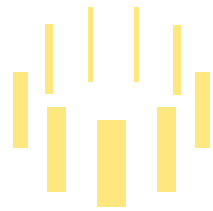


Visiting Sacred Spaces

“How-To” Guide

Tips & Suggestions for Groups & Individuals

GOD IN
AMERICA



Sacred Space International

Visiting Sacred Spaces: a “How-To” Guide

With Tips & Suggestions for Groups & Individuals.

Written by Deirdre Colgan, Executive Director



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Outreach partner for the PBS television series *God in America*

a co-production of *AMERICAN EXPERIENCE* and *FRONTLINE*

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*Please note:

This “How-To” Guide is produced by Sacred Space International to accompany the series of **City Guides to Sacred Spaces in the following Cities:**

- Atlanta, GA
- Boston (& Cambridge,) MA
- Chicago, IL
- New Orleans, LA
- New York (Manhattan & Brooklyn,) NY
- Portland, OR
- San Francisco, CA
- Santa Fe, NM

Use our City Guides to select the spaces you will tour if you live or work in any of the eight cities they describe. If you live outside those metro or regional areas, please use them as “Case-Study” examples of what kind of spaces to include in your own Tour of sacred spaces.

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A Note to Users and An Invitation...

Welcome!

During the summer of 2010, Sacred Space International was invited by WGBH Boston to curate a selection of sacred spaces in eight different US cities as part of the outreach for the documentary series *God in America*. Whether you align yourself with a particular faith tradition, have no religious belief or consider yourself “spiritual, but not religious,” I invite you to join us in our quest to uncover and visit sacred spaces. For the purposes of designing your own visit, you can use the grouped examples we have selected – presented in our City Guides to Sacred Spaces **downloadable at pbs.org/godinamerica** – or you can visit a group of spaces you have selected in your own city or town. Either way, we hope our City Guides can serve as a best practice example to help you in your journey.

We believe you are reading this because you are curious about sacred spaces, but may have wondered how do you go about visiting them? Everyday we walk or drive by spaces belonging to a variety of faith traditions; however most of us have never been inside. It may be due to fear, lack of knowledge or access, or just an oversight – but now that you are ready – we want to extend an invitation to you to enter *inside* these spaces. We believe that when you enter a sacred space, you can not only experience beauty and peace but also an understanding of the purpose and function behind the architecture and design of these sites. We have designed this “How-To” Guide to provide you with useful information and have divided it into three phases for the purpose of your visit:

BEFORE: Preparing for your visit – what to do before you go

DURING: The process of your visit – entering inside a selection of sacred spaces and how to maximize your experience of being in the space

AFTER: When you return from your visit – decompressing and evaluating what you have experienced and how to best engage in a dialogue about your experience

Whether you are conducting a self-guided visit or designing a tour for a group of people, we hope that you will find this Guide useful. General notes are on the left side column, with additional tips and suggestions for groups on the right-hand side. You will be equipped for your journey to uncover and experience the sacred spaces in your city. We hope that during the process of your visit you cultivate a greater sense of cultural understanding and an appreciation for both the magnificent and for the modest sacred spaces around us.

For your curiosity and your interest in sacred space – Thank You!

Deirdre Colgan

Executive Director, Sacred Space International – Chicago, Summer 2010



Letter of Greeting

Greetings public television viewers and friends,

A few years back, following our production of two religious-themed WGBH documentaries (*From Jesus to Christ; Faith and Doubt at Ground Zero*) and while we were at work on the critically acclaimed *AMERICAN EXPERIENCE*/FRONTLINE co-production *The Mormons*, WGBH convened a group of scholars and thinkers about religion in America to ponder a simple, but far-reaching question: What more could public broadcasting do to explore religious faith?

The consensus was that America has what the scholars call a ‘a religious literacy problem.’ While many Americans are deeply involved in their faith, experts say, many also are uninformed—not only about other religions, but even about their own, and certainly about the religious history of our country. Out of these discussions was born a new *AMERICAN EXPERIENCE*/FRONTLINE collaboration: *God in America*.

The first series of its kind on American television, *God in America* looks at the historical role of religion in the public life of the United States—examining 400 years of our nation’s quest for religious liberty, and its impact on society, politics and the spiritual experiences of Americans. It’s history many people don’t know much about, that’s why we’re extending the reach of the series with a robust and enduring community outreach campaign.

When we discovered the Chicago-based Sacred Space International and its dynamic Executive Director Deirdre Colgan, we knew immediately there were synergies in our work. We’re proud to be bringing her talents and expertise to eight U.S. cities and introducing her organization to millions of PBS viewers.

I’m sure you’ll find this guide a tremendous resource and hope the idea of touring sacred spaces is one you will consider for yourself, your family or your community.

Michael Sullivan

Executive Producer, *God in America*



Finding and Defining Sacred Space:

During the summer of 2010, our organization went on a quest to find sacred spaces in eight cities across America. The results of our journey is a curated selection which appears in our City Guides to Sacred Spaces in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, New Orleans, New York, Portland, Santa Fe and San Francisco (**downloadable at pbs.org/godinamerica/outreach**). During this process we thought long and hard about what it is that makes a space sacred. For the purposes of this Guide, our definition of a sacred space includes the following:

Traditional Sacred Space - A house of worship designed and built for a congregation to gather, meet and enjoy community for the purposes of worship, liturgy and/or ritual

Civic Sites – engineered structures, secular in nature and scope – usually built by cities, states or government entities

Landscape Sites – sequestered spaces with natural features including water, trees, parkland which encourage quiet meditation and pause

Memorial Sites – markers of an event or person, burial grounds, cemeteries, sites of conscience and memory

Spiritual Places that have been imprinted over time, or have been historically seen as “sacred” a priori – set aside for the public good

Sacred Ground – Indigenous sites, which have existed since before the arrival of Europeans to the American continent. They remain visible as palimpsests within the fabric of our contemporary American cities

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, one of the definitions of the word *sacred* is the following:

“b. Dedicated, **set apart**, exclusively appropriated to some person or some special purpose.”

We have taken this definition of a space that has been “set apart” to heart during our process of selecting sacred spaces for inclusion in our City Guides. Emile Durkheim, an early proponent of modern social science, agreed with this definition of the sacred. Unlike Mircea Eliade, who wrote the book: *The Sacred and the Profane*, Durkheim believed that “sacred” was not the same as “divine” and that not only are gods and spirits sacred, but also things like rocks, trees, pieces of wood, in fact anything. For what makes something sacred is not its connection to the divine but the fact that it has been *set radically apart from something else*.

We hope that you will find the following *Tips and Suggestions* useful in your own journey to visit and experience a selection of spaces that have been deliberately “set apart” from everyday life. You will discover as we did that there lies an abundance of sacred space within and around your life.

“Your sacred space is where you find yourself again and again” (Joseph Campbell)



Before your Visit

Decisions

- First decide upon the number of spaces you'd like to visit during your tour. On a self-guided tour the amount of spaces depends partly on your stamina, absorption-rate and method of transportation. The size of your city is a factor here – their distance from one another will affect the amount of sacred spaces you are able to visit on your tour.
- We recommend selecting a group of 3-4 spaces as the maximum for a group tour, led by a knowledgeable guide. As an individual visitor, if you devote a day to your visit, you could take in 6-10 spaces - depending on your pace!
- Think about what kind of spaces you are interested in seeing. Are there any religions or faith traditions you have been curious about? What about architectural style? Sometimes the interior of a modern space is very different from how it appears at street level. Now is your chance to experience that style of architecture by including an example in your selection of spaces to visit.

Diversity

- Choosing a group of diverse spaces affiliated with different faith traditions will allow for a richer experience during your visit, and allow you to compare and contrast different methods of worship through the common language of their architecture.
- Another thing to keep in mind is a diversity of architectural style, building type or type of sacred site. Selecting a group of older, more historical churches seen together in the same grouping as a modern mosque or landscape site is a great strategy for your tour.
- Please reference our City Guides for good overviews, groupings and suggestions for notable places to visit in our eight featured cities. Find them at pbs.org/godinamerica/outreach

- * **Decide whether you would like to work alone on your tour event or with others in your community.**

Start the planning with a few preliminary phone calls to like-minded organizations to gauge interest or consult our Resource List in the back to find local chapters of national religious and civic groups.

- * **Find a local expert** to serve as a guide for your group tour. This person would ideally be knowledgeable about architecture or an architect. For knowledge about the sacred space itself, you could find a person from each space who is considered to be the “Resident Expert” to host your visit to that space. Or request that a member of the clergy, or even of the congregation be present to answer questions during your visit. Finding someone to share their space with you will really enrich your tour.

- * **Know your neighbor.** Often when spaces are proximate to one another, or in the same neighborhood – their leaders know one another. Use this information to select a diversity of spaces belonging to people who know one another. This knowledge can contribute to your group tour.



Location Plan

- Recognize clusters of spaces situated close by one another. You could focus your tour on visits to a selection of proximate spaces like this, or include a combination of clusters, depending on your time and transportation.
- Choosing sacred spaces in peripheral locations within your city or town will probably determine that this is a driving tour.
- Find out in advance if there is any building or space of note nearby the neighborhood of the space you plan to visit. Oftentimes it is the sacred space you are visiting that has defined how the surrounding area has grown within the city. If there is a large landmark you can take note of it. If there is a park or open space in the area you can use it as an area to rest in between the spaces. By doing this you can get a better feel for the context of the area where your sacred site is located.

Transportation

- If the spaces that you select are in an urban setting, research modes of transportation and locations to determine in what order you should see the spaces.
- If you selected a group of sacred sites in a geographic "cluster" you can make your visits part of a walking tour. These could be located in the downtown area of a city or in a neighborhood that is navigable by foot.
- If your spaces are far away from one another, or you want to include more than one "cluster" in your self-guided tour, you could try using public transportation to travel between sites. Sacred spaces in urban areas are generally more accessible by public transportation than by car. Advance research about the neighborhood you are going to will contribute to your safety. If you decide to drive, most sacred sites will have information about parking on their website.
- We generally do not recommend public transportation for group tours! *(See the sidebar for more information on transportation for groups.)*

*** Call ahead.** Make sure that you plan ahead by alerting the people in charge of the space that you are bringing a tour to their space. Alert them of the size of your group and if you have any special needs. Most sacred spaces are now accessible to the physically disabled, but some need to make advanced arrangements to accommodate these needs.

*** Drive or walk?** Consider the size of your group when selecting and arranging spaces and transportation. Depending on how many people are in your group, it might be more efficient to provide transportation instead of walking, or vice versa. If you have a larger group and proximity doesn't allow for a walking tour, renting a bus or trolley is good solution. Your group's vehicle is a great place to distribute material to participants, in advance of the first visit or between sacred spaces. Your guide can also use this as a venue to provide your group with introductory remarks and other information.



Timing

- Decide if you would rather see the particular spaces empty or full & time your visit accordingly.
- If you visit while the space is in use, for example during a service, you will see how the space is used and experience the primary purpose for its design.
- If you visit during a downtime, the chances are you will see only other visitors, or have the space to yourself.
- If they are a space that does not usually remain open throughout the day, they will most likely make arrangements for you to enter if you call ahead to make an appointment.
- Most publically accessible non-religious sacred sites have their hours of access online now. If this is a house of worship, find out about opening hours or service times by using their website or by calling ahead.
- It's always a good idea to ask whether you simply observe worship and if you would like to participate, you can find out what to expect in advance during a conversation with their receptionist.
- You should design the order of spaces you will visit on your tour to take into account the time of day when you arrive. Depending on their orientation, some spaces may be at their best in the morning or evening. Many stained glass windows for example are oriented towards the east. Arriving to a space like this early in the morning will allow you to see the light coming through the windows illuminating the space in the way they were designed to do.

* **Service times.** We do not recommend that you visit a house of worship during their hours of service with your group. Unless you get permission and an invitation from the pastor or clergy performing the service in advance it's a good idea to go when the space is not in use by its congregation. This way you can show your group around and field questions, without the worry of disturbing your hosts.

* **Best time to arrive.** Ask the host of the spaces you are visiting if there is a special time of day, which really shows the space off to its best advantage. You can then try to arrive with your group during this time frame. Some spaces simply look better in the evening than in the morning and vice versa. Knowing this can help you to organize the order in which you travel to the sites on your tour.



Research

- After selecting the spaces you have decided to visit, it is a great idea to familiarize yourself with their associated faith traditions. To assist you with this please refer to the section **Dress Codes for a Selection of Faith Traditions, pg 20-21** This should provide you with an overview and serve as a starting point for your research. It should be seen as a beginning - not as a definitive description!
- Research the architect or designer of the spaces you are visiting, if known. Writing pertinent points down before you go will remind you of what to look for while you're inside the space.
- The research process will hopefully raise some questions for you in advance of your visit. You could use index cards or printed notes to keep track of your questions. If you have arranged for a person to greet you when you arrive, they are usually happy to answer these questions.

Dress Code and Etiquette

- Familiarize yourself with codes of conduct that your particular place of worship might have and please refer to the section: **Dos and Don'ts, pg. 11-13**
- You can find more information about what to wear to a particular sacred space belonging to one of faith traditions listed in our section: **Dress Codes for a Selection of Faith Traditions pg. 20-21** If necessary, you should contact the space you are visiting to confirm any special circumstances or questions you have.
- There are many more resources you can refer to for help with this issue. We have included a selection of sources for further reading in our appendices.

* **Docent materials.** If you hire a trained guide to lead your tour to visit sacred spaces, make sure that they include tour materials that can be easily distributed to your participants. This information can thus serve as research on the fly. Encourage tour-goers to use this material to generate questions. You can facilitate this process in between the sacred sites on the tour, or while riding in the bus or trolley if this is a driving tour.

* **Dress code for groups.** Clarify to your group in advance that it would be appropriate to err on the conservative side when dressing for your tour of sacred spaces. Long sleeves and pants for both women and men is probably the best idea for the purposes of your tour to visit sacred spaces. You should specify this when tour participants sign up, so that they know what to expect in advance.



During your Visit

Dos and Don'ts

There are certain things you should and should not do while visiting a sacred space. The following generally apply more to traditional houses of worship, but can be taken into account while visiting any of the spaces you have selected. Here are some good guidelines about what to do...and what not to do during your tour.

Do:

- Be respectful and quiet, knowing that this space has special meaning for the people who come here to worship and experience the divine, or connect with themselves and the world beyond
- Consider your timing. If the space you are visiting is a traditional house of worship, will you be there when its congregation is using the space for its primary purpose? If so, be extra respectful and refrain from speaking or taking photographs while the service is in progress. Research or consult your contact at the site to see whether it appropriate to participate in, or observe the service
- Participate if you feel comfortable! Usually it's ok to follow the movements of the people around you. Some services involve standing, sitting and kneeling. If you feel uncomfortable about participating, it is usually acceptable to simply observe unobtrusively from the rear of the space
- Ask in advance if photography is allowed. Photography is a wonderful way to document your experience; however please note that in general it is not acceptable to photograph individuals as they worship. Usually, it is fine to take photographs in a sacred space, especially when it is not in use. In some older, more historic spaces, with fragile artifacts, flash photography is not allowed. In this case, simply disable the flash on your camera, and consider bringing a portable tripod to avoid blurriness. {For the purposes of our City Guides we have selected sites where photography *is permitted*.}

* **Dress code for groups.** Clarify to your group in advance that it would be appropriate to err on the conservative side when dressing for your tour of sacred spaces. Long sleeves and pants for both women and men is probably the best idea for the purposes of your tour to visit sacred spaces. You should specify this when tour participants sign up, so that they know what to expect in advance

* **Check in: introduce yourself when you arrive.** Invite a member of the congregation, staff or clergy to greet your group when you arrive. Make sure they know whom you are and how long you will be in the space. This will make your group tour go much more smoothly and give your host a chance to more fully share their space with you.



Do (cont.)

- Familiarize yourself with the dress codes of the particular places of worship you will be visiting during your tour, and whether you will be expected to follow them if you are not attending a service. As a general rule of thumb: dress modestly. By doing this you are showing respect for the people who use this for ceremonial purposes. For more information about Dress Codes for a variety of Religions, please refer to the section: **Dress Codes for a Selection of Faith Traditions, pg. 20-21**
- Obey posted signs, especially if there are areas in the sacred space designated as off-limits to the general public. Sometimes there are areas within a particular sacred space that are only for the initiated. Other spaces may have areas that are in need of repair and are therefore unsafe to access. If you are particularly curious about an upper area, such as the balcony or choir, you can always ask for permission to go up. Some spaces will allow this access, others may not. For your own safety and out of respect to your host space, when in doubt: ask!
- Turn off your phone or at least put it in the silent mode.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Use your common sense to keep track of your belongings and your personal safety. Just because you are in a sacred space does not make you immune from theft or attack. With the closure of social service centers in cities, especially in the downtown area, many sacred spaces have become de facto shelters for the homeless and mentally ill. Be cautious as you would in any city or civic public space.

Don't:

Eat or drink or even bring food inside a sacred space. Eating and drinking are prohibited in most sanctuaries. If you visit during a service, there may be food and or drink distributed during the process. In some cases these are ritual items, available only to those baptized in that faith. If you are in doubt, abstain. Most congregations gather around food at the end of a service. Usually, guests are welcomed to post-service coffee hour or fellowship.

* **Make an announcement:** for all the members of your group to check that their phones are off. There is nothing worse than interrupting your guides presentation with the sound of a ring tone. This noise also spoils the experience for other people in the space. Be mindful that you are responsible for the behavior of your group while you are in the space. Reminding your group of this will avoid this noise *faux pas*.

* **Don't assume everyone wants a tour.** Be respectful to other visitors and people using the space for prayer or meditation. Choose a place to speak to your group in an unobtrusive area within the space. interfere with their experience.



DESIGNING A SUCCESSFUL TOUR TO VISIT SACRED SPACES: DURING

Don't (cont.)

- Trespass! Be aware that even though the public can enter the space, that there may be areas within the space, which are off-limits to the public. For example certain faith traditions may not allow visitors to step on the altar, the ablution area, or other liturgically sacred areas in the sacred space.
- Act as if you are outside or in a public space. Avoid loud conversations and fast movements. (Please, no running in the aisles!)
- Assume you have the right to be there. You are an invited guest and it is appropriate that you act accordingly and defer to your host – the people that work in, maintain or lead the congregation of the sacred space.
- Talk on your phone! In general it is a very bad idea to use electronic devices inside a sacred space. The electronic noise may be helpful for you, but spoils the experience for everyone else nearby. Wait until you are outside to use your phone.

* **Don't block** passage for other people or otherwise get in the way. Situate your group so that you are as unobtrusive as possible within the space.

Function and Form

- When visiting a sacred space, especially a traditional house of worship, it is important to remember the real purpose underlying its design – its religious use. Connecting both the form: the architecture of the space, its structure, materiality and decoration; and its function: a way for people to connect with the Divine, as they understand that.
- To find out more about how a sacred space is used, try to arrange an appointment with someone who is knowledgeable about the religion of that space. Explain that you not necessarily interested in converting. Learning about a particular faith tradition by viewing it through the common language of its architecture is an interesting way to create understanding about different faiths.

* **Organize** the order of the tour with your guide before you enter the sacred space. Share this with your tour participants while traveling between the spaces or before the tour begins. This way everyone will know what to expect when they are on the tour.



Function and Form (cont.)

- Some sacred spaces were built originally for another purpose and have been adaptively reused, and designated sacred. Ask yourself how was this achieved? Was it successful?
- In our secular society, it's tempting to focus on form and simply not acknowledge the sacred function of a space. On many architectural tours, the trained guide focuses on the architecture alone, not mentioning that oftentimes it was the religion that determined the design of the space you are visiting. We believe that religion should be part of the discussion, relying upon people who use the particular space to help. We view it as an opportunity, a teachable moment, otherwise, the function of the sacred space just sits there – like an 800-pound gorilla in the room.

* **Break it down.** Make sure there is enough time at each of the sites on your tour for people to wander around the space, investigating details and gaining an overall sense of the space. Breaking down into smaller groups makes the tour less invasive within the space than a large clump. Meet back together in an area like the entry at a pre-assigned time.

* **Welcoming party.** Arrange for a “faith tradition representative” ideally, someone from the space you are visiting, to welcome the tour participant when your group arrives. It's a good idea to begin in the narthex or entry foyer of a space, if it's a traditional house of worship. This way you can make preparatory remarks, pointing them in the right direction when they enter.



Being in the Space

When you are inside a sacred space – it is very easy to be overwhelmed. Instead of taking out your camera to record your experience right away, or busying yourself moving around trying to “fit it all in” – find a place to sit down and simply experience the space before you go any further.

Most sacred spaces have somewhere to sit down comfortably, whether it is on a chair, a pew, the ground or a rock. Allow yourself to “just be” in the space – even if it’s for just a few minutes. How does it feel to you? Quieting down and observing how you are affected by being in this space could be the most important thing you do during your visit.

After you complete your “quiet contemplation” you can set about recording your experience through photography, if appropriate – and referring to the research that you may have prepared in advance.

* **Let your group be!** It’s

tempting to feel like you are on a treadmill – trying to time your visits so that you can cover all the spaces on your tour. Make sure to leave time in each space for your group to have a “Primary Experience” whereby they can directly feel how it is to be in that particular space. Unless this time is scheduled into your plan – it can fall by the wayside. Everyone in your group will have a better time if you allow this time to just be in the space.



Noticing: Questions to Consider

What is the underlying **Structure** of the Sacred Space? If it's a building, how is it held up? Study and observe the structure, first on the exterior of the space and then from the interior. Sometimes the two are in opposition to one another and not the same!

What is the **Context**? How does the space fit within the environment in which it is located? Is it in a dense urban environment, sharing its space with many other buildings? Or is it freestanding on its own block? Consider whether it is on the corner, or bordered by a public square or plaza.

What is the **Orientation**? What direction is the space facing? Is there a direction defining the placement of the altar, for example in a church? Is the space aligned with the underlying organization of the city or neighborhood where it is located? If so does its orientation deviate from the regular grid, or layout of the surrounding streets?

How does the **Façade** appear? What kind of façade or face does the space present to the street? Does it look welcoming or foreboding? Inviting or off-limits? Is it highly ornamented on the outside, or simple and streamlined? Does it stand out from its surroundings, or blend in?

What is the **Materiality**? What kinds of materials were used to construct this space? Are they local, from the surrounding area? Or were they brought here from far away? Is there fine craftsmanship apparent in the materials that were used? Or is there a sense of utilitarianism, which is simple and functional?

What was the original **Purpose** of this space? Has it always been a sacred space? Or has it been repurposed by adaptive reuse? Was it once another kind of building or space and if so how can you tell?

What is the source of **Light** within the space? How does the light enter the space? Are there areas of light and dark? Can you see the outside from within? Do you feel connected with the sky? Or is this a grounding, earth-bound space?

* **Group questions.** If you or your docent has prepared a selection of these questions in advance, you can assign your group to go and consider some of these after your introductory remarks. Having these to refer to makes their tour an engaging experience and is a great icebreaker for people on the tour who may not know one another. Thinking about these questions while they are in the space leaves your tour participants better prepared to discuss their experience afterwards.

* **Exterior View.** Don't forget to look at the outside, both before you go in and after you leave the space. See how your group responds to the exterior of the space after you have completed your visit.



DESIGNING A SUCCESSFUL TOUR TO VISIT SACRED SPACES: DURING

Noticing...(cont.)

Is there a visible **Center** apparent in the space? Does the space have a center of focus? If so what happens here? Why is it important?

What can you tell about the **Function** of the space? Are there any clues as to why things are organized the way they are? Many Protestant Christian spaces emphasize the Word of God – and so great prominence is given to lecterns and any areas for preaching or reading the Bible. In a mosque the direction of Mecca is always apparent, even if the space was not originally aligned in this way. Are there objects visible that reveal traces of any ritual or ceremony?

Where is the **Leader**? Or is there one? Where is the place of the clergy or leader of the congregation, or is there any visible? Does the leader for the particular faith tradition have a higher position in the hierarchy than the members of the congregation? If there is no place for a leader – what does that tell you about the space?

Are there any **Symbols** visible? Can you see images, words, or any other elements described within the space?

Connection? Do you feel connected with the world you left outside this sacred space? Is there any visible connection between sky and earth?

Does the space remind you of just the sky or the space “above?” Or do you feel connected with ground below and the world outside?

Why do you think this space is **Sacred**?



After your Visit

Decompression

- After you leave one of the sacred spaces on your list, schedule enough time so that you have time to think about what you have seen and experienced. Consider using the time it takes to get from one space to another to write about things that come to mind, or visit a local café or restaurant to try and decompress in between spaces and after your tour. Having a tour partner to use as a sounding board will make this process more fun!
- If you complete your tour of sacred spaces solo, a great way to process your experience is to write about it in a personal journal. Reflecting upon your visits by journaling, means putting down on paper all the different elements you saw and how you felt affected by those. It's also a great way to preserve your memory of your tour.

Dialogue

- It is a great idea to have a discussion about what you have seen. The notion of a dialogue certainly involves more than one person. If you have gone on a self-guided tour, then how do you incorporate this element into your own tour experience? Finding people to talk to about this is easy. Start a conversation online by sharing your experience around a discussion group, such as the one created on the *God in America* website at pbs.org/godinamerica. The website offers several additional resources to enhance your tour and conversations including a study guide, an interactive timeline and atlas, interviews with scholars and more. You can even upload video of your own sacred space or create a page in the digital scrapbook, Faithbook. For a face-to face conversation, find or create a Meetup group (meetup.com) with other people who are interested in talking about their visits to see sacred space or locate a local interfaith coalition in your community.

* **Breaks.** Allow your group some decompression time between sacred spaces on your tour, by factoring in breaks. From a physical standpoint this is particularly important if there are elderly people in your group. Taking short breaks to rest between spaces will mean that your tour participants will avoid “Sacred Saturation!”

* **Comfortable conversation.** It is important that people feel comfortable having a conversation about religion. You can help to set the stage for this by having a mediator. Ideally this person could engage your architectural expert, the faith tradition representative and the group members in dialogue.



Dialogue (cont.)

Ask around while you are in the space – can you find someone with whom you can start a conversation about your experience? Going to a space when there is public event happening is a great way to initiate dialogue about the space. You can also speak to someone who calls this sacred space their spiritual home, by visiting during service times and initiating discussion with members of the congregation. Talking about architecture can help to bridge cultural differences. In this way, your tour can help you make new connections with people who have a shared interest in sacred space, even those who have different religious beliefs than you have. If you are individually touring the spaces there are many virtual and physical resources to help you continue thinking about and discussing your experience. Use our **Resources on page 41** to assist you further in this process of dialogue.

If you are unsure what to talk about or how to begin, use the list we have provided in the **Questions to Consider on page 16** to initiate and continue your dialogue.

* **Engaging people in dialogue.**

It is important to convey an interfaith, open perspective. Encourage this by giving your tour participants permission to ask questions that may seem “stupid!” Simply stating that there is no such thing as a stupid question tends to free people up from being embarrassed or ashamed about a lack of knowledge.

* **How to begin?** Here are some

ideas for initiating discussion: ask questions yourself or have your colleagues or friends ask “pre-considered” questions to start the dialogue and engage group members. Invite dissent. Be respectful and open to diverse points of view and you will help people feel comfortable contributing.

* **Bring it back to the**

architecture. During your dialogue, unknown biases and differing opinions may simmer up through the conversation. Smooth over these “hot-button” issues by bringing it back to the architecture.



Dress Codes for a Selection of Faith Traditions*

* Please note:

If you are in doubt about what to wear before entering a particular sacred space or one we have not described here, it is always a great idea to research via the organization's website, or simply call their main number for advice about how best to dress when visiting, whether for service or when the space is open to the public for general use. This list is meant as a suggested guide and is not meant to be definitive.

Judaism

General Dress Code for Synagogues and Temples

For men, a jacket and tie are appropriate. Additionally, a small head covering, called a *yarmulke* or *kipphah*, may be required. A *tallit*, prayer shawl, must be worn by Jewish men, during prayer.

For women, a modest dress, skirt, blouse or pants suit is appropriate. *Tallit* are optional for Jewish women, and should not be worn by non-Jews. In some conservative synagogues, women might be expected to cover their heads. Usually both *yarmulke* and *tallit* are available to borrow. These are usually located in baskets or shelving near the door of the main sanctuary.

Christianity

Catholic, Baptist, and more Conservative Evangelical Traditions

Slacks and shirts or suit and tie, depending on the formality of the church, are appropriate attire for men. Women should wear clothing that covers the shoulders and hems should reach to or below the knee. In some Christian spaces men will be asked to remove hats and head coverings upon entering.

Other Christian denominations: Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, Unitarian Universalist, Episcopal and Christian Scientist & Swedenborgian

Depending on the individual and the congregation, casual clothing or a jacket and tie are appropriate for men. Long pants, dresses and skirts are appropriate for women; hems need not reach the knees and arms don't necessarily need to be covered.



Christian Orthodox

General Dress Code for Orthodox Churches

Clothing should be modest. A jacket and tie are appropriate for men. Dresses and skirts are appropriate for women; hems should reach below the knee, blouses or shirts should cover the shoulders, with ideally a jacket or cardigan to cover arms.

Islam

General Dress Code for Mosques (*Masjids*)

Men may wear a casual shirt or slacks, head covering is not required. For women, modest, looser clothing should be worn to cover arms and legs. Some mosques only require women to cover their heads before praying, but as a mark of respect, wearing a headscarf is a great idea before entering into the Prayer Hall. Ornate religious symbols are discouraged. You will be required to remove your shoes and leave them in an assigned shelving area in the foyer, before entering the prayer area.

Hinduism and the Baha'í Faith

General Dress Code for Temples

No specific dress code. Dress for your own preference and comfort.

Buddhism

General Dress Code for Temples, Churches & Dojos/Zendos (all Buddhist sects)

No specific dress code, but loose clothes in muted colors are preferable, especially for a Zen space.

Sikhism

General Dress Code for Sikh Temples (*Gurdwara*)

Dress modestly. A jacket and tie are appropriate for men depending on the congregation. Women should wear modest dresses, skirts or pants. Both men and women will be required to cover their head and remove shoes when entering the sanctuary or *gurdwara*. Both women and men may cover your head with a hat, cap, scarf or similar head covering.



Credits

About the Author

Deirdre Colgan has served as Executive Director of the Chicago-based architecture nonprofit, Sacred Space International, since August 2008. She regularly presents architectural and other specialist material to a variety of public audiences, from lectures and tours to panel discussions. She currently serves as Scholarship Director on the board of Chicago Women in Architecture (CWA.)

Colgan holds a Masters of Architecture from the University of Illinois, at Chicago (UIC) and a Masters in Fine Art, Sculpture from the California College of the Arts (CCA.) Her Bachelors Degree is from the National College of Art and Design in Ireland (NCAD.) She has practiced as an architectural professional since 1999 and also served as adjunct faculty at a number of academic institutions. Resident in Chicago for over ten years, she has also lived in Taos, NM and San Francisco, CA. To complete her MFA thesis “The *Living Space*,” she traveled to Tokyo and Kyoto to experience Japanese concepts of sacred space. Deirdre was a co-grantee of the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in Fine Arts in 2008 with her brother, radio producer Jim Colgan.

In her personal art practice, she is concerned with sequestering spiritual space amongst the tumult of everyday life. Her methods lie between art & architecture. She is a member of the artist-run cooperative studio – *Spoke*, located in the West Loop of Chicago.

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Appendices

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GLOSSARY of Terms

A

Adobe: Earthen bricks made from mud air-dried in the outdoor sun, instead of being fired in a traditional kiln. Straw or ashes are used as binders. This regional style is suitable for dry climates and is prevalent in the US in the Southwestern states.

Altar: An elevated structure upon which in **pagan** times sacrifices were offered, incense is burned in worship, or before which religious rites are performed. Used metaphorically in most Christian churches to refer to the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made – represented by the **Sacrament** of Communion.

Ambry (or Aumbry): A recessed cabinet or shelf generally used for storing various articles that are used in worship, usually on or near the altar or chapels.

Ambulatory: A pathway to walk on behind the altar in a church. May also refer to the arcade passages that enclose a **cloister** in a monastery, or to other types of aisles round the edge of a church building, for example in circular churches.

A Priori: Latin term for “what comes before.” Relates to facts and knowledge “before experience” taken as truths without needing scientific evidence. The term can denote “first principles” or knowledge bequeathed over time to civilization, without specific remembrance of where that knowledge was derived. According to the philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804,) *a priori* knowledge is transcendental, rather than empirical.

Apse: A semicircular room covered by a semi-dome, usually behind the altar in a church. The term is usually applied to the architectural termination of the main sanctuary at the liturgical east end, regardless of the shape of the roof, which may be flat, sloping, domed, or hemispherical.

Apsidal: relating to the **apse**.

Arch: A curved structure over an opening. Semicircular round arches, which are also called Roman arches, usually characterize Romanesque architecture. Pointed arches generally characterize **Gothic** or **Gothic Revival** architecture. Moorish arches, or horseshoe arches, are wide up from their bases, and then narrow toward their tops.

Ark: A receptacle containing the **Torah** scrolls in a synagogue. In Orthodox synagogues it is placed in the wall that faces toward Jerusalem.

Asistencia: A sub-station of a mission, see also *visita*.

Attributes (or emblems): Symbolic objects used to identify individual saints.

Avenue: A wide road or path often lined with trees in a rural area, or tall buildings in an urban area.



Glossary (cont.)

Axis Mundi: The World Axis, or navel/center of the world. Denotes many different meanings for many different civilizations and cultures, but loosely applied, can mean an axial (tall, linear) form or structure connecting Earth, or the underworld to the sky or the heavens above. Well described in the book: *The Sacred and the Profane* by author Mircea Eliade (see Bibliography for more details.)

B

Baldachin (Italian: baldacchino): An ornamental construction, which covers and protects the altar in a church. Historically: signified a canopy of state over an altar or throne, to denote a person of significance.

Baptistry: Where baptism is administered. A separate structure built to contain the baptismal font, where the ceremony is performed.

Baptism: The ceremony of baptizing, during which a person is immersed in water or water is applied by pouring or sprinkling as a religious rite, or sacrament. It is symbolic of moral or spiritual purification or regeneration. It also serves as a Christian ordinance as initiation into the church.

Baptismal Font: the bowl or stand to hold the water used in the sacrament of baptism. In high churches this was usually placed in a separate area within the space - the baptistry. After the Second **Vatican Council (Vatican II)** this is now more usually located closer to center of the space or near the altar. In some Catholic spaces, the baptismal font is placed close to the entrance, to remind churchgoers of their original immersion during the sacrament.

Baroque: An artistic style predominant in 16th to 18th Century Europe, characterized by energy, emotion, movement, and a sense of mass.

Basilica: In ancient Rome, a Basilica was a public meeting place and a hall of justice. This civic building type was adapted for liturgical use after Emperor Constantine the Great (272-337 CE) declared Rome a Christian state. Typically, the nave is taller than the aisles, which forms a cathedral space lit by clerestory. Today, "Basilica" is a title of honor given to a church in the Catholic tradition to which special privileges are attached. These privileges include precedence over other churches, being directly tied to the Holy See in the Vatican and the right to carry a special umbrella, or *conopaeum* and bell during the procession on state occasions.

Bimah, or bima (also bema/bemab:) A platform with an elevated stand, or lectern, from which the Torah is read. Usually found in synagogues, temples and other Jewish spaces of worship.

Bible: In Judaism, the term Bible applies to the Hebrew Scriptures. Primary authority is ascribed to the **Torah** which is composed of the first five books of the Bible; secondary authority to the Books of the Prophets; and tertiary authority to the Kethubim, whose 13 books include Psalms, Proverbs and the book of Daniel. In Christianity, the term Bible refers to the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, which are known as the **Old and New Testaments**.

Brahman: A Sanskrit word. In Hinduism, Brahman is the One, All-Encompassing soul.

Bridge: A structure that connects and reconciles two or more things.



Glossary (cont.)

Bulto: From Spanish, a sculpted religious image.

Buttress: A solid, vertical structure built against a wall for support.

Byzantine Revival style: Also, Neo-Byzantine. A particularly ornate form of **Romanesque Revival** architecture, which emerged in Western Europe. It is characterized by complex vaulting, domes, large open spaces, and lavish decoration. The materials used typically are precious marbles, mosaics, and gilding.

C

Cabecera: From Spanish. The principal (head) church in a mission district. The priest lives here, and from this base services the smaller churches or chapels.

Campo Santo: From Italian. Cemetery. Though the *Camposanto Monumentale* in Pisa, Italy is a famous example, the term *Campo Santo* refers also to the burial grounds of missions. In this case, the term is taken from the Spanish.

Canales: Rainwater spouts on a roof, widely used in Spanish architecture and mission architecture.

Cantor: Taken from the Latin word for singer, a synagogue official who sings liturgical solos, or an ecclesiastical officer who leads liturgical music.

Cast iron: A building material used in the late 18th century until the prevalence of steel in the mid 19th century. A hard, brittle, and non-malleable alloy of iron, which is shaped by being poured into molds. Was used as an architectural and engineering material before the ready availability of structural steel.

Cathedral: The church in which a bishop keeps his *cathedra*, his physical chair.

Chancel: The space around the altar in which the clergy performing a service move or sit, traditionally separated by a screen from the main body of the church.

Chantry: A small chapel, endowed by a patron, set aside for special duties of the priest, which include saying masses and prayers, often for the soul of the founder of the endowment.

Choir Chancel: The area in a church where the choir sits, separate from the sanctuary, which holds the altar.

Classical Revival (also Neoclassical): A style of architecture that revives the art of ancient Greece, Rome or the Renaissance. Neoclassical architecture was popular in the 18th and 19th centuries. Classical style is the predominant influence on western architecture and is characterized by symmetry, clean lines, and subtle decorations. Classical architecture is also often built on a grand scale, with imposing columns and large arches and is used in civic and religious building types.

Clerestory: An upper story of the nave filled with windows. This generates light from above, creating a “heavenly” effect.

Clergy: The formal religious leadership of a particular house of worship.



Glossary (cont.)

Cloister: a rectangular open courtyard space surrounded by covered walks or open galleries, with open arcades on the inner side, running along the walls of buildings and forming a quadrangle or **garth**. Also denotes a place of religious seclusion such as a monastery or convent.

Colegio: From Spanish. A college or training school for missionaries.

Colonial Revival: The name given to the Wren-Gibbs and Georgian Classical styles of architecture, when revived in the United States in the late 19th and 20th centuries. A nationalistic style of architecture, interior design and landscaping characterized by elaborate front doors, windows hung in pairs or triple combinations rather than as single windows, columned porches. In California and the American Southwest, the Colonial Revival looked back at Spanish architecture, rather than Georgian prototypes.

Colonnade: A series of **columns** placed at regular intervals, supporting and joined by an **entablature**.

Column: A vertical structural support used to support beams or arches. In classical architecture, columns were assigned an Order: Doric, Ionic or Corinthian and consist of a base, shaft, and capital.

Conopaeum: A red and yellow silk umbrella which graces the interior space of a **Basilica**. It signifies the church's readiness to greet the Pope, were he to visit, and usually remains half-opened near the altar.

Convento: From Spanish. The working quarters, housing, and living complexes for the regular clergy in a mission.

Corbel/Corbeling: An arrangement of overlapping architectural elements, either wood or stone, protruding upward and outward from a wall. Corbeling can be used to support beams, rafters and, sometimes arches. Corbeling is an ancient building technique used by stone-age man and usually denotes stonework constructed into layered courses and held together by their own form and weight - without mortar.

Cornice: Horizontal, decorative molding which crowns or finishes a building or a part of a building.

Cross: A Latin cross has a long staff and two short crossing arms. A Greek cross has four arms of equal length. The shape of the cross recalls the body of Christ on the cross.

Crossing: The junction where the four arms of a cruciform cross intersect.

Crucifix: A cross with an image of the crucified Christ.

Cruciform: In the form of a **cross**.

Cupola: A small, most often domed, structure located atop a roof, dome, or tower, which provides interior lighting, air and/or ornamentation, and can be used as a lookout.

D

Dharma: In Buddhism, the teachings of the Way (to Enlightenment,) believed to be the cosmic truth.



Glossary (cont.)

Diocese: The territory of a jurisdiction of a Bishop. If a diocese is considered to be important either because of its history or size, it is called an Archdiocese.

Dojo: In Buddhism, the group meditation halls in which **zazen**, **kinhin** and ceremony are practiced. See also **Zendo**.

Dome: A hemispherical roof or ceiling, the hollow upper-half of a sphere.

Dossal: An ecclesiastical ornamented cloth or tapestry that hangs behind the altar in a church.

E

Eaves: The lower edge of the roof that projects over the side of the building.

Emblem: An object, device, symbol, design or figure used to suggest an identifying mark or something that cannot be pictured. A landscape can be seen as a national emblem.

Entablature: the superstructure of moldings and bands, which lie horizontally above columns, resting on their capitals. Entablatures are major elements of **classical architecture**, and are commonly divided into the architrave (the supporting member carried from column to column, pier or wall immediately above), the frieze (an unmolded strip that may or may not be ornamented), and the **cornice** (the projecting member below the pediment).

Eternal Light: A continuously burning lamp in front of the ark in a synagogue, also called **Ner Tamid**.

Eucharist: The celebration of the **Sacrament of Communion**, as it was done by Jesus Christ and his twelve apostles during the Last Supper, before his death by crucifixion. Can also denoted the physical materials: bread and wine, used in the Sacrament. Some Orthodox and Catholic Christians believe that this is the body and blood of Christ, converted as such during a process called **transubstantiation**, other mostly Protestant denominations believe that these materials are representative of Christ.

F

Feng-shui: An ancient Chinese system of aesthetic in which the placement and design of temples, grave sites, homes, and even whole cities (in China) is planned to guarantee alignment with natural forces. Feng-shui uses the forces of heaven and earth to improve life.

Flèche: A small roof spire placed on the ridge of a church or cathedral roof.

Flying Buttress: A buttress attached by a half arm to support a wall. They are considered a hallmark of **Gothic Architecture** but also used by the Byzantines and in **Romanesque architecture**.

G

Garbhagriha: A small, unlit shrine in a Hindu temple, where the **icon** of the primary deity resides.



Glossary (cont.)

Garden: An enclosed space used for growing flowers, fruit or vegetables. A garden is usually tamed and idyllic, and can be used as a sanctuary amidst hostile nature or urban life.

Garth: An open courtyard that is usually surrounded by a cloister.

Gassho: A bow performed to express gratitude, greeting or prayer in the Buddhist traditions. It is executed by putting one's palms together with the fingers and thumbs aligned, keeping both elbows close to the body and the hands at mid-chest or heart level. In this formation, one then bows. **Gassho** is performed upon entering a Buddhist sanctuary toward the shrine or altar area.

Georgian style: An architectural style popular in England during the reigns of first three king Georges (1714-1820). The style is classical and relies on symmetry, solid proportions, and classical details from ancient Greece and Rome, such as columns, ornate frames around doorways and lunette, semicircular transom windows – especially above the main entry.

Gente De Razon: From Spanish, translated literally as “people of reason.” In Spanish colonial times, the term refers generally to non-Indians or Indians that had become assimilated and carries the implication of being Christian.

Gothic Architecture: A style of architecture prevalent in Western Europe during the 13th to 15th Centuries, the medieval period, characterized by pointed arches, pointed vaults, buttresses, stained-glass windows, tracery, large rose windows, and sculpture with medieval inspiration.

Gothic Revival: A style of architecture that began in the 1740s in England. Used mainly for universities and ecclesiastical structures, Gothic Revival architecture shares features with the Gothic style, such as pointed arches, buttresses, and stained-glass windows. However, there is a difference in construction between Gothic Architecture and Gothic Revival; **Carpenter's Gothic** resembles Gothic decoration, but is not actually built according to medieval Gothic stone construction principles and is often differentiated from **Stonemason's Gothic**, which is built according to historic Gothic construction principles.

Greek Revival Style: A style of architecture which imitates the buildings of ancient Greece. It is usually characterized by a **portico** in the front, and a roof ridge running from front to back. Usually constructed using Platonic solids such as rectangles, squares and triangular forms. Glass windows are usually clear.

Grotto: An artificial structure made to resemble a natural cave. Grottos date back to Greek mythology and were used in the Italian Renaissance.

N

Han: A wooden board used in Zen monasteries or Dojos/centers, struck to announce meditation times at sunrise and sunset.

Haram: A sanctuary within a **mosque**. Can also mean holy site.

Henge: A type of neolithic art work in which upright, large stones or posts are set in a circle. An example is Stonehenge.



Glossary (cont.)

Heritage Landscape: A landscape that is seen to have a long cultural history and is concerned with historical and cultural influences.

Hogan: A sacred home for Navajo Native Americans who practice traditional religion. Though traditionally round or cone shaped, they are often square now. The door often faces the east to welcome good fortune and wealth. Most modern families no longer live in a **Hogan**, but they still must have one for ceremonies.

Horno: Spanish word for oven. As used by Native Americans, it is a traditional outdoor, mud adobe built oven. Horno came to the Native Americans by way of Spanish colonists, but originated in the Middle East

I

Icons: Religious artwork, two-dimensional artistic images of saints. Found primarily in Greek Orthodox churches.

Iconography: The painting of icons in the Byzantine and Orthodox Christian tradition, painted by a religious artist known as an iconographer.

Iconostasis (Icon Screen): A screen or wall covered with icons or religious paintings, separating the nave from the sanctuary in a Christian Orthodox church. The term can also refer to a portable icon stand that can be placed anywhere in a church.

Imam: The leader of prayer in a **mosque** – can be any adult male who leads prayers during congregational worship.

J

Jami: The Islamic congregation.

Jihad: A religious duty of Muslims referring to three types of struggles: an internal struggle to maintain faith, the struggle to improve Muslim society, or the struggle of a holy war.

Ju'mmah: A congregational prayer that Muslims hold every Friday, just after noon, and is recited at a central **mosque**.

K

Keystone: A central stone placed at the apex of an arch to lock the rest of the stones into place.

Kinhin: A form of moving Zen meditation, like zazen, only practiced while walking. It takes place between extended periods of sitting meditation.

Kiva: A circular chamber, built wholly or partly underground, and entered from the top via a ladder. Used by Pueblo Indians in the Southwest States for religious rites.



Glossary (cont.)

L

Landmark: A highly visible element in a landscape. Used to orient a viewer in a space, includes anything that is easily recognizable, such as a monument, building, or other structure.

The term is also used to designate places with historical significance, giving them particular protection against destruction as defined by a city or state.

Lantern: A small, glazed structure on top of a roof or dome with windows to let in natural skylight.

Lectern: An elevated reading stand used to read the Torah in Synagogues or the Bible in churches.

M

Magen David: “Star of David” a six-pointed star associated with Judaism, but also used by Christians in religious architecture.

Madrasa: A Muslim training college, a school of theology and law associated with a **mosque**.

Masjid: Arabic word for **mosque**.

Meeting: The Quaker Society of Friends term for a worship service.

Megalith: A massive stone used in prehistoric cultures (Megalithic) for constructing monuments.

Menorah: A seven-branched candelabra. Often placed on the **bimah**, or raised area for the pulpit, in a synagogue or temple.

Mesa: From Spanish. An elevated area of land with a flat top and steep sides.

Mezuzah: A piece of parchment inscribed on both sides with a special Hebrew verse, which completes the Jewish prayer Shema Yisrael. The parchment is enclosed in a container and attached to the doorpost of a Jewish house or civic building, in fulfillment of religious law.

Mihrab: The central prayer niche in a **mosque** indicating the direction of Mecca, or **Qibla** as this is the direction, which Muslims should face while praying.

Milagro: A religious folk charm common in Mexico and among Hispanic Americans. Usually representing a physical aspect of the body that needs healing, they are placed or fastened to the image of the Virgin, saint, shrine or other place of worship in order to strengthen the petition or to give thanks that the prayer has been answered.

Minaret: In Islamic architecture, a tall, slim tower from which the *muezzin* delivers the daily call to prayer.

Minbar: The high pulpit of a mosque.



Glossary (cont.)

Minyan: The minimum number of men who must be present (which is ten), in order to hold certain Jewish religious services, such as public prayer.

Mission Revival Style Architecture: A style of architecture common in the American Southwest and California, which draws inspiration from the early Spanish missions when those regions were part of Mexico and prior to that, Spanish colonies. Features include broad, wide walls with little decoration and few windows, low and wide eaves, and low-pitched clay tile roofs. The structures are made of **adobe** bricks and covered with plaster to protect from the elements.

Moorish Revival style: An exotic revival style of synagogue characterized by horseshoe or keyhole-shaped arches. Recalling Turkish architectural style, the buildings are grand and embellished and are meant to recall the period when Judaism flourished in Muslim Iberia, especially the area near Cordova.

Mosaic: Decorative surfaces formed by small pieces of glass and/or stone tiles set into a cement or grout base.

Mountain: The symbolic importance of the geographical feature, mountain, is the symbolism of spiritual loftiness, generosity and the eternal nature of life. Reaching up into the sky, a mountain is the place where heaven and earth meet. In this sense, a mountain could be seen as a natural *axis mundi*.

Muezzin: The official at a mosque who delivers the call to prayer five times daily by voice.

Mussala: An open-air place for communal prayer in a mosque.

N

Namaz: The formal ritual prayer in Islam, which has prescribed conditions, procedures and times.

Narthex: The entrance or lobby of a church, either an indoor vestibule separated from the church by a screen or a door, or outside as a porch.

Nave: The part of a house of worship where the congregation stands or sits, usually the center aisle. Traditionally located west of the **crossing**.

Ner Tamid: A continuously burning lamp in front of the ark in a synagogue, also called an **Eternal Light**.

New Testament: The second major division of the Christian Bible, the New Testament is comprised of Scriptures written in the time of the early Christian church. It comprises four Gospels: the Acts of the Apostles, 21 Epistles, and the Apocalyptic Revelations of Saint John.

Niche: A recess in a wall, pier, or other surface, designed to hold a specific statue or other object.

Nirvana: In Buddhism, the state of being free from suffering and which marks the extinction of the worldly illusions and passions.



Glossary (cont.)

O

Obelisk: A tall, tapering, four-sided, usually monolithic stone pillar ending in a pyramid shape.

Oculus: Any round or oval window or opening, usually in the ceiling or roof of a space, for example on the top of a dome. The most famous use is the open oculus atop the Pantheon in Rome.

Onion dome: A dome characterized by its resemblance to the shape of a large onion resting on its top. Usually associated with Russian, Byzantine or Orthodox architecture.

P

Pagan: A follower of a nature-worshipping religion, or one who has not been converted to the current dominant views of a society.

Palimpsest: refers to a text that has been written over an older text, while traces of the original still show through. Before paper, the primary material used for both sacred and secular texts was vellum or parchment. Made from calfskin, vellum was valuable and took a long time to prepare. By scraping it clean, the vellum could be used again. Used in an architectural or archeological sense, the term can be applied to cities, and how the previous plan or design for structures reveals itself through the contemporary layout.

Palisade: A steel or wooden fence used as a barrier, composed of long stakes driven into the earth one adjacent the other.

Palladian window: A large round-arched central window surrounded by lower rectangular window, a style popular in the early 18th century Europe. Named after the Venetian architect Andrea Palladio (1508-1580.)

Parapet: A low protective wall used as a barricade, usually located at the edge of a roof.

Park: A public garden designed for recreational use. Parks are a result of a human desire to contact with nature.

Patio: A square, open-air court that provides a quiet and sheltered space, usually in a residential context.

Pavilion: A free standing structure located outside near a main building. Usually it is used for relaxation or pleasure.

Pediment: A wide low-pitched, triangular gable on top of a colonnade or division of a façade, which acts as a finish to the end of a sloping roof. Can also act as an ornamental feature located above window or door openings.

Pilaster: A flat, rectangular column projecting just slightly from a wall and used for decoration, rather than support.

Pinnacle: A turret or small spire rising from the roof or other base structure, the highest and terminating feature.

Plaza: An open public area around which governmental and religious buildings are arranged to form a square or rectangle, within a city or town. Usually centrally located.



Glossary (cont.)

Podium: A raised platform where announcements are made or where the Scripture is read. Also refers to a continuous pedestal or base on which a building, especially a temple, is built.

Portal: A doorway or entry opening and its surrounding architectural details and composition. Can also mean any other kind of opening or passageway from one place to another.

Portico: A substantial porch, or entrance, with a roof supported by columns, usually in front of a doorway. In a classical temple, the portico occupies the whole facade.

Public Space: A space accessible to everyone, usually maintained and sometimes supervised by the governing civic authority.

Pulpit: The speaking stand in a church from which the pastor delivers the sermon.

Q

Qiblah, or Quibla: The correct direction, alignment towards **Mecca**, to which the **Imam**, or prayer leader, and toward which all Muslims completing obligatory prayers face while praying in a **mosque** or elsewhere.

Qur'an or Quar'an: Islam's central religious text. It is also known as The Recitation. Consists of 114 chapters of **suras** and total of 6,000 verses. Believed to have been divinely revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by the Angel Jibrail or Archangel Gabriel over the course of 22 years from 610 to 632 C.E.

R

Reinforced Concrete: Concrete is relatively weak in tension, so steel reinforcement bars (re-bar) are inserted to help the concrete bear weight.

Reliquary: An object displaying a relic of a saint.

Refectory: The dining hall.

Renaissance Revival style: Architecture based on the styles of the Italian Renaissance which recalls styles that are neither Gothic nor Grecian, but characterized by original Renaissance motifs such as rusticated masonry and quoins, windows framed by architraves and doors crowned by pediments and entablatures. The revival style occurred during the 19th century and the original Renaissance during the 16th century.

Reredos: an altar screen in a church usually richly decorated and placed on or near the **chancel** wall, behind the altar.

Reserved Sacrament: Bread that has been used in the sacrament of Communion, and considered blessed, is then reserved for further use and treated with special significance because it is considered representative of (Protestant) or actually (Catholic) the body and blood of Jesus Christ.



Glossary (cont.)

Retablo: An altar screen, providing elaborate architectural support for paintings and/or religious sculpture or artwork usually behind an altar against a wall. A requirement for every colonial baroque Mexican church. Can also be called *retable*, **reredos**, or altarpiece.

Romanesque Revival Style: Architecture usually characterized by round arches, apsidal chancels, a dome, clear glass, a bell tower, and wheel windows. The original Romanesque or Norman style of architecture predominated in Europe roughly from the sixth century until the 12th Century, and the revival took place in the 19th Century.

Rose window: A circular window with tracery radiating from its center. Characteristic of Gothic and Gothic revival architecture.

Roshi: The Zen Master, a person who has received Transmission from a known Buddhist teacher. Provides spiritual guidance to a Zen Buddhist congregation.

S

Sacristan: An officer in charge of care of the sacristy and its property. Duties also include tasks relating to its maintenance or management.

Sacristy: A room usually attached to the church with direct access to the sanctuary. Vestments, books, and sacred vessels are kept here, and priests prepared and robed for services in this room.

Sanctuary: The part of the church reserved for the clergy. It is usually separated from the congregation by a low railing. It is the most sacred part of the church and contains the main altar. More generally, a sanctuary can refer to a place of psychic or spiritual safety, where religious observances are performed, and which reproduces the universe in its essence.

Sala De Profundis: From Spanish. A room in the *convento*, similar to a chapel, where the congregants can meet or meditate.

Samu: work practice, a dynamic expression of Zen practice. Includes cleaning, manual labor, maintenance of the dojo and living area. Because *samu* brings the fruit of formal practice into daily life, it is a vital part of Zen training.

Santo: From the Spanish. Can be translated as “saint,” “saintly,” or “holy.” A *santo* can also refer to a painted or wooden image of a saint, common in Mexico and parts of the Southwestern United States.

Sesshin: Japanese for “touching the heart-mind.” Refers to an intensive meditation retreat held in Zen centers or monasteries, which can last up to a week, or even longer. During a *sesshin*, participants keep silence and devote themselves to meditation. They only take short breaks to chant, rest or tend to work around the monastery.

Shrine: A special chapel dedicated to the worship of a particular saint. Shrines exist in many places of worship and faith traditions, representing specific deities and/or saints.



Glossary (cont.)

Site: A location of a building or town. A site is more than a place, it is not merely the space a thing occupies, but also the full context and connotation of the area, including biological, social and psychological elements.

Sotocoro: A vestibule or area under the choir gallery.

Square: An open space or area, usually at the intersection of two or more streets.

Stations of the Cross: the fourteen depictions of specific scenes from Jesus Christ's final hours, known as "The Passion" leading up to his crucifixion, death and resurrection. Originating from a pilgrimage to the site of these scenes Jerusalem, the walk past each of the stations is also known as the *Via Dolorosa*. A fifteenth station, not traditionally part of the stations, represents Christ's resurrection, is sometimes included in churches.

Stucco: A fine plaster used for covering and coating walls, ceilings, and floors, and for making decorations.

Surah (or sura): chapter of the **Qur'an**, they range from 3 to 286 verses in length.

Sutra: In Buddhism, the sutra refers mostly to canonical scriptures, many of which are regarded as records of the oral teachings of Gautama Buddha.

Sweat Lodge: A special sauna-like lodge used by some Native Americans for ceremonial purposes. Water is poured over hot stones placed on the interior to create steam. As those inside perspire, they undergo cleansing and purification and even enter a state of altered consciousness leading to insight and connection with the divine.

T

Tabernacle: A cupboard or a case attached to the altar, which holds the consecrated host and wine of the Blessed sacrament (body and blood of Christ). It is usually lined and decorated both on the interior and exterior with images and symbols.

Terra-Cotta: "Baked earth" in Italian. A hard-fired clay used for such things as pottery, tiles and architectural ornaments. It is reddish-brown in color when unglazed.

Terrace: An open, level area. A terrace can be seen as the extension of a building, from which views can be observed.

Tetramorph: The image of an angel, a lion, an ox, and an eagle used to symbolize the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Torah: The first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Tracery: The decorative stone elements that generally support the glass in Gothic-style windows.

Transept: The area comprised of the arms of the cross in a cruciform church, crossing the central approach to the altar (the nave).



Glossary (cont.)

Transubstantiation: refers to the process of change during which the bread and wine of the Eucharist are converted into the substance of the Body and Blood respectively of Christ, during the **Sacrament of Communion**. Part of the Orthodox and Catholic doctrinal beliefs, and that of some other Christian denominations.

Triforium: an **arcade** of columns or a series of windows located between the **nave** and the **clerestory**, usually in a Gothic Cathedral

Truss: A structural support frame composed of one or more triangular forms.

Turret: A small tower usually placed at the corners of a large structure, such as a medieval castle.

Tympanum: The carved and decorated, semi-circular or triangular, space above the main entrance of a building

V

Vatican II: The Second Vatican Council, an ecumenical council of Christian unity, convened by Pope John XXIII in Rome from 1962 – 1965. This marked the Catholic churches intent to integrate modern human experience with Christian dogma. Architectural changes included the priest facing the congregation, instead

Vault: An arched stone or brick ceiling or roof.

Vestry: A room attached to the chancel of a church, used for the storage of sacred objects and vestments. Usually accessible only to the clergy and laypeople who take care of the church. Up until the 19th century, **Vestry** was also the standard term for what would today usually be called a parochial church council.

Vigil light: A light that hangs beside the church tabernacle and burns if the tabernacle contains Reserved Sacrament or to symbolize the presence of the Holy Sacrament.

Visita: From Spanish. A village or chapel that was visited by a priest from the *cabecera*, main church of a mission district in North America.

W

Wheel window: A large round window with spokes radiating from a central opening or circle. They are characteristic of Romanesque architecture, the architectural style of medieval Europe characterized by semi-circular arches, and Romanesque Revival of the 19th century.

Wicca: A Neo-Pagan religion based on the powers of nature and responsibility to care for the environment. Their beliefs incorporate a central mother goddess deity and practice some benign witchcraft and herbal magic. Often referred to as modern day witches.

Wren-Gibbs style: Named for two famous English architects, Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723) and James Gibbs (1683-1774) who designed two London churches: St. Paul's Cathedral and St. Martins in the Fields, respectively. The style is usually characterized by the combination of a classical portico or porch with a tower and steeple. The tower is usually built into the church, on the roof, centered on the façade with the main entrance at its base.



Glossary (cont.)

Z

Zabuton: A “sitting mat” upon which the round *zafu* cushion is usually placed during meditation. They cushion the feet, ankles, knees and legs during meditation. Usually used by Zen Buddhists during *zazen* meditation

Zafu: A round cushion used during meditation, primarily for kneeling. It is usually seen on top of a *zabuton*, a larger cushion, used to cushion the legs. Usually used by Zen Buddhists during *zazen* meditation

Zazen: A seated type of Zen meditation intended to calm the body and mind. It is performed to help the individual experience insight and ultimately gain enlightenment.

Zendo: A meditation hall in Zen Buddhism.



Appendix A

Thanks to the Pluralism Project at Harvard University for allowing the adaptation of the online links and resources. For the complete list, visit www.pluralism.org/resources

* cooperating organization for *God in America*

Interfaith

*Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions

70 East Lake Street, Suite 205

Chicago, IL 60601

312.629.2990

www.parliamentofreligions.org

*Interfaith Alliance

1212 New York Ave, NW, Suite 1250

Washington, DC 20005

202.238.3300

www.interfaithalliance.org

Institute of Interfaith Dialogue

9301 W. Bellfort Ave.

Houston, TX 77031

713.974.4443

www.interfaithdialog.org

*Institute on Religion and Public Policy

500 North Washington Street

Alexandria, VA 22314

703.888.1700

www.religionandpolicy.org

North American Interfaith Network

www.nain.org

Religions for Peace-USA

777 United Nations Plaza, 9th Floor

New York, NY 10017

212.338.9140

www.rfpusa.org

*Sacred Space International

19 S. LaSalle St. #604

Chicago, IL 60603

312.580.1050

www.sacredspaceinternational.org

United Religions Initiative

P.O. Box 29242

San Francisco, CA 94129

415.561.2300

www.uri.org

Research Organizations

American Academy of Religion

25 Houston Mill RD NE STE 300

Atlanta, GA 30329-4205

404.727.3049

<http://www.aarweb.org/>



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The Association of Religion Data Archives

Department of Sociology
 The Pennsylvania State University
 211 Oswald Tower
 University Park, PA 16802-6207
 814.865.6258
www.thearda.com

Center for Engaged Religious Pluralism

Saint Mary's College of California
 316 Galileo Hall
 Moraga, CA 94575
 925.631.4061
<http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/schools/school-of-liberal-arts/centers-and-institutes/engaged-pluralism/>

Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement

Center for Religion and Civic Culture
 University of Southern California
 825 Bloom Walk, ACB 439
 Los Angeles, CA 90089-1481
 213.740.6900
<http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/engagement/>

The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center

555 Pennsylvania Ave.
 Washington, DC 20001
 202.292.6288
<http://www.freedomforum.org>

The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life

1615 L Street, NW Suite 700
 Washington, DC 20036-5610
 202.419.4550
<http://pewforum.org/>

Religious Research Association

618 SW 2nd Avenue
 Galva, IL 61434-1912
 309.932.2727
<http://rra.hartsem.edu/>

Society for the Scientific Study of Religion

Indiana University - Purdue
 University Indianapolis: Center for the Study of
 Religion and American Culture
 Cavanaugh Hall 417
 425 University Blvd
 Indianapolis, IN 46202-5140
 317.278.6491
<http://www.ssrweb.org/>

Tannenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding

254 W. 31st St, 7th Floor
 New York, NY 10001
 212.967.7707
<https://www.tanenbaum.org/>

Media and Communications**Auburn Media**

Auburn Theological Seminary
 3041 Broadway
 New York, NY 10027
 212.662.4315
<http://www.auburnseminary.org/>

Interreligious Dialogue

<http://irdialogue.org>



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Islamic Networks Group

3031 Tisch Way, Suite 950
 San Jose, CA 95128
<http://www.ing.org>

Religious & Ethics Newsweekly

450 West 33rd St
 New York, NY 10001
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/>

Religious News Service

1930 18th Street, NW Suite B2
 Washington, DC 20009
 202.463.8777
<http://www.religionnews.com>

Religious Newswriters Association

30 Neff Annex
 School of Journalism
 University of Missouri
 Columbia, MO 65211-2600
 573.882.9257
<http://www.rna.org/>

Religious Diversity News

The Pluralism Project
 Harvard University
 2 Arrow Street, 4th floor Cambridge, MA 02138
 617.496.2481
<http://www.pluralism.org/news/index/filter:intl>

Trans Missions: Knight Chair in Media and Religion

USC Annenberg School for Communication
 3502 Watt Way #332b
 Los Angeles, CA 90089-0281
 213.821.5388
<http://uscmmediareligion.org/>

World Faith News

<http://www.wfn.org/>

Education**Council on Islamic Education**

100055 Slater Ave., Suite 250
 Fountain Valley, CA 92708
 714.839.2929
<http://www.cie.org>

Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education

88 Broad St, 6th Floor
 Boston, MA 02110
 617.367.0001
<http://www.peje.org/>

Sikh Council on Religion and Education

2446 Reddie Dr., Suite 14
 Silver Springs, MD 20902
 301.946.2800
<http://www.sikhcouncilusa.org>

Melton Research Center for Jewish Education

3080 Broadway
 New York, NY 10027
 212-678-8000
http://www.jtsa.edu/William_Davidson_Graduate_School_of_Jewish_Education/Melton_Research_Center.xml

Campus**Campus Crusade for Christ International**

100 Lake Hart Drive
 Orlando, FL 32832
 888.278.7233
<http://www.ccci.org/>



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Catholic Campus Ministry Association

1118 Pendleton St., Suite 300
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
513.842.0167
<http://www.ccmanet.org>

Cherry Hill Seminary

Distance Education for Professional Pagan Ministry
P.O. Box 5405
Columbia, SC 29250-5405
888.503.4131
<http://cherryhillseminary.org/>

Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life

Charles and Lynn Schusterman International Center
Arthur and Rochelle Belfer Building
800 Eighth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3724
202.449.6500
<http://www.hillel.org/>

Muslim Students Association

<http://www.msanational.org/>

Native American Law Students Association

<http://nationalnalsa.org/>

Secular Students Association

PO Box 2371
Columbus, OH 43216
614.441.9588
<http://www.secularstudents.org>

Young Jains of America

213.863.4831
<http://yja.org>

Advocacy**American Jewish Congress**

115 East 57 St, Suite 11
New York, NY 10022
212.879.4500
<http://www.ajcongress.org>

Bahá'í

<http://www.bahai.org/>

Buddhist Peace Fellowship

PO Box 3470
Berkeley, CA 94703
510.655.6169
<http://www.bpf.org/>

Hindu American Foundation

5268G Nicholson Lane #164
Kensington, MD 20895
301.770.7835
<http://www.hinduamericanfoundation.org/>

The Muslim American Society

1325 G Street NW Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
202.552.7414
<http://muslimamericansociety.org>

Native American Rights Fund

1506 Broadway
Boulder, CO 80302-6296
303.447.8760
<http://www.narf.org>



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National Council of Churches

National Council of Churches

475 Riverside Drive

\New York, NY 10115

212-870-2227

<http://www.nccusa.org>

Our Freedom: Pagan Civil Rights Coalition

<http://www.ourfreedomcoalition.org/>

Secular Coalition for America

P.O. Box 66096

Washington, DC 20035-6096

202.299.1091

<http://www.secular.org>

