How Young is Too Young?

Teaching About Religion in Public Schools

Linda K. Wertheimer
When Should The Lessons Begin

Different approaches – Modesto, Calif.; Wellesley, MA; and Wichita, KS
High school? Modesto says yes.
Modesto high school teacher Sherry McIntyre in her classroom
Former Modesto schools Superintendent Jim Enochs:

“Schools could not make little saints and tolerant people of all of their students because parents had them too much of the time... What schools could do was soften some of the differences among children.” – interview with author, 2013
Wellesley Middle School field trip to Wayland mosque in 2013
Dateline: Wichita, KS.  How about first grade?
What is religion?
Simple Lessons
Challenges: Educating vs. celebrating
Confronting Parents’ & Others’ Concerns

• No religion in the home. Will this upset my child? Cause discomfort?
• How can you teach Hinduism? We teach our son there is only one God.
• How can teachers manage young kids’ comments?
• Elementary teachers don’t know much about religions other than their own.
• Will my child want to adopt a different religion or any religion?
Can Starting Younger Make a Difference?

Find out more about Faith Ed., the book, at www.faithedbook.com. @lindakwert on Twitter
Upcoming Events

13th Annual Meeting, Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light
What Actions Are Needed to Answer Pope Francis' Call?
Wednesday, November 11, 2015
St. Ignatius Church • 7:00 - 9:00 PM

Gustavo Gutierrez, O.P.
My Faith Story within the Story of Liberation Theology
Monday, November 16, 2015
Heights Room, Corcoran Commons • 4:30 - 6:00 PM

For more information call (617) 552-1860 or visit www.bc.edu/boisi