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Three Religions in the Middle East

Most people in the Middle East are Muslims (MUHZ-luhmz). Their religion is called Islam. There are also Christians from many different backgrounds. Judaism is another religion in the Middle East. Most religious Jews live in the country of Israel, but there are some Jewish people in other countries as well.

The Cradle of Civilization

Two important ancient civilizations were born in the Middle East. Ancient Egypt grew up around the Nile River. This is the longest river in the world. Ancient Mesopotamia grew up around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This area is modern-day Iraq.



Current map of the Middle East

A Story of Conflict

The Middle East is one of the most complicated areas in the world. It is the birthplace of three major religions: Judaism (JOO-dee-izuhm), Christianity, and Islam (is-LAWM). And, it is a bridge between three continents: Africa, Europe, and Asia.

The modern history of the Middle East is a story of **conflict**. These conflicts come from three main issues. First, the nation of Israel (IZ-ree-uhl) was formed in 1948. This sparked conflict with those who already lived in the region. Second, **religious extremism** (ik-STREEM-izuhm) causes many conflicts. Some people use their beliefs as an explanation for violence. Third, there is a large amount of oil in the Middle East. Nations around the world rely on this oil supply. So, this often causes conflict, too.

Events in the Middle East affect us all. People around the world pay close attention to what happens there. Because of this, it is important that we try to understand the Middle East.



Oil field pumps are a common sight in some parts of the Middle East. This part of the world produces the most oil.