

# TEACHING TOLERANCE: TOLEDO



# TEACHING TOLERANCE: TOLEDO

## Description

In this lesson, students will compare and contrast the beliefs and practices of Christianity, Judaism and Islam using informational text in the target language. Students will also analyze the relationships and possible source of conflict between people of different belief systems, and brainstorm solutions directed toward them.

## Subjects

Spanish

## Grade Level

9-12

## Duration

60 minutes

## Tour Links

- Toledo, Spain
- Alcázar of Toledo
- The Primate Cathedral of Saint Mary of Toledo
- Church of Santo Tomé
- San Juan de los Reyes Monastery
- Sinagoga de Santa María la Blanca
- Sinagoga del Tránsito

## Essential Questions

- What are the similarities and differences between Islam, Judaism and Christianity?
- How can we become a more peaceful and accepting community, like that of medieval Toledo- a time and place where all three of these faiths lived in harmony?

## Academic Summary

Toledo, Spain: the soul and essence of Spain, a mosaic of different cultures and religions. Until 1492, with the conversion and expulsion of Muslims and Jews countrywide by the Catholic Monarchs, Toledo was a place of religious tolerance. Christians, Jews and Muslims coexisted in the medieval town, giving it the name the “City of Three Cultures.” This harmony would start up again in the Age of Enlightenment in the 1800s, and continue up until the present day.

In a time when religious conflict is a given, not to mention splattered throughout history textbooks and literature, Toledo continues to be an inspiration for those seeking a more tolerant society. The city’s architecture is fascinating. Take the Santa María la Blanca synagogue, for instance. Built under the Christian Kingdom of Castile, it was designed by Islamic architects for Jewish use – a perfect symbol of the cooperation of the three religions. Other remains of the legacies of Christianity, Judaism and Islam can be found throughout the city, unharmed by modern influences like is the case in many other Spanish cities.

In this lesson, students will compare and contrast the beliefs and practices of Christianity, Judaism and Islam using informational text in the target language. Students will also analyze the relationships and possible source of conflict between people of different belief systems, and brainstorm solutions directed toward them.

## Objectives

1. Students will compare and contrast the beliefs and practices of Islam, Judaism and Christianity.
2. Students will interpret written text on Islam, Judaism and Christianity.
3. Students will analyze the relationships and possible source of conflict between people of different belief systems.
4. Students will brainstorm solutions to possible conflicts between people of different belief systems.

## Materials

- 10 sheets of paper, #1-10
- Tape
- Spanish-English Dictionary
- Religion Summary Worksheets: *Islam, Judaísmo and Cristianismo*
- *Las religiones abrahámicas* Worksheet

# Procedures

## I. Anticipatory Set (10 minutes)

- Before class, number ten sheets of paper 1-10, then tape them, spread out, along the classroom or hallway wall.
- In My Opinion Activity: Bring students to the paper display. During this activity they are only to listen with their eyes open- no speaking will be allowed. Read a list of concepts, items or titles, and have the students move to an area based on how they rate each one on a scale of 1-10 (1 = I do not like it at all; 10 = I love it!). This is an opportune time to review past vocabulary words- gustar, sports, hobbies, subject areas, etc.- or grammar rules i.e. use affirmative tú commands to tell the students to hop, skip or run to each number.

## II. Body of Lesson (40 minutes)

- Class Discussion: During the activity, was there a time when you and one of your friends felt differently about an item or activity named? Explore the idea that we do not have to like all of the same things to be friends. What brings people together as friends? What kinds of behavior are important for people to stay friends with each other? What types of things divide us in this school? Hobbies? Where we live? Discuss and brainstorm, writing relevant answers on the board.
- Introduce the idea of similarities and differences amongst different religions- specifically Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Toledo was one of the only cities in the world where Muslims, Christians and Jews could all live peacefully together for hundreds of years. On the board, create a Venn Diagram with three overlapping circles labeled with those three religions. As a class, brainstorm some known or perceived similarities and differences between the religions. Add each to the board in the appropriate location.
- Using this information as a base of knowledge, delve deeper into the comparison of the three religions. Break into groups of three. Each group should be given a Spanish-English dictionary and one copy of the *Islam, Judaísmo and Cristianismo* summary handouts. Each student should also be given a *Las religiones abrahámicas* worksheet. In the group of three, each student will be assigned either Islam, Judaism or Christianity. The student is to read the relevant summary, and use the information to fill in their designated column on the *Las religiones abrahámicas* worksheet table. Afterwards, each student will share their findings with the rest of the group, who will in turn fill out the rest of their table. Once all groups have completed their charts, review and correct as a class.

## III. Closure (10 minutes)

- Discussion: Jews, Muslims and Christians managed to live peacefully in Toledo for hundreds of years, but this is usually not the case. Even today, relationships are strained between followers of these religions. Knowing what you know now about these three faiths, why do you think this is so? Do any of their differences in belief warrant conflict? What steps can we take toward religious tolerance?
- Homework: You are part of an advertising agency based in Toledo, Spain. You have just been hired to create a school campaign promoting tolerance to high school students. Create two posters (in color)- one using a slogan with an affirmative tú command, the other with a negative tú command- to tell students what to do or not to do in order to all get along.

## Extension

### On Tour: Toledo, Spain

In 1986, Toledo was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO for its extensive cultural and monumental heritage and historical co-existence of Christian, Muslim and Jewish cultures. During your visit, keep an eye out for examples of Christian, Muslim and Jewish influence. Listen carefully to your tour guide. Can you identify ten religiously influenced aspects of the town? Can you find anything that has been influenced by more than one religion over time?

## Web Links

- [passports.com/group\\_leaders/on\\_the\\_road/spain/historical\\_sketch](https://passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/spain/historical_sketch)  
“Spain: Historical Sketch”, an On the Road essay by Passports Educational Travel. Written from the viewpoint of a Passports courier. A brief history of Spain, from its origin until the Spanish Civil War.
- [passports.com/group\\_leaders/on\\_the\\_road/spain/toledo](https://passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/spain/toledo)  
“Toledo”, an On the Road essay by Passports Educational Travel. Written from the viewpoint of a Passports courier.
- [www.religionfacts.com/islam/comparison\\_charts/islam\\_judaism\\_christianity.htm](http://www.religionfacts.com/islam/comparison_charts/islam_judaism_christianity.htm)  
“Comparison of Islam, Judaism and Christianity” – Religion Facts website. Easy-to-read tables comparing the three religions. Source for Islam vs. Judaism vs. Christianity worksheet and summaries.
- [whc.unesco.org/en/list/379](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/379)  
“Historic City of Toledo”, from the official UNESCO website. Highlights why the city has been dubbed a World Heritage Site.
- [www.spainthenandnow.com/spanish-history/toledo-historical-overview/default\\_16.aspx](http://www.spainthenandnow.com/spanish-history/toledo-historical-overview/default_16.aspx)  
“Toledo: Historical Overview”, from the “Spain: thenandnow” website. Reviews the city’s early history, period of Christian rule, declination, and rebirth.
- [traveltips.usatoday.com/culture-toledo-spain-11460.html](http://traveltips.usatoday.com/culture-toledo-spain-11460.html)  
“Culture of Toledo, Spain”, written by David Thyberg for Travel Tips, a travel index from USA TODAY. Highlights Muslim, Roman Catholic and Jewish influences on the city that can be seen today.

## Key Terms

- **el alma** soul
- **el árabe** Arabic
- **la Biblia** Bible
- **el cielo** heaven
- **el Corán** Qur'an
- **la creencia** belief
- **el cristianismo** Christianity
- **el día de Juicio** Judgment Day
- **el hebreo** Hebrew
- **la iglesia** church
- **el Infierno** Hell
- **el Islam** Islam
- **la fe** faith
- **el judaísmo** Judaism
- **el lugar de culto** religious house
- **la mezquita** mosque
- **el monoteísmo** monotheism
- **el musulmán, -mana** Muslim
- **la oración** prayer
- **el Paraíso** Paradise
- **la paz** peace
- **la peregrinación** pilgrimage
- **el profeta** prophet
- **el redentor** redeemer
- **el Sabat** Sabbath
- **el santuario** shrine
- **el seguidor** follower
- **la sinagoga** synagogue
- **el texto sagrado** sacred text

