

Youth for Christ

National Juvenile Justice Leadership Team

Understanding Different Religious Viewpoints

What is a Worldview

- A worldview is the framework by which we view reality and make sense of life and the world
- “It’s an ideology, philosophy, theology, movement or religion that provides an overarching approach to understanding God, the world and man’s relations to God and the world (David Noebel, *Understanding the Times*)”
- Whether conscious or subconscious, everyone has a *worldview*. A personal *worldview* is a combination of all you believe to be true, and what you believe to be true, and what you believe becomes the driving force behind every emotion, decision and action (economics, theology, social order, politics...ect)
- Example: Say you bought in to the idea that *Beauty is in the eye of the beholder* (secular relative truth) as opposed to beauty as defined by God's purity and creativity (absolute truth). Then any art piece, no matter how vulgar or abstract, would be considered "art," a creation of beauty.

Biblical Worldview

- A biblical worldview is based on the infallible Word of God. When you believe the Bible is entirely true, then you allow it to be the foundation of everything you say and do
- YFC holds this worldview

This is not about winning

- Conversations about religion is not about attacking/arguing with teens you work with (who do not hold to the same worldview), it is about *understanding the teens* you work with
- Respect given is respect earned
 - "...always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15)"
- Understanding the worldview of a young person does not only demonstrate love and respect, but also stages an opportunity to share the life-changing message of the one and only true living God
 - "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone (Colossians 4:5-6)"

Popular trends among young people

- “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it, but small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it (Matthew 7:13)”

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY 101

1. This red thread-like bracelet is symbolic for "receiving spiritual side" and is often worn by what group of people
A. Buddhists B. Scientologists C. Jews D. Atheists 
2. This cult/religion considers marijuana to be "wisdom weed"
A. Mormonism B. Rastafarianism C. Christian Science D. New Age
3. Islam considers Muhammad to be the final "seal" of many prophets sent by Allah
True or False
4. The "5-pointed star" is a pagan symbol for water, earth, fire, air and _____ 
5. Rihanna, Jay-Z and Kanye West are key players in
A. Illuminati B. Rastafarianism C. New Age Mysticism D. Scientology
6. Kabbalah believes that everyone is given the secret knowledge from God as to the "true" meanings of scripture
True or False
7. What is not a belief for Wiccan/Paganism
A. Reverence for nature B. Witchcraft C. Sorcery D. Animal sacrifice
E. Not gender specific F. Ritualistic G. "Cursing enemies"
8. The Illuminati base their cult on what two ideas
A. The occult (magic rituals) B. Economy C. Fame D. Sacrifice 
9. Although it has gained popularity over the years, the original purpose behind "dreads" was to "mock" the straight hair of Caucasians
True or False
10. Muslims reject the Trinity
True or False
11. "Eliminating suffering" is the central purpose of this religion
A. Hinduism B. New Age C. Mormonism D. Buddhism
12. Agnosticism does not deny the existence of God, but believes it is impossible to
A. Live for God B. To know whether there is a God C. To be loved by God

Kabbalah

- *A mystical Jewish tradition meaning to "receive"*
- *Refers to revelation from God received by Jews and passed to succeeding generations*
- *Believing that only a 'select few' were giving the secret knowledge from God as to the "true" meanings of scripture*
- *Denies the deity (divine character) of Christ*
- *Pantheistic (equality of humans and animals)*
- *The red (thread like) bracelet is a folk custom among Jews to ward off misfortune; symbolic of "receiving" spiritual side*
- *Madonna and Michael Jackson are/were key players*
- *What the Bible says*
 - *"...asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight that you might grow in your knowledge of God (Ephesians 1:17)"*
 - *"But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God's deepest secrets (1 Corinthians 2:10)"*

Wiccan/Paganism

- Means to “bend or shape nature” to your service
- Live by one central rule called, The Rede which says, “Harm no one, do what you will”
- Neo-paganism is a loosely defined system of worshipping nature and gods of nature
- Occultist beliefs such as astrology, divination, and magic are based on “hidden knowledge” about the universe and its mysterious forces
 - Revere nature
 - Witchcraft
 - Not all “curse enemies” (white witches)
 - Ritualistic
 - Sorcery
 - Contrary to popular belief, not gender specific
- What the Bible says
 - “Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the Lord your God (Leviticus 19:31)”
 - “Someone may say to you, “Let’s ask the mediums and those who consult the spirits of the dead. With their whisperings and mutterings, they will tell us what to do.” But shouldn’t people ask God for guidance (Isaiah 8:19)”

Buddhism

- Believe that one can reach “enlightenment”
- The purpose in life is to eliminate suffering
- Believe life is a dream, when you die, you return to earth
- Hold to 4 noble truths:
 - Suffering
 - Cause of suffering
 - Truth of the end of suffering
 - The truth to the path that frees us from suffering
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- Buddha taught that humans ran after things that did not have lasting happiness, resulting in “suffering”
- What the Bible says
 - “There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death (Proverbs 14:12)”
 - “I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to anyone else, not share my praise with carved idols (Isaiah 42:8)”

Islam

- Followers are called Muslim
- Works-oriented
- Believes that when they need forgiveness, it is simply merited
- They don't believe that Jesus is the son of God
- They revere Muhammad as a special messenger/prophet of God
- Any criticism against Islam is a criminal offense and could be punishable by death
 - Questioning Islam is not permissible
 - They don't want the idiosyncrasies and wickedness of their religion exposed
 - They believe in becoming one with Allah
 - Muslim faith believes that God requires you to send your own son to die
- What the Bible says
 - "Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it (Ephesians 2:9)"
 - "And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people (Matthew 24:11)"
 - "It's better that one man should die for his people (John 18:14)"

Illuminati

- Refers to “secret society” or “secret government”
- Power lies in the occult (magic rituals) and the economy-money creates power
- Their main objective is to create a “One World Government”
- Satanic
- Taking over the movie industry and record companies by storm
- Pyramid symbolizes a hierarchy /_ \ money = power
- Key players: Jay-Z, Rihanna, Beyonce
- What the Bible says
 - “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12)”
 - “...so that Satan would not outwit us (2 Corinthians 2:11)”

Rastafarianism

- A cult birthed out of Jamaica
- Named after Ras Tafari, an African emperor
- Based on the belief that black man would never receive fair treatment
- They believe that Ras was God incarnate and deemed as a savior
- Also referred to as “Black Judaism”
- Beliefs/symbols
 - Holy Piby (the central book they live by)
 - “Wisdom weed”-smoking marijuana gives clarity/wisdom
 - Ethiopia is considered to be heaven on earth
 - No such thing as eternal punishment
 - Dreads
 - The original purpose behind dreads was to “mock” the straight hair of Caucasians
 - Bob Marley is a key player
 - What the Bible says
 - “I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another...(Isaiah 42:8)”
 - “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12)”

Other popular worldviews

Atheism

- Does not believe in God or other supreme beings
 - No one is born an atheist- it's a choice
 - Atheism is a belief system-it requires faith that God doesn't exist
- They value logic-share some logical evidence for the redemption of Jesus Christ, and the infinite benefits that it brings

Other popular worldviews

- Agnosticism
 - Does not deny the existence of God, but believes it is impossible to know whether there is a God
 - “For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse (1 Corinthians 8:6)”
 - “...you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul (Deuteronomy 4:29)”