

Key Knowledge

A holy journey or pilgrimage is usually made by believers to a place special to their faith. The place may be connected with the founding or beginnings of the faith or a place where a miracle is said to have occurred. Often the places are linked to the people who have had an influence on the religion or belief.

Pilgrims on the way to Santiago de Compostela carry a scallop shell (St James whose shrine they are going to visit is called St Jacques in French and the French for a scallop is a coquille St Jacques and the scallop shell is his emblem).

Christian pilgrims visit Lourdes, in south west France to see the site of a famous vision experienced by a young girl called Bernadette Soubirous and to be healed by its supposedly miraculous waters.

Ever since the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket in the Cathedral in 1170, Canterbury has attracted thousands of Christian pilgrims.

St Columba was an Irish monk who spread the word about Christianity in Scotland. In 563, Columba travelled to the Scottish island of Iona and set up a monastery there. The monastery helped to spread Christianity amongst the Picts—the people who lived in what is now north-eastern Scotland. After his death, Columba was made a saint.

The Ganges River is most sacred in the Hindu tradition. It is understood as the personification of the Goddess Ganga. Hindu belief holds that bathing in the river on certain occasions causes the forgiveness of sins and helps Hindus to achieve moksha.

Kumbh Mela is the biggest Hindu pilgrimage which takes place approximately every 12 years according to the position of Jupiter and the sun and moon.

Kumbh Mela takes place at 4 different sites on the banks of the River Ganges.

The Hindu Goddess Ganga, is believed to have saved the world from fire and brings life to the earth.

Key Vocabulary

pilgrimage	The journey of a pilgrim to a shrine or sacred place.
pilgrim	A person who travels to a holy place as an act of religious devotion.
devotion	Dedication to a religion.
repentance	Saying sorry for sins
obedience	Being dutiful by following what you are told to do.
Lourdes	A place where Roman Catholic pilgrims visit to be healed by the holy water.
Canterbury	Canterbury Cathedral is the destination for those who travel along the pilgrim paths from Winchester and Rochester to visit the shrine of Thomas Becket.
Thomas Becket	Thomas Becket was an English archbishop and martyr, famously murdered by knights of Henry II at Canterbury Cathedral. After his death, his tomb and relics became a focus for pilgrimage, and he was made a saint.
Santiago de Compostela	Santiago de Compostela is one of three holy cities in the world where Christians can earn absolution of their sins by making a pilgrimage. (The other two holy cities are Rome and Jerusalem.)
Iona	Iona is a quiet island in Scotland where a monastery was built by Columba, a monk. It is often visited by pilgrims. Christians go there to study the Bible and pray, to feel closer to God.
River Ganges	A river in India seen by Hindus as holy and purifying and is often visited as part of a pilgrimage.
Varanasi	Millions of Hindu pilgrims visit Varanasi to purify themselves by bathing in the River Ganges at sunrise.
Kumbh Mela	A Hindu pilgrimage which takes place approximately every 12 years where Hindus will visit 4 sites on the River Ganges and take a purifying dip in the water.
moksha	The release of Hindus from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth by achieving salvation or a release of the soul.

Freeland CE Primary School

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Is a holy journey necessary for believers?

Reasons for pilgrimage

Obedience and acceptance	obedience
acceptance	Progress and journey of individual
remembrance	repentance (saying sorry for sins)
reflection	

Key Concepts

How does a pilgrimage and a holiday differ?
What happens on a pilgrimage?
Which places do Christians visit on a pilgrimage and why?
Which places do Hindus visit on a pilgrimage and why?
Do pilgrims gain more from going on a long journey than worshipping at home?
Do pilgrims benefit from travelling with others?