

What is involved in pilgrimage essay sample



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The word pilgrimage means a journey to a sacred place or shrine, especially one of exalted purpose or moral significance. Pilgrimages can take place all over the world and in all religions. Each religion having a different approach to the way they profess their faith. Lourdes and Lough Derg are two examples of Christian pilgrimages. Lourdes is in France and is one of the most famous places of pilgrimage for Christians. It is entirely devoted to Our Lady and St. Bernadette. Our Lady appeared to St. Bernadette eighteen times as the Immaculate Conception. A shrine has been made for Our Lady and a statue stands where she appeared to St. Bernadette.

Millions of people visit Lourdes each year to pray for the sick, elderly, disabled and to pray to Our Lady. Many of these people do travel to Lourdes to pray for themselves and to receive a certain type of healing, either mental, spiritual or in some cases physical. They attend masses and services at Lourdes in which the pilgrims come together to show their faith. Lourdes is an all year round pilgrimage but during the year it is devoted to different types of pilgrims. For example, at Easter Lourdes is mainly for the HCPT which are disabled children from all around the world.

Lourdes has become very built up and there are thousands of helpers there to look after and care for the sick. These include doctors, nurses, maids etc. People who go to Lourdes always seem to want to go back, it is a very good experience and gives you a lot of time to reflect, pray and worship. At Lourdes there are many activities to do. You can go and pray at the Grotto which is where Mary appeared to Bernadette. People walk around a statue of Mary where she appeared as they feel closer to God and more holy. People

light candles at Lourdes for their own intentions, perhaps to help someone get well.

And at night there are candle lit processions to the main church. Also there is Holy Water in the Grotto in which the people drink, wash and bathe in it in order to be healed. Many people give up their own time and money to go and pray and care for the sick. Also people go to Lourdes to have fun. There are days out to the local country side where you can meet other Christians. There are many fun masses where the hymn singing is joyful especially for the handicapped children. Lough Derg is totally different to Lourdes. It is on a little island in Northern Ireland and is sometimes referred to as St. Patrick's Pilgrimage.

You can only visit Lough Derg between 1st June and 16th August. It is the shrine for St. Patrick, where he lived. To embark on this pilgrimage you have to be at least 14 years old, fit and healthy and have no disabilities. This is a very physically demanding experience compared with Lourdes and for the whole experience you are in your bare feet to get you to understand what it was like for St. Patrick. It is like a form of self-sacrifice, like Jesus did for us. You are there for 72 hours in which you have a vigil from 10pm the first day to 10pm the second day where you deprive yourself of any sleep.

While you are at Lough Derg you begin a fast in which you are only allowed to eat dry toast or oatcakes, and drink black tea or coffee twice a day. There are nine stations at Lough Derg that will be covered over the three days and these involve a lot of walking which can be very demanding. Pilgrimages are for anyone anywhere who wants to go and further their faith and belief in

their religion. They seem to come back a much better and changed person from their experiences. And many seem to enjoy it so much that they keep on coming back to these sacred shrines and places of worship.