



Sacred place — sacred space

Audience – High school human geography

Time required – 15 minutes

Activity	Students will explore the location and distribution of religious world heritage sites around the world.
APHG Benchmarks	Unit 3, B: Compare and contrast ethnic and universalizing religions and their geographic patterns. Unit 3, C: Language, religion, ethnicity, and gender are essential to understanding landscapes symbolic of cultural identity (signs, architecture, sacred sites)
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will be able to compare and contrast the locations of sacred sites related to Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam.• Students will be able to identify and explain where Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism originated.

Map URL: <http://esriurl.com/humanGeoInquiry7>

? Ask

What are sacred sites?

- ? What makes a site or place sacred? *[It is worthy of respect and dedication, and believed to be holy.]*
- ? What impact do sacred sites have on their religion's followers? *[People care for and protect them, and they also make pilgrimages to worship and celebrate.]*

! Acquire

Where are the sacred sites for the world's major religions located?

- Turn on the Sacred Sites layer.
- ? In which regions of the world are these sacred sites located? Where are they not located? *[They are located in the Middle East and Asia but not located in the Americas, Europe, or Africa.]*
- Click a few of these sites to read the pop-up information.
- ? What makes these sites sacred? *[They were the location of important events to the founder's life or had important natural features like rivers, mountains, and so on.]*

🔍 Explore

Where are the hearths of these religions?

- Filter the Sacred Sites layer so that Religion is Buddhism. (Choose Apply and Zoom To.)
- ? Where is Buddhism's hearth located? *[India and Nepal.]*
- Repeat the filter process for Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism.
- ? Where is Christianity's hearth? *[The Holy Land and Israel.]*
- ? Where is Hinduism's hearth? *[India.]*
- ? Where is Islam's hearth? *[The Holy Land, the Arabian Peninsula, and Saudi Arabia.]*
- ? Where is Sikhism's hearth? *[Eastern Pakistan and India.]*
- Clear the filter to make all sites visible.

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Analyze

How close are some of the sacred sites to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity located?

- Choose the Jerusalem bookmark, and show the Map Overview (top-right corner of map).
- ? Where is this city located? [*The Holy Land in Israel, at the convergence of Europe, Asia, and Africa.*]
- Choose the Old City of Jerusalem bookmark, and change the Basemap to OpenStreetMap.
- Using the Measure tool, calculate the area of the Old City.
- ? What is the area of the Old City? [*It is 0.40-0.50 square miles.*]
- Choose the Temple Mount bookmark, and make sure that the legend is visible.
- ? To which faith is the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock sacred? [*Islam.*]
- ? To which faith is the Western Wall sacred? [*Judaism.*]
- ? To which faith is Church of the Holy Sepulchre sacred? [*Christianity.*]

Act

How do these sites impact politics and society?

- Change the basemap to National Geographic and choose the Sacred Sites bookmark.
- ? How do these sacred areas and sites take on political significance? [*Borders cross over some of the areas; governments sometimes favor one religion over another.*]
- ? How do these places become part of a community's identity? [*They are symbols of pride, tourist destinations, part of the laws, and so on.*]

MEASURE

- Click the Measure tool.
- Select Distance, and then choose the unit of measurement.
- Click once to start measuring, click once to change direction, and double-click to stop measuring.

FILTER

- In the Contents pane, near the map layer name, click Filter.
- Set the filter parameters.

Next Steps

DID YOU KNOW? ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to U.S. public, private, and home schools as a part of the White House ConnectED Initiative. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at <http://connected.esri.com>.

THEN TRY THIS...

- Have students research and add point data related to other important religious locations, and then use the Hot Spot Analysis tool to look for expected and unexpected patterns.

TEXT REFERENCES

This GIS map has been cross-referenced to material in sections of chapters from these texts.

- *Human Geography* by McGraw Hill – Chapter 8
- *The Cultural Landscape* by Pearson – Chapter 6
- *Human Geography: People, Place, and Culture* by Wiley Press – Chapter 7