

Winning Words Spring Lesson 8: God¹

Objectives: Expose ss to different religious perspectives; encourage discussion and critical thinking about the nature of existence

Materials: An apple, worksheets, poems

I. Warmer: Chain Reaction

“You can easily adapt this game to many areas of the curriculum. The teacher writes a category on the chalkboard -- foods, for example. Each student writes the letters A to Z on a sheet of paper. The students have five minutes to create an alphabetical list of as many foods as they can think of. Then the game begins. The first student must tell the name of a food. The second person must give the name of a food that begins with the *last* letter of the food given by the first person. The third person must name a food that begins with the last letter of the second person's food and so on. One at a time, students are eliminated.”²

10 min

II. Aquinas: causation

- A. Hold up an apple. Ask students where it came from. Someone will say “a tree.” Ask where the tree came from. “It grew.” With what? “Soil.” Where did the soil come from...and so on.
- B. Ask students what they think came before the Universe.
- C. Ask if they think there is a “god” or creator
- D. SS split into pairs or two groups
- E. Give each group a “quinque viae” worksheet
 - a. Explain that a Catholic priest named Thomas Aquinas, who lived in the 1200's AD came up with reasons why God existed
 - b. The top of each WS has an argument for the existence of god
 - c. In groups, SS write down two reasons why they think it is true and two reasons they think it is false
- F. Nominate ss from the first group to read the argument on their ws and their responses. Nominate other ss to give their reactions. Repeat with groups 2 & 3

20 min

35 min

III. Transition: religious diversity

- A. Write the word “god” on the board. Elicit other names for god: Allah, Yahweh, etc.
- B. Ask ss if they think all these religions talk about the same or different gods
- C. What do people in Iraq call God? What religion do many people there follow?

40 min

IV. Hafiz: mystery

We have talked about whether a god created the earth in the past. Now we will read some poetry from a Muslim poet about communicating with god in the present.

- A. SS sit in a circle. Hand each student a section of a poem. They take turns reading their parts.
- B. Discussion questions
- C. Repeat with second or third poem, depending on time left & number of ss

50 min

VI. Closing: Password

“Choose two students to be the “contestants.” You can always use the “I’m thinking of a number ...” guessing game to determine the contestants. Those two students go to the front of the room and face their classmates. Reveal a secret word -- write it on the chalkboard or a chart or hold up a card --

¹ Lesson plan adapted from Marietta McCarty, *Little Big Minds* (New York: Tarcher), 2006.

² From “Education World,” available at http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson169.shtml.
Downloaded 5/6/10.

to everyone but the two contestants. The rest of the students raise their hands to volunteer one-word clues that might help the contestants guess the word. Contestants take turns calling on clue volunteers until one of the contestants correctly guesses the secret password. The contestant who guesses the password remains at the front of the class; the student who gave the final clue replaces the other contestant.”³

³ Ibid.