

# Reaction to church and mosque visits essays examples

[Religion](#), [Islam](#)



This essay gives information about a recent visit to a Catholic Church and a Mosque. It tries to compare this to the Jewish Temple (The author's church). A discussion about the similarities between the religions will be at the commencement of the paper followed by discussion about the entrance to the church, the service itself, literature available and a reflection on the visit.

A recent visit to a Catholic Church and a Mosque revealed a number of similarities and differences to the Jewish Temple that is normally attended by the writer's family. The Catholic Church was attended during the most popular Sunday service and the Subh (morning prayer) was also attended on a Sunday at the Mosque. All of the religious sites that were visited featured relatively peaceful surroundings with gatherings of people together in prayer. They both had a procedure and etiquette for the service or prayer. This was very different compared to the Jewish Temple normally attended. On both visits it was possible to see people standing outside the building chatting before their entrance to the building.

The first impression of each religion began on my arrival to the buildings. The most significant differences before the entrance of the buildings were the architectural designs. The Catholic Church was a different colour of mostly grey and brown with a tall and non circular domed roof. The Mosque was more of a white colour and had a large dome for a roof in the middle with a square building at the bottom. The normal Jewish temple visited takes a little bit from both of these buildings with a smaller dome and square building. The Catholic Church and Mosque had a number of gardens at the entrance while the Jewish Temple has sparse gardens.

All of the services and prayer that I attended had some kind of noticeboard at the front of the building that had information about the times of attendance and differed slightly depending on the religion. The Catholic Church had information about counselling, prayer groups and non religious activities at the church (like sports groups that use the church). The Mosque noticeboard was much simpler. It has prayer times and some information about a women's prayer groups. The Jewish temple was similar to the Catholic Church and had service times and information about prayer groups and social outings outside of the church.

The procedure for entering each building was different. On entrance to the Mosque, shoes were removed and modest clothing was advised. Pants and a long sleeve shirt seemed to be enough at this particular Mosque. I was also wearing the same clothes on my entrance to the Catholic Church however entering the building was different. People were directed to the holy water and people made a cross on their head with the water. This differs slightly to entering a Jewish Temple where a Kippot is worn mostly by the men and in some temples men do not sit with women.

The procedure for the prayers and service were different for each religion. The Mosque had the men sitting on their knees (no chairs), praying and moving slightly to prayers that were in another language. The Catholic Church had a priest at the front that delivered the service from the bible while people sat and listened or got down on their knees at various times of the service. The Jewish experience is similar with a priest giving a service at the front of the temple. Each person is allowed a prayer book to read in their chair. Music was used in both the Catholic Church and Jewish Temple but was

not a feature of the prayers at the Mosque.

At the end of the service people left the building of all the religions and the prayers at the Mosque seemed to disperse the quickest. The Catholic Church had a confession area where people went to confess sins to the priest after the service. There was also talking to each other outside of the church, laughing and shaking hands. The big surprise was at the end of the Jewish Shabbat where people were served a meal called ' Nosh'. There was wine and bread over a prayer called ' Kiddush' and ' Hamotzi' after the service also.

All of the services had access to literature about the religion available. The priest at the Catholic Church actually mentioned this in his sermon and a small table at the back of the church had books about saints and contemporary literature. The Mosque also had a room with a small library that had some interesting books about Muslim religion in both the Western World and other countries. Some of the literature was in Arabic and other languages, making it difficult to read. The Jewish temple has a small library as well that has books about the religion and the role of different people in the Jewish community. It also had literature that talked about the religion in other countries.

After attending all of the religious services, Shabbat and prayers it seemed that all the religions had things that were pleasurable and not so pleasurable. It has also been found that greater religiousness is mildly associated with fewer depressive symptoms. (Smith) The pleasurable things about the religion like the stunning architecture of the Mosque, the food given at the end of Shabbat and the music at the Catholic service seem to be

in agreement with this research. This added to the general happiness of the congregation and made the ambience and environment more welcoming.

The not so pleasurable included praying on the knees, wearing formal clothes and trying to understand the prayers of each religion. The basic idea of all the religions on reflection was that feelings, acts and experiences of individuals could be in solitude standing in relation to the divine. (James, 31)

Visiting all of the religions has raised some interesting questions such as;

- Why do women mix with the men in some religions and not others?
- Why do Muslims pray so regularly, while it seems Catholics do not pray as often in public?
- Why does the architecture of the church, mosque and temple differ and what are the similarities?
- Why is it necessary for Catholics to confess their sins in a room away from the church?
- What is the hierarchy of each religion? (This question came to bear after talking to one of the people from the Catholic congregation who said that the Pope was the major decision maker in the church.)

The similarities of the church are the mostly general and include the gathering of a collective of people for prayer in different architectural buildings in peaceful surroundings. Both the churches visited away from the Jewish Temple normally attended by family and friends had things that were pleasurable and not so pleasurable. The major differences between the religions seemed to be the different architecture of the buildings, the way that the service or prayer was conducted, etiquette, clothing and religious beliefs.

## **Works Cited**

James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience. A Study in Human Nature*. 1902. Longmans, Green, and Co.

Smith, Timothy; Michael McCullough; Justin Poll. Religiousness and Depression: Evidence for a Main Effect and Moderating Influence of Stressful Life Events. *Psychological Bulletin* 2003.