

My Pilgrimage Explorer's Journal: A Study of Sacred Journeys

Learning objective: To identify the meaning and significance of pilgrimage for believers and explain why individuals undertake these challenging physical and spiritual journeys.

Use this template to document your research on a chosen place of pilgrimage. Think like Ellie the Elephant, who remembers the stories of the past, as you investigate the history and personal meaning behind these sacred sites. Complete each section with detail to show your deep understanding of religious practices.

Word bank: Pilgrimage · Sacred · Devotion · Spiritual · Ritual · Tradition · Reflection · Significance · Community · Faith

1. The Destination: Identify a specific place of pilgrimage (e.g., Mecca, Lourdes, Varanasi, or Jerusalem). Explain why this location is considered sacred to the religion associated with it. (3 marks)

2. The Purpose: What do pilgrims hope to achieve or experience by travelling to this destination? Consider the difference between a holiday and a pilgrimage. (3 marks)

3. Personal Reflection: Explain why a believer might choose to endure a difficult or expensive journey to reach a holy site. How might this experience change their daily life upon returning home? (4 marks)

4. Comparative Analysis: Compare and contrast a pilgrimage to a modern-day travel experience. Justify your answer regarding why one is considered 'spiritual' while the other is 'leisurely'. (4 marks)

5. The Impact of Community: What might happen if a pilgrim completes their journey alone compared to travelling as part of a large group of fellow believers? Discuss the importance of shared experience. (3 marks)

6. Critical Evaluation: If someone cannot physically travel due to cost (e.g., thousands of £) or health, can they still participate in a pilgrimage? Justify your perspective. (4 marks)

Extension challenge: Design a 'Pilgrim's Path' map. In your map, include three specific stops or rituals a pilgrim must complete before reaching the final destination. Write a brief justification for each stop, explaining how it prepares the individual for the spiritual conclusion of their journey.