



INVENT YOUR OWN RELIGION

>>>>>WORKSHOP<<<<<<

Name: _____

Name of Your Religion: _____

Date of its Inception: _____

Step One: Select a Story

This can be any story that has inspired you – and it can be any medium – film, novel, comic book, video game. The important feature is that it is a story whose mythology you are deeply familiar with. Write the name of your story inside of this box (1 minute.)

Step Two: Key Mythological Themes

Identify at least three key mythological themes in the story. These can be archetypal, theoretical, or philosophical. In short, you must identify the prevailing themes that are present in your mythological religion. Examples include : Hero's Journey, Transition from Childhood to Adulthood, Death and Loss, Metamorphosis/Transformation. Write the three themes inside of this box. (3 Minutes).

Step Three: Applied Moral Framework

Utilizing the three mythological themes identified in the earlier section, begin to imagine an Applied Moral Framework that emerges from the mythology of the story. How can the lessons of this story be applied to the life of an individual? If it helps, you can import a recognizable religious prosthetic, such as The Ten Commandments, or The Seven Deadly Sins, or the Six Bardos. There is no minimum or maximum here – take some time with this. (Minimum: 5 minutes).

Step Four: Religious Affordances

Imagine how you can transform key symbolic dimensions of the story into religious symbols. For example, in *The Matrix*, Neo must make a choice as to whether to take the red pill or the blue pill, which Matrixism codes as a sacrament. Or how Jediism uses 'The Force' to explain a sentient animate consciousness. These symbols will become important anchors for your religion to resonate with its adherents. This is a process of symbolic alchemy, where you take recognizable motifs from the narrative and imbue them with larger symbolic meanings.

Try and create/imagine at least four religious affordances and write/draw them inside of this box. (Minimum: 5 minutes)

Step Five: Applied Time/Space

It takes the earth 24 hours to undergo a complete rotation around the Sun, and 365 days to complete its full orbit of the Sun. Likewise, the Moon orbits the Earth every 27.32 days. Both lunar and solar calendars are used by religions to ritually tell aspects or versions of their central stories. This repetition, aligned with changes in the seasons and historical remembrances are important aspects of religion's ritualistic repetitive power. Using the Gregorian Calendar (with lunar cycles attached), try and create holidays or rituals that use aspects of the story for inspiration. For example, Tolkien Religionists track Frodo's Journey with the Ring over the course of one year, and create holidays that reflect key turning points in the narrative (the fellowship's arrival at Rivendell, the Death of Gandalf, their arrival at Lothlorien, the Battle of Helm's Deep, etc.). Many religions use the earth's natural rotation as inspiration (solstices and equinoxes) but feel free to be inventive. Circle key dates on this calendar and give names to a minimum of four holidays. (Minimum : 5 minutes).



Holiday One :

Holiday Two:

Holiday Three :

Holiday Four:

Step Six: Religious Prosthetics

Identify a number of symbolic objects, and/or media from within the narrative you have chosen, which can become relics or religious prosthetics. This can include a song that the story features, or a physical object, or environment from the story which can be constructed or built. These objects become tactile and/or abstract media that give affective and experiential significance to your religion and which can be used in ritual. Select a minimum of three, and draw or write them in this box. (3 minutes)

Step Seven: Create a Logo/Symbol

In a culture of world religions, almost all religions now have identifiable symbols, and invented religions carry on this tradition. Considering all of the symbolic material you have unearthed in this process, select one visual symbol that is able to convey the significance and ideals of this religion to the public. Draw this symbol in this box. (2-3 minutes).

Step Eight: Construct a Ritual

Ritual is the means through which a religion moves from the theoretical to the lived experience. Consulting all of the aesthetic, mythological, symbolic and philosophical materials you have thus far unearthed, design a ritual that your religion, based upon a work of fiction, can create. Think about the entire experience : location, environment, smells, tastes, foods, clothing, music, atmosphere, pace, rhythm and repetition.

Imagine what role the sacred text (or film, or novel, or venerated comic book) may or may not play, as well as time (duration) and/or transitional periods, possibly moving between locations or taking place over a number of days. Take your time with this. Use this paper as a base to design the skeleton of the ritual, then experiment by inviting guests to participate in the ritual, using all of the objects and materials you have unearthed, to learn about your new religion. For makers of performance, you could consider producing this ritual as a live art act, with or without context, as an experiment to see if it indeed produces religious experiences among its audience.

(Minimum: 20 minutes).

Thankyou for taking the time to participate in [M]Dudeck's INVENT YOUR OWN RELIGION workbook, as part of RELIGIONVIRUS TRANSMISSIONS. If you have any questions, comments, feedback, or if you are interested in hosting a workshop or would like to begin a dialogue around any of the themes which this project uses, please contact [M] Dudeck at witchdoctor@michaeldudeck.com. We are particularly keen on hearing the results and observations surrounding the invented ritual if you make it to that stage in the process ! If you would like more information on [M]Dudeck, or Religion Virus, please visit www.michaeldudeck.com, or [M]Dudeck's virtual temple at www.templeofartifice.com.