

Religion

Mini-Lesson—cut this out and glue to the right hand page of your notebook.

When did organized **religion** (a belief system involving powerful beings) begin? It is hard to guess, and did it begin as an extension of life as a farmer, or did religion develop separately? While some questions may never be answered, we do have some information about organized religion. Approximately 11,600 years ago in the southeast part of modern day Turkey is a site called Gobekli Tepe. Anthropologists, through research, think that somewhere around 500 people came together to build the first temple. This building served as a place to worship gods and/or goddesses. One of the interesting parts about this site is that the temple was built before the wheel was invented! The tallest columns were 18 feet tall and weighed approximately 16 tons (32,000 pounds). Fearsome animals were carved into the stones and must have made quite an impression on those who came to worship. It should be noted that the temple was built to have views of the surrounding land, meaning that it was prominently placed so it could be seen, even from a distance. This makes it interesting because it is theorized that a group of hunter-gatherers constructed it. Why this conclusion? There have been no Neolithic settlements found anywhere near it. There are no nearby fresh water sources. The temple itself is absent of any artistic representations tied to farming.

The truth is that anthropologists argue over which came first, religion or farming. Initially, anthropologists thought that farming led to religion; the need for a good harvest promoted worship of various gods or goddesses to make sure weather and harvests were good. It makes sense, especially since most **polytheistic** societies worshipped gods and goddesses connected to the sun, rain, river, harvest, certain plants, and so forth. **Polytheism** (belief in many gods and goddesses) even dominated the ancient world religions. Only one was based in **monotheism** (belief in one all powerful god).

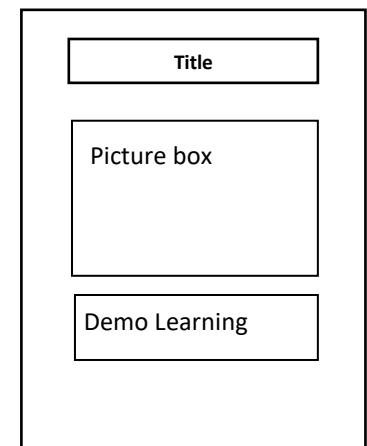
Directions to complete left hand notebook page.

Step 1— Color the title box, figures in the picture box and the background, and Demonstrate your Learning box.

Step 2— Cut out the title, picture box, and Demonstrate your learning box. Glue them as shown in graphic to the right.

Step 3— Answer the one question about the pictures in the picture box.

Step 4— Complete the Demonstrate your learning question.



Demonstrate your learning.

What are the definitions of polytheism and monotheism? How are they alike and how are they different?