



FEZANA Age-Appropriate Lesson Plan

Subject Category (circle one): Religion/Ceremony History Prayer Gathas
Comparative Religion Shahnameh

Age Group (circle one): PreK-K Grade 1-3 **Grade 4-5** Grades 6-8 Grades 9-12

Lesson # (if applicable):

Subject of the Lesson: Places of Worship

Background Knowledge for the Teacher:

PLACES OF WORSHIP

A place of worship is a building or another place where people gather to carry out honor and religious praise. According to varying beliefs, the style of religious buildings has changed over many, many years.

The word 'temple' is frequently used as a broad term for a house of worship. Churches and churches, however, are not usually referred to as temples. Places of worship include Buddhist and Hindu temples, mosques, synagogues, and churches.

Islam

Since their beginnings, mosques have served many purposes. The main purpose of a mosque is to worship and praise Allah. It can be a community building, or an open area deemed as sacred. Several mosques have domed roofs with the symbol of Islam, and many of them in Muslim countries have a tower called a minaret. Mosques don't have furniture, statues, or pictures.



Jamkaran Mosque

Christianity

A church is a place where Christians assemble to worship God. Some are very old while others are very modern—any type of building can be used as a church. Areas in the church include the sanctuary, the most holy area; the nave, the main area where people sit; the altar, which is used for the ritual known

as the Eucharist or Holy Communion. The pulpit is where the minister gives his/her sermon, and s/he uses the lectern to read the Bible out loud during services.



St Andrews Basilica, India

Judaism

A Jewish place of worship goes by several names: shul, beit, congregation and Temple. Synagogue is the most general term and the most recognized. The most significant item in a synagogue is the ark, a cabinet or container that holds the Torah scroll. The ark symbolizes the Holy of Holies, and it is the most sacred place in a synagogue and the prime focus of prayer. During particular prayers, the ark's doors or curtain can remain open or closed.



Eldridge Street Synagogue NY City

Hinduism

In the Hindu religion, everyday worship occurs in three places: in one's home, in a temple, or on a streetside shrine. Most households have a small shrine dedicated to the gods that are significant to that house. If there is a guru, a photo is present to remind the individual of the guru's teachings. In the temple, the god or goddess are regarded as royalty. The statue is bathed and dressed, and meals and

other gifts are frequently provided. Small shrines to Hindu gods and goddesses can be found on roadsides and on streets. They can stay there permanently and untended or be put on a cart and moved around.



Hindu temples in India

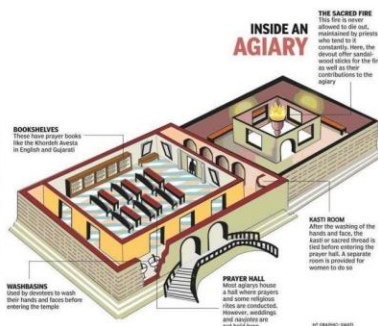
Zoroastrianism

A fire temple, Agiary, Atashkadeh , Atashgah or Dar-e Mehr is the place of worship for the followers of Zoroastrianism, the ancient religion of Iran (Persia).

Parsi Tradition:

In the Zoroastrian religion, fire together with clean water , are agents of ritual purity. Clean, white "ash for the purification ceremonies is regarded as the basis of ritual life", which "are essentially the rites proper to the tending of a domestic fire, for the temple [fire] is that of the hearth fire raised to a new solemnity". For one "who sacrifices unto fire with fuel in his hand ..., is given happiness". In certain fire temples (agiary) the fire is never allowed to die out. It is maintained by priests who tend to it constantly with sandalwood around the clock.

As of 2019, there were 177 fire temples in the world, of which 45 were in Mumbai, 105 in the rest of India, and 27 in other countries. There was a religious custom in India of not allowing Zoroastrian women to enter the Fire Temple and the Tower of Silence if they marry a non-Zoroastrian person. This custom has been challenged before the Supreme Court of India after a Zoroastrian woman was denied entry into Zoroastrian institutions.



Iranian Tradition:

Until the end of Sassanid Era (224-651 CE) Zoroastrian Atashgahs (Atashkadehs) were outdoors, a four-sided open area called Chahartaqh meaning four directions (photo 1). Today Zoroastrian Atashgahs are mainly indoors (photo 2). In Atashgahs the fire is kept alive and re-flamed each day. Zoroastrians pray in front of a source of fire. It could be in their homes, outdoors, Atashgah, or any other place of choosing. They pray individually or as a group. In addition, Iranian Zoroastrians have shrines in Yazd (central Iran) and its provinces were Zoroastrians visit for pilgrimage. It is believed that the Sassanid princesses sought refuge in these locations from the invading Arabs after the fall of Sassanid Empire. Pir e Sabz (photo 3) is an important shrine where many Zoroastrians gather at the beginning of summer to pray, celebrate, and enjoy the community. Pir e Herisht is another shrine where Zoroastrians visit at Nowruz.

Shah Verahram Izad (Izad of Victory), smaller than Atashgah (Atashkadeh) situated in cities are the local places of worship with fire burning and a keeper attending it. Zoroastrians go there for worship, special occasions such as Nowruz, and memorials. It is a place where community members gather pray, donate, eat aash, sirog and enjoy being together as a community. Zoroastrian homes had altars, a corner of the house was dedicated to this altar where a candle would be lit, esfand, condor burned, incense used with Zarathushtra's photo and Avesta book to pray. Today, most Zoroastrians don't keep an alter rather go to the Atashgah or pray at home in front of a source of light.

Iranian Zoroastrians living outside of Iran specially in North America pray in their homes or in the Atashgah (Atashkadeh, Darb e Mehr) close to their place of residence.



Photo 1

Sassanian Chahartaqh at Niasar near Kashan, Esfahan (Isfahan)

Image Credit: Photographer unknown



Photo 2
Varahram Fire Temple, Yazd, Iran
Image Credit: tappersia.com

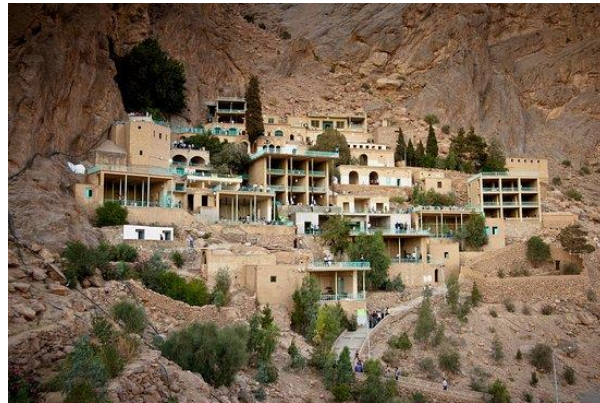


Photo 3
Pir e Sabz, Yazd, Iran

Lesson for students:

1. Refer to PowerPoint for this lesson.
2. Focus on typical rituals of worship.
 - a. Is there special clothing that needs to be worn?
 - b. How do individuals of different faiths pray?
EX. Zoroastrians pray in front of fire, wear a head covering, take off shoes.
 - c. Do the different faiths require individual or communal praying?
EX. Muslims do communal praying on Fridays and individual praying daily.
 - d. Do they use a special prayer to recite?
 - e. Is there a special day or number of times for prayer each day?
3. What are the similarities and differences of each place of worship to Zoroastrian place of worship?

Activity for Students:

1. Various videos to choose from:
 - [https://youtu.be/ A0HU07GYHo](https://youtu.be/A0HU07GYHo) places to worship and religious writings
 - <https://youtu.be/2f0ZyKqYVfs> places or worship and religious symbols
 - <https://youtu.be/4oB iamBSsc> places of worship (excluding judaism)
 - <https://youtu.be/4bURcqHbcGc> places of worship (excluding Judaism) **
 - <https://youtu.be/IEU3SDEwgt8> Zoroastrian Fire Temple Yazd, Iran
 - https://youtu.be/9Z_gyc7yG_c (what to expect in a synagogue)
 - <https://youtu.be/o7-i6KLoEkc> (Hindu Temple)



2. Refer to Places of Worship Activity- coloring
Have each student color one of the places of worship, then tell the class what they learned about that place of worship.
3. Have photos of different places of worship and make a game to see who can correctly name them all.
4. Ask parents to drive by different places of worship close to their area with their student before and after the lesson.
5. Break the class to groups and assign each group a place of worship of different religions.
 - a. Ask each group to create a graphic (Venn diagram, mind map, etc.) to compare Zoroastrian place of worship with the place of worship of the religion assigned to them. How do they look similar or different? What are the practices in each place of worship? Etc.
 - b. Share what they learned with the class
 - c. Then have each group choose a different place of worship than they originally chose and add it to their graphic and discuss.

Sources:

1. <https://www.theclassroom.com/places-of-worship-for-different-religions>
2. [Place of worship - Wikipedia](#)
3. [Zoroastrian Places of Worship. Atash Adaran, Agiary, Atashkadeh, Atash Dadgah, Dar-e-Meher or Darbe Mehr \(heritageinstitute.com\)](#)

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