

Earth-Centered Traditions

Lesson 4: Animism, Polytheism, and Monotheism

10.10.2021

Objectives: Explore monotheism, polytheism, and animism as they relate to nature.

Materials: Laptop setup, song lyric handout, blank cards, worship program copies.

Time allotments: Suggested for 50 minute class, followed by 25 minute closing service.

1. Nametags and Graffiti Wall (5 minutes before class begins):

- Make nametags using blank paper, markers, and holders. Youth can create their own unique but LEGIBLE nametag. Make it a regular practice to wear nametags.
- “Graffiti Wall” questions: Write the following on whiteboard. Invite youth as they arrive to grab a marker and weigh in with their responses:
 - ▶ List some words that begin with the prefix “mono-” and “poly-.”
 - ▶ What makes the earth sacred for you?
- Teachers complete attendance sheets.

2. Silly Fun: Guess Who? (5 minutes max)

Give each youth two blank cards to write two little known facts about themselves. (Teachers included, too!) For example: *I was born exactly at midnight, I am ambidextrous, I have gone hiking in the Swiss Alps.* Teacher collects and mixes cards in a basket, then draws one card at a time and reads aloud for youth to guess whose fact it is. (Please don't guess aloud if it's your own card!) See who guesses the most correctly.

3. Chalice Lighting: Light the chalice, saying these words together: “We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith; the light of truth and the warmth of love.”

Teacher reads: (from author and radical environmentalist, Derrick Jensen)

“If we are to survive, we must learn a new way to live, or relearn an old way. There have existed... many cultures whose members refuse to cut the vocal cords of the planet... [These] cultures listen attentively (as though their lives depend on it, which of course they do) to what plants, animals, rocks, rivers, and stars have to say, and that these cultures have been able to do what we can only dream of, which is to live in dynamic equilibrium with the rest of the world.”

4. PowerPoint presentation: Animism, Polytheism, and Monotheism (45 minutes)

Follow the lesson plan in the PowerPoint presentation, with teachers facilitating discussion along the way.

***Note: To help track time, a suggested time allotment for each slide is listed on the upper right corner.**

5. Say goodbye until next time: Extinguish the chalice, saying together: *“May the light of truth and the warmth of love go with us in our hearts.”*

6. Help clean up classroom before leaving: Please keep regular practice of readying classroom for the next class.

- leave lesson plan and all materials organized
- wipe the whiteboard clean
- tables and chairs neatly returned
- nametags collected in Ziploc bag
- leave any comments for RE staff on attendance sheets