

Journeys of Faith: Understanding Pilgrimage

Learning objective: To identify and explain the significance of a pilgrimage for religious believers.

Read the passage carefully and answer the questions using full sentences. Use your knowledge of religious practices to support your answers.

A pilgrimage is a special, intentional journey undertaken by a person to a place they consider sacred. For many religious believers, travelling to a site of historical or spiritual significance is an act of deep devotion. Throughout history, people have trekked across mountains, sailed across seas, or walked long paths to reach these destinations. Whether it is a grand temple, a quiet mountain shrine, or a historic city, the goal is to feel closer to the divine. Ellie the elephant, who loves learning about human history, notes that these journeys are often about more than just the destination. Pilgrims often use the time spent travelling for quiet reflection, prayer, or to show gratitude. Some might save money for years—perhaps even thousands of £—to afford the travel costs required for such a significant life event. Once they arrive, visitors often participate in rituals, light candles, or share meals with other pilgrims. It is a time to step away from daily life, leave behind distractions, and focus entirely on their beliefs, finding peace and renewal in the beauty of a shared tradition.

Word bank: pilgrimage · sacred · devotion · tradition · reflection · sanctuary

1. According to the text, what is the primary purpose of a pilgrim travelling to a sacred site? (2 marks)

2. List two activities mentioned in the text that pilgrims might participate in once they reach their destination. (2 marks)

3. Why might a person choose to spend a large amount of money, such as several thousand £, to go on a pilgrimage? (3 marks)

4. Explain why the journey itself might be just as important as the destination for a pilgrim. (3 marks)

5. Do you think a pilgrimage is a meaningful way to express faith? Justify your answer using evidence from the passage. (4 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene of a pilgrim reaching a beautiful, peaceful destination. Include symbols that represent a journey, such as a walking stick, a map, or a landmark.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast a pilgrimage to a modern-day holiday. What are the key differences in intention and preparation? If you were to design a 'pilgrimage of learning' to a place that matters to you, where would you go, what would you hope to learn, and why is that location significant to your own personal growth?