

## Religion in Japan

### Let's Visit a Shrine and Temple: Video Activities

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#### Learning Objectives:

- Students will learn about the two main religions in Japan, Shinto and Buddhism.
- They will become familiar with what can be seen at both shrines and temples and some of the customs associated with visiting them.

#### Learning Outcomes:

- By the end of the lesson, students will be able to answer questions about Shinto and shrines and Buddhism and temples.
- Students will make an ema board typically seen at shrines in Japan.

#### Curriculum Links:

- Religious education for KS2
- Promoting British values by learning about other religions and fostering mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs

#### Keywords:

Shinto	Japan's own religion	torii	gate (symbol of Shinto)
Buddhism	Religion introduced to Japan through India and China	ema	wooden board which shrine visitors write wishes on
jinja	shrine in Japanese	komainu	lion dogs
otera	temple in Japanese	omikuji	fortune
kami	Shinto gods		

#### Resources:

Video: [Let's Visit a Shrine and a Temple](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZZhjbGPjRA) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZZhjbGPjRA)

Presentation: Religion in Japan

Worksheet: Shrines and Temples

Template: Ema board

Teacher's Background Notes

#### Additional Resources:

Worksheet: Write an Omikuji Fortune

Lesson: [Obon Festival](https://www.japansociety.org.uk/resource?resource=48) (https://www.japansociety.org.uk/resource?resource=48)

Lesson: [7-5-3 Festival](https://www.japansociety.org.uk/resource?resource=75) (https://www.japansociety.org.uk/resource?resource=75)

#### Loan Resources:

Ema (included in the [activity chest](#))

## Task 1

- Use the presentation to introduce the topic of religion in Japan. Refer to the teacher's background notes for additional information.
- Play students the short video about Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples. Older students can jot down notes or you can set questions for them to answer as they watch.
- Ask some questions to check their understanding and confirm the most important points. You may prefer to continue with the presentation and ask questions as you go.

**Suggested Questions** *Students may need to re-watch clips before answering – see the timecodes.*

- What are the 2 main religions in Japan? *Shinto and Buddhism*
- What is the place of worship associated with Shinto called? *A shrine, jinja in Japanese*
- What is the place of worship associated with Buddhism called? *A temple, otera in Japanese*
- What can you see at a shrine? *torii gate, shimenawa ropes, ema boards, omikuji fortunes, etc.) / What can you see at a temple? statues, sanmon gate, bell, incense burner, etc.*
- What looks different to other religious buildings you've been to or seen?
- When might people go to shrines or temples? *For special occasions or festivals*
- What are the gods called in Shinto? *Kami*
- How many times does the woman in the video bow and clap her hands when praying at the shrine? *2 bows and 2 claps. See '1.38.*
- How does she pray differently at the temple? *No claps. See '3.47*
- What was the difference between the two statues of the komainu, lion dogs? *One had its mouth open and the other was closed. See '1.18*

**Estimated Time: 10 minutes**

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## Task 2

- Show the rest of the images in the presentation, discussing as a class as you go through.
- There is a fill in the blanks activity on slides 21 and 22. You can go through it as a class or there is a copy on the shrines and temples worksheet for students to complete individually (or as an additional review).

**Estimated Time: 5-10 minutes**

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### Task 3

- Confirm that students remember what an ema is, the small wooden board used to write wishes and prayers on that is hung up at the shrine. (See '2.02, slide 23 and 24)
- Remind the students the kinds of things that people might wish for in Japan (good health, to pass a test, etc.) and then set the task of decorating an ema board with their own wish.
- Students can plan a draft of their wish using the Shrine and Temple worksheet. There is also an ema template for teachers to print on card. Students can make their own ema from scratch if you have more time. Cardboard makes a good base.

**Estimated Time: 20 minutes +**

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### Extension Activities

- Learn about the Buddhist festival of Obon, which is one of the most important festivals in Japan and takes place each year in August.
- Learn about the 7-5-3 Festival, a day when children in Japan aged 3, 5, and 7 visit a shrine and receive a blessing to wish for their continued health and good fortune.
- Make an omikuji box and ask the children to write omikuji fortunes to put in it. See slides 25-27 for examples and the Make an Omikuji worksheet.