Religions of Southwest Asia
The Three Religions

1. Judaism, Jew
   - Star of David

2. Christianity, Christian
   - The Cross

3. Islam, Muslim
   - Crescent Moon and Star
Similarities

1. Monotheistic
2. Abrahamic – Recognize Abraham as Patriarch (father)
3. Consider city of Jerusalem to be Holy
4. All connected to parts of the Bible.
Judaism
Judaism

• Where Founded:
  – SW Asia, Fertile Crescent

• When Founded:
  – Founded 4000 years ago
  – Judaism is the oldest surviving monotheistic religion.

God tests Abraham: Asks him to sacrifice his son Isaac
Judaism

• Important Teachings & Beliefs:

  1. Monotheistic
  2. 10 commandments
  3. Prayer
  4. Still Awaiting Messiah (Savior)

Holy Book(s): (Old Testament)

1. Torah
   • First 5 books of Bible
   • According to Torah, it is disrespectful to spell out name of deity (G_D) [Yahweh] in full.

2. Talmud
   • record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, customs, and history.

Moses breaks the first set of the 10 Commandments
Judaism

• Important Cities
  1. Jerusalem

• Major Groups:
  1. Orthodox Jews:
     • adheres faithfully to the principles and practices of traditional Judaism.
  2. Conservative Jews:
     • modern denomination of Judaism that arose in United States in the early 1900's.
  3. Reform Jews:
     • largest denomination of Jews. They are more liberal in their thinking about Judaism.

Samson destroys the Philistine temple
Judaism

• Founder/Prophets/Important people:
  1. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (name changed to Israel)
  2. Twelve Tribes (sons of Israel)
  3. Moses
  4. David, Solomon

• Languages:
  1. Hebrew

• Percent of followers in the world:
  - 2%
  - Jewish influence on the world has been vast -- far more than their numbers would indicate.
Christianity
Christianity

- **Where:**
  - SW Asia, Jerusalem

- **When:**
  - 2000 years ago
  - Stems from Judaism.

  - Jesus was a Jew, whom Christians claim is the Messiah (Savior)
Christianity

- **Important Teachings:**
  1. Monotheistic
  2. Salvation
     - Jesus died on the cross as payment for sin. Resurrected to offer hope of eternal life.
  3. Trinity of God
     - God the Father
     - Jesus, son of God
     - Holy Spirit

- **Holy Book:**
  The Bible
  - Old Testament
  - New Testament
Christianity

- Important Cities
  - Jerusalem
  - Vatican City (Rome)

- Important Groups
  - Roman Catholic
    - makes up the largest group of Christians.
  - Protestant
    - represents a diverse range of theological and social perspectives, denominations, individuals, and related organizations.
    - Would include Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Charismatics, Methodists, Disciples of Christ, etc.
  - Eastern Orthodox
    - body of Christians that claims origins extending directly back to Jesus and his Apostles.
    - Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Abyssinian (Ethiopia) Orthodox
Christianity

- **Founder/Prophet/Important People**
  - Jesus (Son of God - Savior - Christ)
  - Abraham
  - 12 Apostles
  - Apostle Paul
  - Augustine
  - Martin Luther
  - John Calvin

- **Languages**
  - Greek
  - Hebrew
  - Latin

- **Percent of followers in world**
  - 32% +/-

- Largest religion in the world
Islam
Islam

• Where
  – SW Asia
  – Mecca, present-day Saudi Arabia.
  – Medina, Saudi Arabia

• When
  – 613 A.D.

Muslims worship at the Kaaba (sacred black stone) in Mecca
Islam

- **Important Teachings:**
  1. Five Pillars of Islam
  2. Monotheistic
  3. God is called Allah

- **Holy Book(s):**
  1. The Qur’an (Koran)
     - The Qur’an contains both verses from the Torah & the Bible.
  2. Sharia
     - a tradition of rulings that touch on virtually all aspects of life and society.

Muslims worshiping towards the Kaaba in Mecca. Zoomed out.
Islam

– Moral Code is derived from Five Pillars:

1. **Faith**: There is only one god- Allah.
2. **Prayer**: pray five times a day. (Towards Mecca)
3. **Fasting**: during month of Ramadan.
4. **Zakah**: Giving Alms to the poor.
5. **Hajj**: Pilgrimage to Mecca.

Muslims gathering outside Mecca during their Hajj
Close ties to Christianity & Judaism:

1. Believe that both Abraham & Jesus were prophets
2. Islam is the last religion of the Abrahamic tradition
3. Muhammad is the last prophet in a long line of prophets
Islam

• **Important Cities:**
  – Mecca
  – Medina
  – Jerusalem

• **Major Groups:**
  – **Sunni**
    - largest denomination of Islam; means the tradition of the prophet of Islam - Muhammad
    - Believe caliphs (priests) were to be chosen by consensus

  – **Shi-ite**
    - Shi'a Muslims adhere to the teachings of the Islamic prophet Muhammad and his Ahlul Bayt (family).
    - Believe caliphs should be descendants from Muhammad’s son in law (Ali) and wife (Fatima)
Islam

- Founder/Prophets/Important People:
  - Muhammad
  - Abraham

- Languages:
  - Arabic

- Percent of followers worldwide:
  - 25%
  - Second largest religion in the world