



Anda Foxwell
Christian Academy in
Japan

Social Studies 6
World history
35 students

Student Learning Result
“The Egyptians believed there were lots of things you had to do to get eternal life.... That’s not what Christians believe.”

Tip
Show students what a connection between course content and Biblical teaching looks like. Do this repeatedly.

Unit
Ancient Egypt, 4 weeks

Essential Questions
What do you have in common with the ancient Egyptians? How are you different?

Content
Afterlife, polytheism, connections of Biblical characters to Egyptian history

Skills
Research, writing, outlining, speaking

Assessment
Presentation

Instructional Strategies
Group research, jigsaw, drill and practice, discussion

Resources
The Ancient World, Bible, library resources, web links, classroom texts

What are you excited about?

Anda: I’m excited that my 6th grade social studies students are beginning to see that God is at work through history and that history connects to them. In a presentation at the end of the unit on ancient Egypt, one student said, “The Egyptians believed there were lots of things you had to do to get eternal life. That’s why they made mummies. That’s not what Christians believe; we know that it’s only through Jesus!”

What were your students studying?

Anda: They were studying ancient Egypt. They flew through thousands of years of geography, history, and culture in a month, while focusing on essential questions—What do you have in common with the ancient Egyptians? How are you different? How could a child of God have responded to the Egyptians?

Toward the end of the unit, my students did in-depth research on a topic of interest. Then, they combined their research and their study of a Biblical perspective of Egyptian religion and culture to develop a 5-10 minute presentation.

What was the presentation prompt?

Anda: Give a 5-10 minute presentation on a topic of your choice, which includes your response to the unit’s essential questions (What do you have in common with the ancient Egyptians? How are you different? How could a child of God have responded to the Egyptians?) You must give your presentation from an outline, use a minimum of 3 documented sources, and use a visual aid.

How did you prepare your students for the assessment?

Anda: Before students started their independent research, they did significant preparation. They studied maps, used motions to memorize a timeline of Egyptian achievements, looked for connections between Egyptian history and Biblical events, did group research and presentations on pharaohs, did a web quest, and jigsawed information about Egyptian pyramids, writing, and views of afterlife and deities.

At the end of the jigsaws, I posed the essential questions to help students connect jigsaw content and Biblical teaching. I directed the discussion so that all students would understand the difference, for example, between monotheism and polytheism.

Next, they did their research. I encouraged them to make connections between their research and Biblical perspective, between what they were learning and what the Bible teaches. Then they developed outlines for their presentations and practiced giving their presentations.

What did you learn from teaching your unit on ancient Egypt?

Anda: Just because kids know the Bible stories and understand the social studies content doesn’t mean they automatically make connections between the two.

For example, I arranged small groups so that kids with limited Bible knowledge would be paired with students with Bible knowledge. I was surprised to find that once students with limited Bible knowledge learned the Bible content, they were able to connect Bible content and social studies content more easily than some of the students with the Bible knowledge were.

What modifications will you make to your unit?

Anda: I want all my students to make good connections between course content and Biblical perspective. I need to point out to kids when they are making connections so they know what a connection is and can then make their own connections between course content and Biblical perspective. To help kids make connections, I also want to give them a bookmark with the essential questions on it so that kids will see the questions when they do their research.

I need to clarify my vocabulary so that all students understand the words I’m using. For example, I used “child of God” to mean the Old Testament equivalent of Christians, and some students took “child of God” to mean “child.”