



# Language and religion

from the Esri GeoInquiries™ collection for Human Geography



Audience – Human geography

Time required – 15 minutes

URL: <http://esriurl.com/humanGeoInquiry6>

APHG: III.B2 Explain the diffusion of cultural traits through time and place.

APHG: III.B1 Explain cultural patterns as they vary by place and region.

•Students will be able to analyze diffusion patterns of languages and religions and to identify correlations between the two.

## How do linguistic patterns affect the spread of religion?

Cultural diffusion is the spreading of cultural traits from one group or place to another.

? How can one cultural trait influence the spread of another cultural trait? How could language or religion influence the diffusion of the other?

*Language: ideas of a religion spread more easily to speakers of similar languages. Religion: often tied to the use of a particular language, the spread of a religion will spread the use of that language. Both: a colonizer can bring both language and religion to a new area (relocation diffusion)*

? What are some factors that would help the spread of a religion?

*Common language, colonialism, and economic interaction help spread religion.*

## How are languages and religions distributed?

→ Click the map URL above to launch the map.

→ With the Details button underlined, click the button, Show Contents of Map (Content).

? What is noticeable about the distribution of religions?

*Religions diffuse more along lines of latitude than longitude; indigenous religions are located in lightly populated areas.*

→ Click the checkbox to the left of the layer name, Languages Families of the World.

? Which language family is the most widely diffused?

*Indo-Europeans*

## How do Patterns of Religion Vary?

→ Click the button, Bookmarks. Select South America.

→ Turn the language and religion layers on and off to explore patterns.

? Which religions are dominant in South America?

*Roman Catholic & Indigenous*

→ Pan the map to North America.

? Which religions are dominant in North America?

*Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Mormon*

? What relationship exists between language and religion in North America?

*Catholicism is tied to Romance languages, and Protestantism is tied to Germanic languages.*

## Compare the patterns of European languages and religions.

→ Click the button, Bookmarks. Select the Europe bookmark.

→ Turn on only two layers, Major World Religions and Indo-European Language Branches.

? What connections do you see between the religions of Europe and the major Indo-European language branches?

*Catholicism is tied to Romance languages, Protestantism is tied to Germanic languages, and Eastern Orthodoxy is tied to Slavic languages.*

→ Turn to the layer, Indo-European Language Branches.

→ Click the other bookmarks.

? Which region has the greatest religious diversity?

*Africa and Southeast Asia have the greatest diversity.*

## What factors influence the diffusion of a religion?

→ Press the button, Measure. Select Distance. Use Miles.

? Measure how far Islam has spread east & west from Mecca.

*~ 6,700 miles and ~3,800 miles, respectively.*

? How did physical and human factors serve as barriers and supports for the spread of Islam?

*Mountains and cultural differences were barriers to diffusion, whereas plains, rivers, sea access, and cultural linkages enabled it.*