MONTHLY RECAP
We met on January 6th, to discuss ideas and a plan of action to spread knowledge about this month's theme - Religion Recognition Month. At lunch, on January 27th, we had coloring pages depicting major religions throughout the world, crosswords, and a bulletin board to educate students about different aspects of the religions.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS RECOGNITION
Religion is an important aspect in many peoples' lives. By educating ourselves on the vast religions we can better understand and connect with each other. There are six main world religions: Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, and Hinduism, but there are various branches and smaller religions too.

Islam - Is a monotheistic faith (believing in only one God - Allah) and the second largest religion in the world.

Buddhism - Buddhists do not believe in a god. They follow the actions of the Buddha, a man who gave up his wealth to become a monk.

Christianity - Is also a monotheistic faith and the largest religion in the world. Christians follow the Bible, which includes the Old and New Testaments.

Judaism - Is the oldest monotheistic faith, and they also believe in God. Jews follow the Tanakh, it includes the Old and New Testaments, and its first five books form the Torah.

Sikhism - Is a monotheistic religion that started in India. The sacred scripture of the Sikhs is called Guru Granth Sahib and it is believed that the spirit of Guru Gobind Singh was transferred into that scripture.

Hinduism - In the Hindu faith, God goes by many names, but Brahman is recognized as creating everything in the universe. Hindus have various sacred texts, Bhagavad Gita, the Samhitas, and the Vedas.
LET'S HEAR FROM SOME DRAGONS!

Eshal Rehmani

What religion do you practice?
"Islam."

What are the beliefs or origin of Islam?
"The religion was originated in Makkah by prophet Muhammad. We believe that there's one God and that he sent the messenger Muhammed to give us the teachings on how to live in an Islamic manner."

What are your favorite parts of your religion?
"My favorite part about my religion would probably be the month of Ramadan where we fast. It's really fun once you learn the meaning behind it. Ramadan basically teaches you how to be patient. You spend a lot of time with your family and friends going to late night prayers, which is the best part about Ramadan, and after the 30 days, you get to celebrate by eating candy, getting money, and presents."

What are some traditions of Islam?
"A big tradition in Islam would praying, praying plays a big role when you're a Muslim because that's how we thank God for giving us all the basic needs that many may not have. Praying also can be calming and peaceful, almost like meditating. We also have two holidays, but they don't end up on the same day every year, the reason for that is because Islam is based on the lunar calendar."

Gina Hadad

What religion do you practice?
"I'm a Greek Orthodox Christian."

What are the beliefs of Greek Orthodox Christians?
"We believe in one God with three parts, Father, Son, and Holy spirit (the Holy Trinity). We believe in the resurrection of Jesus and salvation from sin, and also in eternal life."

What are your favorite parts of your religion?
"One of my favorite parts of my religion is the cultural connection. It's nice to be around people of the same culture, and to celebrate the things we all believe in."

What are some traditions of Greek Orthodox Christians?
"One of my favorite traditions is something we do on Easter Sunday. We each get a hardboiled egg that has been dyed red, and two people smash them together and say, 'Christos anesti (Christ is risen)!', and 'Alithos anesti (truly he is risen)!'. We do that to celebrate Christ's life and all of the things he has done for us. Another thing that is super special about my church is the beauty of it. It's full of amazing intricate artwork and iconography."
What religion do you practice?
"My religion is Islam, and those who follow it are called Muslims."

What are the beliefs or origin of Islam?
"Muslims believe in the five pillars of Islam, which are the shahada (saying a statement saying you believe there is only one God, and his last prophet was Muhammed, prayer, which is to spend at least five to ten minutes, five times a day, to pray to God, giving a small percentage of your income to charity, keeping fast in the month of Ramada and finally, if possible, attend pilgrimage at Makkah, which is called Hajj.) Even if one can’t meet each requirement, Islam encourages us to try our best and above anything else, to be a kind and good person."

What are your favorite parts of your religion?
"I love how peaceful and kind it is. Nowhere in Islam has it ever said to hurt people or to be cruel. It accommodates everyone, understands that no one is perfect, and that the most important value is to just be kind."

What are some traditions of Islam?
"Some traditions Muslims practice are to fast for thirty days in Ramadan in an effort to keep in mind how those less fortunate than us feel and spend time being thankful for what we have. Of course, if one is too old, needs medication, on their period, etc., they have no obligation to fast – it’s actually recommended not to. I think Ramadan is a beautiful month, and it’s a nice way to spend time with the family. We also have two celebrations each year, called Eid al Fitr and Eid al Adha. The first one is celebrated after Ramadan and the second is to celebrate those who were able to attend Hajj that year. It’s always super fun, and everyone gets to dress up, eat really good food, and exchange gifts."