

World Religions Vocabulary

Chapter 11

The Origins of Judaism

Torah: Judaism's most sacred text, consisting of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible

Israelite: An early name for the Jewish people

Judaism: The first religion to worship one God, developed among the ancient Israelites

Tradition: an inherited or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior

Israel: the Israelites' kingdom; divided about 930 B.C.E. into two kingdoms called Judah and Israel

Slavery: The State of a person who is treated as the property of another

Jerusalem: The holiest city of the Jews; Capital of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and then Judah

Covenant: An agreement or promise

Exodus: The escape of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt to freedom.

Ten Commandments: Ten laws and teachings said to have been given to Moses by God.

Chapter 15

Learning About World Religions: Hinduism

Hinduism: A religion that developed in India over many centuries; it traces its roots to older traditions, such as Vedic beliefs and Brahmanism

Vedas: A collection of ancient writing viewed as sacred by many Hindus

Sanskrit: An ancient Indian language

Brahmanism: Ancient ritual traditions in which Brahmins played a key role; it grew out of older Vedic religious beliefs and helped lead to Hinduism

Caste: A class, or group, in Hindu society

Dharma: A belief found in Hinduism and other Indian traditions that a person has a duty or obligation to live an honorable life

Karma: A belief found in Hinduism and other Indian traditions that the good and evil done in a past life determine the nature of the person's next life

Reincarnation: The belief that a person's soul is reborn into a new body after death

Pilgrimage: A journey to a holy place

Chapter 16

Learning About World Religions: Buddhism

Buddha: A Sanskrit word meaning "enlightened;" the name given to the man who founded Buddhism

Ascetic: A person who gives up worldly pleasure

Enlightenment: The state of gaining spiritual insight and finding universal truth; the goal of Buddhism

Alms: goods or money given to the poor

Nirvana: An ideal state of happiness and peace.

Buddhism: The religion founded by Siddhartha, which teaches that life brings suffering that one can escape by seeking nirvana through enlightenment

Four Noble Truths: The four basic doctrines, or principles, of Buddhism

Eightfold Path: A key idea of Buddhism whereby followers should live their lives according to these eight teachings

Chapter 36

The Origins and Spread of Christianity

Christianity: The religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus

Jesus: The founder of Christianity upon whose life and teachings the religion is based

Messiah: A savior who many Jews believe had been promised to them by God

Gospel: An account of the life and teachings of Jesus; four of them are included in the New Testament of the Christian Bible

Disciple: A person who helps spread the religious teachings of another

Parable: A simple story that explains a moral or religious lesson

Resurrection: In Christian belief, Jesus's rise from the dead

Missionary: Someone who tries to convert others to believe in a particular religion or set of beliefs

Constantine: Roman emperor from about 280 to 337 C.E.; the first Roman emperor to become a Christian

Learning About World Religions: Islam

Ramadan: The ninth month of the Muslim year, during which strict fasting is observed from sunrise to sunset

Eid al-Fitr: The Muslim festival marking the end of the fast of Ramadan.

Quran: Holy book of the Islamic religion.

Allah: The name of God among Muslims (and Arab Christians).

Kaaba: A shrine in Mecca that is the most important Islamic holy site.

Hajj: Pilgrimage made by Muslims to the holy city of Mecca.

Mosque: Islamic house of worship.

