**Christianity**

**General Information:**

* **Founder**-Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples who helped spread his teachings.
* **Geographic Origin**-Developed in Judea (now Israel), around the year 30 C.E., under control of Roman Empire
* Monotheistic
* **Significant Writings**-The *Holy Bible*, consisting of both the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament***.**

**Roman Reaction to Jesus:**

* Jesus stated publicly that he spoke with the authority of God.
* This claim angered the Jewish religious authorities in Palestine, and they handed Jesus over to the Roman authorities as a revolutionary.
* He was tried for heresy, condemned, and put to death by means of crucifixion.

**Who were the Christians?**

* Jews who believed Jesus was the messiah promised in the Torah
* Followed Jesus’ teachings

**Early Christianity:**

* One supreme God who loved humankind
* Acceptance
	+ Offers hope and eternal life
	+ Paul moves Christianity away from Judaism
	+ Persecuted for centuries
* Strong organization and following by 400 C.E.
* Roman Emperor Constantine converts to Christianity in 330 C.E.
* Exclusive 🡪 idea of one truth
* Jesus of Nazareth
	+ Message of salvation
	+ Disciples spread message
* Christians are expected to attend church services regularly, usually on Sundays and holy days such as Christmas and Easter. On these occasions Christians take part in sacraments, which are religious practices.

**The Great Schism:**

* The differences between Eastern (Constantinople) and Western (Rome) Christianity culminated in what has been called the Great Schism, in 1054, when the patriarchs of the Eastern and Western division were unable to resolve their differences.
* The split led to the Orthodox church and the Roman Catholic church.

**The Great Schism: (Continued)**

* The Orthodox Church does not recognize the authority of the Roman papacy and claims a Christian heritage in direct descent from the Christian church of Christ's believers
* There are multiple branches of Christianity with slightly differing doctrines.
	+ Roman Catholic
	+ Orthodox
	+ Protestant
* broke from Catholicism
* Martin Luther’s 95 Theses in 1517

**Beliefs:**

* Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.
* Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
* Christians believe that God sent His Son to earth to save humanity from the consequences of its sins.
* One of the most important concepts in Christianity is that of Jesus giving his life on the Cross (the Crucifixion) and rising from the dead on the third day (the Resurrection).
* Trinity: Christians believe that there is only one God, but that there are three elements to this one God:
	+ God the Father
	+ God the Son
	+ The Holy Spirit

**Islam**

**Background Info:**

* Islam, which when translated from Arabic, means "to submit to the will of Allah," is the youngest of the world's major religions.
* Islam comes from the word salam which means “peace” and “surrender”
* Worshippers of this monotheistic religion are known as Muslims, which means "one who submits to the will of Allah."
* Islam is currently the second most practiced religion in the world.
* Founder-Islam was founded by the prophet Mohammed.
* Geographic Origin-Developed on the Arabian Peninsula in the year 622 CE, and quickly spread to other regions

**Info:**

* Currently Practiced- Islam is most dominant throughout the Middle East (Southwest Asia and Northern Africa) and parts of Southeast Asia
* Significant Writings-The teachings of Islam are collected in the Qur'an (Koran)

**History:**

* Founder: Mohammed, born in Mecca around 570 C.E. to a leading tribe
* Both parents died; uncle adopted him and he took up the caravan business
* Married Khadija at age 25
* During meditation, was visited by Gabriel, who told him to go out and proclaim God’s word, to tell others of the belief in 1 God
* Slow start: 40 followers in first 3 years
* 622C.E.: After Khadija’s death, Muhammad had to flee from Mecca; went to Medina.
* This flight was instrumental to the founding of the religion of Islam and is known as the Hegira.
	+ Marks beginning of spread of Islam
	+ 622 is the first year of the Muslim calendar
* 630C.E.: Muhammad returned to Mecca with an army and took over the city; destroyed images of polytheistic gods
* Muhammad died in 632C.E.

**Beliefs:**

* According to Muslims, God sent a number of prophets to mankind to teach them how to live according to His law.
* Story of Creation follows Judaism and Christianity to a point
	+ Ishmael’s descendents become the Muslims
	+ Isaac’s descendents become the Hebrews
* Adam, Jesus, Moses, David, and Abraham are respected as prophets of God. Muslims believe that the final prophet was Muhammad.
* Muslims believe that Islam has always existed but, for practical purposes, date their religion from the time of the migration of Muhammad.
* Rules of Living: Muslims believe that the Koran gives information to live by concerning religion, politics, law, and social life

**Five Pillars of Islam:**

* **Shahadah** or Confession of Faith: “There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet.“
* **Salat** or Prayer: Muslims must pray five times a day, facing towards Mecca.
* **Zakat** or Charity: Muslims give alms to the poor, and support the local Mosque by donating a portion of their income.
* **Saum** or Fasting: During the Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, all Muslims must fast during daylight hours, except the very young or sick.
* **Hajj** or Pilgrimage: If possible financially, each Muslim must make a hajj, or holy pilgrimage, to the city of Mecca once a lifetime.

**Basic Articles of Faith:**

* Muslims have 6 main beliefs:
	+ Belief in Allah as the one and only God
	+ Belief in angels
	+ Belief in holy books
	+ Belief in the prophets
	+ Belief in the Day of Judgment
	+ Belief in Predestination (with human choice)

**Impact of Muslim Civilization:**

* Through conquest and trade, cultures of Greek, Persian, Egyptian, and Arabic blended
* Established banking centers and started using lines of credit
* Many advances in medicine, algebra, development of an accurate calendar

**Divisions:**

* Sunni Muslims
	+ Any devote Muslims can be caliph
* Shiite Muslims
	+ Only descendents of Muhammad (or brother-in-law Ali) can be caliph

**Similarities to Judaism and Christianity:**

* Belief in one God
* Descendant from Abraham
* Live a moral life in accordance to God’s law
* Follow the holy texts
* God is immortal, omniscient, and omnipresent

**Jerusalem:**

* The Holy city is shared between the three: The Temple Mount (site of the destroyed Temple), the site of Jesus’ crucifixion and burial, and the place where Mohammed rose to heaven.
* All three religions believe that the last days of the earth and the final coming will occur in Jerusalem.