

"The Jesus Factor" Teacher's Guide

About the Film:

For classes in Social Studies, History, Current Events, and Religion; grade level 9th-12th

As an evangelical Christian, President Bush has something in common with the 46 percent of Americans who describe themselves as being "born again" or having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Often has the president recounted praying about major decisions facing the nation -- but what do we actually know about the rudiments of George Bush's faith? To what extent do the president's spiritual beliefs impact or influence his political decision-making? And how closely do Bush's religious views mirror those of the country's burgeoning -- and politically influential -- evangelical movement?

A Note to Teachers:

"The Jesus Factor" challenges students and teachers to examine the intersection of two strands in American history and culture. From the beginning of the European migration to North America, Christianity has been a powerful influence. Early settlers were fleeing religious intolerance in Europe, but sometimes, in their efforts to ensure their *own* freedom to worship, they clashed with others whose ideas of Christianity were different. Slowly, the acknowledgment of the importance of religion in early colonial and American life began to co-exist, often uneasily, with the idea that the new country that became the United States was, unlike the theocracies left behind in Europe, a secular state.

Whether teachers present this film in classrooms where almost everyone is Christian and goes to the same church on Sundays or in classrooms of Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, or non-believers, the discussion will inevitably evoke questions about the junction between religious faith and politics in a pluralistic society.

Before teachers show the film, "The Jesus Factor," they might want to mention the following examples to raise students' awareness that, though most Americans are Christian, the number of members of other religions continues to increase.

- The 1990s saw the U.S. Navy commission its first Muslim chaplain and open its first mosque.
- There are presently more than 300 temples in Los Angeles, home to the greatest variety of Buddhists in the world.

- There are more American Muslims than there are American Episcopalians, Jews, or Presbyterians.

Source: *A New Religious America* by Diana L. Eck of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University

http://www.pluralism.org/publications/new_religious_america/index.php

LESSON PLANS:

PRE-VIEWING LESSON PLAN:

Understanding Key Concepts and Terms

Concepts and Vocabulary

Students will take a pre-test to determine their knowledge of some terms and key ideas and compare their definitions to those in the glossary.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Students will examine the First Amendment and discuss what they think it means.

Jefferson's Address to the Danbury Baptists (1802)

Students will examine a letter from Thomas Jefferson that lays out his thoughts on separation of church and state.

EXTENDING THE LESSON:

Religion in Colonial and Early America

Students will learn about the role of religion in immigration to the North American continent and the founding of the American Republic.

VIEWING LESSON PLAN:

Student Viewing Guide: Key People to Watch in "The Jesus Factor"

Students will be assigned to take notes from a particular group or participant's perspective while viewing the film.

POST-VIEWING LESSON PLAN:

The Big Picture

Students will explore the different views of people and groups in the film. (Note: This discussion, like all discussions about the film, has the potential to be heated.)

Two Debate Possibilities:

- What does the First Amendment mean today? What *should* it mean?
- Should there be a "wall of separation between church and state"?

EXTENDING THE LESSON:

Faith-Based Initiatives

Students will research faith-based initiatives and write their views about the intersection of religion and policy.

Purchasing the Video

"The Jesus Factor" can be purchased from **ShopPBS for Teachers**.

<http://teacher.shop.pbs.org/home/index.jsp> Also, teachers and students can watch the entire film streamed in its entirety on FRONTLINE's **Web site**. [**<http://www.pbs.org/frontline/shows/jesus>**]

Credits

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PRE-VIEWING LESSON PLAN: Understanding Key Concepts and Terms

Lesson Objectives:

Part One

In this part of the lesson, students will:

- Evaluate their understanding of some key terms and ideas before they view "The Jesus Factor"
- Discuss their sense of these terms and ideas with their classmates
- Compare their definitions to a glossary of terms

Materials Needed:

- A computer with Internet access
- Copies of the Pre-Viewing Student Worksheets: "Key Concepts and Terms" and "A Glossary for Reference"

Time Needed:

Part One of the lesson will take 30-60 minutes, depending upon the students' previous exposure to the terms.

Procedure:

This part of the lesson is divided into three steps:

Step One:

Ask students to explain as many of the terms as they can on the Student Worksheet "Key Concepts and Terms." They should work alone.

Step Two:

After they fill in as many answers as they can, students should compare their definitions with those of their classmates. They may work in groups of three to four or, if the teacher prefers, as a whole class.

Step Three:

Students should then compare their definitions with the definitions provided on the Student Worksheet: "A Glossary for Reference."

Stress to students that throughout the discussion they will return to (and sometimes investigate further) the concepts in the glossary.

Method of Assessment:

Students should write a paragraph that either:

- Describes one idea or concept about which they had been confused or ignorant; or
- Discusses one idea or concept whose meaning surprised them.

Part Two:

Lesson Objectives:

In Part Two of the Pre-Viewing Lesson, students will look closely at the language of the First Amendment and of a letter from Thomas Jefferson that lays out his ideas regarding the separation of church and state.

Materials Needed:

- Computers with Internet access
- Student Worksheet: A Glossary for Reference

Time Needed:

30-45 minutes for discussion; 15-30 minutes for group preparation.

Procedure:

Students should return to Questions #4 and #10 on the Student Worksheet: "A Glossary for Reference." Both the First Amendment and Jefferson's letter are short enough for students to read easily. Explain to students that, despite their brevity, these two documents are often debated at length.

(Note: If time is an issue and the teacher prefers, half the class can do Step One and half the class can do Step Two.)

Step One:

1. Students should read **the First Amendment** aloud in groups of three to four. [URL: <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/data/constitution/amendment01/>]
2. Students should focus on the passage that says: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."
3. As a group, students should write a paraphrase of this First Amendment phrase. The groups should be sure to take into account what "establishment of religion" and "prohibiting the free exercise thereof" mean. Each group should then write its paraphrase on the board.
4. The teacher should facilitate the discussion about the discrepancies in paraphrases that will inevitably appear. For example, teachers might point out:
 - Differences and similarities in the *choice of words* in the students' paraphrases. For example, how do students paraphrase "establishment" and "free exercise thereof"?
 - The emphasis of each paraphrase. For example, does the paraphrase indicate a group's point of view?
 - The prior knowledge each group brought to the exercise.

Step Two:

Note to Teachers: Before presenting this exercise to students, teachers might want to consult **A Wall of Separation**, [<http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danbury.html>] a scholarly article from the Library of Congress Web site that explains the religious and political context in which President Thomas Jefferson wrote his 1802 Letter to the Danbury Baptists.

1. Students should read **Jefferson's letter** aloud in groups of three to four.
[<http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html>]
2. Students should focus on the passage in which Jefferson writes: *"Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State."*
3. As a group and using their own words, students should list at least three important ideas in the passage from the Jefferson letter, being sure to take into account what "building a wall of separation between Church & State" means in the context of the whole passage. Each group should then write its ideas on the board.
4. The teacher should facilitate the discussion of the important ideas.
 - Are there any ideas that all groups included? If so, circle those ideas.
 - Are there any obvious differences? If so, ask the students to discuss the differences.
5. Tell students to copy and save their classmates' paraphrases of the First Amendment and of the important ideas of Jefferson's letter. They should be prepared to use these notes in the Debate and Press Conference activities after they have seen the film.

Method of Assessment:

Participation in classroom activity

"THE JESUS FACTOR" STUDENT WORKSHEET

Key Concepts and Terms

Directions: Write down what you know about the terms, concepts and ideas listed below. For each entry, include if and how you think it fits into American government and society. (The terms appear in alphabetical order.)

- 1) Born-again Christian
- 2) Executive Order
- 3) Evangelical
- 4) First Amendment
- 5) In God We Trust
- 6) Pilgrims
- 7) Pluralism
- 8) Proselytize
- 9) Secular
- 10) Separation of Church and State
- 11) Theocracy

"THE JESUS FACTOR" STUDENT WORKSHEET

A Glossary for Reference

1) Born-again Christian: [n] "a Christian who has experienced a dramatic conversion to faith in Jesus" [Source: <http://www.hyperdictionary.com/dictionary/born-again+Christian>]

Christian: [n] "1. One who professes belief in Jesus as Christ or follows the religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus. 2. One who lives according to the teachings of Jesus." [Source: <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=christian>]

2) Executive Order: [n]

"An executive order is a legally binding edict issued by a member of the executive branch of government, usually the head of that branch." (In the United States, the president is the head of the executive branch.)

The executive branch enforces or executes laws. The power of the executive branch in the United States is limited by the separation of powers with the legislative branch and the judicial branch.

Executive orders have legal force unless they are in conflict with a law approved by the legislature. Under the United States Constitution, this power is given to Congress. Many critics have accused presidents of abusing executive orders, both to make new laws without Congressional approval, and to move existing laws away from their original mandates. Large policy changes with wide-ranging effects have been passed into law through executive order, including the integration of the Armed Forces. Likewise, the Congress may overturn an executive order by passing legislation in conflict with it or refusing to approve funding to enforce it.

[Source: <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/>]

3) Evangelical: [adj] 1: "relating to or being a Christian church believing in personal conversion and the inerrancy of the Bible especially the four Gospels;

Evangelical Christianity: [n] "an ultraconservative evangelical message" 2: "of or pertaining to or in keeping with the Christian gospel especially as in the first four books of the New Testament 3: marked by ardent or zealous enthusiasm for a cause [syn: evangelistic]" [Source: <http://www.hyperdictionary.com/search.aspx?define=evangelical>]

4) First Amendment: [n]

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." [Source: <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/data/constitution/amendment01/>]

5) In God We Trust: "The motto IN GOD WE TRUST was placed on United States coins largely because of the increased religious sentiment existing during

the Civil War." [Source: <http://www.ustreas.gov/education/fact-sheets/currency/in-god-we-trust.html>]

6) Pilgrims: [n] "The Pilgrims were English Separatists who founded Plymouth Colony in New England in 1620. In the first years of the 17th century, small numbers of English Puritans broke away from the Church of England because they felt that it had not completed the work of the Reformation. They committed themselves to a life based on the Bible. The Pilgrims founded the first permanent European settlement in New England. Most of these Separatists were farmers, poorly educated and without social or political standing." [Source: <http://pilgrims.net/plymouth/history/index.htm>]

7) Pluralism: [n] 1. a. "A condition in which numerous distinct ethnic, religious, or cultural groups are present and tolerated within a society."
b. The belief that such a condition is desirable or socially beneficial."
2. Philosophy. a. "The doctrine that reality is composed of many ultimate substances. b. The belief that no single explanatory system or view of reality can account for all the phenomena of life." [Source: <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=pluralism>]

8) Proselytize: [v] intr. 1. "To induce someone to convert to one's own religious faith. 2. To induce someone to join one's own political party or to espouse one's doctrine." v. tr. "To convert (a person) from one belief, doctrine, cause, or faith to another." [Source: <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=proselytize>]

9) Secular: [adj] 1. "Worldly rather than spiritual."
2. "Not specifically relating to religion or to a religious body: secular music." [Source: <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=secular>]

10) Separation of Church and State: This phrase first appeared in a letter that President Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1802 to a group of Baptists in Danbury, Connecticut. The phrase has been a contentious one, involved in many court cases and public debates, in the years that have followed. [Source: <http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html>]

11) Theocracy: [n] "A government ruled by or subject to religious authority."
"Government of a state by the immediate direction or administration of God; hence, the exercise of political authority by priests as representing the Deity."
n. 1. "A political unit governed by a deity (or by officials thought to be divinely guided) 2: the belief in government by divine guidance" [Source: <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=theocracy>]

EXTENDING THE LESSON:

Religion in Colonial and Early America

Lesson Objectives

- Students will learn about the role of religion in immigration to the North American continent.
- Students will learn about religious conflict and intolerance in Colonial America.

Materials Needed:

- Computers with Internet access
- Student Worksheets: "The Role of Religion in the Founding of the American Republic" and "True/False Quiz"

Time Needed:

30 minutes to prepare (can be done for homework) and 30-45 minutes to present information to each other.

Procedure:

If there is time, students should consult the article **Religion and the Founding of the American Republic** from the Library of Congress Web site as background. This site describes the persecution in Europe of various Christian religions by other Christian religions.

[<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel01.html>]

Step One: Working Alone (This could be done for homework)

1. Divide the class into the seven groups listed on Student Worksheet "The Role of Religion in the Founding of the American Republic."
2. All students should read the introduction as assigned in the Student Worksheet.
3. Students should then read the section of the Library of Congress Web site that they have been assigned.
4. Using the Student Worksheet, students should take notes as directed.

Step Two: Comparing Notes

Students should spend 10 minutes in their groups, comparing their understanding of what they have read.

Step Three: Sharing Information

Students should reassemble as a whole class and, sitting with their groups, give an overview of their findings.

Method of Assessment:

Completion of Student Worksheet: "True/False Quiz"

"THE JESUS FACTOR" STUDENT WORKSHEET

The Role of Religion in the Founding of the American Republic

Part One: All students should read the following introduction to "Religion and the Founding of the American Republic" (an online resource of the Library of Congress)

<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/religion.html>

Write (in the box below) a sentence or two discussing: What is the purpose of the Library of Congress exhibit and Web site?

Part Two:

Your teacher will assign you to read ONE of the following sections. (Circle the section that you have been assigned.)

- 1) Religion in Eighteenth-Century America
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel02.html>
- 2) Religion and the American Revolution
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel03.html>
- 3) Religion and the Congress of the Confederation, 1774-89
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel04.html>
- 4) Religion and the State Governments
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel05.html>
- 5) Religion and the Federal Government
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel06.html>
- 6) "The State Becomes the Church"
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel06-2.html>
- 7) Religion and the New Republic
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel07.html>

AFTER you have read the short introduction to the section you were assigned, WRITE (in the box below) two to three sentences summarizing its ideas and/or concerns.

"THE JESUS FACTOR" STUDENT WORKSHEET

True/False Quiz

Directions: Mark each of these statements "true" or "false."

1. From the beginning of the formation of new American governments at both state and national levels, most American statesmen took it for granted that religion was crucial to a republic.
2. The average American rebelling against Britain believed that God supported his cause.
3. In early America, there was a widespread and articulated acceptance of all religions and of non-believers.
4. From the start, formal religious services were prohibited in the official halls of government because they violated "the wall of separation between church and state."
5. Chaplains in the army served Jews and atheists as well as Christians.
6. Indians who converted to Christianity were rewarded by the new government.
7. Nineteenth-century evangelicals believed that converting people to Christianity was good for the nation.
8. After 1776, taxes no longer supported religion.
9. The "Great Awakening" in the 1730s and 1740s is a term that indicates a revival of religious energy.
10. Thanksgiving Day marked the only day in the year reserved for thanksgiving and prayer during colonial times and the Revolutionary War.

Answer Sheet to the True/False Quiz

(All explanations come from the Library of Congress Web site.)

1. From the beginning of the formation of new American governments at both state and national levels, most American statesmen took it for granted that religion was crucial to a republic.

True: Most agreed with Alexis de Tocqueville's observation that religion was "indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions."

2. The average American rebelling against Britain believed that God supported his cause.

True: At the beginning of the war some ministers were persuaded that, with God's help, America might become "the principal Seat of the glorious Kingdom which Christ shall erect upon Earth in the latter Days."

3. In early America, there was a widespread and articulated acceptance of all religions and of non-believers.

False: Nothing in this Web site indicates anything except that the new American nation saw itself as Christian.

4. From the start, formal religious services were prohibited in the official halls of government because they violated "the wall of separation between church and state."

False: According to the Web site, "it is no exaggeration to say that on Sundays in Washington during the administrations of Thomas Jefferson (1801-1809) and of James Madison (1809-1817) the state became the church. Within a year of his inauguration, Jefferson began attending church services in the House of Representatives. Madison followed Jefferson's example, although unlike Jefferson, who rode on horseback to church in the Capitol, Madison came in a coach and four."

5. Chaplains in the army served Jews and atheists as well as Christians.

False: Congress appointed chaplains for itself and the armed forces, sponsored the publication of a Bible, and imposed Christian morality on the armed forces.

6. Indians who converted to Christianity were rewarded by the new government.

True: Congress granted public lands to promote Christianity among the Indians.

7. Nineteenth-century evangelicals believed that converting people to Christianity was good for the nation.

True: Converting their fellow citizens to Christianity was, for evangelicals, an act that simultaneously saved souls and saved the republic. The American Home Missionary Society assured its supporters in 1826 that "we are doing the work of patriotism no less than Christianity."

8. After 1776, taxes no longer supported religion.

False: Religious taxes were laid on all citizens, each of whom was given the option of designating his share to the church of his choice.

9. The "Great Awakening" in the 1730s and 1740s is a term that indicates a revival of religious energy.

True: "Between 1700 and 1740, an estimated 75 to 80 percent of the population attended churches, which were being built at a headlong pace. Toward mid-century the country experienced its first major religious revival. The Great Awakening swept the English-speaking world, as religious energy vibrated between England, Wales, Scotland and the American colonies in the 1730s and 1740s."

10. Thanksgiving Day marked the only day in the year reserved for thanksgiving and prayer during colonial times and the Revolutionary War.

False: National days of thanksgiving and of "humiliation, fasting, and prayer" were proclaimed by Congress at least twice a year throughout the war.

VIEWING LESSON PLAN:

Key People to Watch in "The Jesus Factor"

Lesson Objectives: Students will watch the film "The Jesus Factor" and become familiar with the information presented.

Materials Needed:

- A copy of the film, "The Jesus Factor"
- Student Viewing Guide: "Key People to Watch in "The Jesus Factor"

Time Needed:

60 to minutes watch the film and take notes for class discussion. (See Post-Viewing Activity for discussion questions.)

Procedure:

Instruct students to take notes from a particular group's or participant's perspective while viewing the film. They will use the Student Viewing Guide: Key People to Watch in "The Jesus Factor" to record both their own notes during the viewing and the observations of their classmates in the discussion that follows the viewing.

Note to Teachers: Should you wish to provide additional information to students, you can find extended interviews with people featured in the film on the FRONTLINE Web site at
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/jesus/>

Teachers should stress that students should watch carefully so that they can participate actively in the activities that follow.

Method of Assessment:

Checking or collecting the note sheets
Students' participation in discussion/debate that follows

STUDENT VIEWING GUIDE: Key People To Watch In "The Jesus Factor"

As you watch "The Jesus Factor," you will see and hear many people talk about President George Bush, his religious faith, and the effect of religion in American politics. Your job is to track ONE of the following people. Before you begin viewing, circle the person you have been assigned.

Take good notes. You will be speaking in the voice of "your" person during the discussion that follows.

Circle "your" person:

- George W. Bush, president of the United States
- Richard Cizik, vice president for governmental affairs, National Association of Evangelicals, a group that represents 45,000 churches
- E.J. Dionne, Jr. *Washington Post* columnist
- C. Welton Gaddy, liberal evangelical
- Richard Land, president, Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, Southern Baptist Convention
- Mark Leaverton, co-founder, Midland Men's Community Bible Study Group
- Marvin Olasky, former George W. Bush adviser, editor of the conservative evangelical magazine, *World*
- Jim Wallace, liberal evangelical and editor-in-chief of *Sojourners Magazine*
- Doug Wead, former adviser to George H.W. Bush

Some things you might note as you watch:

- Is "your" person a journalist?
- Is "your" person identified as liberal? If so, what does that seem to mean?
- How does "your" person view the role of religion in contemporary politics?
- How does "your" person view President Bush?
- Do you agree with what "your" person seems to think?
- If "your" person is President Bush, be prepared to discuss what statements, yours and others, seem most important to you

POST-VIEWING LESSON PLAN: The Big Picture/Two Debate Possibilities

Lesson Objectives:

Part One: To understand the points of view students heard in the film

Part Two: To debate the larger issues that the film raises about the relationship between religion and the state

Materials Needed:

- Student Worksheets: "Key Concepts and Terms;" "A Glossary for Reference;" "The Role of Religion in the Founding of the American Republic;" "True/False Quiz"
- Student Viewing Guide: "Key People To Watch In 'The Jesus Factor'"

Time Needed:

10-20 minutes for small groups to compare notes about "their" person

30-40 minutes for addressing Discussion Questions

30-45 minutes for Part Two (the debate or debates)

Procedure:

Part One: Round-Table Discussion

Students should sit with others who share "their" person. Each small group should meet briefly to compare notes. Then, the teacher should introduce the following discussion questions to the whole class. Students will engage in a round-table discussion about the points of view of the person they were following in the film. (Reassure students that they will have an opportunity to express their own views in Part Two.)

Discussion questions the teacher might pose:

1. What problems was the community of Midland, Texas facing in the mid-1980s after "the biggest oil bust in a generation"?
2. What does "your" person think about how George Bush's problems mirrored those of his community?
3. What does "your" person think about how George Bush's religious faith affects the way he leads his life?
4. What does "your" person think about how George Bush's religious faith affect the way he leads the country?
5. How does "your" person see the benefits and risks of government support of faith-based organizations like Teen Challenge?

Note: If teachers wish, they can include the activity on faith-based organizations at this point. The activity is in the "Post-Viewing Lesson Extension" section.

Part Two: Debate/Discussion:

Begin by referring students back to what they wrote about the First Amendment and Jefferson's 1802 letter for the Pre-Viewing lesson. Then, introduce the following two topics. The topics overlap and could be done together.

- With reference to the views you heard in the film and to your own views, what does the First Amendment mean today? What *should* it mean?
- Should there be a "wall of separation between church and state"? Why or why not?

Depending on time, the teacher could either set up a formal debate or allow students to engage in a whole-class discussion. Once again, teachers should be prepared for genuine disagreement.

Method of Assessment:

Performance in the Round-Table Discussion and in the Debate/Discussion
Notes from Student Worksheets

EXTENDING THE LESSON

Faith-Based Initiatives

Lesson Objectives:

Part One: To learn about the rise of government-supported faith-based organizations in the United States

Part Two: To have students apply what they have learned from all the activities in a real-world context.

Materials Needed:

Part One:

Student Worksheet: "Faith-Based Organizations"

Computers with Internet access

Part Two:

Notes and worksheets from all the activities

Time Needed:

Part One: 45-60 minutes for research (can be done as homework) followed by 30-45 minutes for discussion

Part Two: 30-45 minutes for writing (can be done as homework)

Procedure:

Part One:

Using the Student Worksheet "Faith-Based Organizations" as a guide, students should research the controversial role of faith-based organizations in the United States today. The teacher should facilitate a discussion after the students have completed their research.

Part Two:

1. Based on what they have seen and learned, both in the film and in classroom activities, each student should write a letter or editorial expressing his or her views about the intersection of religion and government.
2. Students should turn in two copies of this written assignment -- one for the teacher and the other to be sent to the intended audience.

Some ideas:

Students might write to the School Board about:

- A curricular issue; for example, how should health classes teach sex education? Should religion enter the discussion?
- Whether prayer before athletic events or at graduation should be allowed. If so, what prayer?

- Whether clubs affiliated with religious organizations should meet on school property
- Whether students should read the Bible in their literature classes
- Whether students should learn about world religions and read their sacred texts, for example, the Quran (Koran)

Students might write an editorial or a letter to the editor for a local newspaper in which they discuss their view of the appropriate role for religion in public or school life. They should be sure to give examples.

In order to stress the importance of student involvement, teachers should explain that these writing exercises are *not* simply classroom assignments -- the letters or editorials will be sent.

Method of Assessment:

Part One:

Completion of the "Faith-Based Initiative" and Faith-Based Organizations Student Worksheet

Participation in classroom discussion

Part Two:

The teacher should read and grade the letters or editorials.

STUDENT WORKSHEET: "The Jesus Factor"

The Faith-Based Initiative and Faith-Based Organizations

Background: Through a series of executive orders (see the Glossary of Key Terms and Ideas to review what an executive order is) President Bush has opened the possibility for "faith-based" groups to receive United States government funds to provide social services. "The Jesus Factor" notes that to date almost 100 percent of groups receiving federal funds are Christian.

Directions: Research each of the issues below by consulting the Web sites. Since the "faith-based initiative" is controversial, you will encounter contradictory opinions. Try to learn as much as you can about the "faith-based initiative" and the role and practices of faith-based organizations. Write your notes and answers on another paper.

1. Executive Order 13199 created the White House Office of Faith-Based & Community Initiatives on Jan. 29, 2001. Executive Order 13279 requires equal protection for faith-based and community organizations as of Dec. 12, 2002. Read each of these executive orders, which can be found at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/executive-orders.html>

Questions:

- What groups are affected by President Bush's executive orders?
- What services will they provide?
- How do the executive orders justify assigning funds to religious/faith-based groups?

2. A report issued by the White House says that part of the goal of the executive orders you read about is "identifying and eliminating improper Federal barriers to effective faith-based and community-serving programs through legislative, regulatory, and programmatic reforms." Read the report at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/reports/faithbased.html>

Question:

- Based on your reading and discussion, write a short paragraph explaining what you think the report means by "improper Federal barriers."

3. Opposition to federal funding of "faith-based organizations" has come from a range of areas. Read the articles from the links below, and write a sentence or two for each article, explaining its main point.

- Conservative opposition:
<http://www.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2001/3/20/54802.shtml>
- Anti-discrimination opposition
<http://writ.corporate.findlaw.com/hamilton/20010802.html>
- Civil libertarian opposition: <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0206/p02s01-uspo.html>
- Atheist opposition: <http://www.atheists.org/action/alert-08-dec-2001.html>

Question:

- Based on your reading, write a short paragraph evaluating the opposition. You will use your ideas and evaluation in discussion.

4. Click on the following link to listen to "Ex-Staffers Sue Salvation Army over Religious Bias." <http://www.npr.org/dmg/dmg.php?prgCode=ATC&showDate=17-Apr-2004&segNum=8&mediaPref=RM>

Question:

- Are the ex-staffers right? Write a short paragraph stating your opinion.

Further resources:

FRONTLINE: "From Jesus to Christ"

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/teach/>

This Teacher's Guide for FRONTLINE's film offers a range of historical background information about the rise of Christianity.

FBI Helps LC Restore Jefferson Draft Letter

<http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danbury.html>

This scholarly article from the Library of Congress offers the religious and political background for President Thomas Jefferson's 1802 Letter to the Danbury Baptists.

Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address (March 4, 1865)

<http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres32.html>

Lincoln's address, in the direst moments of the Civil War, reads almost like a sermon. Students might want to read and evaluate both the language of the address and the historical events that prompted its tone.

"Faith-Based Initiatives"

<http://pewforum.org/faith-based-initiatives/>

This Web site, with many links, explores the rules and ramifications of some of President Bush's ideas for faith-based initiatives.

Bush Will Allow Religious Groups to Receive U.S. Aid

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/13/politics/13BUSH.html?pagewanted=2&ei=5070&en=137f477ab639e3f7&ex=1081483200>

This 2002 *New York Times* article gives a good overview of the constituencies who support and oppose President Bush's proposal for allowing religious groups to administer federally-funded programs.

Pluralism Project

<http://www.pluralism.org/about/mission.php>

This link leads to the mission statement of this rich Web site, which is a fine resource for teachers. "The Pluralism Project: World Religions in America is a decade-long research project, with current funding from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, to engage students in studying the new

religious diversity in the United States." It focuses on "particularly the communities and religious traditions of Asia and the Middle East that have become woven into the religious fabric of the United States in the past twenty-five years."

Isaiah Berlin on Pluralism

<http://www.cs.utexas.edu/users/vl/notes/berlin.html>

This is an excerpt from an essay on pluralism by renowned philosopher Isaiah Berlin. He speaks about the difference between "relativism" and "pluralism," concluding: "for all human beings must have some common values or they cease to be human, and also some different values else they cease to differ, as in fact they do. That is why pluralism is not relativism."