

Key Vocabulary

pilgrimage	A journey to a special place that is important for religious reasons. A person who goes on a pilgrimage is called a pilgrim.
Christianity	One of the world's main religions. Followers are called Christians.
Buddhism	The religion followed by Buddhists.
Hinduism	The religion followed by Hindus.
holy	Something or somewhere that is dedicated to or associated with God or a religious purpose.
miracle	Something extraordinary and positive that is believed to happen because of another power, such as a god.
sacred	Something that is connected with God or a god.

What Is a Pilgrimage?

A **pilgrimage** is a special journey to a place that is important for religious reasons. Different religions have different special places that **pilgrimages** are made to. All places of **pilgrimage** are considered to be **sacred** and **holy** and they can be places where **miracles** have taken place.



Buddhist Pilgrimages



Pilgrimages are very important in **Buddhism**. The most important **Buddhist pilgrimage** sites are called the 'Eight Great Places'. They are: Rajgir, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Vaishali, Sankassa, Kusinara, Shravasti and Lumbini. Four of these are believed to be where **miracles** took place.



Christian Pilgrimages



There are different views on **pilgrimage** in **Christianity**. For some Christians, going on **pilgrimage** is important, whereas others do not believe it is that important. Christians who go on **pilgrimages** visit places that are in the New Testament in the Bible, or are linked with saints or **miracles**. **Pilgrimages** include Lourdes in France and Bethlehem.



Hindu Pilgrimages



Pilgrimage is an important part of **Hinduism**. Hindus go on **pilgrimages** to several places, including temples and mountains. Once every 12 years, millions of people share in ritual bathing at the Kumbh Mela festival. This is held where the waters of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers combine. The River Ganges is the **holiest** river for Hindus.



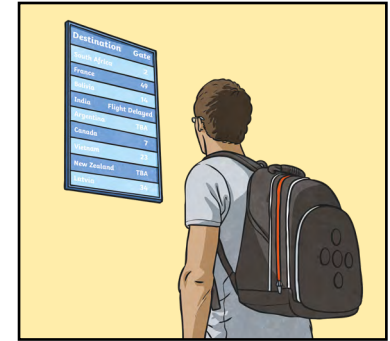
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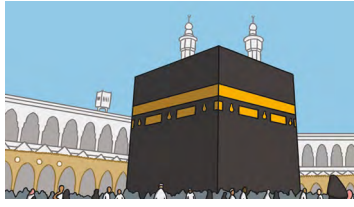

Key Vocabulary	
Islam	Islam is the second most popular religion in the world. Muslims are followers of Islam.
Judaism	The religion followed by Jews.
Sikhism	The religion followed by Sikhs.
guru	A religious teacher or leader in the Hindu or Sikh religions.



Are Pilgrimages Important To All Religions?

Although going on a **pilgrimage** is important to many different religions, this is not true with every religion. Some Sikhs go on **pilgrimages** but many do not as it is not seen as a compulsory part of **Sikhism**.



Muslim Pilgrimages 	Jewish Pilgrimages 	Sikhism and Pilgrimages 
<p>In Islam pilgrimage is important. All three types of Muslims (Sunni, Shia and Sufi) take pilgrimages. Each group of Muslims has its own pilgrimages but they all believe in a special pilgrimage called Hajj. All Muslims try to go once in their life, as this is the fifth pillar of Islam. For Hajj, Muslims travel across the world to visit Mecca.</p> 	<p>In the past, it used to be the duty for all followers of Judaism to pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year during specific festivals. It is no longer a duty, but Jews still go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem as it is their holiest city. Jews go to pilgrimage at the Western Wall (or Wailing Wall) as it is the last site of a destroyed Jewish temple. Jews pray at the wall and write messages to God.</p> 	<p>Pilgrimage is not compulsory for Sikhs so many choose not to go and spend the money they could have spent on a pilgrimage to help others. Sikh gurus, such as Guru Nanak, have said that spiritual wisdom and "God's name is the real pilgrimage place". If Sikhs do choose to go on a pilgrimage, they visit the 'Golden Temple' in India. It is the most famous place of worship for Sikhs.</p> 