



FEZANA Age-Appropriate Lesson Plan

Subject Category (circle one): Religion/Ceremony Celebration **History** Prayer
Gathas Comparative Religion Shahnameh

Age Group (circle one): PreK-K Grades 1-3 Grades 4-5 **Grades 6-8** Grades 9-12

Lesson # (if applicable): Post-Sassanid Empire- Lesson 6

Subject of the Lesson: Understanding the Zoroastrian Community in North America

Background Knowledge for the Teacher:

Zoroastrians have migrated and resided all over the globe. At times, these migrations have been on a large scale and other times they have begun with individuals.

The largest of these migrations happened after the Arab invasion of Iran in 631 CE mostly to India and then again in the 1980s and still ongoing with the 1979 Islamic revolution of Iran.

Those who had migrated to India in the 8th century due to the persecution of Zoroastrians in Iran are known as Parsis.

Parsis since their migration to India have migrated to other parts of the world for trade, commerce, better education, and improved living conditions.

Today, there are many Zoroastrian centers and communities residing in North America. Many of Zoroastrian centers and smaller communities come together under the umbrella of the Federation of Zoroastrian Association of North America (FEZANA).

Brief history of FEZANA:

The idea of a unifying Zoroastrian organization has long been on the minds. This became a foreseen reality in the 5th North American Zoroastrian Congress in Los Angeles in 1985. The organizers of the Congress, Ms. Farangis Shahrokh and Ms. Dhunmai Dalal placed the proposal for the organization of a North American Zoroastrian Body on the agenda. Mr. Rohinton Rivetna of Chicago drafted the constitution soon after. Delegates from different Zoroastrian centers with the aid of legal services of Ms. Dina McIntyre reviewed, fine-tuned, and finalized the document. On November 15, 1986, the final draft was sent and signed by 16 of 17 Associations of record in 1986. FEZANA was registered in the State of Illinois on June 2, 1987, as a not for profit religious and charitable corporation. FEZANA's vision is of being a forum to unite and strengthen individual Associations with the decision-making power not with the executive officers of the FEZANA but within the member Associations (individual Associations



have the only voting power). The day-to-day operations of FEZANA will be conducted by its executive officers (president, vice president, secretary, vice-secretary, treasurer) and committees that serve under the executive officers.

FEZANA partners with Zoroastrian Associations to sponsor congresses, offers scholarships to students, and hosts educational talks among other contributions. Some of the FEZANA committees include the Religion Education Committee that supports religion education and teachers, and Interfaith Committee to introduce Zoroastrian religion to a wider audience among other active committees. For a complete list please visit <https://fezana.org/committees/>

FEZANA has a monthly newsletter that consists of shared news by different Zoroastrian organizations connecting all the Zoroastrians in North America. Many events such as youth camps, programs initiated by different organizations, new books by Zoroastrian authors and much more get circulated through the FEZANA newsletter.

For more information about FEZANA please refer to the 2007 summer issue of the FEZANA Journal or visit FEZANA's website: https://fezana.org/fjissue/FEZANA_2007_02_Summer.pdf
<https://fezana.org/>

Zoroastrian Youth of North America (ZYNA):

ZYNA is the youth committee of FEZANA organizing events from camping, road trips, youth congresses to weekly get-togethers and more. Zoroastrian youths are encouraged to join ZYNA and it is a great community for the younger generation to look forward to.

Lesson for student and activity are combined as described below:

Lesson Objectives / Learning Targets:

1. Introduce students to the larger Zoroastrian community in North America Beyond their local centers.
2. Understand the significance of this community to the students.

Essential Questions: Who are the Zoroastrians in North America? Why is it important for us to connect with them?

Materials Needed: Whiteboard, markers, Internet-connected device, construction paper so they can present their research (optional)

Introduction / Anticipatory Set: Begin by asking what students know about the Zoroastrian community in North America beyond their local center in North America.



Vocabulary: FEZANA

Lesson Procedure:

- **Direct Instruction (10 minutes):** Give a brief introduction about the Zoroastrian community in North America and discuss the importance of connecting with this larger community beyond their local centers. Make sure to mention that the students have the support not only from their local centers but from the larger Zoroastrian Community as well.
 - "Today, we are going to explore a very special group of people that we are a part of - the Zoroastrian community in North America. You might wonder why we are focusing on North America. As you may already know, Zoroastrianism has ancient roots in Persia, modern-day Iran. However, in the past century, our community has spread all over the world. Today, Zoroastrians live in many countries, and North America is home to one of the most active and vibrant Zoroastrian communities. This is particularly relevant to us as we are part of this community.
 - We are going to explore how our community is organized, who are the key groups and associations like FEZANA, and how these organizations support our religion, culture, and fellow Zoroastrians. Understanding this is important because it not only helps us understand where we come from, but it also enables us to be active contributors to our community in the future."
- **Guided Practice (15 minutes):** Create a mind map on the whiteboard with the students' input, focusing on aspects of the larger Zoroastrian community, the importance of connections beyond the local center, and how the larger community can support their goals.
 - Begin the mind map with the phrase "Zoroastrian Community in North America" in the center of the board. Draw lines from this central idea leading to several different key areas. These areas might include:
 - Key Organizations (FEZANA, CZC, Sports, camp, etc.)
 - In this activity, ask students to share what they know or think about each area. For example, under "Key Organizations," a student might say "FEZANA" since it was mentioned in the direct instruction. Record their responses on the mind map. Encourage students to discuss and ask questions about each point. This will create a visual representation of their current knowledge and questions, which will be expanded upon throughout the lesson.
 - Remember that it's okay if the students don't have much to contribute initially. The purpose of this activity is to gauge their current understanding, stimulate their curiosity, and set the stage for the rest of the lesson.



- **Independent Practice (10 minutes):** In groups of two or three students are tasked with researching one element from the mind map and sharing their findings with the class.
 - **Assigning topics:** After creating the mind map, assign each student (or pair of students for group work) a specific branch of the mind map to delve into.
 - If there are more students than branches, you can split larger categories into smaller topics. For example, under 'Key Organizations', one student could research FEZANA, and another could explore a local Zoroastrian community center.
 - **Research time:** Students will need access to resources for their research. If possible, have available books, articles, or allow them internet access to search for reputable sources. Give them about 10-15 minutes to explore their topic and gather information. Encourage them to make notes of key points or facts that they find interesting or surprising.
 - **Sharing findings:** Once research time is over, ask each student or group to share a brief summary of what they learned. They should explain their topic's importance to the Zoroastrian community in North America. This could be done as a quick oral presentation, a poster, a slide, or another creative format that allows them to express their learning.

This activity encourages students to take responsibility for their learning process, develop research skills, and practice summarizing and communicating information to others.

Summary/Closing Activity (5 minutes): Discuss the findings and encourage the students to think about the importance of connecting with the wider Zoroastrian community.

- In the summary or closing activity, the objective is to synthesize the knowledge gained from the lesson and have students reflect on the importance of connections within the wider Zoroastrian community. Here's how this might unfold:
 - **Recap:** Start by summarizing the topics explored during the class, bringing together all the points shared by students during their presentations. This can be done in the form of a group discussion where you invite students to remind each other of what they've learned about different aspects of the Zoroastrian community in North America.
 - **Reflection:** Encourage students to share their thoughts and feelings about the lesson. Ask them questions like, "What did you find most surprising about the Zoroastrian community in North America?" or "Why do you think it is important for us to connect with other Zoroastrians?"



- Connection to self: Ask the students to think about what they can do to foster a connection with the wider Zoroastrian community. This could be attending local Zoroastrian events, joining youth groups, or reaching out to Zoroastrian organizations.
- Future Lessons: Finally, let students know that in the future lessons, they will be learning more about the Zoroastrian community, its traditions, and its practices. Encourage them to come to the next lesson with any questions they might have.

Remember, the goal of the closing activity is to reinforce learning and stimulate further thinking beyond the lesson itself. It should be a space for students to reflect, ask questions, and express their ideas.

Learning Extensions: As homework, students can write a short reflection about what they learned and how they feel about connecting with the wider Zoroastrian community.

Assessment: Observation during the class discussions, quality of research shared, and reflection essay.

Resources: Zoroastrian community websites, local center resources.

Post Lesson / Teacher Reflection: Evaluate the effectiveness of the lesson, student participation, and whether the objectives were met. Reflect on improvements for next time.

Note: This lesson can be implemented virtually by a PowerPoint presentation of the basic information, breakout room grouping option, and the use of the whiteboard on Zoom.

Sources:

1. <https://fezana.org/>
2. <https://fezana.org/zyna/>
3. <https://www.zathletics.com/>
4. https://fezana.org/fjissue/FEZANA_2007_02_Summer.pdf
5. <https://fezana.org/309/>

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