**Food Taboo and Prohibitions Project**

A food taboo is a prohibition against consuming certain foods. The word "taboo" (also spelled "tabu") is Polynesian and means 'sacred' or 'forbidden'. Food is a culturally specific concept. In general, anything can function as food if it is not immediately toxic. But what is edible in one culture may not be in another. The concept of food is determined by three factors: biology, geography, and culture.

Certain plants and animals are not consumed because they are indigestible. Geography also plays a role. For example, dairy products are not part of the food culture of the humid tropical regions since the geographical conditions for keeping cattle are unfavorable. Milk is often a taboo food in such cultures. Insects are not considered food in Europe and most of the United States despite attempts to introduce them in the late twentieth century. This is because there are few edible insects in regions with temperate climates. In Mexico, by contrast, insects are packaged in plastic sachets, cans, or jars for sale. Cultural reasons for food taboos often have a geographical basis—unknown or exotic foods will be rejected as unfit for consumption.

It is of interest to note that food avoidance most frequently relates to animal meat, since in most cultures human beings have an emotional relationship with animals they have to kill to eat. In Western society cats and dogs are not consumed because of the emotional relationships developed with these pets. By contrast, dog meat is popular in China and the mountainous regions of the Philippines. From a nutritional point of view, dog meat is an excellent source of animal protein, and dogs do not require the grazing area demanded by cattle or other large ruminants.

One of the few taboos of a food of vegetable origin is the prohibition against alcohol for Muslims and some Christian denominations. Food may establish a cultural identity of an ethnic group, religion, or nation. Food taboos in a society function also as a means to show differences between various groups and strengthen their cultural identity. Refraining from eating pork is not only a question of religious identity but is likewise an indication of whether or not one belongs to the Jewish or Muslim cultural community.

**Project-** Choose a meal that your family would traditionally serve at a holiday or celebration (birthday, religious event, 4th of July etc. . ) For this meal, however you are going to invite some guests and to be an accommodating host you need to adapt for their food prohibitions.

Part One – List all the ingredients and the correct steps to prepare this meal for your family. Include pictures of the ingredients.

Part Two – Adapt your meal for the following groups

* A 17 year old student who is a practicing Hindu
* A 21 year old adult who is a practicing Muslim
* A 20 year adult who is an orthodox Jew
* A 19 year old Vegan
* A 16 year old who is gluten and lactose intolerant.
* A 40 year old adult who is a practicing Catholic during Lent

For each group, indicate what ingredients you may have to eliminate and or replace, and how the preparation of the meal may have to be adapted.