

FIGHTING RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Portraits of Hate, Lessons of Hope



Lesson Plan: Overview of Dehumanization

Objectives:

- Students will learn about and then recognize characteristics of dehumanization.
- Students will be able to point out dehumanization in intolerant images.
- Students will retain the ability to relate images of dehumanization with religious intolerance and then formulate an explanation.

Activities:

- A preview lecture on the background of dehumanization.
- Utilize the website to address images of dehumanization to the class. Use images to open class discussion.
- Implement the worksheets into the class and set aside a specific amount of time for the students to complete them. Then open the class for discussion and have the students describe their answers.
- Concluding Class Discussion Questions – Why would intolerant groups use dehumanization as a tactic? What are some examples of dehumanization seen in our today?

Assessment:

- In class discussion and responses to worksheets and images.
- Participation in class discussion.
- Assign an essay as homework. Use the images viewed in class. (Possible rubric provided)
- Create groups to present research on the images with a written component.

Background Information on Dehumanization: Common Stereotypes Associated with Dehumanization in the United States

Dehumanization: Dehumanization, the denial of one's humanity, is a frequent tool of religious intolerance. It blocks sympathy for a marginalized religious group by portraying the group and its members as objects, monsters, or demons—as less than human. When religious intolerance denies the humanity of its victims, a dangerous environment is created that opens the door for the denial of basic human rights. Even more, dehumanization creates an environment in which acts of hatred and violence against marginalized religious individuals and groups can flourish.

Anti-Catholicism

- Priests have been depicted as less than human, often as sexually aggressive and/or sneaky animals.
- The Pope and other Catholic Church leaders are often depicted as evil obese monsters attempting to exert power over American politics.

Anti-Mormonism

- Mormons are often depicted as reptiles and birds, both animals that can represent a threat to all around them.
- Mormons are also portrayed as sexually deviant. This intolerant view leads to images of dehumanization.

Anti-Semitism

- Jews are commonly dehumanized and portrayed as animals, namely snakes. They are depicted as cunningly evil serpents who desire to gain power through political and economic dominance.