



Sacred place — sacred space

from the Esri GeoInquiries™ collection for Human Geography

Audience – Human geography

Time required – 15 minutes

Activity Explore the location and distribution of religiously sacred sites around the world.

APHG Benchmarks **APHG: III.B. Compare and contrast the geographic patterns of ethnic and universalizing religions and their geographic patterns.**
APHG: III.C. Explain how language, religion, ethnicity, & gender are essential to understanding landscapes symbolic of cultural identity.

Learning Outcomes

- 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.]*
- Click the URL above to launch the map.

↓ Acquire

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

- With the Details button underlined, click the button, Show Contents of Map (Content).
- Check the box to the left of the layer name, Sacred Sites.
- ? 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.]*
- Zoom in and click a few of these sites. 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?

- Click the button, Basemap. Select National Geographic.
- Filter the Sacred Sites layer. Set to show: Religion is Buddhism. (See Tooltips on page 2.)
- ? Where is Buddhism's hearth located? *[India and Nepal.]*
- Repeat the filter process for Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism.
- ? Where is Christianity's hearth? *[Israel, Eastern Mediterranean]*
- ? Where is Hinduism's hearth? *[India]*
- ? Where is Islam's hearth? *[Eastern Mediterranean and the Arabian Peninsula]*
- ? Where is Sikhism's hearth? *[Eastern Pakistan and India.]*
- Remove 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?

- Click the button, Bookmarks. Select Jerusalem.
- ? Where is this city located? [*Israel, near the convergence of Asia and Africa*]
- Choose the Old City of Jerusalem bookmark, and change the Basemap to OpenStreetMap.
- Turn on the layer, Old City of Jerusalem.
- Using the Measure tool, calculate the area of the Old City. (See the Tooptip below for info.)
- ? What is the area of the Old City? [*It is 0.40-0.50 square miles.*]
- Choose the Temple Mount bookmark.
- Turn on the Jerusalem's Sacred Sites layer and make sure the legend is visible.
- ? To which faith are 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.
- Select the bookmark, Sacred Sites.
- ? 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 Area or Distance and choose unit of measurement.
- Click once to start measuring, click once to change direction, and double-click to stop measuring.
- *Tip – if the measure tool is blocking your view, click on map and drag it.

FILTER

- In the Contents pane, click the map layer name.
- Click Filter icon.
- Set the filter parameters (e.g. Religion is Buddhism).
- Choose Apply and Zoom To.

Next Steps

DID YOU KNOW? ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to public, private, and home schools. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at <http://www.esri.com/schools>.

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