women* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1983), 4.

¹² Ashton, "Rebecca Gratz."

hardly any rabbis, meant that obtaining ritual objects and kosher food was difficult.¹³ The Gratzes attended Mikveh Israel, Philadelphia's first synagogue. While Gratz did not speak Hebrew, she used and studied prayer books imported from England that had English translations. She supplemented her education with her family's substantial library and also established exchanges of knowledge with her wide circle of friends, which ranged from many Gentiles, or non-Jews, to famed Reform rabbi, Isaac Leeser. She believed learning about other religions was as important as learning about her own, considering it a form of strengthening her relationship with Judaism. This relationship was paramount to Gratz: the closest she came to marriage was with promising Presbyterian attorney Samuel Ewing, but the two ultimately decided that their disparate religions were ultimately incompatible.¹⁴ In every interaction with Gentiles, Gratz ensured that her companions respected her religion and her knowledge.

Gratz became involved in philanthropy at a young age, becoming secretary of the Female Association for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances in 1801. Later, she was instrumental in the creation of the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society ("FHBS") in 1819, which emerged as a haven for Jewish women to receive charitable services like food and shelter, because the majority of Christian-run shelters evangelized to the poor.¹⁵ She was also involved with the Philadelphia Orphan Society, founded in 1815, and the Jewish Foster Home and Orphan Society, founded in 1855. Gratz is most well known for her establishment of the Hebrew Sunday School Society of Philadelphia in 1838, which she described as "the crowning happiness of [her] life."¹⁶

Gratz held executive secretarial roles in each organization she started or supported. This allowed her to not only maintain institutional records but also control institutions' end-of-year reports and policies, which were often published as pamphlets for public distribution. Thus, Gratz could maintain a high level of authority within each institution, and she could use these reports as platforms for arguing her philosophies regarding education and care.¹⁷

One of Gratz's most explicit explanations of this philosophy came from her 1835 report on behalf of the FHBS where she laid out her reasons for wanting to establish the Hebrew Sunday School Society. She acknowledged that Jewish youth, attending school alongside Gentile children who were taught to evangelize, needed a strong education in order to appreciate and protect their heritage. This was doubly true for new Jewish immigrants, who endured pressure to Americanize in a way that also meant converting to Christianity. Thus, improved Jewish education could help newly-arrived immigrants to Americanize while maintaining their Jewish heritage. Ultimately, Gratz saw Jewish education as a way to dismantle anti-Semitism: she argued that Jews would no longer face stigma "when

¹³ At this time, all rabbis were European immigrants, and similarly, all Torah scrolls had to be sent to the United States from Europe. In fact, it was not until 1840 that the first rabbi was ordained in America. Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 91.

¹⁴ Harriet L. Parmet, "Rebecca Gratz: Benevolence Above and Beyond." *Midstream* 53 no. 5 (2007).

¹⁵ Ashton, "Rebecca Gratz."

¹⁶ Wagenknecht, *Daughters of the Covenant: Portraits of Six Jewish Women*, 6.

¹⁷ Ashton, "Rebecca Gratz."

enlightened Jews mingle with the inhabitants of the land respecting their own laws and practicing the virtues required of the chosen people of God.” Not only did Jews need to learn about their own religion, according to Gratz, but they needed to coexist alongside Gentiles and help foster an atmosphere of mutual respect.¹⁸

Nineteenth Century Immigration

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, immigration to the United States was largely unrestricted. Naturalization was similarly easy, with the first laws regarding citizenship qualifications being passed in 1790.¹⁹ Immigration to the United States would not peak until the 1880s, when 23 million people would come to the country before the United States established restrictive quotas essentially shutting down immigration in 1924.

In the few decades after the creation of the new country, immigration to the United States was minimal. From 1724 to 1820, economic depressions, conflicts with Native Americans, and the War of 1812 inhibited immigration; around 360,000 immigrants came to the United States during that time.²⁰ These primarily European immigrants included Dutch, Swedish, English, and Mexican settlers.²¹ However, the two largest groups of immigrants during this time were Irish Catholics and Germans, including German Jews.

Between 1783 and 1815, more than 100,000 Irish immigrants came to the United States, primarily Presbyterians and Catholics.²² Escaping the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, economic depression, conflict between Protestants and Catholics, and eventually the Great Famine, the number of Irish emigrants rose between 1825 and 1845.²³

Between 1820 and 1880, around 250,000 German Jews immigrated to the United States. Like the Irish Catholics, they largely came after the Napoleonic Wars and economic turmoil, with the Industrial Revolution threatening the livelihood of German Jewish farmers.²⁴ Among these immigrants was Isaac Leeser, a rabbi originally from Westphalia, who helped establish Philadelphia as the “Jewish capital of the United States” in the

¹⁸ Dianne Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz: Women and Judaism in Antebellum America* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), 142-144.

¹⁹ Ronald Schultz, “‘Allegiance and Land Go Together’: Automatic Naturalization and the Changing Nature of Immigration in Nineteenth-Century America,” *American Nineteenth Century History* 12 no. 2 (June 2011): 149-150.

²⁰ “Post-Revolution Period,” in *Immigrants in American History: Arrival, Adaptation, and Integration*, edited by Elliott Robert Barkan (ABC-CLIO, 2013), 81.

²¹ “Introduction: Migrants to America, to 1870,” in *Immigrants in American History: Arrival, Adaptation, and Integration*, edited by Elliott Robert Barkan (ABC-CLIO, 2013), 3-5.

²² Timothy Meagher, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 44.

²³ “Outlines of Irish Catholic Immigration to 1870,” in *Immigrants in American History: Arrival, Adaptation, and Integration*, edited by Elliott Robert Barkan (ABC-CLIO, 2013), 87.

²⁴ “German Jews Become the Majority,” in *Immigrants in American History: Arrival, Adaptation, and Integration*, edited by Elliott Robert Barkan (ABC-CLIO, 2013), 110.

nineteenth century. Arriving in the United States in 1824, he was distraught by the level of assimilation he saw in non-immigrant Jews and campaigned for a return to traditional Jewish practice.²⁵

As two religious minorities, Irish Catholic and German Jewish immigrants stood out from the Protestant majority, resulting in discrimination. For Jews, those who did not assimilate faced pressures to convert by Protestant neighbors, who proselytize out of good will and the spirit of the Second Great Awakening. For Catholics, centuries of clashes with Protestants and their higher numbers resulted in more extreme reactions, such as the Philadelphia Bible Riots which saw a mob violently attack an Irish Catholic community in 1844. On a national scale, rising nativism led to the creation of the Know-Nothing Party, which was founded in the 1850s to oppose immigration and the election of Catholics to public office.²⁶

²⁵ Friedman, "Introduction," 2.

²⁶ Thomas J. Curran, "Know-Nothing Party," in *The Oxford Companion to United States History*, edited by Paul S. Boyer (Oxford University Press, 2001).

PROCEDURE

1. Ask: “What conditions in a social setting would make you feel comfortable being yourself?”
 - a. If necessary, give prompts: What kinds of people would be there, what would they be doing, how would they treat you, how would they treat “outsiders,” etc.
 - b. Have students write-pair-share their answers.

2. Display and analyze “Document 1: *Religious Camp Meeting*,” a painting by J. Maze Burbank, c. 1839. Share contextual information (see “Second Great Awakening” in Historical Background) as needed.
 - a. “Try to determine what all of the people are doing: those on stage, those sitting on benches, those who have fainted. What is going on?”
 - b. “Where is this meeting located? What are the advantages of preaching at an outside location? What are the disadvantages?”
 - c. “What kinds of people do you think these are? What kinds of people do you think are missing from the scene?”
 - d. “What kind of object is this and when is it from? Why do you think the artist painted this image?”

3. Lecture briefly on Second Great Awakening (see “Second Great Awakening” in Historical Background). Display and read out loud “Document 2: Hymn 11” from *The Camp-Meeting Chorister* and discuss.
 - a. “Summarize the hymn. What is each stanza communicating?”
 - b. “Who do you think the intended audience is? What do those singing the hymn want their audience to do?”
 - c. “How do you think evangelical Christians would feel while singing this hymn? How do you think their audience would feel while hearing it?”
 - d. “What kind of text is this? What’s the difference between reading about conversion from a hymn and a different kind of text, such as a diary entry?”

4. Lecture briefly on the population in Philadelphia in the early nineteenth-century (see “Jews in the Early Republic and Nineteenth Century” and “Nineteenth-Century Immigration” in Historical Background). Discuss the circumstances and effects of immigration during this time, and the effects of the Second Great Awakening on new immigrants.
 - a. “What do you think newly-arrived immigrants would think they had to do

in order to fit into American society?”

5. Introduce Rebecca Gratz (see “Rebecca Gratz” in Historical Background). Display and read out loud “Document 3: Report of the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society” and discuss.
 - a. “What do you think Gratz is trying to say in this report? What is she trying to accomplish?”
 - b. “Gratz writes how ‘the lack of education shuts the door of advancement’ – what do you think she means by this? How can education be used to fight stigma?”
 - c. “Why do you think Gratz decided to publish her opinions in the annual report for the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society?”

6. Scaffold the activity.
 - a. Ask students to name all of the people who would interact with this publication.

Answers might include: Rebecca Gratz, other leaders and workers at the FHBS, supporters and patrons of the FHBS, and the students themselves who are reading the document in the present.
 - b. Have students write a brief sentence from Rebecca Gratz’s point of view. “What is she trying to say or accomplish?”
 - c. Have students write a brief sentence on the potential reaction of another person, such as a supporter of the FHBS. “How might they feel while reading this?”
 - d. Have students write a brief sentence on their own reactions. “How do you feel about this text and interaction?”

7. Divide students into small groups of 3-4 and distribute primary source worksheets.
 - a. Instruct students to read the handouts together as a group.
 - b. Discuss the meaning of the text, using the discussion questions to help.
 - c. Come up with three ways to caption the text: from the author’s point of view, from another party’s point of view, and from the students’ point of view.
 - d. (*optional*) Draw a three-panel comic strip illustrating each perspective reacting to the text.
 - e. (*optional*) Use the captions to create a text or Twitter conversation between the actors in each text.

- f. (*optional*) Have students curate an exhibit of texts about Rebecca Gratz, using their captions as object labels.
8. Report out and discuss the following questions:
- “How do you think Rebecca Gratz would answer our starting question: what conditions in a social setting would make you feel comfortable being yourself?”
 - “Have any of you had religious education, like Sunday School? Do you think you’ve benefited from it? Why or why not?”
 - “What can we do to contribute towards creating a pluralistic and religiously harmonious society?”

Answers might include: learn about other religions, be kind, stand up for those in need, vote in elected officials who are accepting of other religions, etc.
 - “What is the difference between religious tolerance and acceptance?”

HOMEWORK

Journal on the following topics:

- What is one way you can learn about/define/assert your own heritage?
- What is one way you can learn about a friend’s heritage?

CHAPTER 5

PROPOSED LESSONS

Introduction

Philadelphia has had a long and varied history with religious liberty, and it would be impossible to contain it all within two lessons. The following seven lessons still leave many major players, communities, and events out of the picture. Instead, these proposed lessons try to balance approaching the topic of religious liberty from both topical and thematic perspectives, providing a starting point for the development of further lessons in the broad religious history of Philadelphia.

Three lessons that follow focus on specific events: Philadelphia's early government, which crumbled under the weight of its Quaker dominance; the founding of the First African Presbyterian Church in 1807, which was the fourth of five African American churches established in early Philadelphia; and the Bible Riots of 1844, when anti-immigrant fears triggered Protestant Philadelphians to revolt against their Irish Catholic neighbors. Two of these lessons will explore the different ways that religion was used to restrict freedoms, and one will demonstrate how religion was used to increase freedoms.

Three lessons explore themes relating to religious liberty. One examines the extra-legal forces that shape religious liberty. Another will look at specific immigrant communities to see how religious liberty influenced their migration stories. The last lesson asks students to create artistic representations of how they define religious liberty and how they would defend it.

The topics and themes of these lessons take inspiration from the undergraduate class at Temple, “Religion in Philadelphia.”¹ Not only do these lessons explore aspects of Philadelphia’s history left out of the first two lessons, but its varied approaches and methods appeal to students with different interests and learning styles.

Quakers and Politics

In the first lesson, students learn about William Penn, the Pennsylvania Charter, and the origins of religious liberty within Philadelphia. However, despite Penn’s intentions regarding the City of Brotherly Love as a Holy Experiment, the city did not act as a religious haven for all its residents. This lesson will explore this discrepancy between ideal and reality, and how religious freedom for one does not necessarily mean religion for all.

Imagining a religious haven for all who needed one, William Penn’s “Holy Experiment” did not necessarily reflect Philadelphia’s population. Having designed the city, including its government, with a top-down approach, Penn expected Philadelphians to fall in line with his plans. They did not, and congregation-led voluntary associations arose to meet residents’ needs. With the promise of religious freedom and the lack of established church, a plethora of denominations settled in Philadelphia, each forming voluntary associations to assist with public services like education and poor relief. However, because congregations often preferred to only help its own members and neighbors, and because Quakers heavily out-populated residents of other religions, resources and political interests became unbalanced, favoring Quakers and causing

¹ David Harrington Watt, Syllabus for “Religion in Philadelphia,” obtained 3 September, 2017.

tension. This friction lasted until the ratification of the Constitution, where a centralized government negated the need for such voluntary associations.²

This lesson would use newspapers, correspondence, and even city maps to compare Penn's Holy Experiment with its execution. For example, students can examine the inconvenience of how the city grid placed the Quaker Meeting House far away from the social and economic hub of the budding city.³ Students will use archival documents to determine what residents' needs were, especially regarding their religious needs, and redesign the city grid. They will decide which organizations can best cater to residents' needs and interests and arrange them geographically. This will help students to understand how residents' needs can support and conflict with each other, and reinforce the ideas that, not only is religious liberty not as simple as it seems at face value, but that we must work hard to maintain it as best as we can.

First African Presbyterian Church

In the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, African-Americans in Philadelphia formed five of the first churches attended and owned by African-Americans. This lesson highlights the formation and achievements of the fourth of those five churches: the First African Presbyterian Church, established in 1807 by John Gloucester.

Originally enslaved in Tennessee, Gloucester was bought, educated, and set free by a white Presbyterian preacher, Gideon Blackburn.⁴ Gloucester later appeared before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, seeking to become a

² Jessica Choppin Roney, *Governed by a Spirit of Opposition : The Origins of American Political Practice in Colonial Philadelphia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 14-20.

³ Roney, *Governed by a Spirit of Opposition*, 2.

⁴ George M. Apperson, "African Americans on the Tennessee Frontier: John Gloucester and His Contemporaries," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2000): 2.

minister even though he lacked the formal education that ministers typically had. Eventually, after several years and many debates, the General Assembly agrees to waive those requirements for ordination, acknowledging that Gloucester could help serve as a missionary to African Americans. With the financial help of his supporters, which included signer of Declaration Benjamin Rush, Gloucester received his ordination in Tennessee, purchased freedom for his wife and children, and moved permanently to Philadelphia, where he established the First African Presbyterian Church at 7th and Bainbridge Streets.⁵

Acknowledging the obstacles he had to overcome to be ordained, Reverend Gloucester centered education and literacy as a core value of the new church. He established a Sabbath School to ensure that his congregants would be able to read and understand the Bible for themselves.⁶ Reflecting on the church's history, later minister William T. Catto reflected how students in the Sabbath school developed a strong sense of confidence and respect for learning from being taught directly by Reverend Gloucester.⁷

At 211 years old, the First African Presbyterian Church still exists, although the congregation has since moved to West Philadelphia. Keeping in the tradition of Reverend Gloucester's intentions of helping congregants more than just spiritually, the church also

⁵ Apperson, "African Americans on the Tennessee Frontier," 13.

⁶ Euell A. Nielsen, "First African Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1807-)," *BlackPast.org*. <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/first-african-presbyterian-church-philadelphia-pennsylvania-1807>

⁷ William T. Catto, *A Semi-centenary Discourse: Delivered In the First African Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, On the Fourth Sabbath of May, 1857: With a History of the Church From Its First Organization: Including a Brief Notice of Rev. John Gloucester, Its First Pastor*, (Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, 1857), 33-34.

runs food programs and a weekly health clinic.⁸ In this lesson, students would interview current congregants in addition to analyzing primary documents to learn about the relationships between religion, education, and freedom — in the contexts of freedom from slavery and the freedom to self-actualize.

Bible Riots of 1844

Dog-whistling and other euphemisms often play a large role in how laws are passed and enforced, especially when related to religion. In the current political climate, for example, students have seen lawmakers grapple with so-called “travel bans” influenced by Islamophobia and Orientalism. And in 1844, Philadelphians witnessed and participated in two massive riots that grew out of nativist fears, particularly of Catholic immigrants.

By the mid-1800s, the Catholic presence in Philadelphia increased dramatically through immigration. Protestant nativism and fears of Catholic loyalty to the Pope rather than the American government fueled anti-Catholic sentiment through propaganda, Protestant-focused public services, and election of nativist Protestants into office. In addition to reflecting centuries of strife between Protestants and Catholics, conflict arose from the struggle between immigrants’ asserting their rights and the white Protestant majority defending the status quo.⁹ In May 1844, after rules favoring Protestant Bibles in public school increased tensions, nativist protesters brought a violent riot to Kensington, then an Irish Catholic neighborhood. A Protestant teenager was killed, inciting Protestants to start fires and destroy churches. Thirty Catholics died in these riots. After

⁸ Nielsen, “First African Presbyterian Church.”

⁹ Amanda Beyer-Purvis, “The Philadelphia Bible Riots of 1844: Contest Over the Rights of Citizens,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 83, no. 3 (2016): 366-393.

nativist protestors planned to hijack the Independence Day celebration to intimidate Catholics, Governor David Porter deployed troops to arrest the nativist movement's most virulent leaders, finally bringing an end to the unrest.¹⁰

By studying this event, students will be able to explore the intersections of religion with other issues such as nationality and politics. In examining the external factors that exacerbated fears of Catholic immigrants, students will be able to pick apart the complexities of political action and public opinion. For example, students will analyze Protestants' fears that Catholics would be more loyal to the Pope than to the American government – a fear that has continued since then, such as during the presidential election of 1960. Part of the lesson will also involve analyzing the wealth of anti-Catholic political cartoons and tracts published at this time, allowing students to understand the power of propaganda and its legacy as “fake news” today.

Philadelphia as a Religious Haven

Typically, religious liberty is understood as a legal issue, regarding the state enforcing laws that protect religious expression or lack thereof. However, religious liberty is inevitably affected by extra-legal elements, such as community members supporting or challenging those laws, or even by uncontrollable elements like the landscape shaping human actions. By exploring one of the following stories, students can uncover the experiences of specific and unique groups in the Philadelphia area, such as the Poor Clare sisters and the Peace Mission of Father Divine.

The Poor Clares of the Primitive Ordinance, a Franciscan Catholic monastery

¹⁰ Kathleen Oxx, “The Philadelphia Bible Riots of 1844,” in *Religion in Philadelphia*, edited by Elizabeth Hayes Alvarez (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2016): 201-207.

founded in 1212, were commissioned to establish a branch in the United States in 1875 and found Cincinnati, New York, and Philadelphia as potential new homes. All three cities denied their requests to join each respective archdiocese. The Philadelphia archdiocese, for example, required women's monasteries to also run schools or other public services, while the Poor Clares devoted themselves entirely to prayer. However, while Cincinnati and New York turned the two Poor Clare representatives away, Philadelphia's archbishop allowed the sisters to stay to stay in a West Philadelphia house while figuring out their next steps. While there, they received support from many lay Catholic Philadelphians, including St. Katharine Drexel's stepmother, Emma Drexel. This assistance gave them the support they needed to begin establishing monasteries, first in Omaha and later in the Philadelphia suburbs.¹¹ Established in 1917, the Poor Clare monastery in Langhorne, Pennsylvania recently celebrated its centennial. By combining primary sources from the American Catholic Historical Society that explore the initial archbishops' denials and public reactions to the sisters' arrivals such as in newspapers at the time, students can puzzle together the different forces that eventually allowed the Poor Clare sisters to remain in Philadelphia.

Although the Peace Mission also started outside of Pennsylvania – it began in New York during the Great Depression – it moved to Philadelphia as its headquarters in the 1940s. The Peace Mission originated with Reverend Major Jealous Divine, also known as Father Divine, a charismatic preacher who drew influences from Methodism, Catholicism, and New Thought. This religious movement, which many considered to be a cult, sought to cultivate a “divine mind substance,” which involved respectability,

¹¹ Lou Baldwin, "Unwanted at first, Poor Clare sisters mark 100 years in Philadelphia," *Catholic Philly*, 5 October 2017. catholicphilly.com/2017/10/news/local-news/unwanted-at-first-poor-clare-sisters-mark-100-years-in-philadelphia/

cleanliness, and, in defiance of Jim Crow laws and other forms of systemic and culturally ingrained racism, racial equity. Preaching that self-empowerment could be achieved through economic stability, Father Divine and his followers bought substantial real estate in North Philadelphia, in an effort to create an alternative economy within a self-contained community. This lesson gives students the opportunity to explore how freedoms and laws can contradict, as well as how racial inequality affected Philadelphians; for example, the “dark-complected” Father Divine and “light-complected” Mother Divine had to marry in Washington, D.C., because miscegenation was illegal in Philadelphia at the time.¹²

Teachers could also consider focusing on other religious groups, such as the Shakers and the Moorish Science Church. By choosing select artifacts and primary documents from both within each respective religious group and from the public at large, teachers can explore the issues pertinent to each religious group and determine how the people, politics, and landscapes of Philadelphia affected, and were affected, by each religious group.

Religious Landscape of Philadelphia

With the focus on the history of religious liberty, many aspects of Philadelphia’s contemporary religious community do not get included in this curriculum. There are two main reasons for this: some religions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, have only been brought to Philadelphia in more recent waves of immigration, and thus do not have an established history of struggle with religious liberty yet. For other religions, few records

¹² Leonard Norman Primiano, “When ‘God in a Body’ Lived in Philadelphia: Father Divine and His Peace Mission in the City of Brotherly Love,” in *Religion in Philadelphia*, edited by Elizabeth Hayes Alvarez (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2016): 247-252.

exist of their beginnings in Philadelphia. For example, for the United States' first several decades, the majority of Muslims came to the new country via the Atlantic slave trade.¹³

In the "Religion in Philadelphia" course at Temple University, students conduct a survey of all religions present in small areas of various neighborhoods.¹⁴ As a variant on that activity, in this lesson, students will investigate specific religious communities in Philadelphia. They might choose specific geographic communities, such as the Buddhist Cambodian community of South Philadelphia, or specific congregations, like the newly-built Mormon Temple on North 18th Street and Vine Street.¹⁵ With teachers' and parents' help, this would ideally involve speaking to members of each chosen community and recording oral histories.

Students will investigate the migration stories of each community, to determine how individuals and families ended up in Philadelphia. They will also determine what each community needed in order to build a life here: for example, did the community need to build houses of worship, or find access to specific foods? Was this an easy or difficult process, and what obstacles did each community face, if any?

This lesson accomplishes two main goals. First, this lesson acts as a way to include additional religions in the curriculum that have a shorter history in Philadelphia, and also give students a chance to learn about religions they may be more familiar with. Second, it expands students' understandings of religious liberty beyond just laws.

¹³ Muslims did not begin to voluntarily immigrate to the United States until the late nineteenth century. At that point, many chose to move to rural areas, such as in the Midwest, for work. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane I. Smith, *Muslim Communities in North America* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994): xvii.

¹⁴ Rebecca Alpert, "'Religion in Philadelphia' for General Education." *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy* 25, no. 1 (2014): 124-27.

¹⁵ Joy Manning, "Carving an Official Cambodia Town out of South Philadelphia," *The Inquirer*, 14 May 2015.
www.philly.com/philly/living/20150514_Carving_an_official_Cambodia_Town_out_of_South_Philadelphia.html

Future of Religious Liberty

So far, the lesson plans have attempted to analyze Philadelphia as a location that was built on and yet has struggled with religious liberty. This lesson takes this theme a step further by asking students how they, personally, interpret religious liberty, and what they can do to protect and maintain it.

This lesson connects students with the National Liberty Museum, a glass art gallery located in Old City. Founded in 2000 by Irvin Borowsky, the museum celebrates liberty with art inspired by those that the museum considers to be heroes and who exhibit certain desired character strengths like empathy and responsibility. The majority of art in the museum is made of glass, signifying freedom's fragility.¹⁶

While different exhibits within the museum focus on individuals and themes such as immigration, the National Liberty Museum's Welcome Gallery, which opened in 2014, focuses on the idea of freedom itself. Embodying the museum's tagline to "live like a hero," the Welcome Gallery invites visitors to ponder artistic representations of freedom and explore how they are a part of the story of freedom as well.¹⁷

This lesson expands on this invitation by having students do a deep exploration of specific art pieces, such as Dale Chihuly's "Flame of Liberty" or one that each student chooses on their own during a tour of the museum. Students will learn the story behind the sculpture, the artist's influences, and how it is meant to represent freedom. For example, with Chihuly, students might learn about how he has adapted his artistic process around several health problems, choreographing a team of artists to perform the labor of

¹⁶ *National Liberty Museum website*. <http://www.libertymuseum.org>

¹⁷ Bobbi Booker, "National Liberty Museum Promotes Living Liberty," *Philadelphia Tribune*, September 21, 2014.

his ideas, and think about what analogies to religious freedom this arrangement might have.¹⁸

Students will design their own glass sculpture representing religious freedom. The sculpture design would act as a vehicle for students to define religious freedom from their own perspective and based on what they have learned in the preceding lessons. Students present their designs to the class, along with concrete actions they can take that are in line with their interpretation of religious freedom, such as by learning about unfamiliar religions or by standing up against bullies.

This lesson gives students a way to reflect on previous lessons while exercising their creativity. Additionally, the use of art as a learning tool exercises students' creativity and reasoning skills.

Conclusion

While these proposed lessons do not seek to encapsulate the religious history of Philadelphia or even of Pennsylvania, they begin to establish a set of pertinent people, congregations, events, and themes that can later be expanded. Additionally, lessons focusing on overarching themes can be used as a platform to discuss a wider range of religions and religious communities in Philadelphia.

¹⁸ Regina Hackett, "Chihuly victimized by his own success?" *Seattle Pi*, 16 April 2006. www.seattlepi.com/ae/article/Chihuly-victimized-by-his-own-success-1201229.php

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In this thesis project, I have outlined a set of lesson plans exploring the history of religious liberty in Pennsylvania. This project fully develops two of the lessons and proposes six others for later development. In the meantime, I plan to make the two developed lesson plans available for free public use. This will involve creating a public digital platform on which the lessons, worksheets, and fact sheets can be offered and securing copyright permissions for all primary sources used. The website will also offer a guide to teachers for how to approach the lessons, as well as optional notices to parents that their children will be studying religious history in class.

These lesson plans draw from a strong connection between public history, religious history, and educational disciplines and pedagogies. Public historians interpret the past to make it more relevant, engaging, and accessible to the general public. Public historians also make history useful, in terms of helping the public use the past to prepare for the future. Religious history offers a dynamic and convenient touchpoint for discussing a number of important topics, including diversity, conflict and compromise, power dynamics, and cultural influences. Using primary source education as a way to make studying history more grounded and engaging, it is my hope that these lessons help public historians and educators to bridge the gap between history, religious education, and primary source pedagogies. This will help students become more interested in history and encourage them to become advocates for religious liberty and diversity.

Additionally, I hope that these lessons will help public historians to better discuss

potentially controversial topics such as religious history. Museums and other historical sites are not neutral, and neither are the members of the public who interact with the past. These lessons, in handling a potentially controversial topic such as religious history, take care to present multiple sides of an issue, leave room for personal connections, and encourage students to make their own conclusions about the conflicts being discussed. I hope that these lessons demonstrate to public historians how they can discuss potentially controversial topics in honest, communicative, and inclusive ways.

In all, these lessons attempt to contextualize and celebrate the religious diversity that Pennsylvania has known since its inception. By understanding how this diversity developed over time and through obstacles, I expect that students will be more willing and motivated to do their individual part to maintain and protect religious liberty. The final activity of each lesson demonstrates how students can do that: by learning about unfamiliar lessons, by learning how religion can have different meanings for different people, by having empathy with others, by taking a stand when someone is denied their religious liberty, and so on.

Additionally, it is my hope that these lessons will inspire and encourage others, including educators and public historians, to talk about religion. Most people assume that religion is too divisive a topic to discuss in a classroom, archival, or museum setting, or even that it is illegal to do so. I hope to show that not only is it acceptable to discuss religion in a historical or sociological context, but that doing so can encourage increased knowledge, empathy, and cross-cultural mutual support.

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APPENDIX 1

WORKSHEETS

Lesson 1

Definition 1: The Frame of Government of Pennsylvania (1682)

XXXV. That all persons living in this province, who confess and acknowledge the one Almighty and eternal God, to be the Creator, Upholder and Ruler of the world; and that hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly in civil society, shall, in no ways, be prejudiced for their religious persuasion, or practice, in matters of faith and worship, nor shall they be compelled, at any time, to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place or ministry whatever.

XXXVI. That, according to the good example of the primitive Christians, and the case of the creation, every first day of the week, called the Lord's day [Sunday], people shall abstain from their common daily labour, that they may the better dispose themselves to worship God according to their understandings.

Historical context

William Penn, a Quaker, wrote the Frame of Government for Pennsylvania while he journeyed to the new colony. Living in England, where the official church was the Church of England, he had been persecuted for his beliefs, and so he hoped to create a haven for religious minorities in Pennsylvania. He called this haven his "Holy Experiment."

What words or phrases do you think are most important in this Declaration? Underline them.

Who is included under this protection of religious freedom? Who is left out?

Consider the prejudice that William Penn faced in England. Why do you think he wrote the Frame of Government to not include everyone?

Definition 2: A Declaration of The Rights of The Inhabitants of Pennsylvania (1776)

All men are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent and inalienable rights, amongst which are, the enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.

All men have a natural and unalienable right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences and understanding. And no man can be compelled to attend any religious worship, or support any place of worship, or maintain any ministry, contrary to, or against, his own free will and consent. Nor can any man, who acknowledges the being of a God, be justly deprived of any civil right as a citizen, on account of his religious sentiments or peculiar mode of religious worship. And no authority can be given to or assumed by any power whatever, that shall interfere with or control the right of conscience in the free exercise of religious worship.

Historical context

After the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, states began to draft their own individual constitutions. Several of them, in addition to other guidelines for how to operate in the new country, included rules on how to enact religious freedom. The above excerpt from Pennsylvania "Declaration of Rights" draws a lot of inspiration from the 1682 "Frame of Government" written by William Penn for Pennsylvania colony.

What words or phrases do you think are most important in this Declaration? Underline them.

What specific actions and beliefs are being protected?

Who's included in this Declaration? Who's left out?

Definition 3: Pennsylvania's Religious Freedom Protection Act (2002)

The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

1. Laws and governmental actions which are neutral toward religion, as well as laws and governmental actions intended to interfere with religious exercise, may have the effect of substantially burdening the free exercise of religion. However, neither State nor local government should substantially burden the free exercise of religion without compelling justification.
2. The General Assembly intends that all laws which it has heretofore enacted or will hereafter enact shall be construed so as to avoid the imposition of substantial burdens upon the free exercise of religion without compelling justification.

Definitions.

"Substantially burden." An agency action which does any of the following:

1. Significantly inhibits actions mandated by a person's sincerely held religious beliefs.
2. Significantly curtails a person's ability to express their religious faith.
3. Denies a person a reasonable opportunity to engage in activities which are fundamental to the person's religion.
4. Compels conduct or expression which violates a specific tenet of a person's religious faith.

Historical context

In 1993, U.S. Congress passed a law saying that neutrally-worded laws can still burden a person's religious freedom, and that should not be allowed to happen. By 1997, after this federal law was used to override a state law, the U.S. Supreme Court decided it was unconstitutional and gave Congress too much power. Many states, including Pennsylvania, responded by passing their own versions of this law at the state level.

What words or phrases do you think are most important in this Declaration? Underline them.

Can you think of an example of how a law that has nothing to do with religion might burden someone's free exercise of religion?

Do you think this law is necessary? Who do you think will benefit the most? The least?

Case 1: School District of Abington Township, PA v. Schempp (1963)

The Situation:

In Abington public schools, students were required to start each day by reading ten verses from the Bible, after which they would recite the Lord's Prayer, one of the most important Christian prayers. A teacher had to lead the reading, and if the teacher did not comply, they risked being fired. Students could be excused if they did not wish to participate. The Schempps disagreed with this practice.

School District's argument:

The school's representative described the Bible reading as secular [not religious], and said it was important to read the Bible as moral guidelines and as part of an ancient tradition, not a religious exercise. They brought up how, for centuries, the Bible was used to teach and improve reading skills. Additionally, a student has never asked to be excused, and since students were encouraged to bring in their own copies of the Bible, many translations have been used, including a Jewish Bible.

Schempp's argument:

As non-Christians, the Schempp children were confused by the Bible passages, as they went against what the family believed and taught the children. Edward Schempp, the father, considered excusing his children from the activity, but he didn't want to risk them being outcast by teachers and classmates.

Your decision:

Why?

Case 2: Murdock v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1943)

The situation

In Jeannette, Pennsylvania, all solicitors [those who sell goods door-to-door] must purchase a license to do so. Robert Murdock is one of many Jehovah's Witnesses living in Jeannette. As part of their religion, they distribute and sometimes sell religious pamphlets door-to-door. They were arrested for doing so without having a license.

Plaintiff's argument

Distributing pamphlets is an integral part of religious practice for Jehovah's Witnesses. Thus, requiring a license makes it so they have to pay to act according to their religion. It should not be expected of them to give all pamphlets away for free, because like all organizations, religions need money to operate.

Defense's argument

Because the pamphlets are sold, instead of freely distributed, the Jehovah's Witnesses are engaging in commercial activity, which requires the license. Besides, plenty of religious activity is still taxed, like income tax for a religious leader.

Your decision:

Why?:

Case 3: Braunfeld v. Brown (1961)

The situation

Abraham Braunfeld, an Orthodox Jew living in Philadelphia, owns a store. He closes the store every Saturday, so he can observe *shabbat*, the Jewish day of rest. In 1959, Pennsylvania passed a law, known as a Sunday law, which requires all stores to close on Sundays to have a uniform day of rest.

Plaintiff's argument

It is not fair for Braunfeld to have to close two days a week, while other shop owners only have to close one day a week. Since he is in direct competition with shops owned by non-Jews, his competitors have an advantage over him. He also argues that if more people followed a religion with a day of rest on Saturday, then the Sunday law would not have passed.

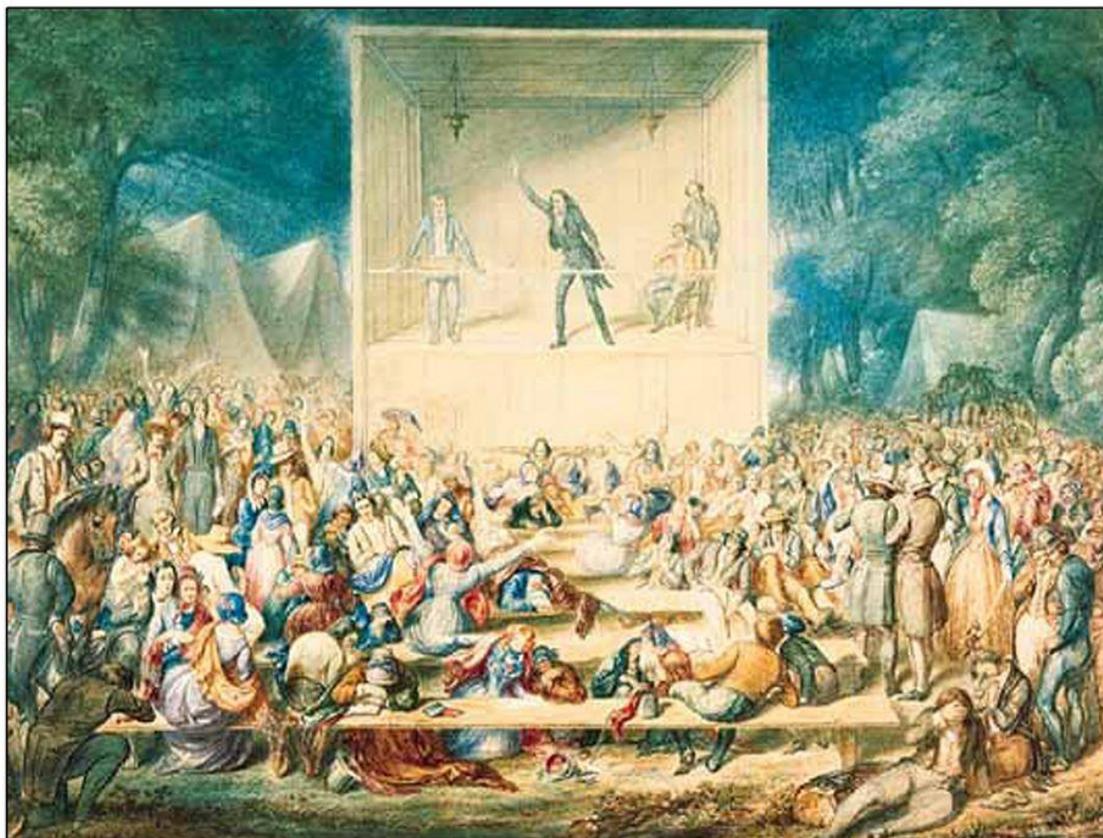
Defense's argument

The Sunday law has nothing to do with religion, but just helps to establish a uniform day of rest for all Pennsylvanians. If Braunfeld doesn't want to close his shop for two days to follow both his religion and the law, he can choose a different occupation.

Your decision:

Why?:

LESSON 2

Document 1: *Religious Camp Meeting* by J. Maze Burbank (1839)

Document 2: Hymn #11

STOP, poor sinner! stop and think,
 Before you farther go!
 Can you sport upon the brink
 Of everlasting woe?
 Hell beneath is gaping wide,
 Vengeance waits the dread command;
 Soon he'll stop your sport and pride,
 And sink you with the damn'd.
 Then be entreated now to stop;
 For unless you warning take,
 Ere you are aware you'll drop
 Into a burning lake.

Say, have you an arm like God,
 That you his will oppose?
 Fear you not that iron rod
 With which he breaks his foes?
 Can you stand in that great day,
 When he judgment will proclaim ?
 When the earth shall melt away
 Like wax before the flame ?

Ghastly death shall quickly come,
 And drag you to the bar;
 Then to hear your awful doom
 Will fill you with despair:
 All your sins around you'll crowd—
 Sins of a blood-crimson dye;
 Each for vengeance crying loud:
 And what will you reply?

Though your heart be made of steel,
 Your forehead lined with brass,
 God at length will make you feel,
 He will not let you pass;
 Sinners then in vain will call,
 (Though they now despise his grace,)
 “Rocks and mountains on us fall,
 And hide us from his face.”

But as yet there is a hope,
 You may his mercy know:
 Though his arm is lifted up,
 He still forbears the blow :
 ‘Twas for sinners Jesus died,
 Sinners he invites to come:
 None that come shall be denied,
 He says, “There still is room.”

Historical Context

This hymn, or sung prayer, comes from *The Camp-Meeting Chorister* published in 1830. The hymnal is divided into many sections by theme, which includes atonement, warfare against sin, rejoicing, and trusting in grace. This hymn comes from a section on “inviting,” which focuses around convincing the listener to convert to Christianity.

Document 3: Report of the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society (1835)

While we feebly put forth a diminished strength to relieve the cravings of nature we would suggest the wish that our abilities might be directed to a more pressing need - the mental impoverishment of those who are rising to take their place among the thousands of Israel scattered throughout the facilities of the earth.

The lack of education shuts the door of advancement - which an Israelite might obtain in this country - and the sum of our highest ambition may even be the wiping off of that stigma, when enlightened Jews mingle with the inhabitants of the land respecting their own laws and practicing the virtues required of the chosen people of God. The grain must be sown before the harvest can be reaped and if we are only employed in the humblest occupation of preparing the soil for future seasons of prosperity - our labor will not be lost to that all seeing eye that searcheth out the smallest seed of good.

Historical context

Rebecca Gratz helped found the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society (FHBS) in 1819. This organization provided food, shelter, and other resources for low-income Jewish women in Philadelphia. As executive secretary, she published annual reports on the preceding year as well as future plans.

Worksheet 1: Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz, October 28, 1833

I received a note from one of my neighbours a few days ago, requesting the loan of my Bible, as she found according to hers the time was near at hand when the Jews would be gathered to their own land. On returning it, she expressed in another note her joy at finding my Bible the same as hers. She begged me not to let the light that was in me be darkness, but daily to examine myself and have regard to my soul, by studying the scriptures etc. She is so earnest that I cannot help being obliged to her, though she sent me more books than I can read, and should try to canonize herself by my conversion. Thank God I have the law & the prophets and am willing to hear them.

Historical context

Rebecca Gratz, who is Jewish, has a close relationship with her sister-in-law, Maria Gist Gratz, who is Christian. Rebecca Gratz maintains a wide circle of friends who are both Jewish and Christian. Because of this, she often faced pressures to convert from her Christian friends, who thought that proselytizing was a way to help their friend.

What is happening in this letter? Try and reconstruct the notes that Rebecca Gratz's neighbor wrote her. What does she want Gratz to do? How does Gratz respond?

Gratz concludes her story by saying she's grateful she's "willing to hear" the law and the prophets. What do you think this means? How does this help her deal with her neighbor?

Caption 1 (Rebecca Gratz's POV):

Caption 2 (Gratz's neighbor's POV):

Caption 3: (your POV):

Worksheet 2: The Teachers' and Parents' Assistant: Thirteen Lessons Conveying to Uninformed Minds the First Ideas of God and His Attributes, by An American Jewess, 1845

TO THE PUBLIC.

This little book has been written expressly for the benefit of the rising generation of Israel, by assisting mothers and teachers in the duty of imparting to their minds the first ideas of the Deity. As, however, it contains nothing national, and is only designed to teach those first grand truths, in the contemplation of which all sects and denominations melt down into one great mass of God-adoring believers, it is hoped that in this liberal and enlightened age and country, the mere fact of its having been composed by a Jewess, for the instruction of Jewish children, will not cause it, if otherwise approved, to be rejected by the Christian community. The writer would gladly feel it in her power to discharge ever so small a fraction of the debt of gratitude that her nation is under to Christian writers.

Historical Context

The Teachers' and Parents' Assistant was published in Philadelphia in 1845. Supposedly written by an anonymous Jewish educator who likely worked in Rebecca Gratz's Sunday school, it was published with a preface by Isaac Leeser, a famous rabbi (religious leader). The book offers guidance for teachers and parents for how to initiate teaching a child about religious subjects for the first time.

Why do you think the preface specifies this book "contains nothing national"?

Why do you think the author had to write this preface for her book?

Caption 1 (the author's POV):

Caption 2 (the public's POV):

Caption 3: (your POV):

Worksheet 3: Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz, February 19, 1837

I can hardly tell you my dear sister how happy I was to receive your letter on Friday. . . every topic in your letter is full of interest to me. . .

Since I last wrote I have been to a party where I met Mr Furness, and at his church where I heard an excellent sermon from Mr Dewey. Mr Furness told me he & I ought to be unfriendly to each other, according to the usual system of mankind — because in religion we were not very different, and yet not alike. I told him that I claimed the privilege of not being unfriendly to anyone’s religion, even though I am still firmly attached to my own. I cannot comprehend why the worship of God should be so fertile of ill will on earth. . .

Adieu Beloved Maria, ever your devoted,

RG

Historical context

Rebecca Gratz, who is Jewish, has a close relationship with her sister-in-law, Maria Gist Gratz, who is Christian. Rebecca Gratz maintains a wide circle of friends who are both Jewish and Christian, and she enjoys discussing what is similar and different about their respective religions.

What does Mr. Furness say is “the usual system of mankind”? Does Gratz agree or disagree with him?

How do you think you should treat others who are “not very different and yet not alike”?

Caption 1 (Rebecca Gratz’s POV):

Caption 2 (Maria Gist Gratz’s POV):

Caption 3: (your POV):

APPENDIX 2

RELIGION FACT SHEETS

Lesson 1

Jehovah's Witnesses

Remember: Religion is personal! While the information below applies to many Jehovah's Witnesses, many individuals, families, and communities might have different beliefs, practices, or traditions.

Historical Origins:

In 1860, a Bible study class in Pittsburgh, led by Charles Taze Russell. The class began to develop a systematic and literal interpretation of the Bible, and they realized that contemporary Christianity was very different from how it was described in the Bible. They began to publish their findings and promote what they considered a more "authentic" way of Christian life.

U.S. Population:

approx. 1,200,000

World Population:

approx. 8,000,000

Sacred Texts:

Because Jehovah's Witnesses are a type of Christian, their main sacred text is the Bible, including the Old Testament and New Testament. Jehovah's Witnesses also publish their beliefs in pamphlets that they distribute to others, such as *The Watchtower*. However, these pamphlets are not considered to be sacred.

Major Beliefs and Practices:

Jehovah's Witnesses try to live their lives according to the Bible as much as possible. For most Jehovah's Witnesses, this can include believing in God and the Bible, avoiding temptation of sin, and warning others of the Armageddon and the Earthly return of Jesus, who Jehovah's Witnesses consider to be the son of God. They also try to help others live what they see as a more Bible-based way of life as well, so most Jehovah's Witnesses will go door-to-door to share their beliefs.

Have a Holiday:

Because the Bible doesn't mention any religious or secular holidays such as Christmas, Easter, or birthdays, Jehovah's Witnesses do not include them in their Bible-based way of life.

Orthodox Judaism

Remember: Religion is personal! While the information below applies to many Orthodox Jews, many individuals, families, and communities might have different beliefs, practices, or traditions.

Historical Origins:

Judaism is an ancient religion that is said to have existed for almost 6,000 years. It is also an ethnic group which, due to centuries of discrimination and exile, has spread all over the world. To avoid or prevent discrimination, Jews have tried to assimilate to the cultures they live in. Orthodox Judaism, developed in Germany in the mid-1800s, is a reaction against that drive towards assimilation, trying to keep practice Judaism the way it's thought to have been for generations.

U.S. Population:

approx 530,000

World Population:

While the way denominations are defined varies by country, there are approx. 14.4 million Jews in the world.

Sacred Texts:

Jews read from the *Torah* (Hebrew: תורה, “teaching”), which many Christians also read as the Old Testament. This text, believed to have been written by Moses through divine revelation, contains the ancient history of the Jews and laws for how to behave in everyday life. There's also the Oral *Torah*, which contains the many debates and interpretations of rabbis (Jewish religious leaders) throughout the centuries.

Some Beliefs and Practices:

Jews believe in one God who wants humans to behave well. Unlike other religions that focus on beliefs, Judaism focuses on deeds, emphasizing being a good person. This can include helping others, not gossiping, and studying. Other deeds involve food restrictions, such as avoiding pork, and modest clothing. Orthodox Jews typically follow these *mitzvot* (Hebrew: מצוות, “commandments”) more closely, while other denominations might interpret them more broadly.

Have a Holiday:

Every week from Friday night to Saturday, Jews celebrate *shabbat* (Hebrew: שבת, “rest”), a day of rest to honor how God rested after creating the world in six days. Jews typically go to synagogue (house of worship), read from the Torah, spend time with friends and family, and relax. Jews typically do not work on *shabbat* – and many Jews interpret “no work” to include no writing, cooking, or using electricity.

Quakerism

Remember: Religion is personal! While the information below applies to many Quakers, many individuals, families, and communities might have different beliefs, practices, or traditions.

Historical Origins:

Quakers belong to the Society of Friends, an English religious society founded in 1648 by George Fox. Because England had an established religion, the Church of England, English officials and clergy thought the Quakers were subversive and jailed them. Many Quakers began immigrating to the American colonies in the mid-1600s to escape persecution.

U.S. Population:

approx 87,000

World Population:

approx 359,000

Sacred Texts:

While many Quakers read the Christian Bible, most do not consider it to be the final word of God. Individual Quakers typically interpret the Bible in very different ways, ranging from the literal to the metaphorical, according to their own Inward Light.

Major Beliefs and Practices:

Quakers typically believe that every single person can have their own direct relationship with God, with no need for clergy or other religious leaders. Quakers call the Divine, and their relationship with it, many different names including Inward Light. Quakers believe that in this Inward Light, all people are equal, regardless of gender, race, class, ability, or other qualities.

Have a Holiday:

Most Quakers do not celebrate Christian holidays like Christmas and Easter, and instead believe that every day should be a "holy day." However, more recently, some Quakers might celebrate a low-key version of those holidays.

Lesson 2

Evangelical Christianity

Remember: Religion is personal! While the information below applies to many evangelical Christians, many individuals, families, and communities might have different beliefs, practices, or traditions.

Historical Origins:

Evangelical Christianity, or Evangelicalism, first grew to prominence during what we now call the First Great Awakening, which occurred in parts of New England and Europe during the 1730s. Preachers such as Jonathan Edwards inspired Christians of many denominations to embrace a more faithful and observant way of life. Since then, there have been four Great Awakening periods (1730-1755, 1790-1840, 1855-1900, 1960-1980) that all encouraged Christians to have a more meaningful relationship with their religion.

U.S. Population:

approx. 285,000,000

World Population:

approx. 285,000

Sacred Texts:

Evangelical Christians read the Christian Bible, which includes the Old Testament and New Testament. They typically have a literal interpretation of the Bible.

Major Beliefs and Practices:

Evangelicalism is a form of Protestant Christianity that places emphasis on personal transformation through being “born again,” or spiritual rebirth after developing a personal relationship with Jesus, who Christians believe is the Son of God. There are four major aspects of evangelical belief: helping others achieve salvation through conversion, literal interpretation of the Bible, atoning for one’s sins, and spreading the “good news” about why people should accept Jesus as savior.

Have a Holiday:

Each year around early spring, many Christians, including evangelicals, celebrate Easter. This holiday celebrates the resurrection of Jesus three days after being fatally crucified by the Romans. In the 40 days leading up to Easter, Christians celebrate Lent, which is a time of fasting and sacrifice. Evangelical Christians typically celebrate Easter by going to church, reading from the Bible, and celebrating eternal life that comes after death.

Judaism

Remember: Religion is personal! While the information below applies to many Jews, many individuals, families, and communities might have different beliefs, practices, or traditions.

Historical Origins:

Judaism is an ancient religion that is said to have existed for almost 6,000 years. It is also an ethnic group which, due to centuries of discrimination and exile, has spread all over the world. The first Jewish community immigrated to the American colonies in 1654.

U.S. Population:

approx. 5.3 million

World Population:

approx. 14.4 million

Sacred Texts:

Jews read from the *Torah* (Hebrew: תורה, “teaching”), which many Christians also read as the Old Testament. This text, believed to have been written by Moses through divine revelation, contains the ancient history of the Jews and laws for how to behave in everyday life. There’s also the Oral *Torah*, which contains the many debates and interpretations of rabbis (Jewish religious leaders) throughout the centuries.

Some Beliefs and Practices:

Jews believe in one God who wants humans to behave well. Unlike other religions that focus on beliefs, Judaism focuses on deeds, putting emphasis on being a good person. This can include helping others in need, not gossiping, and studying. Other deeds involve food restrictions, such as avoiding pork, and modest clothing.

Have a Holiday:

Rebecca Gratz educated her Christian sister-in-law on many Jewish holidays and rituals. In one letter, dated September 21, 1833, Gratz describes Yom Kippur (Hebrew: יום כיפור, “Day of Atonement”), which usually falls in September or October. One of the holiest days in the Jewish calendar, many Jews spend the day fasting and remembering the past year. It is said that on Yom Kippur, Jews are written into the Book of Life, so they typically ask for forgiveness for any harm caused over the past year. Most Jews observing Yom Kippur fast and end the holiday with a big meal.