

Name:

Exploring Religion and Culture: Global Studies

Assignment Due By Friday 2/2

Hint: Complete soon after your event- It helps with remembering the service!

Before the end of the school year, each student in the Global Studies Program is required to attend a religious service outside their faith tradition* as part of our ongoing exploration of culture. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students may attend an online/virtual service or an in-person service (see norms in this doc) with Watkinson or on their own. This is a required reflection even if you have already completed your required 9 reflections for the year.



**Students who are Christian can attend another Christian denomination's service, but I ask that students stretch themselves and attend a different denomination. For example, a Catholic or Episcopalian can attend a Baptist Church service. SENIORS- Must attend a different faith service from last year.*

Norms:

- Remember you are joining people expressing their faith. Be polite and friendly. If there is an interactive part of an online service.
- Take notes that will help you write the reflection outlined below.
- You will have the opportunity to join other Watkinson students at a Rosh Hashanah Jewish service, a Christian Baptist service, a Hindu service, and Muslim Friday Prayers and a talkback with an Imam on a Friday afternoon. More info later.
- Here are a few videos to help you know what to expect. Research more on YouTube.
 - [How To Attend a Muslim Friday Prayer Service \(Jum'ah\)](#)
 - [What To Expect At A Synagogue - InterfaithFamily.com](#)
 - [What to Expect in Quaker Meeting for Worship](#)
 - [Catholic Know-How Series - Church Etiquette](#)

Before You Go:

- Find a service to attend. Check websites for links or see Ms. OB.
- Research the basics of the religion and denomination, sect or branch of the religion, and what to expect. [Here](#) is a quick overview of the major world religions.
- Read through the *Reflection Journal Prompts* below

During the Service:

- Follow the *Norms* on the reverse
- Notice the items listed in the *Prompts* below
- If you want to take notes, do it on paper or a notebook- no phones!

In-Person Attendance & Norms:

- Remember you are joining people expressing their faith. Be polite and friendly.
- If you are going on your own, research the time of service and check the place's website to see if they welcome visitors (most do!). When in doubt, give them a phone call. Some services (e.g. Muslim) may have separate male and female services or sections of the room for each gender.

- Dress like you are going to a business casual event: pants/skirt & nice shirt. Be modest and do not show too much skin. If attending a Muslim prayer service- you are expected to remove your shoes before entering the service. **Females**- if you are attending a Muslim or Orthodox Jewish prayer service, wear loose clothing (no leggings unless under a longer skirt), long sleeves & shirts that reach your collarbone and cover your whole back to fit in with everyone else. No mini-skirts or skirts with slits. Women attending a Muslim prayer service may bring a scarf to cover their heads. Wearing one is optional, and they often have a basket of scarves available. **Males**- If you are attending a Jewish service, look for a basket of skull caps, kippah, or yarmulke to wear on your head before entering the service.
- Consider bringing a few dollars as a donation. Most places of worship collect donations.
- During the service, no side conversations or phone use.
- If you want to take notes, bring a pad of paper or notebook.
- Arrive a bit early to get settled and a seat.
- It is OK to remain seated or stand with the congregation during the service. Avoid engaging in parts of the service that is only for people in the religion. For example, non-Christians should not walk to the altar during communion. If in doubt- just stay seated.
- If you need to leave the service before it ends, exit quietly.

****Reflection Prompts-Add to your Reflection Journal****

JUNIORS- Reflection Journal Prompts:

- What was the name of the house of faith, location & time of service?
- In a few sentences, describe the religion and denomination, sect or branch of the religion from your prior research (monotheistic? polytheistic? conservative? etc).
- Describe the service as best you can. Here are some things to look for and describe:
 - Describe the people there: age, gender, ethnicity/race
 - What was the structure of the service (readings, music, rituals, etc)?
 - What elements of culture (see below) did you notice?
 - How did you see the beliefs and faith of the people expressed?
- Discuss how this service is similar or different from your faith or beliefs (including if you are atheist, agnostic, etc)?
- Did anything surprise you?

SENIORS- Reflection Journal Prompts: *Attend a different service from last year!!***

1. Go back and read your reflection from last year's religious service in your *Reflection Journal*.
 2. Compare and contrast your experience at the two services. Describe this year's service, too.
 3. Evaluate (connect, agree, disagree, both, etc) with **ONE (1)** of the following readings. How does it connect to, reflect or stand in contrast with the services you attended over both years or your own personal beliefs? :
 - "Religion" chapter from the book, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*: tinyurl.com/21LessonsReligion
 - [What Religion Gives Us \(That Science Can't\)](#) *NYTimes*
 - [Secularism is on the rise, but Americans are still finding community and purpose in spirituality](#) *Vox*
 - [About Three-in-Ten U.S. Adults Are Now Religiously Unaffiliated](#) *Pew Research*
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****Read Below****

Helpful Vocabulary

Culture: The shared beliefs, values, and practices of a group of people. Aspects of culture include:

Values are a culture's standard for discerning what is good and just in society.

Beliefs are the tenets or convictions that people hold to be true.

Norms define how to behave in accordance with what society has defined as good, right, and important, and most members of the society adhere to

Symbols such as gestures, signs, objects, signals, and words

Language is a symbolic system through which people communicate and through which culture is transmitted.

Religion is a system of beliefs, values, and practices concerning what a person holds to be sacred or spiritually significant

Spirituality means different things to different people. For some, it's primarily about a belief in God and active participation in organized religion. For others, it's about non-religious experiences that help them get in touch with their spiritual selves through quiet reflection, time in nature, private prayer, yoga, or meditation. Many people identify as spiritual but not religious: With a few exceptions, the percentage of adults who identify as religious in many industrialized countries is declining, while remaining generally high in less developed nations. Even as religious affiliation decreases, though, a sense of spiritual identification could remain steady or even increase.

Adapted from <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/sociology> and Psychology Today
