

## **Pilgrims worship**

This section gives you some material for worship. You can add to it, or miss things out as suit your congregation, but it is hoped that with the material from the previous weeks, plus the suggestions here you will be able to produce a service that is of interest and relevance to your congregation.

### **Introduction**

Today we are looking at Pilgrimages. What is a pilgrimage? The Oxford English Dictionary says it is a journey to a place of particular interest or significance. It also says that from the literary world it is a view of life as a journey, an obvious reference to Pilgrims Progress written by John Bunyan. So today we are going to look at both places that people make pilgrimages to, and also at our spiritual journeys through life. But before we do, let's sing a rousing hymn – Guide me oh thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim through this baron land.

### **First hymn – Guide me oh, Though Great Jehovah**

#### **Pilgrimages in other religions**

People in many religions make pilgrimages. Maybe the most well known is from the religion of Islam, where every Muslim is expected to visit Mecca at least once in a their life. Mecca is the birth place of Mohammed and also the site of Mohammed's first revelation of the Quran. Mohammed was the founder of the Islamic faith and set out the rules for all Muslims to live by in the Quran.

Every year, over 15 million muslims visit Mecca. Many of them do this during a time known as the Hajj, which means pilgrimage. This is in the twelve month of the Muslim calendar called Dhu al Hijjah.

Another famous pilgrimage is from the Hindu religion and is in four parts. Collectively known as Char Dham, it actually involves visiting four different places in different parts of India. They are situated in the North, South, East and West of India and are all very different.

#### **Activity – word search**

Produce a large version of the word search on activity sheet 1 and invite members of the congregation to come out when they see one of the words and point them out. You could have the word search projected on a screen, and a smaller version available for them to mark the words they find on.

Rather than talking about the different religions and pilgrimages before doing the word search, you may prefer to talk about them as people find them in the word search. You could even have something written for each word and ask the person who finds the word to read it out.

### **Second hymn – Moses I know you're the man**

#### **Places visited by Christians around the world.**

If one or more of your church members have been on a pilgrimage to the holy land or anywhere else, ask them to tell the church about it. If you have a projector you could show any photographs they might have. If you don't have anyone who can share their experiences, use the words provided under 'words for use in worship', ideally read by different voices. These are actual accounts of people who have been to the holy land. You can download photographs for use from the affiliated area of Pilots web site.

Talk about places visited by Christian pilgrims. Have names hidden around the room for people to find and fit into words on the screen. You can make up your own paragraph, or you can use the one below. The words in blue should be left out.

'Christians often visit [pilgrimage](#) sites around the world. Probably the most popular area is the [Holy Land](#). This is the area that Jesus lived in. Many pilgrimages involve [long walks](#), such as the walk from St Jean-Pied-du-Port to [Santiago](#). At the end of the journey people visit the [tomb of St James](#). Another popular place to visit is Lourdes in [France](#). This is a place where miraculous [healings](#) are said to take place. Finally, many people visit Rome, which is the home of the [Pope](#).'

### **Prayer**

Lord we give thanks for the great variety of places around the world that we can visit as Christians. Places that remind us of the great things you have done, and the many people who have dedicated their lives to you. Help us to remember at all times of the great variety you have given us in this world.

### **Lords prayer**

### **Collection**

### **Third hymn – Will you come and follow me if I but call your name**

Whilst visiting places like the holy land can be great spiritual experiences, and help us picture what life was like for Jesus much better, the cost of doing this can be prohibitive. But there are pilgrimages we can experience more easily within the UK. Many people go on pilgrimages to places such as Iona, Holy Island and Canterbury Cathedral.

At this point, if you can think of a place that is fairly local to you, it would be good to talk about it and perhaps share some photographs with the congregation. If not, use the material from week 3 to tell the congregation about popular pilgrimages in Britain. Use photos if you have a projector.

There are many more local places that people go on pilgrimages to, and even non-religious people can feel the benefits of a pilgrimage.

If you have the technology, show the Tony Robinson video about visiting a tree known as Majestic: <https://vimeo.com/190484844>

### **Prayer**

Lord we give thanks for the many great places to visit here in Britain. We give thanks for the wide variety of buildings, landscapes and experiences we can have in our local area. We give thanks for the rich history that our country has, and the many lessons about life that we can learn from it. Help us to see you in everything.

Amen.

### **Fourth hymn – One more step along the world I go**

Talk about Pilgrims Progress and the spiritual side of pilgrimages, using the notes from week 4, or from your own research or knowledge.

If you have technology available, you could show this short trailer advertising a musical version of Pilgrims Progress which is available on You Tube, released in 2017.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISfiC\\_gY7xY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISfiC_gY7xY)

**Activity** – if you have time, play a short version of The Game of Life, followed by a brief discussion on the points raised in the notes.

**Prayer**

Lord we give thanks for great writers like John Bunyan who can teach us how to live our lives to the benefit of ourselves and those around us through the words they have put into their books. We thank you that we can enjoy stories that teach us things, and that through these we can become better people. We ask for your help to become more like you as we journey through life.

Amen.

Lets close our worship by joining together to sing John Bunyan's great hymn – To be a Pilgrim

**Closing hymn – To be a pilgrim**

As a blessing, the prayer from week 4 can be used.

**Alternative hymns:**

- We are marching in the light of God
- I want to walk with Jesus Christ
- Follow me, follow me

## **Pilgrims worship**

This section gives you some material for worship. You can add to it, or miss things out as suit your congregation, but it is hoped that with the material from the previous weeks, plus the suggestions here you will be able to produce a service that is of interest and relevance to your congregation.

### **Introduction**

Today we are looking at Pilgrimages. What is a pilgrimage? The Oxford English Dictionary says it is a journey to a place of particular interest or significance. It also says that from the literary world it is a view of life as a journey, an obvious reference to Pilgrims Progress written by John Bunyan. So today we are going to look at both places that people make pilgrimages to, and also at our spiritual journeys through life. But before we do, let's sing a rousing hymn – Guide me oh thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim through this baron land.

### **First hymn – Guide me oh, Though Great Jehovah**

#### **Pilgrimages in other religions**

People in many religions make pilgrimages. Maybe the most well known is from the religion of Islam, where every Muslim is expected to visit Mecca at least once in a their life. Mecca is the birth place of Mohammed and also the site of Mohammed's first revelation of the Quran. Mohammed was the founder of the Islamic faith and set out the rules for all Muslims to live by in the Quran.

Every year, over 15 million muslims visit Mecca. Many of them do this during a time known as the Hajj, which means pilgrimage. This is in the twelve month of the Muslim calendar called Dhu al Hijjah.

Another famous pilgrimage is from the Hindu religion and is in four parts. Collectively known as Char Dham, it actually involves visiting four different places in different parts of India. They are situated in the North, South, East and West of India and are all very different.

#### **Activity – word search**

Produce a large version of the word search on activity sheet 1 and invite members of the congregation to come out when they see one of the words and point them out. You could have the word search projected on a screen, and a smaller version available for them to mark the words they find on.

Rather than talking about the different religions and pilgrimages before doing the word search, you may prefer to talk about them as people find them in the word search. You could even have something written for each word and ask the person who finds the word to read it out.

### **Second hymn – Moses I know you're the man**

#### **Places visited by Christians around the world.**

If one or more of your church members have been on a pilgrimage to the holy land or anywhere else, ask them to tell the church about it. If you have a projector you could show any photographs they might have. If you don't have anyone who can share their experiences, use the words provided under 'words for use in worship', ideally read by different voices. These are actual accounts of people who have been to the holy land. You can download photographs for use from the affiliated area of Pilots web site.

Talk about places visited by Christian pilgrims. Have names hidden around the room for people to find and fit into words on the screen. You can make up your own paragraph, or you can use the one below. The words in blue should be left out.

'Christians often visit [pilgrimage](#) sites around the world. Probably the most popular area is the [Holy Land](#). This is the area that Jesus lived in. Many pilgrimages involve [long walks](#), such as the walk from St Jean-Pied-du-Port to [Santiago](#). At the end of the journey people visit the [tomb of St James](#). Another popular place to visit is Lourdes in [France](#). This is a place where miraculous [healings](#) are said to take place. Finally, many people visit Rome, which is the home of the [Pope](#).'

### **Prayer**

Lord we give thanks for the great variety of places around the world that we can visit as Christians. Places that remind us of the great things you have done, and the many people who have dedicated their lives to you. Help us to remember at all times of the great variety you have given us in this world.

### **Lords prayer**

### **Collection**

### **Third hymn – Will you come and follow me if I but call your name**

Whilst visiting places like the holy land can be great spiritual experiences, and help us picture what life was like for Jesus much better, the cost of doing this can be prohibitive. But there are pilgrimages we can experience more easily within the UK. Many people go on pilgrimages to places such as Iona, Holy Island and Canterbury Cathedral.

At this point, if you can think of a place that is fairly local to you, it would be good to talk about it and perhaps share some photographs with the congregation. If not, use the material from week 3 to tell the congregation about popular pilgrimages in Britain. Use photos if you have a projector.

There are many more local places that people go on pilgrimages to, and even non-religious people can feel the benefits of a pilgrimage.

If you have the technology, show the Tony Robinson video about visiting a tree known as Majestic: <https://vimeo.com/190484844>

### **Prayer**

Lord we give thanks for the many great places to visit here in Britain. We give thanks for the wide variety of buildings, landscapes and experiences we can have in our local area. We give thanks for the rich history that our country has, and the many lessons about life that we can learn from it. Help us to see you in everything.

Amen.

### **Fourth hymn – One more step along the world I go**

Talk about Pilgrims Progress and the spiritual side of pilgrimages, using the notes from week 4, or from your own research or knowledge.

If you have technology available, you could show this short trailer advertising a musical version of Pilgrims Progress which is available on You Tube, released in 2017.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISfiC\\_gY7xY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISfiC_gY7xY)

**Activity** – if you have time, play a short version of The Game of Life, followed by a brief discussion on the points raised in the notes.

### **Prayer**

Lord we give thanks for great writers like John Bunyan who can teach us how to live our lives to the benefit of ourselves and those around us through the words they have put into their books. We thank you that we can enjoy stories that teach us things, and that through these we can become better people. We ask for your help to become more like you as we journey through life.

Amen.

Lets close our worship by joining together to sing John Bunyan's great hymn – To be a Pilgrim

### **Closing hymn – To be a pilgrim**

As a blessing, the prayer from week 4 can be used.

### **Alternative hymns:**

- We are marching in the light of God
- I want to walk with Jesus Christ
- Follow me, follow me

### **Words for use in worship**

A pilgrimage to the Holy Land is always an amazing experience. To relive the story of Jesus, in the locations where it happened, is truly faith-enhancing. Even though many of the holy sites have churches built over them, even though there's no guarantee that these sites are in the actual place where something from the Gospels happened, even though there might be competing sites for the same event, we know things happened somewhere nearby, and faith and imagination do the rest.

But you're never far away from the politics of the region. To enter Bethlehem you have to go through the apartheid wall (my words – the official term is "Separation Barrier"). In the Palestinian territories you see good roads which the locals aren't permitted to use – only the illegal Israeli settlers. You hear that Christians are leaving the country in droves, and worry that soon there might not be any native Christians left in the land of Jesus.

So you return home understanding more of the "then" and the "now". And you return home with the desire to join the Psalmist in praying for the peace of Jerusalem, and to do something about it yourself.

For many a Holy Land trip is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Here are some testimonies from some of those who went for the first time in September 2016.

**Andrew:** The pilgrimage to the Holy Land has reinforced my faith. The sites that we visited, the churches we looked around meant so much, that I now think I understand why the Holy Land is so special. To tour with a group of like minded people made it all so special.

**Jayne:** It was such an amazing experience. It truly bought the pages of the bible to life and so much more!

**Tony:** Following in the footsteps of Jesus was an amazing experience for me and it brought to life the story of His ministry and suffering. At the time, and many times since, it has caused me to reflect on the events of 2,000 years ago. When I now read the Bible, I have a picture in my mind of what I am reading. It was valuable being in the company of fellow Christians particularly those from our Church. I enjoyed the gospel readings at each holy site. I know that

buildings are only bricks and mortar but I thought the richness of the architecture of the churches and the wonderful and symbolic paintings, statues and mosaics created by previous generations to venerate those places was inspiring. Unforgettable! I also enjoyed travelling in such an historical and culturally rich part of the world and seeing first hand some of the current political issues, but that is another story.

**Edith:** Going on pilgrimage to the Holy Land has brought the Bible vividly to life for me. I know for myself now that the places are real, not just story book places with lovely names, and I can now properly picture in my mind the landscapes, the river Jordan, the wilderness, the olive groves, the great walled city of Jerusalem, the gently lapping Sea of Galilee ... around which Jesus walked, preached, lived, died. And if the places are real, that can only add weight and authenticity to the words and actions of Jesus in those places. I know now how the geography works, the distances between biblical sites, how beautiful or how wild and daunting they appear. I know the heat and cool of Israel, the smells, the good local food, the plants (the pomegranates, the mustard seeds, the Christ thorn), the sounds of crowded markets and the stillness of the lakeside, and it is very special to think that Jesus experienced these same sensations and scenes in the same landscape in his time. It is a kind of shared experience with Jesus; we know his country a little now, we know a little more of how and where he lived, and so we feel we can know him a little better to as a result of the pilgrimage.