

World Religions in Greater Indianapolis Teaching Module

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Humanities Discipline: World History

Date: February 25, 2016

World Religion: Christianity

Teaching Module Title: Christianity in America

Teaching Module Goals:

1. Introduce students to the historical background to Christian immigration to North America.
2. Examine the cultural and religious environment that led to the spread of Christianity in North America.
3. Familiarize students with the basic historical events related to Christian scripture.

Assigned Readings and/or Websites:

Duiker and Spielvogel, Chapter 7, pp 180-183, "Andalusia: A Muslim Outpost in Europe"

Duiker and Spielvogel, Chapter 14, pp 357-359, 'A New Player: Europe'

"U.S. History: Pre-Columbian to the new Millenium", <http://www.ushistory.org/us/25f.asp>

American River ganges by Thomas Nast (1871) [http:// thomasnastcartoons.com/irish-catholic.../the-american-river-ganges-1871](http://thomasnastcartoons.com/irish-catholic.../the-american-river-ganges-1871)

Study Questions and/or Discussions Prompts for Students:

1. What was the cultural background of the first Christians in America?
2. What was the nature of the relations between Catholic and Protestant Europeans at the time of colonization?
3. How did these relations affect Christian interactions in the English colonies and then the United States?
4. How were Irish immigrants received in the United States, and how did they respond?
5. What was the reaction of many Americans to Catholic education in the United States?

Written Assignments and/or other Assessment Instruments:

Come to class with written responses to these questions. We will discuss the answers together and have a brief lecture. After the classroom discussion, students will be assigned a one-page paper demonstrating their learning regarding Christian immigration to the United States.

Important points to stress in classroom discussion:

The *Reconquista* in Iberia and the various religious wars in Europe led to a colonial mindset of denominational dominance in North America.

Protestant domination of the English colonies and the United States led to suspicion and suppression of non-Protestants, including Catholics, Jews, and others. Job discrimination was rampant.

Irish and other Catholic immigrants responded to such discrimination by building Catholic institutions (schools, churches, hospitals, etc.). Often these were viewed with suspicion by non-Catholics.

Irish Catholics served in the military (both Union and Confederate) and in public service (police and fire fighting) in numbers well beyond their general representation.