

## Religion in Architecture

*Lesson plan written by Erica Luetzow-Coward*

**Overview** In this lesson, students will explore and compare major religious landmarks in Senegal. Students will also investigate how a building's purpose can reflect artistic or design choices and how architecture and cultural practices can reflect or affect each other.

### Essential Questions

- How can art express cultural values or ideas?
- How are belief systems represented through architecture or art?
- How does purpose affect art or the design of a building?

**Intended Grade Level** K-2

**Intended Content Areas** Social Studies

### Standard Alignment with NC Standards

K.B.1.1 Identify cultural practices in local communities and around the world.

K.B.1.2 Compare cultural practices of people in local communities and around the world.

1 B.1.1 Identify cultural practices and traditions in local communities and places around the world.

1 B.1.3 Explain how the artistic expressions of diverse people and cultures contribute to communities around the world.

2.B.1.1 Identify the various values and beliefs of diverse cultures that have shaped American identity.

I.1.2 Recognize a compelling question with prompting and support.

I.1.3 Explain why or how a compelling question is important to a topic or issue.

I.1.6 Demonstrate an understanding of facts, opinions, and other details in sources.

### Materials

- Picture books, such as [In My Mosque](#) by M.O. Yuksel or Hena Khan's [Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns](#) or [Crescent Moons and Pointed Minarets](#)
- [Lesson Resource Slides for Classroom Use](#)
- [Architecture vocabulary handout](#)
- [Overview of Islam for children](#)
- Drawing paper, crayons, blocks

**Suggested Length of Time** One 45-60 minute class, with additional days as needed to complete drawings/make comparisons

## Procedures

- “In your community, people may have many different values, beliefs, cultural practices, and traditions.” What are some holidays that you celebrate or your neighbors or friends celebrate?
- “Different communities around the world have different beliefs and traditions. For some people their religion is an important part of their identity. There are many religions in the world, but there are a few that are more common: Christianity (people who follow this are called Christians, they worship in a church); Judaism (people who follow this are Jewish, synagogue); and Islam (people who follow this are called Muslims, mosque).”
- Show a picture of a mosque in your community if possible or use the provided resource slide.
- Brief intro to Islam, highlighting the term *mosque*.
  - A very brief discussion of Islam is included in the Resource Slides.
  - The vast majority of Senegalese identify as Muslim, with a very small minority identifying as Roman Catholic.
  - Consider reading picture books (a few recommended ones listed above in resources) to introduce some basic tenets or terminology relating to Islam. [Youtube video of “In My Mosque” by M.O. Yuskel](#)
- Today we will be looking at some places of worship in Senegal: Massalikoul Djinane Mosque and the Our Lady of Victories Cathedral. [Here is an infographic of images to explore](#). As students share observations, fill out a [double bubble thinking map](#) of the cathedral and the mosque or a [tree map](#) for the buildings to make observations concrete. Have students identify shapes and different architectural features (setting, “shapes” used, introducing [architectural terms](#) as appropriate).
- “Buildings have functions. The function of a mosque or a church or a synagogue is to be a place for people to gather to worship together.” Give students building blocks or paper to draw on and task them with building a structure that meets a certain function (an ice cream store, a place where kids can play, a secret clubhouse etc). Ask, “can you tell from the outside what happens inside? Why or why not?”
- After students share their drawings or block creations, refer back to the images of the mosques and cathedrals. Ask, “Based on the architecture, how can we tell what goes on in this building?” (Size, minarets, domes, windows, decorations, etc) How do you know that it isn’t a hospital? A school? A store?