

# Religion & Webinar Teaching Resources / Study Guides

## Religion & Spirituality in Museums – released April 2022

[https://youtu.be/\\_csrXB-6EZw](https://youtu.be/_csrXB-6EZw)

### **Overview**

In foundational museum studies literature of the past 50 years, museums have been called “temples,” “sacred groves,” and places to connect with “something higher, more sacred, and out-of-the-ordinary.” How do museums today engage religion and spirituality, with whom, and why? Can encounters with objects and exhibits move people beyond the material world to consider the divine, the transcendent, the magical? In what ways do museums serve the growing number who consider themselves “spiritual but not religious,” those of different faiths, and those of no faith? Considering global challenges, how could museums contribute further to spiritual well-being as well as our collective future? Join four public-engaged scholar-practitioners of museum studies and/or religion to explore these intriguing questions and highlight the growing connections between religion, spirituality, and museums.

### **Sources Mentioned in Video:**

*The Social Work of Museums* by Lois Silverman

“On Museums: Transcendence and Magic”, chapter by Lois Silverman in the book *Flourishing in Museums*

*Religion in Museums* published by Bloomsbury Publishing

### **Teaching Resource 1 - Assignment (Clip)**

Watch this clip from Religion & online seminar and answer the following based on the panelist's answers.

Clip: 40:00-50:00

1. What are recommendations for museums so that visitors have a safe space to reflect and discuss these big, difficult topics?
2. What programs or examples are mentioned in the video that explain how this works?
3. Is it the museum's job to create these safe spaces?

## **Teaching Resource 2 - Assignment (Full Video)**

After watching the video and taking notes, answer the following based on the information provided in the video.

1. What interpretations do different artifacts hold in different spaces?
2. How does the museum change the meaning, interpretation or more of an artifact? How does it function differently in a different museum? For example, the replica of Noah's Arc at the Creation Museum.
3. Can encountering objects and exhibits move people beyond the material world to consider the divine, the transcendent, the magical?
4. How do museums compensate for the neglect and loss of material histories going forward?
5. Is it the museum's job to create reflection or safe spaces for dealing with difficult topics?
6. Why religion and spirituality in museums?
7. Why does this topic matter in our culture?

## **Teaching Resource 3 - Assignment/Discussion (Clip or Full)**

After watching this lecture, particularly 25:00-40:00, respond to the following prompt. Use examples from the video to support your answers.

There has been a long, bad history for museums being classist, racist, elitist and more. Despite the work of many museums, there are still some that fall along those lines. This history has affected the way museums have been formed and what is inside of them. In what ways do we see people, museums or organizations working to change these patterns? How are they engaging with this difficult history? How are they compensating for the loss of items, history and respect?

