

## Religion in America: Denominations, Congregations, Clergy

### Objective:

- 1) Introduce students to the denominations, congregations, and religious leaders operating in the United States
- 2) Examine trends in growth/decline
- 3) Familiarize students with online research tools

### Activity:

Using the [US Congregational Membership](#) tool on The ARDA, find the denominations most prevalent in the local zip code, or where students are originally from

Using the [US Congregational Membership](#) tool on The ARDA, view GIS maps that provide religious denomination, congregation, or census information on any US county

Introduce students to the [American Denominations](#) page on The ARDA. View profiles of over 400 past and present American denominations, investigate the [Denominational Family Trees](#) of major American denominations (ex: [Baptist](#), [Methodist](#)), and [Compare Members](#) of various denominations in the US

Using [QuickLists](#) on The ARDA, explore with students the various denominations and religious traditions operating in the United States

Explore the types of religious leaders in American denominations and congregations using The ARDA [Religion Dictionary](#) ([Archbishop](#), [Bishop](#), [Cardinal](#), [Clergy](#), [Deacon](#), [Elder](#), [Imam](#), [Pastor](#), [Patriarch](#), [Patriarchate](#), [Pope](#), [Priest](#), [Rabbi](#))

As a class, view various worship service videos on The ARDA's [YouTube channel](#) paying particular attention to the leader(s) of each service and the wider religious group of which they are a part

### Assessment:

Direct students to complete the [Exploring the U.S. Religious Landscape](#) learning module

Direct students to complete the [Exploring Denominations in the United States](#) learning module

Using the [American Denominations](#) page on The ARDA, have students compare and contrast the members of three denominations using the [Compare Members](#) tool and provide an explanation for those differences using theories and concepts from the sociology of religion

Direct students to attend a worship service outside their own faith tradition. Use Nancy Ammerman's [Visitor's Guide to Religious Groups](#) learning resource to prepare the



students for their visit. Roger Finke's [Congregation Observation Tool](#) is useful to the students for making notes while they are conducting their observation.

Suggested readings:

Chaves, Mark. 2011. *American Religion: Contemporary Trends*. Princeton. Ch. 5-7.

“[Denomination](#)” in the Religion Dictionary in Teaching Tools on The ARDA

“[Denominationalism](#)” in the Religion Dictionary in Teaching Tools on The ARDA

“[Religious Affiliation](#)” in the Religion Dictionary in Teaching Tools on The ARDA

“[Religious Producer](#)” in the Religion Dictionary in Teaching Tools on The ARDA

“[RELTRAD](#)” in the Religion Dictionary in Teaching Tools on The ARDA