

Prayer

Where, when and how do Hindus pray?

In Hindu traditions prayer takes place formally as part of puja, which is Sanskrit for adoration. This worship can take place in the home or in the mandir, or temple. Puja is worship and for Hindus provides a way of directly communicating with God. The act of prayer is part of puja, alongside rituals and songs.

For most Hindus prayer forms part of the puja that takes place daily in the home at least once a day, often in the morning. Hindu worship is primarily an individual act rather than a communal one, as it involves making personal offerings to the deity. During puja Hindus repeat the names of gods and goddesses that are important to them. They also repeat mantras over and over again. Worshippers also offer water, fruit, flowers and incense to God or the divine.

During the act of puja an image such as a murti or other symbol is used as a way of accessing God. The murti or symbol is not being worshipped or prayed to - it is just a focal point for honouring and focusing on the deity. It is very often women who perform the puja at the home shrine.

1. **Underline** key words in the text above.
2. Sum up what you have read in no more than five sentences.

3. Read what Neera and Susham say about prayer below. Underline the reasons why prayer is important, then, in the space below, explain three reasons why prayer is important to Neera and Sushma.

Date:

Neera:

I pray all of the time. I have an 'open line' connection where thoughts of thanks, wonder and despair are shared with 'angels'. For example, looking at a beautiful sunset I just say a silent 'thanks for this beauty' in my head. I also engage fully in real prayer rather than just having my head down when there are formal prayers. When praying, whatever feels right to you, will feel right to the divine. So it can be a ritual like puja, but it does not have to be, and in a church or outdoors is as ok as a mandir.

I pray because it feels right at the time I do it. I no longer set time aside for prayers in the morning and evening like I used to when I was a child. Many Hindus have a daily ritual of morning and evening prayer at a shrine in their home. I pray because I can't not pray when in that moment of thankfulness or need.

Prayers matter to me because it helps to ground me and I feel many prayers are answered. From simple things such as finding a good parking space to people who have been on the brink of death surviving and healing. Because of this I feel it's important that I pray for the wonder of the world - all who are suffering (human and non-human) in any way, wherever in the world they may be. I hope it makes a little bit of a difference for the better.

Sushma:

As a Hindu, I perform a form of Hindu prayers called puja, ideally twice a day. Puja allows me to quieten my senses sufficiently to experience this grace and receive this guidance.

Prayer matters to me because it reminds me that I am connected to a heritage and a way of being that enriches me and serves all of life from loving abundance.

How and why do Muslims pray?

As you watch the clip write down **3-5** points about **prayer in Islam**.

Prayer is called **SALAH** in Arabic. Muslims pray **five** times a day, and each salah takes about ten minutes. They pray on a mat to ensure cleanliness.

Date:

Muslims face the **Ka'bah** when they pray. The Ka'bah is a building in **Makkah**, in Saudi Arabia, and is said to be the House of God on Earth.

Muslims remove their shoes and wash thoroughly before they pray in a ritual called **wudu**.

Salah consists of a sequence of actions as well as words. Each sequence is called a **rak'ah**. Muslims should perform salah regularly from the age of ten, but they are encouraged to start from the age of seven or earlier.

Before and/or after the compulsory prayers, or at any time of the day, Muslims are encouraged to say voluntary prayers.



Fajr: prayer between dawn and sunrise.

Zuhr: prayer at midday after the sun passes its highest point

Asr: prayer late afternoon

Maghrib: between sunset and dusk (at the end of daylight)

Isha: prayer between dusk and midnight

Praying at times throughout the day reminds Muslims that God is constantly with them and of their submission to him and duty to praise him. This means that they are encouraged to do good and avoid evil. Through prayer, they ask God for guidance, express gratitude, and ask for help in making difficult decisions.

On Fridays, instead of offering the Zuhr prayers, it is obligatory for Muslim men to attend Jumu'ah prayers at a place of worship - the mosque. It is optional for women to attend.

Hasya:

I pray at the prescribed times for each prayer. The places I pray vary from a classroom corner and the green grass in the park to the living room in my house. I pray because I am grateful to **God** and each **prayer** helps me to remember him. Prayer is a step towards better living - living in his presence. Prayer matters to me because it is my one-to-one connection with Allah, an opportunity to have a conversation and time to reflect. What I love about having **five set times** to pray is that in our busy lives we can get so caught up with worldly things but in Islam, through these set times, you are given the opportunity to stop and reflect. In times of need prayer helps me feel **safe** and **reassured**. When all is well with my world then it gives me the opportunity to give thanks for all that I have been blessed with.

Knowledge check: Answer the following questions in full sentences.

1. How many times a day do Muslims pray? _____

Date:

2. How do Muslims prepare for prayer? _____

3. Which prayers are said in the mosque around midday on Fridays?

4. Who is supposed to attend? _____

5. Complete the grid below. In 66 words **describe why prayer** throughout the day is important to Muslims. Refer to Hasya's account of help you.

M is for Meditation and Prayer | Religious Studies - A to Z of Religion and Beliefs

As you watch the clip, write down 3-5 points about prayer and meditation. Is there a difference between prayer and meditation?

Where, when and how do Christians pray?

Prayer for Christians is like having a **conversation** with *God*. Sometimes this is done in a group in church or with a small group of friends; sometimes it is done alone. In prayer many Christians **worship** *God*, say 'thank you', say 'sorry' for the things they have done wrong and ask for help. In church, prayers can be led by a priest or members of the **congregation**. Roman Catholic Christians describe prayer as '**the raising of the heart and mind to God**'.

Sometimes prayers are said all together following particular words, such as the **Lord's Prayer**, a prayer that Jesus taught his followers to say.

Many Christians believe regular prayer is important. Just as in a friendship, if you do not talk to a friend regularly you can drift apart; similarly, if you do not pray to *God* regularly the same thing can happen. Many Christians pray everyday. Sometimes people follow **set prayers** but often they pray using ordinary words, just as if they are having a conversation.

Some people kneel for prayers saying sorry, or stand for prayers that praise *God*. Some Christians put their hands together when they are praying but most people think it does not matter how you sit, stand or put your hands in prayer.

During church services there are always prayers, some are said all together by the congregation, and others are said by one person on behalf of everybody. Christians show that they agree with a prayer by saying '**Amen**' together at the end.

4. Give two examples of **how** a Christian might pray.
-
-

5. Complete a venn diagram identifying the similarities and differences between when, where and how **Christians, Muslims and Hindus** pray.

Handling disagreement: does prayer matter more than work?

Providing shared spaces for people to stop and pray is becoming more popular. Most commonly these are multifaith spaces suitable for use by those of any faith or none.

For example, in the county of Leicestershire you can find a multifaith prayer room in a variety of locations, including:

- All three hospitals
- Highcross shopping centre
- Leicestershire Police HQ
- The city and county council offices
- Leicester City Football Club
- Leicestershire County Cricket Club
- East Midlands Airport



Prayer in the workplace

Some businesses provide multifaith prayer rooms for their employees.

A report in *The Guardian* in 2008 talks about the example of Slough Borough Council, which received the approval of the Muslim Council of Britain for its treatment of people of faith in its employ. The borough council offers a quiet room for prayer and reflection, accessible to all and appropriate for people of all faiths and none.

Practising Muslim and trainee solicitor, Raheela:

- We have an open plan office and I feel it would be distracting to pray in full view of everyone while they are trying to do their work, but I have been fortunate enough to work with an employer who has provided the relevant facilities.....
- I try to pray during my lunch break, and for the afternoon prayers I use the two ten minute breaks all employees are entitled to.

Atheist temp, James:

- No public body has any business using taxpayers' money to support other people's private religious practices, any more than it would be for churches to demand public funding.
- The individual needs to take personal responsibility to work in an environment tailored to their beliefs. It isn't up to the world to change around them.

President of the National Secular Society, Terry Anderson:

- There should be no penalty for not providing prayer spaces, and people who are employed should understand this and not start challenging it.

Head of consultancy at Employment Law Advisory Services:

Date:

- What encouraging religious diversity and practice does mean is that workers feel included. This generates loyalty within the workplace and productivity doesn't go down.

Roger:

As an employer I don't feel I need to provide a special room for prayer. I do think it is reasonable to allow employees to take one of their breaks and book an empty room for prayer.

Nick:

I value being able to pray at work. It allows me time to focus if things are difficult. Sometimes I can do it at my desk but sometimes things are too noisy. I think prayer should be allowed - it is only a break similar to a cigarette break.



After reading the above information on prayer in the workplace and shared spaces, complete the following table:

Arguments for allowing spaces available at work for prayer	Arguments against allowing spaces available at work for prayer

Outcomes and feedback:

Level	I can.....	I can....	Teacher feedback:
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give my own opinion on things that are important to me. • give some reasons why people might pray. • use some key vocabulary. 		
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe why prayer matters to religious believers, using examples from at least one religion. • describe some of the impact that prayer has on the life of a religious believer. 		
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain the significance of prayer to at least one religion and express my own ideas about the significance of prayer in two religions. 		
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give an informed account of how and why different people might agree or disagree with prayer in the workplace and public buildings. • Express insights into the practice and significance of prayer to religious believers, using reasoning and examples from at least two faith traditions. 		



www: _____

Q: _____



Target: _____

Date:

Worship

Match up the terms with the correct definition - colour code them to match.

Then think of an example for each.

Concept	Definition	Example
Beliefs	Special places set aside for worship.	
Rituals	A group of people that meet to worship.	
Story	Actions that you perform.	
Community	Stories that explain religious ideas.	
Experience	Ideas that you accept without question.	
Rules	Special Sacred signs that mean something.	
Buildings	Laws/the way in which you should behave.	
Symbol	Something that you feel.	

Date:

Rituals in worship

R is for Rituals | Religious Studies - A to Z of Religions and Beliefs (youtube clip)

As you watch the clip note down 3-5 examples of different religions:

What is a ritual?

Many religions use RITUALS. A ritual is an action used again and again in exactly the same way. Repetition doesn't make them boring. In fact, the opposite is true - it makes them stronger.

1. Choose one football ritual that you think is particularly important. Use the pictures to help you.

2. What similarities are there between religion and sport?

3. Do you think football is like a religion? Give reasons why.

4. With a partner, discuss and then note down two other examples of rituals in everyday life. For example: 'I always go to my gran's for tea on Friday's' or 'I always go swimming on my birthday.'

Date:

5. Work out two reasons why rituals in everyday life are important and why we seem to need them.
-

Extension question:

6. Do you think religion needs a God? Give reasons why

Date:

Belief in God

Below is an opinion line regarding the belief in a God. Where would you fall on this line? Put a star to show your belief and then explain it in the box below. Then read the statements below and place the numbers on the opinion line where you think they should be placed.

ATHEIST

Someone who does not believe in God and is convinced that God is not real.

AGNOSTIC

Someone who is not sure if God is real and feels that proof of God's existence is beyond human knowledge and experience.

THEIST

Someone who does believe in God and is convinced that God is real.



I think this because _____

People's beliefs are based on what they consider to be reliable evidence, and this applies to people's beliefs about the existence of God. Often, visible evidence is considered the most reliable source of evidence. For example, they will claim belief in something because they have seen it with their own eyes. However, people usually consider a range of evidence to arrive at their beliefs.

Date:

Belief in God

Read through the statements below and with a partner place them into the diamond activity grid on the next page.

1. Science explains how we got here but religion explains why we are here. Science is limited to facts rather than being open to the spiritual side of humans.
2. God gave humans free will so they could freely choose to do good. We would just be robots otherwise and we would all be the same. God can't intervene in the world, as it compromises our free will.
3. Science explains how the world got here - there is no need for God. Science deals with facts, while religion deals with something that can't be proved.
4. Humans have free will, given to them by God, so they can do whatever they want to. That is why God doesn't intervene in the world.
5. God has a master plan that humans are not aware of because God is beyond our human understanding.
6. God must exist. There are too many examples of miracles and religious experiences for God not to exist. They can't all be coincidences.
7. The problem is the huge amount of evil and suffering in the world. Surely if God was all-loving, God would help us.
8. Suffering helps humans become stronger. It allows us to deal with events more effectively, so suffering has some purpose in our lives. Without evil, we cannot appreciate good.
9. Evil and suffering are a test of our faith. Religious believers know that if they trust in God, they will eventually be rewarded.



With a partner decide what statements you agree most with and those you completely disagree with - then explain your choices.

Date:

Belief in God

Statement I agree with the most

I agree with this most because

Statement I agree with the least

I agree with this the least because

Date:

Religious Responses to Belief in God.

using four coloured pencils - match up the religious ideas below to the four biblical quotes in the banners.

I believe God must exist because someone must have caused the universe to have come into

God must exist because I have a real sense of what is right and wrong - a conscience - and I think it is God given.

In the Bible Jesus performed miracles and there are still miracles going on in the world today. God therefore exists through these.

I believe God exists through answering my prayers. God will always do what is best for us, even if our prayers are not always answered.



By the power of signs and miracles...I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ (Romans 15:19)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1)

Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. (Jeremiah 29:12)

And the Lord said, 'The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil.' (Genesis 3:22)

Now choose two of the examples and explain how the biblical quotes support the religious ideas expressed above.



1. The quote supports the idea that _____

_____ because

_____.

2. The quote supports the idea that _____

because _____

_____.

Religious Response to Beliefs about God.

Now using the religious beliefs below match them up to their opposing arguments, one is done for you.

I believe God must exist because someone must have caused the universe to exist. Everything has a cause. The universe is so big that I believe God must have been the cause of it.

Just because some people occasionally gets well against the odds does not mean that a miracle has taken place.

I believe that God answers prayers. This doesn't mean that we always get what we pray for, but that God will do what is best for us in the situations that we pray about. Answers to prayers are my reasons for belief in God.

Our universe was caused by a big explosion - it was a completely natural process.

In the bible Jesus, performed miracles and even today miracles are happening around the world. I believe God does exist and is still being experienced by people today through miracles.

We should question the things that we are taught - just because someone tells you something is true does not mean that it is.

To me God must exist because I have a real sense of right and wrong - a conscience - and I think this has been given by God.

The Bible is written by people who may have believed what they wrote but they were wrong.



Ever since I was little I have been taught that God exists. I cant see any reason not to believe this and religion forms a very important part of my life.

Not everyone has the same sense of what is right and wrong, for example...

The Bible tells people that God exists and it explains who he is and how people can get to know him. I believe the Bible is proof that God is real.

Prayers only appear to be answered because of coincidences.



Date:

Key words

1. Glossary: match the word to the correct definition.

2. Agnostic	Belief that there is a God and that God is real.	
3. Atheist	God is believed to be everywhere at all times.	
4. Faith	Ultimate and supreme power to whom worship is given.	
5. God	Belief in God and religious teachings without proof.	
6. Omnipresent	Believing that there is no God.	
7. Theist	Believing that you cannot know whether or not God exists.	

1. Explain two reasons why people believe in God. You must use key vocabulary in your answer.

2. Explain two reasons why people do not believe in God. You must use key vocabulary in your answer.

Date:

3. Complete the following sentences using the words below to help you:

Bible	seven	Sunday	one	monotheistic	created
Holy	six	loving	special	powerful	

Christians believe in _____ God. A religion that believes in one God is _____. Christians believe God is all - _____, all-knowing and all-_____.

In the _____ Christians learn that God _____ the world in _____ days and rested on the seventh. The day of rest is observed on a _____, the Christian _____ day.

6. Circle the correct answer: **True or false?**

- Christianity is an example of a monotheistic religion. TRUE / FALSE
- The Bible is the Christian holy book. This is where Christians learn about God. TRUE / FALSE
- Christians believe God created the world. TRUE / FALSE



7. 'God must exist because there is so much evidence to prove it.' Give TWO reasons why a religious believer might agree or disagree with this statement.

Date:

What is the Nature of God?

So what is God like? In 20 words write down what you imagine God to be like?

God is.....



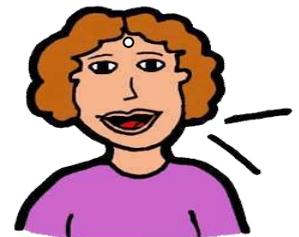
Other people have described God as the following...

A GREAT ARCHITECT –
The designer of the
world.

A JUDGE – The one who
decides what should
happen to us after
death.

A she, not a HE.

Like a FATHER The one
who cares for us.

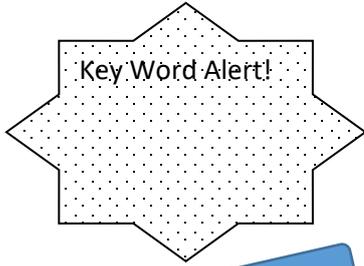


I believe God is
OMNIPOTENT, who has
power over all creation.

Date:

The Nature of God

Many religious people use these terms to describe God:



H/W: Learn the key words opposite for a test next lesson!

Omnipotent -

Omniscient -

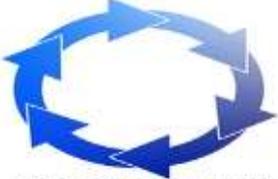
Omnibenevolent -

Omnipresent -

Using some of the other terms used to describe God create a symbol or small picture to illustrate each of the characteristics listed. For example, you could draw a judge's hammer to represent the idea of God as a judge.

		
Our Judge	King/creator/Holy spirit	Omnipresent

Now use the drawings to identify a characteristic of God

	 Image Envision · 13359	
		Perfectly Good

Date:

Symbols of belonging

Symbols Quiz

Symbols and images provide useful shorthand. They enable people to express ideas they can't put into words. For some people, a religious image or symbol can help them to reach a deeper understanding than they might have otherwise.

Task: Research and present a range of religious and non-religious (e.g sporting symbols etc) and give a brief summary of their meaning.

Symbolism -

Date:

Question: Describe and explain two different religious symbols of belonging from two different religions.

Look at the example below and identify the following by annotating and drawing arrows to show where it is in the text:

- Description given
- Clear ideas of identity and belonging
- Key vocabulary

Name of religion: Christianity

Symbol of belonging: A cross is two pieces of wood or metal arranged in the form of a plus sign, although the down piece is longer. A crucifix has a model of the body of Jesus on it. Either may be worn as a necklace, or a pin-badge, and shows that the wearer belongs to the Christian faith. It reminds them of what Jesus, the Son of God, did for them, and shows their faith. It also tells other people that they follow the teachings of Jesus.

Name of religion: Islam

Symbol of belonging: The ihram is a special cloth worn by Muslim pilgrims to Makkah, and shows that they are Muslims. Pilgrimage is a very important part of Islam. All Muslims are expected to go on pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime.

What do you think could be added to improve the answer?

Pilgrimage

With your partner discuss a special journey you have been on. Think about: where you went; how you prepared for it; why you were going; who it was with; for how long; what you enjoyed and what was special about it.



Pilgrimage:

- A special journey for religious or spiritual purposes e.g to perform hajj
- A journey to a place of special religious significance e.g. where a founder was born

All religions have places that are special to members of the faith because of their connections in some way with the founder or important leaders, or where some great happening or experience took place. Often, believers make pilgrimages to such places, to show their devotion, or as a witness to their faith, or to grow spiritually through the experience. Some religions require or expect pilgrimage to be made at some point in one's spiritual life. Others have no requirement, but individual believers, or groups of faith communities, do undertake pilgrimage as part of their spiritual life and experience. Everyday people make special journeys, each of which has its own purpose and destination. Sometimes it is important to go as part of a community. Sometimes it is to be on your own to reflect. Each journey means saving up, leaving friends and family, planning clothes to take etc.

1. From the passage above identify three reasons why people of a religious faith may go on a pilgrimage.

2. Why do you think some people prefer to carry out the journey/pilgrimage with others?

Research two places of pilgrimage, one in Christianity and a religion of your choice.

In the space below take notes showing what happens on pilgrimage and why.

Date:

Think about the following when you are making your notes:

Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

Pilgrimage:

Religion:	Religion:

Imagine you have been on one of the journeys. Use your notes to help you write a postcard describing where you went and how you felt throughout the experience.

Date: