



Places of Worship

Inside a Synagogue

The Importance of Rituals

Inside all religious places of worship, special rituals take place that allow people to participate in their tradition. They might include acts of respect or adoration, commitment or celebration, or even religious study.

This activity will involve some research into the rituals that are performed inside a synagogue, and an exploration of the reasons they are important.

1. From the list below, identify which are beliefs and which are rituals by marking them with 'B' or 'R'.

- Weddings
- God created the world
- Bar Mitzvah
- Olympic Games opening ceremony
- Life is a gift
- Everything will be okay
- Shabbat
- We all go to heaven when we die
- Breaking a mirror will give you seven years of bad luck
- 18th birthday party

2. Write your own definition for:

a) belief

b) ritual





Places of Worship Inside a Synagogue The Importance of Rituals

3. Fill out Table 1 on the following page by choosing three rituals from your own life. You may choose rituals from the list in question 1 if they apply to you.
4. Fill out Table 2 on the page after by choosing three Jewish rituals that take place inside a synagogue. You may choose rituals from the list in question 1, or others you find in your own research.
5. Considering the reasons why Jewish people believe their rituals are important, answer the following:

a) What reasons might there be for someone to enter a synagogue if they weren't Jewish?

b) What reasons might there be for someone not to enter a synagogue?

c) Do you think visiting a place of worship you're not familiar with is an effective strategy to maintain a cohesive society? Why or why not?





Places of Worship Inside a Synagogue The Importance of Rituals

Table 1: Rituals in my life

Ritual	Where does it come from?	Where does it take place, and why?	Why is this ritual important to the people who participate in it?	What about this ritual (if anything) is most attractive or important to you?





Places of Worship

Inside a Synagogue

The Importance of Rituals

Table 2: Jewish rituals

Ritual	Where does it come from? <i>Is there, for example, a sacred text or tradition that has shaped this ritual?</i>	Why does it take place within the synagogue building? <i>Consider physical objects and symbolism important for the ritual.</i>	Why is it important to Jewish people? <i>What does it represent, and what value does it have?</i>	What about this ritual (if anything) is most attractive or important to you?

