
ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: SACRED PLACES

Grade Level 10-11 / 16-17y



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Islamic Religious Education: Sacred Places

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Key Words

Church, synagogue, mosque, mausoleum, individual “holy” places

Competences/Learning Outcomes

- Students can define what is 'sacred' for them and others.
- They have experiences of a specific sacred space and know how to behave appropriately there.
- They are familiar with the specific characteristics of a sacred space and can describe them.

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Descriptions



Islamic Religious Education:

Sacred Places

Relation to life: Many students in Islamic religious education have an extremely heterogeneous understanding of religion. The situation is similar with their connection to local communities and mosques. Although many families attend local mosques and congregations, this does not necessarily mean that they are also members of them. For example, Turkish-speaking Muslims are more likely to go to a mosque where the imam and the congregation members speak Turkish and where acquaintances and relatives may frequent or be known. In this context, a mosque is more than a mere sacred space that is furnished according to certain ritual specifications and is only used for prayer and preaching. The mosque is also a community centre and a follow-up point for many activities of everyday life and community work.

Textual reference: Etymologically, the German word *Moschee* refers to the place where one kneels or prostrates oneself in prayer. Also, in many Islamic and non-German-speaking contexts, the word *jami* or *cami* is more commonly used. Which is derived from Arabic and means 'place of assembly' and refers to the gathering for prayer. In Turkish, the word *mescit* is also used, which can be seen as a loanword for the Germanised word: *Moschee*. In the Qur'an, the term appears several times, for example in Sura 17, verse 1 *al-Isrā'* (The Night Journey), Sura 9, verse 108 *at-Tauba* (The Repentance), Sura 2, verse 144 *al-Baqara* (The Cow) or in Sura 9, verse 18 *at-Tauba* (The Repentance): "*Only they shall maintain the mosques of God who believe in God and the Last Day, perform the prayer and give the alms, and fear none but God. Such as these may be among the rightly guided.*"¹

Theological reference: The mosque has produced various types throughout history. Following the model of the first mosque built by the Prophet and founder of the religion of Islam Muhammad (between 570 and 573 to 632), a mosque consists of at least one large hall. The courtyard and hall mosque type extends this with another pillared hall and a courtyard in front of it; the Iranian-Central Asian mosque consists of four vaulted halls arranged in a cross shape opposite each other and opening onto a central courtyard, and the Turkish domed mosque is characterised by numerous half-domes on the sides of a large central room. The outer silhouette of such an oriental mosque is

¹ Nasr, Syyed Hossein: *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, Harper One.



usually characterised by one or more minarets, a tower from which the muezzin calls to prayer. A mosque is always oriented towards Mecca.

Ritual reference: A mosque is entered via a forecourt or similar, which is equipped with washing facilities for preparation for prayer and with shoe racks. Even guests are not allowed to enter a mosque with shoes on. The most important part of a mosque is the prayer niche (mihrab), which indicates the direction of prayer towards Mecca (*qibla*) and into which the prayer leader (imam) enters. To the right of the prayer niche is the preacher's pulpit (minbar). From its steps, the congregational leader or an authorised representative delivers the addresses at Friday prayers and festival speeches. In its simplest form, a smaller lectern (kursi) is used to place a copy of the Koran. As a smaller pulpit, the kursi is a combination of chair and lectern that serves an exegete (interpreter, explainer) to the left of the prayer niche before the congregational prayer for the interpretation of the Qur'an or for lectures. The floors of mosques are carpeted for prayer. Just as there are no seats, there are no pictures in mosques. Because of the ban on pictures, Islam has developed a rich culture of calligraphy of Koranic verses, with which mosques are decorated inside and out.



First Phase: Development of the Topic in Own Subject Lessons

Islamic Religious Education: Sacred Places	
Teaching Steps	First double lesson
Overarching goals	Students can define what is sacred for them.
Entry [20min]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silent impulse: Show pictures of personal and general holy places and mosques. (M1). • The presentation of the upcoming project as well as the explanation of the process and the subsequent working methods can be recalled here, but should already have been discussed in advance. • Teacher/student discussion: "Which mosque in the neighbourhood can we visit as part of the project?" • During the project there will be several phases of work in groups. These can already be divided up now so that they work together for the whole time of the project.
Elaboration I [15min]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual work: Create a mind map of what is 'holy' for you. (<u>Guiding question</u>: When you hear the word 'holy', what do you feel, what does it look like to you, what colour etc. does it have and why?) (M2a/b) • Short teacher/student discussion: How did you cope with the task? (Regardless of the result, how difficult/unfamiliar/clear is the question about the 'sacred'?)
Fuse I [10min]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should exchange ideas with each other, e.g. with the Fishbowl method, Socratic Seminar, Analytic Members, Update Your Classmate etc. (M3). <p><i>The "fishbowl" is a teaching strategy that helps students practice being contributors and listeners in a discussion. Students ask questions, present opinions, and share information when they sit in the "fishbowl" circle, while students on the outside of the circle listen carefully to the ideas presented and pay attention to the process. Then the roles reverse. This strategy is especially useful when the teacher wants to make sure all students participate in the discussion, when the teacher wants to help students reflect on what a "good discussion" looks like, and when the teacher needs a structure for discussing controversial or difficult topics. In fishbowl, the teacher has the role to control, such as when a student speaks more than one minute, the teacher will limit the time or stop that student and invite the next student to speak (Yabarmase, 2013).</i></p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sB143EA1ZGU</p>



<p>Elaboration II <i>[20min]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner work/group work: "What does sacred mean to us? (Create poster/digital poster). Possible impulse questions for the poster creation of the groups: • "Why is this place sacred to me personally?" • "Why is this place collectively 'sacred' to us?"
<p>Fuse II <i>[20min]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the results of the groups. • Introduce the definition of personal and 'sacred' places on the PPP/poster -> point out that the text and pictures are part of the video conference that the students will present to the other participants.
<p>Transfer / Deepening <i>[5min]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is time, because the class is small or because a preliminary discussion of the project has already taken place, a film can be shown to deepen the discussion, in which people were asked what "holy" means to them.
<p>Deepening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have now discussed what 'holy' means, now it is about what is holy to me, what is holy to you. • Hand out the worksheet (M2a/b) and let them fill it in while they are doing it.
<p>Closing</p>	<p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a text about what is important and sacred to you personally. Explain why it is sacred to you. It can be an object, a person or a memory. • Write a text of ½ to 1 page and add a picture! • Your text and picture are part of the video conference with other students. You will present your texts and pictures to each other. Therefore, write an English translation right away. Use: DEEPL.

	<p>Second double lesson</p>
<p>Overarching goals /</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students determine the relationship of their own religion to the term 'sacred'. • Students determine the difference between 'sacred' and 'important'. • Students explore a sacred place. • Preparing for on-site learning with the creation of a video clip. • Note: Prepare parent letters for permission to participate in Encounter Learning day and mosque visit.
<p>Entry <i>[5min]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher: Welcome and introduction • Students: Summary of the last double lesson • Teacher: Explain lesson structure • Teacher and students clarify open questions.
<p>Elaboration I <i>[20min]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students present their pictures and texts (from the previous lesson's homework) about "my personal sacred place" in English in preparation for the Encounter Learning Day.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers and students give feedback, pay attention to the English language of the students and give suggestions for improvement.
Fuse I [10min]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each student creates a corresponding index card for the presentation in English.
Elaboration II [20min]	<p>Powerpoint presentation with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Images of personal and general sanctuaries Definition of 'sacred' and 'profane' Sacred place: Names, images, construction, interior and exterior architecture, role, variations... Details, "What makes it holy?"
Fuse II [30min]	<p>The search for a suitable place to visit could be undertaken and coordinated with the students, but perhaps the local conditions and organisational circumstances mean that there is no alternative, so that the destination simply has to be specified.</p> <p>Organisation of the excursion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision where to go Discussion of the rules of conduct (M4) more detailed explanation and instruction on the short film (duration of the film) Discussion of who cuts and assembles the film clip. Discuss whether each group will create a single film or the whole class. <p>-> Completion by the last double lesson</p>
Consolidation / Conclusion [5min]	<p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write information from the research on the 2nd index card.
Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for the film clip on site <p>Distribution of letters to parents for permission to participate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on Encounter Learning Day at the mosque visit

Third double lesson	
Overarching goals	<p>Students explore the 'sacred' place and create their own short films. <i>(Depending on the distance and local conditions, a double lesson will not provide enough time for the visit. Perhaps, in consultation with the school management and the colleagues, additional lessons can be arranged).</i></p>
Entry [5-10min]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome and introduction to today with "learning on the spot" (explaining the daily schedule) Walking/driving to the "holy" place There may be "official" people on site whom you would like to welcome or who would like to introduce themselves. This needs to be found out and discussed in advance and also clarified with the students.



<p>Elaboration I <i>[50min]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovery and experience of the sacred place • Teacher chooses a suitable didactic approach and carries it out with the students (e.g. search for one's own place, blind leading (sensing with the senses), search for symbols, guessing, measuring the room, etc.). • Each group creates a small film clip about the main areas/views.... (show several elements of the sacred place) • Each group is given an envelope with individual terms related to specific features of the 'sacred' place; these have to be presented by the group in the short film.
<p>Elaboration II <i>[15min]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independently explore and discover the place • Task: 3-5 photos to (3 minutes time) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. show the place 2. students should show themselves in a pose at the place 3. students in a certain posture 4. important symbol/object
<p>Consolidation / Conclusion <i>[5min]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss homework for the next lesson: • Bring photos, videos and flashcards for the next lesson • Farewell or joint walk back to school

<p style="text-align: center;">Fourth double lesson</p>	
<p>Overarching goals</p>	<p>Students evaluate their experiences in the sacred place. Students evaluate their prepared film clips.</p>
<p>Entry <i>[30min]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short feedback round after the excursion • clarify open questions • Presentation of the results of the excursion • In plenary: Watching films
<p>Elaboration I <i>[30min]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students discuss their results in their groups. • Plenary discussion "What happens on Encounter Learning Day?" • "What else needs to be done for that?"
<p>Fuse I <i>[15min]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work: Revision and preparation of the corresponding index cards.
<p>Elaboration II <i>[10min]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The groups present their different experiences of the 'sacred' in plenary.
<p>Fuse II</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw results on the blackboard or whiteboard.
<p>Consolidation / Conclusion <i>[5min]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detailed organisational explanation for the upcoming Encounter Learning Day



Second and Third Phase: Presentation and Exchange in Mixed Small Groups at Stations

- Find these phases in the “**Guidance for Teachers**” on:

<https://sharing-worldviews.com/>

Fourth Phase: Reflection in Own Subject

- Find these phases in the “**Guidance for Teachers**” on:

<https://sharing-worldviews.com/>



Material



[M1] Islamic Sacred Places



Sultan Umar Ali Saifuddien Mosque.
by Bernard Spragg



Mosque in Shamakha Azerbaijan
by amanderson2



Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, City Mosque
by Metamorfa Studio



India Ooti to Mysore. Mosque.
by Anne & David (Use Albums)



Baitul Samee Mosque, Houston, Texas
by U.S. Embassy Jakarta, Indonesia



Blue Mosque (Sultan Ahmet)", Istanbul
by flprograms



Suleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul
by flprograms



Temple Mount, Jerusalem
by Mussi Katz



5



Hazrat Sultan Mosque Astana Kazakhstan
by amanderson2

12



Free Kaaba in Mecca image

6



Esfahan, Shah Mosque
by Frantisek_Trampota

13



Masjid Al Nabawi (17948287651).jpg
by SHAHID SIDDIQI

7



Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi
by ForwardDefensive

14



Shah Jahan Mosque, Maybury, Woking.JPG
by Hassocks5489





[M2] Worksheet

M 2a Mindmap Worksheet



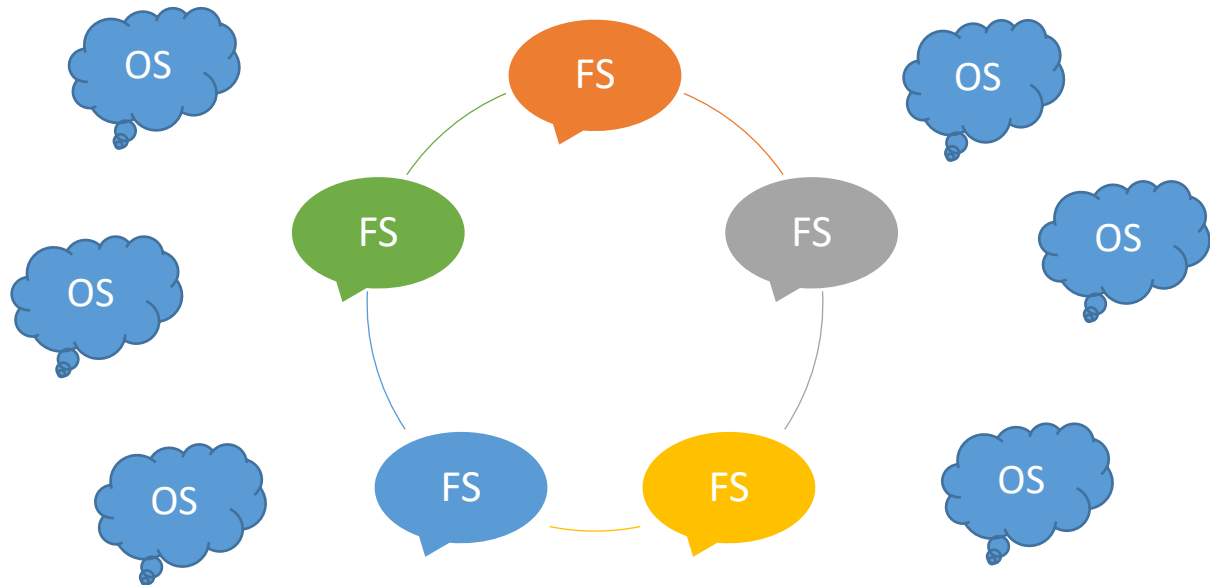
M 2b Additional Mindmap Worksheet

<i>SACRED PLACES</i>	<i>JEWISH</i>	<i>CATHOLIC</i>	<i>PROTESTANT</i>	<i>ORTHODOX</i>	<i>ISLAMIC</i>	<i>ETHICS/ PHILOSOPHY</i>
<i>Cities</i>						
<i>Structures</i>						
<i>Burial Sites</i>						
<i>Places in Nature</i>						





[M3] Fish Bowl Teaching Method



FS: Fish Bowl Students
OS: Observer Students

STEPS:

1. Choose a central topic or text. Develop an open-ended question to start the discussion. If using a text, students may read the text before hand or the strategy may be used to introduce the text (i.e., create a question that makes the central them relevant to the students).
2. Ask for or select 4-5 volunteers to be in the “fishbowl.” Only the students in the fishbowl are allowed to talk. After a class demonstration with one “fishbowl”, there can be several “fishbowls” organized in the classroom to ensure that all students are engaged.
3. Instruct the outer circle to remain quiet, observe and take notes on the content and process of the inner circle’s discussion.
4. The first few times, play the role of the facilitator yourself. Once the process is familiar, select a student facilitator. The facilitator does not participate in the discussion, but poses questions along the way to prompt deeper discussion and to ask sure everyone inside the fishbowl has a chance to talk.
5. At first or with younger students, identify the focus of the discussion and provide text dependent questions for students to answer during the fishbowl discussion.
6. Allow the conversation to progress where students take it. Rotate students in and out of the fishbowl throughout the course of the discussion. Set up a procedure ahead of time so students know to expect



this rotation. Allow the fishbowl discussion to continue for at least 15- 20 minutes, depending of the students' age.

7. After all students have rotated through the fishbowl, divide the class into small groups and invite students to debrief. Students can use their observations from the outer circle to highlight strengths of the discussion and make suggestions for ways to engage each other more meaningfully. The following discussion starters may facilitate the conversations:

- What did you observe during the discussion of the text?
- What is one thing you heard that is similar to your point of view?
- What is one thing with which you disagree?
- How did you feel while on the outside of the fishbowl?
- How did you feel while on the inside of the fishbowl?

8. Wrap up the process with a full class discussion about the discussion Pose a final question and give everyone an opportunity to talk to a partner. After this discussion, you may have the students do a quick write answering the guiding question.

9. Add these specific questions to scaffold the experience for Emergent Bilinguals:

- Observer question: What helped you understand the information that was being shared (context or non-verbal cues, use if L1, etc)?
- Fishbowl questions: How do you feel knowing that peers were listening to what you were saying? What do you wish you could have said more clearly or what point do you wish you could have made in you first language?



[M4] Rules for Visiting a Holy Place

1. This is a special place. If other visitors are praying or placing a candle, behave in such a way that you do not disturb them.

2. Take care of the objects in the room. They are very important to the people who come here.

3. Avoid running and talking loudly. If you want to look around, walk slowly from one place to another. If you have a question, go quietly to your teacher or write your question down.



Bibliography

Nasr, Syyed Hossein (2009): The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary, Harper One.

Yabarmese, Dominicus (2013): The Fishbowl Strategy: An Effective Way to Improve Students' Speaking Ability, Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching, 9 (2).

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