

FOOTNOTES FOR:

Middle East in Transition, 2nd edition

Background Lesson: An Overview of the Middle East

Activity 2, “What are some similarities and differences between Islam, Judaism, and Christianity?”

Teacher Resource 0.3

6. Teachers should note that the answer provided in the answer key is based on the fact that, ethnically speaking, both Arab Muslims and Jews can trace their people directly to Abraham. Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Muslims consider Abraham to be the ancestor of the Arabs through Ishmael. Jews trace their lineage to Abraham through Isaac. In this way, Abraham can be considered the father of these two peoples. Some may also argue that Abraham is the father of the Christian religion, in as much as Christianity stemmed from the Jewish tradition.

8. Question 8 refers to the Jewish Scriptures, or “Old Testament,” which is more commonly called the Hebrew Scriptures, or *Tanakh*. Teachers should note that some Jews take exception to calling the Hebrew Scriptures, or *Tanakh*, the “Old Testament.” In addition to the *Tanakh*, Jews study the *Talmud*, which is commentary on the *Torah*, or the five books of Moses. The *Talmud* explains, supplements, and applies the commands that were set forth in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is considered sacred, but not divine.