



Middle School Social Studies

From Jerusalem to Elkader:

An exploration of three Abrahamic faiths coming together (and colliding), an examination of Islam in particular, and a spotlight on the Algerian hero Emir Abd el-Kader.

A unit in three parts:

- Lesson One: Jerusalem (4-5 class periods)
- Lesson Two: Islam (4-5 class periods)
- Lesson Three: Abd el-Kader to Elkader (6 class periods)

Overview

From Jerusalem to Elkader is a comprehensive unit for middle school students, grades 6-9. (The unit is currently presented with 6th grade Iowa social studies standards but is relevant and adaptable to any course covering global cultures and issues.) While each lesson provides a foundation for the next, they may also be used independently. Each lesson includes both formative and summative assessments. The unit incorporates a variety of literacy skills.

The unit begins with a study of Jerusalem: an exploration of how Judaism, Christianity, and Islam come together (and collide) in one small area. Students research sacred sites of the city and compare the fundamental beliefs of the three religions. Understanding the significance of Jerusalem will contribute to an understanding of the entire Middle East.

Lesson Two focuses on Islam: its origin, spread, and beliefs. Students respond to the essential question “What does it mean to be Muslim?” While the lesson may be used alone, it provides a bridge between the first and third lessons.

In Lesson Three, students examine the life of Abd el-Kader, a unifying Muslim role model, and learn about his connection to Iowa.