



Shared sacred spaces

Adapted from original article by Amari Leiva-Urzua

<https://www.australiancatholics.com.au/article/shared-sacred-spaces>

Interfaith prayer spaces are places where people from different religions can come together to pray and talk about their faith. These spaces help people understand each other and become friends, even if they believe in different things.

What are shared sacred spaces?

In many places like universities, airports, and hospitals, there are special rooms or areas called ‘multifaith spaces.’ These are places where people from different religions can pray and feel welcome. They help people with different beliefs share their prayer experiences and learn from each other.

Jerusalem: A city of shared sacred spaces

The city of Jerusalem is very special because it is important to three religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism. These religions have special sites in Jerusalem where they pray and remember their faith. For example:

- **The Temple Mount** is a holy place for both Jews and Muslims. It has the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, which are important to Muslims, and it is also where the Jewish First and Second Temples stood.
- **The Western Wall** is a sacred place for Jews, but it is also important to Christians and Muslims because it is part of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.
- **The Church of the Holy Sepulchre** is a place that brings Christians together, as they believe it is the site of Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection.

Even though Jerusalem is a beautiful place, it can also be a place of conflict because people sometimes disagree about religious beliefs. But, the sacred sites in the city show that there are ways religions can share space and learn from each other.

Oxford University Chapel: A modern example

At Oxford University, there is a chapel called Sommerville College Chapel. It is different because it was built to be a place where all people, no matter their religion, can pray. The chapel was created to be open to everyone, with no specific religious symbols. Later, the chapel added some Christian symbols, but it still remains a place for people of all faiths.

Why are shared sacred spaces important?

These special spaces help people talk to each other and understand different religions. They help break down the walls between people and make it easier to build friendships, even if they don’t agree on everything. These spaces are important in showing that we can all respect and learn from each other, no matter what religion we follow.



Slide show overview based on article content

Here's an overview for a slideshow to reinforce the key concepts from the article 'Shared sacred spaces'. This slideshow can be used as an engaging way to reinforce the understanding of shared sacred spaces and interfaith dialogue, while encouraging students to reflect on how they can apply these ideas in their own lives.

Slide 1: Introduction to shared sacred spaces

What are shared sacred spaces?

- Interfaith prayer spaces are areas where people from different religions come together to pray and talk about their faith.
- These spaces help people understand each other and build friendships, even if they believe in different things.

Slide 2: Where can we find shared sacred spaces?

- Examples of shared sacred spaces:
- Universities, airports, and hospitals have special rooms called 'multifaith spaces' where people of all religions can pray together.
- These spaces help people share their prayer experiences and learn from each other.

Slide 3: Jerusalem – a city of shared sacred spaces

Why Is Jerusalem special?

Jerusalem is important to three major religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

Sacred sites in Jerusalem:

- The Temple Mount: Sacred to both Jews and Muslims.
- The Western Wall: Sacred to Jews, and important to Christians and Muslims.
- The Church of the Holy Sepulchre: A place for Christians to remember Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

Challenges in Jerusalem:

While beautiful, Jerusalem can be a place of conflict, but its sacred sites show how religions can share space and learn from each other.

Slide 4: Oxford University Chapel – a modern example

Sommerville College Chapel:

- Built as a place where everyone, regardless of religion, could pray.
- Started as a neutral space, and later added Christian symbols, but remains open to all faiths.



Slide 5: Why are shared sacred spaces important?

The role of shared sacred spaces:

- They help people from different religions talk to each other and understand each other better.
- These spaces break down walls and make it easier to build friendships, even if people don't agree on everything.
- They teach respect for all religions and show how we can learn from each other.

Slide 6: Reflection questions

- How can shared sacred spaces help people from different religions understand each other better?
 - Why is it important to respect and learn from people who have different beliefs?
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