

Exploring Sacred Spaces: A Journey with Ellie

Learning objective: To identify and compare the key features of different places of worship and understand their significance to believers.

Ellie the elephant has been travelling to learn about how different communities celebrate their faith. Below are six descriptions of features found in places of worship. Your task is to match the feature to the correct religion (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism) and then answer the deeper thinking questions to explore why these spaces are special.

Word bank: Minaret · Altar · Mandir · Gurdwara · Synagogue · Shrine · Mosque · Church · Pew · Bimah

1. 1. A tall, slender tower attached to a mosque from which a call to prayer is made. Which religion is this associated with and what is the tower called? (2 marks)

2. 2. In a synagogue, the Torah scrolls are kept in an ark and read from a raised platform. What is this platform called, and why is it important to treat the scrolls with such great care? (2 marks)

3. 3. Compare and contrast: How does the interior of a Mandir differ from a Church in terms of the objects or statues that might be present? (3 marks)

4. 4. Explain why many places of worship have specific rules, such as removing shoes or covering one's head before entering. What does this suggest about how believers view the space? (3 marks)

5. 5. Justify your answer: If a community were building a new place of worship, why might they choose to include a quiet garden or a community hall alongside the main prayer room? (3 marks)

6. 6. What might happen if a place of worship lost its sense of community and became only a building for individual prayer? Discuss the importance of shared rituals. (3 marks)

Draw: Design your own 'Universal Sacred Space'. Include three features from different religions that you have studied, such as a stained glass window, a dome, or a peaceful garden area. Label each feature and explain why you chose to include it.



Extension challenge: Research a place of worship in your local town or city. Write a short report explaining how the building reflects the history and the values of the people who worship there. How does the architecture help people feel a sense of peace or belonging?