

Sacred Spaces: A Journey with Ellie

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

Read the passage carefully, then answer the questions. Think about how the environment inside a place of worship helps people feel peaceful or connected to their beliefs.

Ellie the elephant has travelled across the globe, using her incredible memory to recall the beautiful places of worship she has visited. She explains that a place of worship is more than just a building; it is a sanctuary where people gather to share their faith, find peace, and express gratitude. In a church, Ellie admired the tall, stained-glass windows that paint the floor in vibrant colors, telling stories through light. In a mosque, she observed the intricate geometric patterns on the walls, which reflect the beauty of order and creation. In a mandir, she noticed the presence of many shrines, each filled with offerings of flowers and incense to show deep devotion. Finally, in a synagogue, she saw how the community carefully kept the sacred scrolls, showing great respect for their ancient history. Although these buildings look different on the outside, they all share a common purpose: to provide a quiet, holy space where individuals can reflect and connect with the divine. Ellie reminds us that entering these spaces requires us to be respectful, quiet, and mindful of others who are there to pray.

Word bank: sanctuary · reverence · architecture · tradition · community · symbolism

1. According to the passage, what are two reasons why people might gather in a place of worship? (2 marks)

2. What does the passage say about the stained-glass windows in a church? (2 marks)

3. Why might a place of worship have specific rules about being quiet and respectful? (2 marks)

4. How do the geometric patterns mentioned in the passage help us understand the atmosphere of a mosque? (2 marks)

5. Do you think all places of worship need to look the same to be considered 'holy'? Explain your answer using evidence from the text. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a place of worship that includes at least three symbols or features mentioned in the text, such as stained glass, geometric patterns, or flowers.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast two different places of worship. Justify why the architecture might be designed to make someone feel small or humble. What might happen if a place of worship was designed to be loud and chaotic instead of peaceful?