Religion in the Workplace
Leah Smiley, CDE – Presenter
On Today’s Agenda

- To discuss how religion and non-religion means many things to different people
- To distinguish between the top 5 religions in the U.S.
- To ascertain the best practices for reducing and/or eliminating workplace discrimination as it pertains to religion
Who Is Your Presenter?

- Leah Smiley, CDE
  - Founder & President of the Society for Diversity
  - 15 Years in HR / 10 Years of Experience in Diversity

About the Society for Diversity
- #1 and Largest Professional Association for Diversity & Inclusion in the U.S.
- Focuses on Cultural Education & Leadership
- Parent Company of the Institute for Diversity Certification
Religion Around the World
The 5 Major Religions

- Christianity
- Judaism
- Islam
- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Atheists
- Agnostics
- Non-Religious
Christianity

- The World’s Largest Religion with a Foundation on Jesus Christ
- Believers rely on faith—which is “being sure of what is hoped for and certain of what is not seen”
- Christians Read the Bible and Generally Worship on Sundays and During the Week
- More than 38,000 Christian Denominations with the Major Groups Being: Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant
Major Protestant Branches

- Anabaptists
- Reformed Churches
  - Calvinism
  - Presbyterians
  - Congregationalists
  - Puritans / Separatists
  - Pietism
  - Methodists
  - Adventists
  - Pentecostalism
  - Holiness movement

- Anglicanism (via media)

Timeline:
- 1500
- 1600
- 1700
- 1800
- 1900
- 2000
Judaism is the monotheistic religion of the Jews, based on the laws revealed to Moses.

Jews Read the Torah and the Sabbath is Saturday.

Jewish Days Begin at Sundown and Holidays May Coincide with Some Christian Holidays.

Kosher Refers to Food and Dietary Restrictions.
Major Types of Judaism

- **Orthodox**
  - Resists Changes to Beliefs & Practices
  - Individuals Must Learn & Practice the Laws

- **Reform**
  - Relaxed Restrictions
  - Decisions Regarding Rituals and Observances Made by the Individual

- **Conservatives**
  - A Combination of Orthodox and Reform
Islam

- The World’s Second Largest Religion
- Muslims Believe in the Quran and the Sabbath is on Friday
- Muslims Adhere to a Dress Code and Islamic Etiquette
- Food permissible for Muslims is known as *halal* food
- 85% of Muslims Sunni, While 10% are Shi’ite
The 5 Pillars of Islam

- There is no god but God; and Muhammed is the prophet of Allah (Shahada, Testimony)
- There are Five Pillars of Islam, Which are the Foundation of Muslim Life
  - Say the Confession of Faith
  - Pray
  - Give Alms
  - Fast During Ramadan
  - Make a Pilgrimage to Mecca
Hinduism

- A Hindu is an individual who accepts and lives by the religious guidance of the Vedic scriptures
- The 3rd Largest Religion But Primarily Exists in India and Nepal
- One of the oldest & most diverse and complex religions—having millions of gods
- The basic scriptures of Hinduism are collectively referred to as Shastras
- Yoga, Karma, etc. Originate from Hinduism
Buddhism

- The word comes from 'budhi', 'to awaken'
  - Siddhartha Gotama, known as the Buddha, was awakened at age 35
  - Wealth & Luxury Does Not Guarantee Happiness

- Advocates for science
- Buddhists pay respect to images of Buddha
- Follows a moral code, or precepts
Religion at Work

- Employees Want Deeper Sense of Meaning and Fulfillment While at Work
- Investors Seeking Socially Responsible Organizations
- Promoting Tolerance
- Title VII Prohibits Discrimination
- Lawsuits on Both Sides of the Fence
Lawsuits

- EEOC vs. Convergys Corp.
- EEOC vs. Imperial Security
- EEOC vs. Pliant Corp.
What the Law Says

- Workplace Discrimination Based on Religion Prohibited; Applies to Employers with 15+ Workers
- Employment Protection Provided for:
  - Workers in Organized, Traditional Religions
  - Workers with Sincerely Held Religious, Ethical or Moral Beliefs
  - Treating Individuals Different Because of their Connection to a Religion or Marriage to Someone in a Religion
  - Harassment Prevention
Reasonable Accommodations

- Types of Accommodations
  - Flexible Scheduling
  - Voluntary Shift Substitutions
  - Job Reassignments
  - Modifications to Policies or Practices

- The Employer Cannot Force Someone to Participate or Not Participate in a Religious Activity as a Condition of Employment

- Undue Hardship
Reflection

- Key Points
- Talking Back
  - Questions
  - Comments
  - Suggestions
Thank You for Attending!

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