

Template for Paper

Your paper should follow the following outline, or at least adequately cover the material outlined below. In preparing your paper, pay attention to your sources of information, and whether or not they are biased for or against the group you are studying.

/5 **I. Introduction** (Should be bold font and Roman numeral I.)

Brief statement about the religious group, the number of members it has, in what part of the world this group tends to be found, and any other general information about the group.

/10 **II. Origin and History** (Should be bold font and Roman numeral II.)

1. How did the group begin?
2. Where did it begin?
3. What story, if any, surrounds its beginnings and/or what were the significant moments in its history?
4. Who was the founder?
5. What is/was the founder's story?
6. How important is the founder to the group today?
7. Other unique things about the founder.

/10 **III. Appeal** (Should be bold font and Roman numeral III)

What are the "big questions," or the basic human needs, that this group seems to address itself to the best? What is the most appealing aspect of this group or religious system? What does spirituality "look like" for them? What do you personally find most attractive and least attractive about this religious system?

/15 **IV. Similarities/Differences when compared to Christianity:** (Should be bold font and Roman numeral IV.)

1. If it is a non-Christian religion, does it have anything to say about Jesus?
 - A. (Non-Christian) how is Jesus viewed/understood?
 - B. (Christian) how does this group view Jesus?
2. What is its view about salvation. More specifically:
 - A. What do we need to be saved from? What is broken in life that needs repair?
 - B. What is the method by which we are saved?
3. What is the source of their Spiritual authority? (Sacred writings, leader, mystical experiences, etc.?)

4. What does it say about people and who they really are? (for example, are people spirits inhabiting physical bodies? Are we “little gods” becoming bigger ones? Are we simply animals that have evolved by chance? etc)
5. How is the problem of suffering and/or evil dealt with or explained?
6. What does worship look like for this group? How does *what* they believe impact *how* they worship? Give some examples.
7. Other points of interest?

/5 V. Tracing God’s Footprints: (Should be bold font and Roman numeral V.)

Do you see evidence of God’s influence being felt either in the religious system itself, or in the lives of those who are members? Explain what you mean. If you can’t find any, why do you think you haven’t?

/5 VI. Sharing your Faith: (Should be bold font and Roman numeral VI.)

If you were to try to explain to a member of this religious group why what you believe is important to you in a way that they could understand or “connect with,” how would you go about it? What common ground can you find with them either in terms of what you believe, or the way you experience God’s work in your life?