

Sacred Spaces: Exploring Places of Worship

Learning objective: To identify and compare the significance of features, symbols, and practices within diverse places of worship.

Read each question carefully and use your knowledge of world religions to provide detailed, reasoned answers. Ensure you use appropriate religious terminology.

In Year 5, we explore how different communities express their faith through their physical surroundings. Whether it is a church, mosque, synagogue, mandir, or gurdwara, each building is designed to reflect specific beliefs, history, and the relationship between the congregation and the divine. Think about the sensory experience of these spaces: the sounds, the light, the layout, and the objects that hold special meaning to believers.

Word bank: Sanctuary · Iconography · Ritual · Architecture · Deity · Congregation · Consecrated · Liturgical

1. Compare and contrast the seating arrangements in a church and a mosque. How does the layout influence the way the congregation prays? (4 marks)

2. Explain why many places of worship have specific 'sacred' areas or zones that are separated from the main entrance. What is the purpose of this transition? (3 marks)

3. Identify one symbolic object found in a place of worship you have studied. Justify why this object is essential for the religious rituals performed there. (3 marks)

4. Max the monkey is helping a friend design a community space. If they wanted to create a room that feels 'peaceful' and 'reverent', which architectural features should they include and why? (3 marks)

5. What might happen to the atmosphere of a place of worship if all religious symbols and icons were removed? Argue your perspective. (4 marks)

6. Nova the owl observes that many places of worship are built with high ceilings or domes. How might this design choice represent the relationship between the people inside and the heavens? (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a bird's-eye view floor plan of an imaginary place of worship. Include a space for quiet meditation, an area for communal gathering, and at least three symbolic features that represent the beliefs of the people who use it.



Extension challenge: Research a historical place of worship in your local area. Write a short report explaining how the building's architecture has changed over the last 100 years. If the building had to be sold for £500,000, how would the community justify the preservation of its historical significance versus the need for modern functionality?