

Journeys of the Spirit: Understanding Pilgrimage

Learning objective: To understand the concept and significance of pilgrimage within various religious traditions.

Read the passage carefully, then answer the questions below. Ensure you use evidence from the text to support your justifications.

Ellie the elephant, with her incredible memory for history, explains that a pilgrimage is far more than a simple holiday. For millions of people across the globe, a pilgrimage is a sacred journey undertaken to a place of deep religious significance. Whether it is travelling to the holy city of Mecca, walking the winding paths to Santiago de Compostela, or visiting the sacred River Ganges, the act of travelling is considered a profound act of devotion. Pilgrims often leave behind the comforts of their daily lives to focus entirely on their faith, seeking spiritual growth, forgiveness, or a sense of inner peace. Some journeys involve physical challenges, such as climbing steep mountains or walking long distances, which represent the difficulties overcome in life. Upon arriving at their destination, many find that the shared experience with fellow believers creates a powerful sense of community. Through these ancient traditions, people connect with their history and their beliefs in a tangible way. It is a time for quiet reflection, prayer, and gratitude, marking a transformative moment in a believer's life that often leaves them changed long after they return home.

Word bank: Pilgrimage · Sacred · Devotion · Reflection · Tradition · Spiritual · Journey · Reverence

1. Identify two reasons mentioned in the text why a person might choose to go on a pilgrimage. (2 marks)

2. Name three specific locations cited in the text that are considered destinations for pilgrimages. (2 marks)

3. Explain why the author describes a pilgrimage as a 'transformative' experience rather than just a trip. (3 marks)

4. How does the physical difficulty of a pilgrimage (such as climbing a mountain) relate to a pilgrim's spiritual journey? (3 marks)

5. Do you think a pilgrimage is more meaningful if it is physically challenging? Justify your answer using examples. (4 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene of a pilgrim reaching their destination. Include symbols that represent peace, reflection, or the journey they have completed.

Extension challenge: Compare and contrast a pilgrimage with a modern-day tourist holiday. Create a table identifying three differences and explain why a pilgrim might feel a different sense of purpose compared to a holidaymaker.