

Unit 2D Visiting a place of worship

Generic

ABOUT THE UNIT

This unit extends and deepens children's knowledge about beliefs and practices by enabling them to experience the atmosphere of a place of worship at first hand, to see features and artefacts in their place and possibly in use, and to meet and talk with leaders and members of a faith community. It also enables them to consider the importance of special places in their own lives and those of others.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds on the visit to a church in year 1 (Unit 1F). The principles for planning and managing visits to places of worship outlined in this unit can be applied to visits across the key stages.

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children have:

- visited other places of worship and developed an understanding of the need to respect places which are special to others
- had opportunities to experience times of quiet reflection
- experience of preparing questions for discussion with adults

VOCABULARY

In this unit children will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:

- the main beliefs and practices associated with worship and the specific parts of a religious building
- attitudes, *eg respect, courtesy, good manners*
- atmosphere, *eg peaceful, calm, silence, welcoming, awesome, colourful, noisy*

RESOURCES

- a range of reference books, pictures, posters, religious artefacts
- videos and CD-ROMs showing how the building is used for worship
- 3D jigsaws, models, nets
- internet sites providing virtual tours of religious buildings

EXPECTATIONS

At the end of this unit

most children will:

describe the main features of the religious building they have visited, exploring how it is used by the members of the faith community; identify symbols and explain their meaning; know that the building is special to the people who use it; respond to the atmosphere in the building and describe how it feels; consider their own special places and why they are important to them

some children will not have made so much progress and will:

describe some of the main features of the building and explain how some of them are used; identify some symbols and explain their meanings; consider how special places are important; reflect on their own special space

some children will have progressed further and will:

explain some of the beliefs which underlie the ways in which the building is used; understand the importance of special places in our lives

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

WHAT IS A PLACE OF WORSHIP FOR?

- the key features of the building they will be visiting
 - how the building is used for worship and other uses
- Look at pictures, diagrams and video extracts which show the place of worship. Use a range of reference material to find out what the building is like and what people do there.
 - Use the internet to make a virtual visit to a place of worship. Ask the children to devise questions they would like to have answered when they visit. Keep a list of these for reference.
 - Ask the children to identify likely sources for the answers to their questions, *eg people, noticeboards, observation, reference books.*

- use research skills to find out about the place of worship they will be visiting
- ask appropriate questions about the place of worship and select relevant information to answer them

- Some religious buildings are used for a variety of purposes by the religious community and not just for worship.
- The focus chosen for the visit should be made clear to the children. Prepare a list of questions with them beforehand. Distinguish between questions that can be answered from their observations in the building, *eg where things are and what they are like*, and questions about belief and practice which they will want to discuss with religious leaders and members of the community.
- Make relevant links with children's own experiences and feelings and between the religious values and commitment demonstrated by members of the faith community and children's own attitudes and behaviour.

WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT IN A PLACE OF WORSHIP?

- that religious communities have expectations about how people will act, dress and behave in their place of worship, and that these expectations are linked to their beliefs
- Talk with the children about what they expect to see/hear/do on the visit.
 - Build up a sense of anticipation and talk about the idea that this is a special place to the people who go there. Discuss the reasons why this is.
 - Introduce the idea of respect. *How would you expect visitors to treat a place that was special to you?*
 - Discuss any special preparations that are required, *eg heads covered, shoes removed before entering.* This will vary between and within faiths. Whatever the requirements are, make sure that you have talked about them and that children understand the religious reasons.
 - Prepare children for seeing members of the faith community engaged in worship during the visit. Explain that they should observe this respectfully.
 - Talk about respect, courtesy and good manners. Ask children to draw up a 'Code of behaviour' for school visits to places of worship, explaining why this is important.

- know how to behave appropriately in a place of worship and explain why this is important

- Prepare children to be polite about any food they may be offered during the visit. Explain that hospitality is often an important part of the way of life for some religious groups, as it is when someone visits your home. Clarify what will be expected when you plan the visit.
- The visit involves meeting people from a range of social, cultural and faith backgrounds; recognising and responding to different expectations about attitudes and behaviour.

THE VISIT

- to reflect on their feelings and experiences
 - to meet and talk with members of faith communities about what their place of worship means to them
 - about how the building is used for worship and other activities
 - to use all their senses to explore the place of worship
- When you enter the area used for worship make time for children to experience the atmosphere. Ask them to sit or stand quietly and think of words to describe how they feel. These can be written down by the adults working with groups so that these important first impressions are not lost in the subsequent deluge of new experiences.
 - Provide opportunities for children to talk with religious leaders and members of the community. This is an opportunity for them to ask the questions they have prepared in school.
 - Enable them to record what they have seen in words and pictures. Provide guidance on this. Let them respond to what they are seeing, hearing, smelling and touching; identifying things which they like or which particularly interest them. Ask them which part of the building they think is the most important and why.

- make personal judgements about the atmosphere and qualities of a place of worship
- ask and answer appropriate questions to show their knowledge and understanding of the place of worship and its significance for the faith community

- Visits can make important contributions to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Visits provide opportunities for reflection on beliefs and values, and allow children to respond with awe and wonder to the atmosphere or to something beautiful or special.
- Taking photographs can be a useful way of helping children to recall what was seen on the visit.
- A digital camera would provide opportunities for developing skills in the use of ICT. Check with the faith community that taking photographs is acceptable.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE VISIT

- to reflect on the experience of the visit and use information to help them to build up a picture of some of the beliefs and practices in the religion they are studying
- The visit can be a stimulus for a wide range of work. As soon as possible give the children time to share their impressions and feelings and to ask any questions which were not answered on the visit.
 - Use postcards, pictures, posters and photos taken on the visit to help them to recall the visit.
 - Tasks could include:
 - reflective writing, *eg 'what I particularly liked and why'*
 - handling and identifying artefacts they saw on the visit, matching artefacts with words
 - making a display
 - role play a wedding, a baptism or a welcoming ceremony
 - preparing a presentation for other children, *eg an assembly about what they learnt on their visit*
 - writing thank you letters to the people who met and talked to them, about what they learnt about that religion
 - inviting someone from the faith community to talk to them in school or to see their display or presentation

- describe some of the features of the place of worship and explain how they are used in worship or other activities
- develop their social skills by writing a formal letter and making a presentation to visitors

FUTURE LEARNING

Children could go on to:

- apply what they have learnt on future visits to places of worship
- compare and contrast the ways in which different buildings express the beliefs of the faith community to which they belong

OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING

Children could:

- look out for places of worship in their local community, on car and bus journeys and on trips and holidays