



Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

Rulership and Justice, Before Islam

Jennie Myers, Research Associate, University of Chicago

Lesson Plan 2:

Should Church and State be Separated?

General Description of Lesson Plan: Students will analyze the fundamental American political principle of separation of church and state by researching the impact of religion in ancient rulership.

Created By: Blake Noel, Bronzeville Scholastic Institute, Chicago, IL

Subject Area(s): History, World Studies, Political Science

For Grade Level(s): 8-12

Time Needed: 1-5 class periods

Outcomes/Objectives:

Students will read and take notes on the module. Students will analyze the impact of religion on ancient and modern politics. Students will be able to answer the essential question in a written response.

Materials: Rulership and Justice, Before Islam module, notes

Suggested Procedure(s):

Part 1: Have students discuss the internal logic of separating church and state through a bell ringer activity. Bell ringers are short questions that students write a response for and discuss during the first few minutes of class. Have students read and take notes on the module, paying extra attention to the Divine Kingship section and all associated links. Students should be allowed to take notes in a variety of formats to develop familiarity and organization; depending on the grade-level outline notes might be good for these texts.

Part 2: Ask students how Near Eastern rulers used religion; focusing their attention on legitimacy and control. Now ask students to imagine the practical realities of having a ‘God-King,’ for instance, making offerings or obeying orders without questions. Could you have a democracy with a divine ruler? How do modern religious states treat their citizenry? Would they want to live under a king?

For homework, have students find examples of religion in current politics from the media. Ask them to bring articles, images, advertisements, etc for the next class.

Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

Lesson Plan 2: Should Church and State be Separated?

Part 3: Have students share their examples within small, rotating groups. Have them sit with 2-4 peers and give each a minute to discuss his/her homework, then leave a minute at the end for a wrap-up. After the allotted time, have the students stand and form a new group, with new partners. Repeat the process no more than three times to ensure that students stay on task. While in groups, students should be presenting their examples as well as keeping a graphic organizer to record the overall facts of each example and whether they believe religion played a positive or negative role in the specific political situation. Once they have participated in several groups, have them analyze their organizers to find if religion more often played a positive role. Be sure to stress that laws should be universal as a means of combating the tendency not see the problems with one's own religious view. As an example, ask students if they'd want to live in an animistic culture that promotes scarification or mutilation. Changing the cultural paradigm will promote understanding. Conclude the activity by having students discuss the impact of religion on the Bush Administration, as he admittedly followed his religious guidelines, and whether they believe it was positive or negative.

Part 4: Have students construct a written response to the guiding questions, utilizing examples from their notes, homework, graphic organizer, and discussions. Allow them to use all the work they've done thus far.

Evaluation/Assessment Strategies: All the work from this lesson can be graded, including the bell ringer, discussions, notes, homework, graphic organizer, and written responses. Ideally, it can all be collected on the day they turn in the written response.

Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

Lesson Plan 2: Should Church and State be Separated?

Evaluation Rubric:

6+1 Trait Writing Model: Should Church and State be Separated?

Teacher Name: Blake Noel _____

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Focus on Topic (Content)	There is one clear, well-focused topic. Main idea stands out and is supported by detailed information.	Main idea is clear but the supporting information is general.	Main idea is somewhat clear but there is a need for more supporting information.	The main idea is not clear. There is a seemingly random collection of information.
Accuracy of Facts (Content)	All supportive facts are reported accurately.	Almost all supportive facts are reported accurately.	Most supportive facts are reported accurately.	NO facts are reported OR most are inaccurately reported.
Sources (Content)	All sources used for quotes and facts are credible and cited correctly.	All sources used for quotes and facts are credible and most are cited correctly.	Most sources used for quotes and facts are credible and cited correctly.	Many sources used for quotes and facts are less than credible (suspect) and/or are not cited correctly.
Conclusion (Organization)	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader with a feeling that they understand what the writer is "getting at."	The conclusion is recognizable and ties up almost all the loose ends.	The conclusion is recognizable, but does not tie up several loose ends.	There is no clear conclusion, the paper just ends.

Use these guiding questions to spur discussion in your classroom:

1. Should Church and State be separated?
2. What is the difference between living in a kingdom and living in a democracy? Which would you rather live under?
3. Can a theocracy ever be a good thing?