

TITLE: Prayer: How and why do Muslims and Jews pray?

YEAR GROUP 5/6

ABOUT THIS UNIT

This unit uses a study of the practice of prayer in Jewish and Muslim traditions to pose questions for pupils about prayer and their own needs for silence and peace. Questions about the importance of duty and ritual are used alongside questions about the emotions of prayer. Pupils explore the feelings - of peace, challenge or the presence of the divine - that Muslims and Jews may find in prayer, making links to their own feelings. Opportunities to take note of similarities and differences between Muslim and Jewish prayer are provided for the higher achieving pupils.

Estimated time for this unit: (in hours) 8

Where this unit fits in:

This unit is a key opportunity for the study of Jewish religion and practice. The key concepts of prayer in Jewish and Muslim tradition are presented for pupils to learn about both religions, identifying similarities and differences. This is a challenging topic, and the emphasis is as much on the experience and emotions of prayer as it is on the artefacts and rituals.

Issues of continuity and progression

This unit adds to the introductory study of Islamic prayer from the unit on 5 Pillars, and develops skills in dealing with religious ideas and questions.

KEY STRANDS ADDRESSED BY THIS UNIT

Beliefs and teachings
 Questions of belonging
 Questions of meaning

ATTITUDES FOCUS

- Respect for all: pupils are invited to be respectful to two religious traditions
- Commitment: pupils are encouraged to think about the challenges of belief and of prayer from different perspectives, applying ideas for themselves.

Prior learning	Vocabulary	Resources
<p>It is helpful if pupils have:</p> <p>Studied units on Jewish and Muslim religion from earlier in the syllabus</p> <p>Been challenged to think about similarities and differences between religions</p>	<p>In this unit, pupils will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:</p> <p>Islam: Sawm Rakah Dua Al Fatihah</p> <p>Judaism: Torah Simchat Torah Yom Kippur</p> <p>Religion in general Prayer Meditation</p> <p>Human and religious</p>	<p>Text & Web</p> <p>There is a very good selection of authentic materials about Islam for children available from the Islamic Foundation in Leicestershire: www.islamic-foundation.com . Story books, audio and video tapes and posters are all useful.</p> <p>The Qur'an in Plain English (Islamic Foundation)</p> <p>Moving On Up (RE Today) has a story of the first revelation of the Qur'an with a thinking skills approach, and a Jewish story of Moses</p> <p>~ www.ummah.org.uk – A Muslim gateway site</p> <p>~ Pupils can listen to the call to prayer at www.islaam.com/audio</p> <p>~ www.jewish.co.uk – A gateway site for Judaism.</p> <p>~ There is a good introduction to the prayers of the Synagogue at www.spirit-staffs.co.uk/synagogue/index1.htm</p> <p>~ www.pcfre.org.uk – website for the Professional Council for Religious Education: follow links to a database of children's quotes on prayer, easily searchable for Muslim and Jewish experiences.</p> <p>DVD / video / visual</p> <p>BBC Broadcasts and videos: e.g. Pathways of Belief (two programs on Judaism and two on Islam from Summer 2001)</p> <p>Praying Their Faith pub. RE Today: contains examples of prayers from the major world faiths</p> <p>PCET, Folens and Nelson publish some useful photo / picture packs on particular religions.</p> <p>Leicestershire LEA have a CD Rom picture pack of faith communities in Leicester.</p>

experiences
Reflection
Use of silence

The Bradford Inter Faith Education Centre (01274 731674) has many useful publications about its local faith communities.
Sacred spaces DVD (Bradford interfaith) has a Mosque object trail for pupils, available from RE Today.

Contributions to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils(links directly to framework)

The unit enables pupils to develop:

- Spiritually by thinking through their own ideas about prayer and God.
- Morally and socially by developing respect for those different from themselves
- Culturally by thinking about similarities and differences between religious ways of life and their own.

EXPECTATIONS

At the end of this unit:

Nearly all pupils will be able to work at level 3:

- Describe simply how Jews and Muslim pray
- Make links between different kinds of prayers and feeling
- Suggest some puzzling questions about prayer and consider some answers

Most pupils will be able to work at level 4:

- Use the right words to describe the impact of prayer in two religions
- Show that they understand why prayer is important in Islam and Judaism
- Apply the idea that silence is good for you to the topics of prayer and to their own lives

Some pupils might be able to work at level 5:

- Explain how prayer is connected to belief about God for Jews and Muslims
- Express their own views about the idea that 'prayer is the most important religious ritual' referring to Jewish and Muslim understanding.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

Teachers might assess this work by:

Asking pupils to design prayer rooms for believers from 2 of the religions studied to use. They might imagine the room is for an Airport or hospital used by Jews and Muslims. What special features would the room need in order for Jews and Muslims to use it? Examples might include somewhere to wash near the Muslims' room, a place to keep Torah scrolls for the Jews and so on. Next, they should think about how they will establish the right atmosphere in inspire people: how will they encourage people to be thankful – displays of great food? How will they encourage people to say sorry and ask forgiveness – clips from tragic newspaper stories? How will they encourage believers to praise God – photos of creation? Pupils could either write descriptions of their designs, or draw them. Some pupils might look at several Jewish and Islamic prayers, and then write some prayers or meditations of their own, for occasions when people are thankful sorry, or worried, full of joy or feeling concerned.

Key questions	LEARNING OBJECTIVES Pupils should learn to:	TEACHING AND LEARNING	LEARNING OUTCOMES Pupils	WIDER LEARNING
What is prayer?	Think for themselves about the idea of prayer as talking to God.	What does it mean to pray? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a list. Ask pupils to think of all of the people they turn to when things go wrong for them. A parent? Grandparent? Their best friend? An older brother or sister? • Consider what helps: Ask them to pick the sentences which best describe what happens: 'This person magically solves all my problems' or 'This person gives me a hug and helps me to feel better', 'This person makes sure nothing bad ever happens' or 'This person really cares about me', 'We never bother to talk to each other' or 'We like spending time together'? • Talking to others: a metaphor for talking to God? Ask whether talking like this is similar or different to praying. Return to this discussion during the unit: it's important that teaching links to pupils' own experience. 	Ask questions raised by prayer and make links with their own experiences	This is a good speaking and listening activity for circle time.
Is prayer helpful? How could we answer this question?	Understand how and why people in different religions pray or meditate	Picturing those who help us: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who loves you? Refer back to the first session above. Make the point that we talk to the people we are closest to because they love us and look after us, which helps us feel good: they don't grant magic wishes for us (there is an important self esteem issue here). • Talking to God. Introduce the idea that believers talk to God for the same reasons: this is called praying. While it might be tempting to think that God grants magic wishes, for religious people prayer is really about friendship, love and support. • Symbols for why we talk. For many religious believers, God is both awesome, and close to them, like their mum, best friend and big brother all rolled into one. Pupils could make symbolic pictures to show the reasons why we talk, and the reasons why religious people pray. Challenge them to think of four reasons in each category. 	Develop understanding that talking to God is a metaphor for prayer. Reflect thoughtfully on their own needs for conversation.	This AT2 work is very important if RE topics are to connect with pupils' own experience. The language of emotional literacy is useful here too, and there are links with the PSHE curriculum.
What happens in Jewish prayer? What does this show us about Jewish beliefs and ways of life?	Learn about the forms, symbols and artefacts of different Jewish prayers. Think about the words Jewish people use	Learning about Jewish Prayer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artefacts of prayer. Look at a tallit (prayer shawl) and a Mazuzah (door frame reminder of the Almighty). Pupils can make a 'beliefs box' or a 'message box' of their own, in which they write neatly on a tiny scroll their own beliefs about prayer or the message from God that matters most to them. Suggest the place it at home as a reminder of their ideas. • Words of prayer look at some examples of Jewish prayers such as morning, evening or Shabbat prayers (see the resource section 	Describe, understand and explain the actions and meanings of Jewish prayer.	Literacy link: prayer is a genre of text, and can well be explored via this idea.

	in prayer.	<p>above) and ask: if you pray like this, then what do you believe? What difference do you hope it will make to your life?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praying together at festivals and on Shabbat: teach pupils about the special occasions of Shabbat and a festival like Simchat Torah or Yom Kippur, where prayer is important. Draw attention to the importance of praying together for Jewish people. 		
<p>What happens in Islamic prayer?</p> <p>What does this show us about Muslim beliefs and ways of life?</p>	<p>Learn about the forms, symbols and artefacts of Islamic prayer.</p> <p>Think about the words Muslim people use in prayer.</p>	<p>Learning about Islamic Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparations for prayer. Use artefacts and pictures to explore ideas and practices: being clean, and in a clean place, facing Makkah, preparing the mind, praying alone or with others, using set words. • The words of prayer. Look at the first Surah of the Holy Qur'an, al Fatiyah, the Opening. This is part of the daily prayers. Talk about what it means. What words describe Allah here? What do they mean? Listen to the prayer call, and think about the use of both Arabic and English in prayer. • The emotions and feelings of prayer. Use the website www.pcfre.org.uk/db to explore what Muslim children 7-12 say about prayer. Attend specially to the different feelings associated with prayer. 	Describe, understand and explain the actions and meanings of Islamic prayer.	The website www.pcfre.org.uk/db is simple to use, and interactive. Children can search for themselves, and can add to the data by posting their own thoughts and ideas. It is monitored by the PCFRE.
<p>What do prayers tell us about beliefs?</p>	<p>Talk thoughtfully about the meanings of the words used in prayer by Jews and Muslims, and the beliefs that they show.</p>	<p>What do prayers from different religions say?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look together at the words of prayers from different religions e.g. like those in Praying Their Faith (see resources). • Look at the words and explain any difficult language: Are there any common themes, e.g. praise, thanksgiving, saying sorry? • Then take Islam and Judaism as examples and find out about some of the more unusual prayers found in the religion. • Note that in Judaism, God's name is holy. God is often called 'The Almighty' or 'The eternal' or 'King of the Universe'. In Islam, Allah is known by 99 names, including 'The Lord of the Worlds' 'the ruler of the Day of Judgement' and 'The Merciful'. Discuss the question: do Muslims and Jews believe the same things about God? • Pupils could create a prayer or meditation of their own on a theme such as humanity, peace, unity or happiness. 	Consider important questions about meaning and truth in regard to Jewish and Islamic prayer.	This unit carries controversy into the classroom. This needs careful management by the teacher, but religion is controversial, so it is appropriate not to shy away for questions of truth in the teaching.
<p>Prayer and me: why do some people pray every day, but others not at all?</p>	<p>Think about differences in belief and ways of life to with prayer, and ask what these differences mean.</p>	<p>What are the emotions of prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to pupils about how being quiet, remembering the past, singing together or looking at beautiful images or calligraphy might make believers feel: Relaxed? Peaceful? Grateful? Full of praise? • What might they think about in this atmosphere as they read words or take ritual positions • Establish a quiet atmosphere in the classroom and ask pupils, with eyes closed, to think back 	To consider, describe and understand some of the feelings associated with	

		<p>over a day or a week about the things which felt good and the things which felt bad. What are they most grateful for and what are they least grateful for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss: is this like prayer? What is similar and different to prayer in this activity? • Ask: why do some people pray every day, and others not at all? 	Jewish and Christian prayer.	
Reflection : what are my thoughts?	<p>Engage in an activity with a reflective purpose</p> <p>Use stillness and silence to think more deeply for themselves.</p>	<p>What can prayers and meditations help us to reflect on?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make flower shapes (water lilies) for the pupils: draw a circle with a diameter of 8cm, then on the outside edge of the circle draw triangular shaped petals of 4cm (pupils should be able to fold all the petals into the centre of the circle without them overlapping). • Photocopy and give each pupil 6 flowers to decorate. Give pupils sentence starters: I am thankful for...I would like help with...I want...I'm sorry about... I'd like people to be protected from... My hope for the future is... These themes correspond with some themes in Islamic and Jewish prayer. Ask them to write and complete one sentence in the middle of each flower and then to fold the petals over into the middle so that the writing is hidden. • Provide wax candles or wax crayons so that pupils can wax the back of their flowers. Float all the water lilies, wax side down, on water. Watch as they open up, revealing the children's hopes and wishes. 	To express spiritual thinking clearly and reflectively.	This AT2 activity enables pupils to see that prayer has many meanings, and to engage in reflection together, even if they come from several different religious and non-religious communities. It can provide for spiritual development.