Exploring Traditions: Inside the Synagogue

Learning objective: To identify and understand the significance of key features and objects found within a Jewish place of worship.

Use the word bank to label your drawing and answer the questions below to show your understanding of how Jewish people worship.

Draw: Draw the interior of a synagogue. Include a raised platform (the Bimah) in the center or front. On the wall, draw an ornate cabinet with curtains, which is the Aron Kodesh. Above the cabinet, draw a small, glowing lamp (the Ner Tamid). On the Bimah, draw an open scroll representing the Torah, and a small pointer tool (the Yad) resting nearby. Use clear, neat lines and add labels using the provided word bank.

Label words: Aron Kodesh · Torah Scroll · Ner Tamid · Bimah · Yad

Steps:

1. Label the Aron Kodesh (the Ark) in your drawing. Why is this considered the most important part of the synagogue?
2. Explain why the Ner Tamid (Eternal Light) is kept burning above the Ark at all times.
3. What is the purpose of the Yad, and why do you think it is used instead of fingers to touch the Torah scroll?

4. Compare and contrast the Bimah to a teacher's desk in a classroom. How are they similar in their function?

5. Justify why it is important for the Torah scrolls to be treated with such great respect and care.

6. What might happen if a synagogue did not have a Bimah? How would this change the experience for the congregation?