

RITUALS IN WORLD RELIGIONS (HRT 3M)

OHASSTA CONFERENCE - NOVEMBER 9, 2007

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The following is a small collection of ideas/assignments/contacts/resources for hands on and reflective experiences in HRT3M. I hope they will be helpful in making this fascinating course more memorable and meaningful for your students.

Resource List:

www.omc.ca

The Ontario Multifaith Council has a wonderful ceremony for *Spiritual Awareness and Care week*, which could be utilized at any time during the course. It is free, downloadable and will take about one full 75 minute period to complete.

www.explorefaith.org

A full and detailed examination of three monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam).

www.worldreligions.ca

This is the Encountering World Religions website, a non-profit organization in Guelph. They offer teacher education summer workshops, class visits with sacred symbols, organize Houses of Worship visits and run ongoing classes for “seekers” of spiritual knowledge.

www.paganlibrary.com/rituals_spells

This site contains the script of the ritual from the OHASSTA conference and a number of others.

www.snowowl.com/rainofsmudging

(yes, it really does have that extra “w” in it!)

A detailed site to explain various different Aboriginal smudging rituals and the symbolism of the variety of herbs that may be used.

www.tanialove.com

This is my yoga teacher’s website and I included it because she has a clear outline of the sun salutation postures, should you wish to learn them or guide your class through them.

www.heartswithwingstheatre.com

www.beliefnet.com

There are many places to find guided meditations online. These are just two of them and BeliefNet has TONS of resources to help you get up to speed on the various different faith groups.

www.jewfaq.org

An unbelievably thorough website that will answer any and every question you might have about Judaism, and in much more detail than you may ever need!

www.artnetwork.com

A spectacularly beautiful set of pictures illustrating the creation of a sand mandala. A must see website if you wish to do the sand mandala assignment with your class.

Judaism

Western Wall Prayer – have your students create a scroll with a prayer on it and display them on the Western Wall of your classroom. If you have students that are uncomfortable with the notion of “praying” suggest they consider it a offering of positive energy into the universe.....Have a gallery walk at a later date and ask them to personally reflect on what they read and how it touched them.

Buddhism

1. After studying the Buddha’s Four Sights, ask your students to write about four significant events in their lives and what they learned from them. It is amazing what some of them will share.

2. Sand Mandala Project – details included in this package

Hinduism

1. Have a yoga teacher visit or go through a yoga video together – one that focuses on relaxation – NOT power yoga! I included my yoga teacher’s web site in this package.

2. An article from Psychology Today (included) focuses on the benefits of meditation. My school just opened a meditation room after a student approached the administration and provided a ream of articles to suggest the positive benefits of this practice. It’s open from 8:20-8:40 each morning and from 12:00-12:20 each lunch hour. We are using one of the seminar rooms in the library so there is an assumption of some quiet already. Student Success dollars will be purchasing cushions, guided meditation cd’s and some focal point items. It is supervised by staff completely voluntarily and most of us feel it will force us to practice more often than we do!

Aboriginal Spirituality

1. Building a Medicine wheel activity is included in this package.

2. The Wheel of Life Activity is included as well.

3. Reference to an information site on smudging is mentioned earlier.

4. The Sacred Bundle Project is simply: It must contain a minimum of 5 items; you must provide a container to hold the items (ideally something that compliments the theme of your bundle or has some meaning to you); a thoughtful write-up to explain each item, it’s significance to you and why it help you fell good/happy/peaceful (min. of 50 words for each write-up). I always include the suggestion to use natural materials BUT nothing illegal!

Early Religions

1. The script for the Neo-Pagan Moon Goddess Ceremony you participated in is included in this package.

2. Have a Taoist Tai Chi teacher visit and guide them through some of the movements then watch them demonstrate the whole series together.

Islam

1. I think it is imperative in this day and age to ensure every student steps foot inside a mosque to build understanding and respect.

2. if you are somewhat lax about food and drink in class, as I am, try fasting with your class for a month during your HRT3M class. I found it FAR more difficult than the students!

Film List:

And because I LOVE films and connecting them to curriculum, here is a brief list of some good ones I've used that students have generally not seen but enjoyed....

1. **Eve and Fire Horse** – Christianity, Confusionism and Canadian immigration converge in the 1970's
2. **Kadosh** (Israeli film with a great opening 10 minutes to show an Orthodox Jewish man preparing/dressing for his day). You should preview due to some sexual content, however it is a fascinating glimpse into Orthodox Jewish life.
3. **Seven Years in Tibet** (and not just because Mr. Pitt is in it) – a fantastic juxtaposition of Buddhist and Western culture
4. **Sunshine** – an evolution of Jewish culture and identity in Eastern Europe pre, during and post World war two. Ralph Fiennes plays three characters. Exceptionally acted, however there are a couple of graphic sex scenes. You must preview it and know when to skip!
5. **Deepa Mehta's Water** – about child widows in India - with Canada's own Lisa Ray!
6. **A Monsoon Wedding** – Hindu wedding traditions blending with western ideals and family secrets.

The Wheel of Life Activity – Aboriginal Spirituality

Each spoke represents a facet of our lives. Physical Activity, Home and Family, Friends, Spirituality, Part-time work, School, Relationships, Fun and Recreation. Put each of these facets at the end of each spoke and ask your students to plot how they feel about each of these facets. From 0 -10, 0 is the lowest point of satisfaction in the middle of the wheel and 10 signifies total satisfaction on the outer rim of the wheel,

After they have reflected on these things and plotted dots, ask them to join them together – like a dot-to-dot. Likely they will come out with some sort of misshapen circle. This visually illustrates what areas of their life they need to pay more attention to and work on. The ones closest to the outside are doing well and our energies need to be focused on bringing our lives into balance so that we can “roll along” smoothly.



MANDALA

General Info:

Definition:

any formal circular geometric design that contains symbols of the universe and its powers.

Significance of objects within mandala:

- conveyed by shape, size, colour, symbolism, etc.
- objects can be abstract designs or specific drawings of people, places, ideas, ...

In Tibetan Buddhism:

Meaning: - (Sanskrit) *mandala* means centre, circle

- Symbolic representation of universe; "cosmogram" of world in harmony

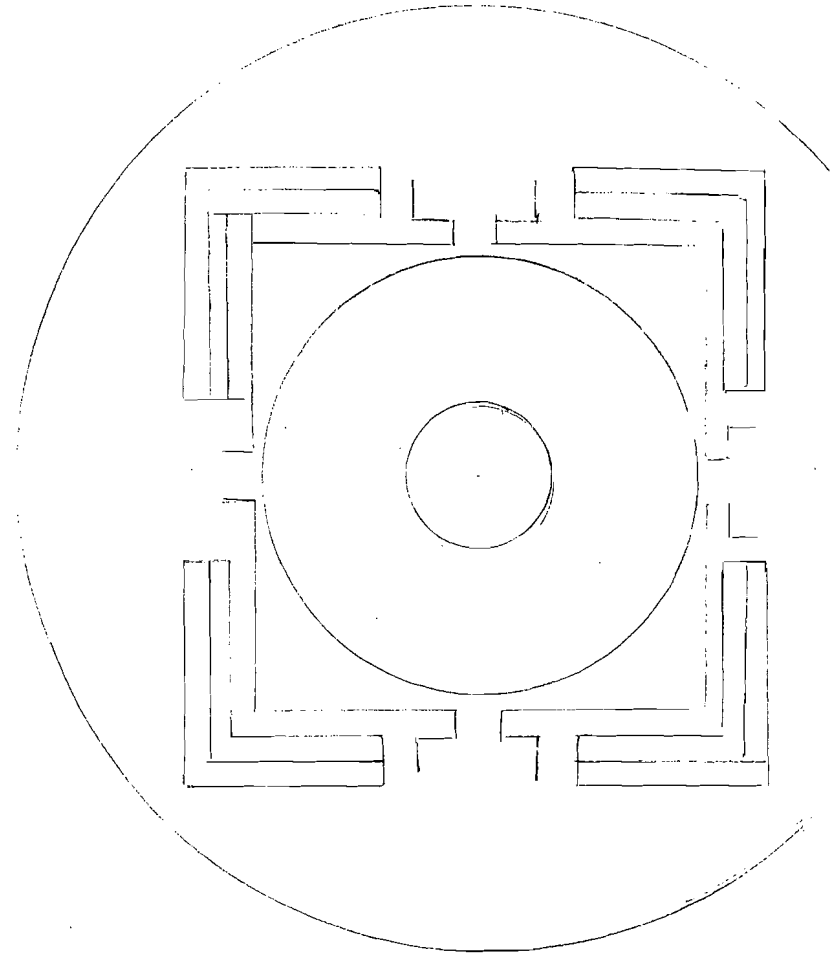
Purpose: - meditation tool to guide individual along path of enlightenment
(imaginary palace)

- healing and purification tool: created whenever a need is felt;
- healing energies transmit to environment and all who view it.

Significance of objects within mandala: each object represents some aspect of wisdom, guiding principle, symbolic archetype (recurrent symbol), or overall ideas about the universe.

Procedure: very ritualized

- monks consecrate site with chanting and music, prepare to work collectively
- begin outline drawing of Large Circle, Square within circle, Small Circle in centre
 - ~ Outer Circle- represents model of the universe, world in its divine form
 - ~ Square- map to help ordinary human mind transform into enlightened beings
(4 portals left open act as paths for reaching centre)
 - ~ Inner Circle represents central unifying element, perfect balance
- fill in drawing with variously-coloured sand
- sweep up all sand, discard in flowing water to disperse healing energy



**HRT 3M World Religions
Buddhism Unit, Mandala Project**

Objective:

- a) To understand purpose, philosophy, and method underlying Buddhist sand mandalas.
- b) To experience making a personal sand mandala

Background Information :

1. Show overhead pictures illustrating geometrical symmetry of generic mandala
2. Show overhead notes with corresponding handout on *mandala*:
 - a) general definition and characteristics
 - b) Tibetan Buddhist definition and characteristics.
3. Read *Mandalas*, p. 185, chap. 5, Buddhism, in textbook
4. Project web pages via laptop and data projector showing process of Tibetan monks making, then destroying sand mandalas:
www.artnetwork.com/mandala (click on *construction process*)
www.asia.si.edu/exhibitions/online/mandala (click on *about the mandala* for general info,
mandala animation for time-lapse sequence of steps in construction
www.earthmandalas.com (not Tibetan, but fascinating examples of digital photography
mandalas that show many ideas for building geometrical symmetry)
5. Distribute mandala templates
6. Distribute and explain Mandala Project Instructions (see separate page)

Project:

Students will create their own individual mandala, but will work in groups of 4-5 simply for the sharing of materials. Each group will have one box of materials.

Materials Needed in Boxes:

for each student:

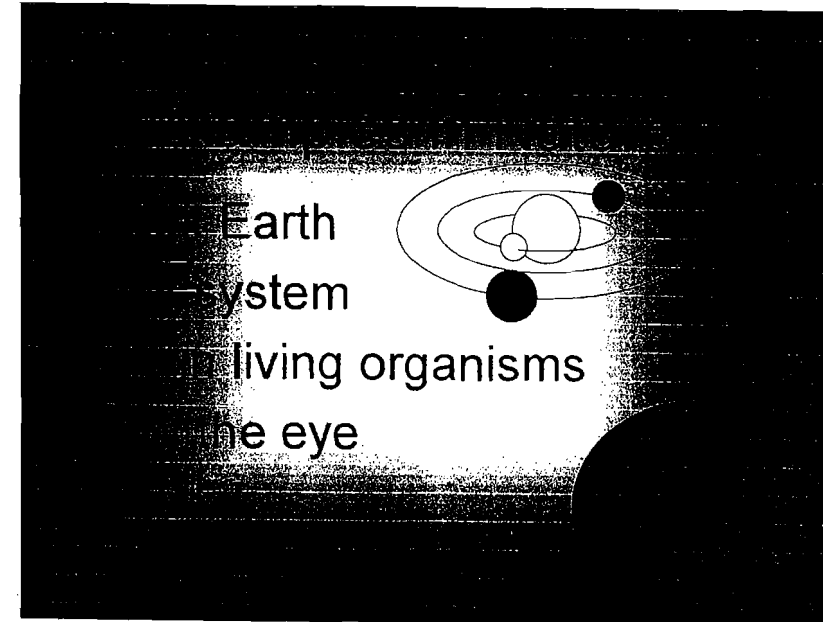
- 8 x 8 foamboard or some other firm surface
- gluestick
- ruler
- straw (to act as *chakpur* (funnel for sand)
- pencil

for each group to share:

- scissors to cut out the mandala template
- jars/bags of sand in various colours to fill in the drawings
- pencil crayons (optional) to draw mandala geometrical and symbolic shapes
- popsicle sticks (optional) to spread the sand onto the mandala
- compass (optional)

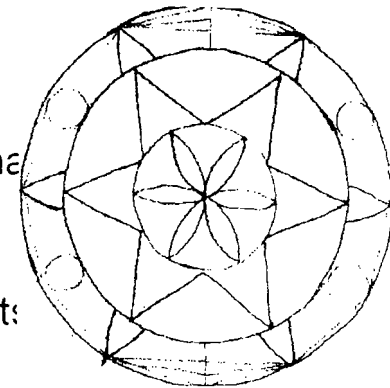
Construction:

1. Students cut out mandala circle, glue it onto foam board
2. Draw mandala lines, symbols, pictures
3. Glue/glitter glue may be used to further define outlines and create 3d border to help hold sand in place
4. Fill in drawings with various colours of sand. Glue stick may be applied first to help sand adhere.



Mandala- The figure

- circular design in layers radiating from the center
- center symbolizes the which is beyond our understanding
- circumference reflects its potential as well as boundaries



The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion. It should transcend a personal God and avoid dogmas and theology. Covering both the natural and the spiritual, it should be based on a religious sense arising from the experience of all things, natural and spiritual as a meaningful unity. If there is any religion that would cope with modern scientific needs, it would be Buddhism.

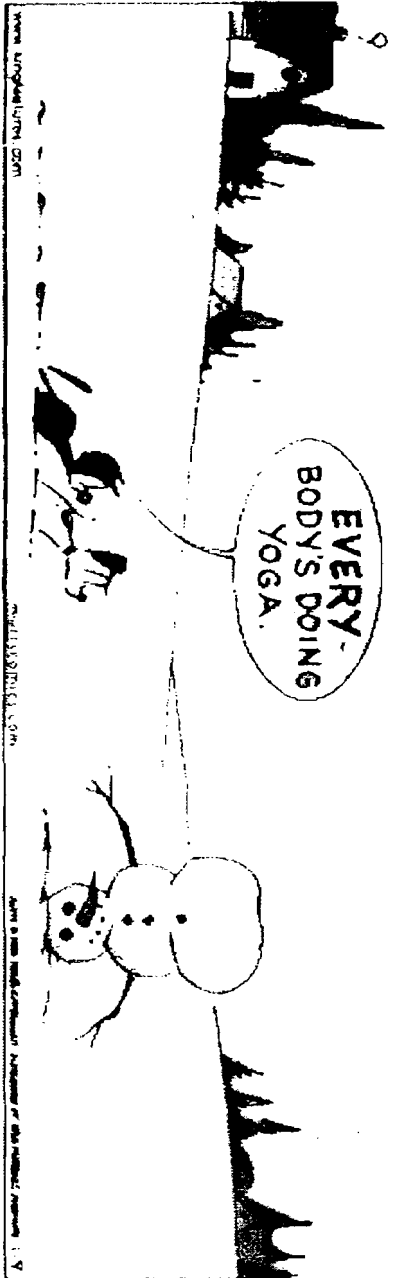
Albert Einstein

● BUILDING A MEDICINE WHEEL ●

A 'standard' Medicine Wheel (if there is such a thing!) consists of between twelve and thirty-six stones. It all depends on the depth of knowledge of the person leading the building of the Wheel.

The breakdown of a thirty-six stone Medicine Wheel is as follows:

- The Centre Stone (stone #1)
contains the essential person - the deepest inner soul. Some post-European descriptions of this stone refer to it as 'The Creator' stone, a concept born out of the notion of a Supreme Being which was imposed by Christianity on the belief systems of many First Nations. Ms Thunderbird builds her wheels in the 'old' way, prior to the imposition of Christianity. This stone can also be called the Cosmos or Universe Stone (1);
- Four Directions Stones (stones 2-5): East (Teacher), South (Healer), West (Visionary), North (Warrior) (within these stones are the four colours of human; These stones sit at the four corners of the centre stone.
- Seven stones (stones 6-12) surround the Centre stone, and stand for: Father Sky, Mother Earth, Grandmother Moon, Grandfather Sun, Star Nation, Other Worlds (Planets), Wolf Road (Milky Way);
- Two stones between each Direction on the outer perimeter of the circle:
 - Northeast: Earth Crawlers, Flying Beings (13-15)
 - Southeast: Rooted Beings, Earth Walkers (4 leggeds) (16-17)
 - Southwest: Ancestors, Stone Beings (17-18)
 - Northwest: Rainbow Spirits, Water Beings (19-20)
- Four stones between each direction and the Universe stone, with the "Element" stone closest to the Direction stone:
 - East: Air, Illumination, Wisdom, Clarity (21-24)
 - South: Earth, Spirit, Trust, Love, Growth (25-28)
 - West: Fire, Emotions, Dreams, Experience, Introspection (29-32)
 - North: Water, Body, Physical Cleansing, Purity, Renewal (33-36)



Pagan Ritual For Basic Use

Ed Fitch – retrieved from www.paganlibrary.com/rituals_spells

A circle should be marked on the floor, surrounding those who will participate in the ceremony. An altar is to be set up at the center of the circle. At the center of the altar shall be placed an image of the Goddess, and an incense burner placed in front of it. Behind the image should be a wand fashioned from a willow branch. Candles should be set upon the altar a total of five, since one is to be set at each quarter and one will remain on the altar during the rite.

When all the people are prepared they shall assemble within the circle. The woman acting as priestess shall direct the man who acts as priest to light the candles and incense. She shall then say:

"The presence of the noble Goddess extends everywhere,
Throughout many strange, magical,
And beautiful worlds,
To all places of wilderness, enchantment, and freedom."

She then places a candle at the north and pauses to look outwards, saying:

"The Lady is awesome,
The Powers of death bow before Her."

The person closest to the east takes a candle from the altar and places it at that quarter, saying:

"Our Goddess is a Lady of Joy,
The winds are Her servants."

The person closest to the south takes a candle from the altar and places it at that quarter, saying:

"Our Goddess is a Goddess of Love.
At Her blessings and desire
The sun brings forth life anew."

The person closest to the west takes a candle from the altar and places it at that quarter, saying:

"The seas are the domain of our Serene Lady,
The mysteries of the depths are Hers alone."

The priest then takes the wand, and starting at the north, draws it along the entire circle clockwise back to the north point, saying:

"The circle is sealed, and all herein
Are totally and completely apart
From the outside world,
That we may glorify the Lady whom we adore.
Blessed Be!"

All repeat: "Blessed Be!"

The priest now holds the wand out in salute towards the north for a moment and then hands it to the priestess, who also holds it out in salute. She motions to the group to repeat the following lines after her:

"As above, so below
As the universe, so the soul.
As without, so within.
Blessed and gracious one,
On this day do we consecrate to you
Our bodies,
Our minds,
And our spirits.
Blessed Be!"

*Now is the time for discussion and teaching. Wine and light refreshments may be served. When the meeting has ended, all will stand and silently meditate for a moment. The priestess will then take the wand and tap each candle to put it out, starting at the north and going clockwise around the circle, while saying:

"Our rite draws to its end.
O lovely and gracious Goddess,
Be with each of us as we depart.
The circle is broken!"

*At OHASSTA we did a Moon Goddess ritual to honour the expansion of the universe at the time of the full moon. This ritual may be performed two days on either side of the full moon. The altar should have a beautiful cloth, candles at each point on the compass and one for the goddess in the centre, as well as a variety of special objects honouring the sacred feminine. After casting the circle, pass a special bread and say to your neighbour "May you never be hungry". Passing the wine/juice you say to your neighbour "May you never be thirsty". Once everyone has eaten and drank the time for personal reflection occurs. Place a pencil and small paper under each participant's chair. Have them write down a characteristic, thought or feeling they would like to let go of (anger, fear, an addiction etc.). When their turn comes, they walk clockwise around the circle and burn

their paper, thereby entirely removing it from the universe. Proceed to each member. At that time there is a little more space in their heart and they may invite something positive in. When it is their time they may light their tea candle and meditate on the positive element they would like to invite into their life. You may go around the circle and ask each member if they would like to share what they have invited in. "Tonight I have asked patience/love/kindness/non-judgment etc. into my being." Any individual may pass if they so choose. After the ritual has ended feel free to answer questions and discuss the ritual. When the discussion has ended, and the circle has been broken, each participant may take their candle home to reflect for the coming month.