


<h1>M</h1>	<h2>MEDITATION and prayer</h2>	<p>What's it all about? The value of silent spirituality Meditation and prayer are practised in many religions in slightly different ways, and by lots of people who don't go to holy buildings. Some Christians pray for healing, for example: can a prayer actually change anything? Like changing God's mind, for example? Can praying for healing make a difference?</p> <p>In Islam, 5 prayers every day are a way to show total commitment and devotion to God, following the example and teaching of the Prophet. Meditation is a bit different: there might not be anyone listening but focusing the mind on just one thing can bring calm and peace (it's hard: the Buddhists talk about the distractions of the 'monkey mind'!) They learn discipline to concentrate on meditation and on reducing suffering.</p> <p>Sikhs see prayer as a kind of shower for your mind. If you meditate, the mental dirt that builds up in your mind is washed clean. That's good to do every day. A different kind of space, and a powerful help? Lots of people say yes to that.</p> <p>Of course, this is a tiny introduction to prayer and meditation: much more can be said!</p>
	<p>For believers, answered prayer is good evidence for their faith in God. But for sceptics it can look like coincidences, and what about unanswered prayers?</p>	
<p>Which religions and beliefs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christians • Muslims • Hindus • Buddhists • Sikhs <p>Clip available here: www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/religious-education-ks3-a-z-of-religion-and-beliefs-m-is-for-meditation-and-prayer/z4fp382</p>	<p>Key Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main purposes of prayer and meditation in different religions? • Does prayer change anything? • What is the difference between meditation and prayer? • Why do so many billions of religious people find prayer and meditation valuable? • If you wanted to try out some spiritual practice yourself, what would you do? What would you hope for? 	<p>Classroom or homework task:</p> <p>A> Dr Peter Boelans ran an experiment in Mississippi in 2009 with people who were depressed. It involved them praying for an hour a day. All of them showed improved mental health, and it lasted – the improvement was still there after a year. Maybe ancient religions have always known what modern psychology is just discovering, that we need the space to pray and meditate if we are to live our best lives. What do you think?</p> <p>B> About 9% of Brits go to church in a month. But about 60% say they pray in some way or other. Why do you think people pray, but don't go to church or Mosque?</p> <p>C> 'Shower for your mind' 'Mental space' 'Talking to God' 'Talking to yourself' A waste of time' 'As useful as breathing' 'God's gift to humanity'. Put these 7 ideas about prayer on an opinion line – which do you most agree with, and disagree with? Say why.</p> <p>D> If you could ask God (if there is a God) three questions about meditating and praying, what would you ask? How do you think God might reply?</p> <p>Suggested outcomes: students can...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Give an informed account of ideas about prayer and meditation for themselves, using varied viewpoints. ▪ Give reasons for their views about the practices of meditation and prayer in different religions. ▪ Handle information and ideas effectively by analysing 'big ideas and big questions' about prayer.

M is for Meditation

Here are four reasons why people say meditation helps them. Give your comments in each one.

- A. "I need to meditate for my inner peace. 10 minutes a day helps me no end."

- B. "My meditation practice reminds me that I am a small being in a huge universe. It stops me thinking everything is all about me, and challenges my selfishness"

- C. "Meditating is a way to feel connected to God"

- D. "After I meditate, I can see the rest of my life clearly and in focus. It makes me a better person."

Write two sides of this argument:

Some people pray every day or every week, and say that it puts them in touch with God and helps them to live a good life. I think the arguments in favour of this include...

Some people never pray, and believe that it is a waste of time, and you are better off doing something practical. I think the arguments in favour of this include...

About 9% of Brits go to church in a month. But about 60% say they pray in some way or other. Why do you think people pray, but don't go to church or Mosque?

My three questions for God (if there is a God) about prayer:
1.

2.

3.

On another page, organise these 7 ideas about prayer into an opinion line, the one you agree with most at one end and the one you disagree with most at the other end. Say why you have written each idea in the pace you chose for it. Is prayer...

'A shower for your mind' **'Mental space'** **'Talking to God'** **'Talking to yourself'**
A waste of time' **'As useful as breathing'** **'God's gift to humanity'**