

Lesson 5: ST. BASIL’S CATHOLIC CHURCH (3611 Wilshire Blvd.) and WILSHIRE BOULEVARD TEMPLE (3663 Wilshire Blvd.)

- What You Need to Know:**
- Grade Level: All Levels
 - Curriculum Connections: English—Language Arts, History—Social Science
 - *Kids’ Guide* Correlation: Use this lesson in conjunction with pages 10–11 of the *Guide*. Also use it in conjunction with the *Sacred Spaces of Wilshire Boulevard: A Guide for Kids, by Kids* (downloadable from the “For Kids” page of www.curatingthecity.org). As students explore Wilshire Center, use this detailed comparison of St. Basil’s Catholic Church and Wilshire Boulevard Temple to lead students to a deeper understanding of sacred architecture, community change, and an appreciation of religious and cultural diversity in Los Angeles. This lesson is designed to supplement a class visit to these sacred spaces, where students can do first-hand observations. You can modify this activity to have students compare any two sacred structures or historic buildings.
 - Website Correlation: Go to “Explore the Blvd.” at www.curatingthecity.org. Use the neighborhood profile for the “Wilshire Center” section and building profiles for “St. Basil’s Catholic Church” and “Wilshire Boulevard Temple” for photos and background information. You can view other religious buildings on Wilshire by using “Sort By” or “Filter” at the bottom of any page.

- Focus Questions:**
- How are St. Basil’s Catholic Church and Wilshire Boulevard Temple similar and different?
 - What architectural elements do all sacred spaces share?
 - What do Wilshire’s sacred spaces tell us about how people worship in Los Angeles?

- Expected Learning Outcomes:**
- Students will be able to describe how St. Basil’s Catholic Church and Wilshire Boulevard Temple are similar and different.
 - Students will be able to identify some of the architectural elements of sacred spaces.
 - Students will be able to see how a building reflects larger community change.
 - Students will be able to explain that Los Angeles is home to people from many faiths and cultures.

Assessment: Write a paragraph/essay comparing and contrasting the architecture of St. Basil’s Catholic Church and Wilshire Boulevard Temple.

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Essential Vocabulary: | arch | modern |
| | Byzantine Revival | mosaic |
| | congregation | rose window |
| | dome | sacred |
| | | |

Materials: Lesson 5 worksheet
pencils
paper

PROCEDURE

Motivation: Distribute paper and pencils to students. Ask them to write freely for five minutes, and direct them to describe a place of worship. If clarification is needed, tell students to imagine a place where they might go to think about spiritual issues and practice religious traditions. Tell students to use specific images and details to elicit their ideas of what a church or temple should look like. Encourage students to share their responses with each other, and discuss the ways that students' ideas are similar and different. Tell the class that they will be looking closely at two places of worship on Wilshire Boulevard: St. Basil's Catholic Church and Wilshire Boulevard Temple.

Making Connections: Ask students to share their own experiences of visiting sacred spaces. What common elements have they noticed about the sacred spaces that they have visited? Encourage students to identify specific details as well as more intangible qualities, such as the feel or atmosphere of a space. In which sacred spaces did they feel most comfortable? Why?

Guided Instruction:

1. Distribute the Lesson 5 worksheet, and have students read the descriptive paragraphs about each space. Take time with students to identify key vocabulary in the passages: *arch*, *Byzantine Revival*, *congregation*, *dome*, *modern*, *mosaic*, *rose window*, and *sacred*. Use the photographs to show specific examples of the architectural terms.
2. When your class visits St. Basil's Catholic Church and Wilshire Boulevard Temple, have students bring along the compare/contrast grid so they can take notes on their observations. Encourage students to use specific language to describe what they see.
3. As you explore Wilshire Boulevard, direct students to look for additional places of worship. What kinds of structures do they see? What languages do they see on signs and notice boards in front of the sacred spaces? What can they conclude about the kinds of communities that worship on Wilshire?
4. Help students understand how the presence of sacred spaces on this part of Wilshire Boulevard reflects the growth of Los Angeles over the years. As the city grew from east to west, religious communities built places of worship near where people lived. Point out that as different ethnic groups have come to live in Los Angeles, additional places of worship have appeared on Wilshire to serve those communities.
5. Once you return to the classroom, direct students to create an essay that compares and contrasts St. Basil's Catholic Church and Wilshire Boulevard Temple. Depending on the grade level of your students, you can modify the complexity of this assignment. Younger students may be more successful focusing on the compare/contrast grid and writing a few summary sentences; older students may be capable of a multi-paragraph essay with a thesis statement and supporting details. In either case, encourage students to use the structure and sequence of the chart to help them organize their ideas effectively.

| | |
|---|---|
| Assessment: | Have students write compare/contrast essays about the architecture of St. Basil’s Catholic Church and Wilshire Boulevard Temple. |
| Reflection/ Critical Thinking: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did you feel when you entered these sacred spaces? In what ways did the architecture of these buildings help you to feel this way? 2. Think about St. Basil’s Catholic Church and Wilshire Boulevard Temple in comparison to other spaces where people gather for a common purpose, such as a shopping mall or Dodger Stadium. How are these public spaces different from the sacred spaces? 3. Why do you think there are so many different languages and religions represented on Wilshire Boulevard? What can you conclude about how the community has changed over the years? 4. Have you experienced other buildings like these, or are they unique to you? Does this contribute to their importance? Why should they be preserved? What would be lost if these buildings were lost? 5. Compare St. Basil’s Catholic Church and Wilshire Boulevard Temple to photographs of sacred spaces and famous architecture around the world, such as the Egyptian pyramids, the Taj Mahal, and Middle Eastern mosques. Invite students to identify the similarities and differences, and help students come to a deeper understanding of how architectural designers borrow architectural styles from different cultures and periods in history. |
| Enrichment Opportunities: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From <i>www.curatingthecity.org</i>, go to “For Kids” and download the Los Angeles Conservancy’s <i>Sacred Spaces of Wilshire Boulevard: A Guide for Kids, by Kids</i>. Extend your exploration of the sacred spaces of Wilshire by visiting other sanctuaries on the boulevard. 2. Have students choose two other sacred spaces in their own community to do a similar comparison. 3. In addition to English-language religious services on Wilshire, you can find services in Ethiopian, Korean, Spanish, and Tagalog. Challenge students to find out more about when, how, and why each ethnic group came to Los Angeles. 4. The Old Plaza Church, otherwise known as the Church of Our Lady the Queen of the Angels, can be found near Olvera Street. Have students explore this sacred space from the early days of Los Angeles, and encourage students to compare its architectural elements with those found in St. Basil’s Catholic Church and Wilshire Boulevard Temple. |
| Worksheet Answers: | Responses will vary. |
| California Standards: | <p><i>English-Language Arts (Writing):</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1.0 Students write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. 3.1.1 Create a single paragraph. 3.2.2 Write descriptions that use concrete sensory details to present and support unified impressions of things or experiences. 4.1.1 Select a focus, an organizational structure, and a point of view based upon purpose, audience, length, and format requirements. |

- 4.1.2 Create multiple-paragraph compositions.
- 4.1.3 Use traditional structures for conveying information (e.g., chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference, and posing and answering a question).
- 5.1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions.
- 5.1.6 Edit and revise manuscripts to improve the meaning and focus of writing by adding, deleting, consolidating, clarifying, and rearranging words and sentences.
- 5.2.3 Write research reports about important ideas, issues, or events by using the following guidelines:
 - a. Frame questions that direct the investigation.
 - b. Establish a controlling idea or topic.
 - c. Develop the topic with simple facts, details, examples, and explanations.
- 6.1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions.
- 6.1.6 Revise writing to improve the organization and consistency of ideas within and between paragraphs.
- 6.2.2 Write expository compositions (e.g., description, explanation, comparison and contrast, problem and solution).
- 7.1.1 Create an organizational structure that balances all aspects of the composition and uses effective transitions between sentences to unify important ideas.
- 7.1.2 Support all statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.
- 7.1.3 Use strategies of note taking, outlining, and summarizing to impose structure on composition.
- 7.2.4 Write persuasive compositions.
- 8.1.1 Create compositions that establish a controlling impression, have a coherent thesis, and end with a clear and well-supported conclusion.
- 8.1.2 Establish coherence within and among paragraphs through effective transitions, parallel structures, and similar writing techniques.
- 8.2.4 Write persuasive compositions.
- 9.1.1 Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing.
- 9.1.2 Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers, and the active rather than the passive voice.
- 9.2.3 Write expository compositions, including analytical essays and research reports.
- 11.1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the elements of discourse (e.g., purpose, speaker, audience, form) when completing narrative, expository, persuasive, or descriptive writing assignments.
- 11.1.3 Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained, persuasive, and sophisticated way and support them with precise and relevant examples.

History-Social Science:

- 2.2.4 Compare and contrast basic land use in urban, suburban, and rural environments in California.

- 3.3.3 Trace why their community was established, how individuals and families contributed to its founding and development, and how the community has changed over time, drawing on maps, photographs, oral histories, letters, newspapers, and other primary sources.
- 4.2.8 Discuss the period of Mexican rule in California and its attributes, including land grants, secularization of the missions, and the rise of the rancho economy.
- 4.4.3 Discuss immigration and migration to California between 1850 and 1900, including the diverse composition of those who came; the countries of origin and their relative locations; and conflicts and accords among the diverse groups (e.g., the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act).
- 6.2.5 Discuss the main features of Egyptian art and architecture.
- 6.7.8 Discuss the legacies of Roman art and architecture, technology and science, literature, language, and law.
- 7.2.2 Trace the origins of Islam and the life and teachings of Muhammad, including Islamic teachings on the connection with Judaism and Christianity.
- 8.12.7 Identify the new sources of large-scale immigration and the contributions of immigrants to the building of cities and the economy; explain the ways in which new social and economic patterns encouraged assimilation of newcomers into the mainstream amidst growing cultural diversity; and discuss the new wave of nativism.
- 11.2.0 Students analyze the relationship among the rise of industrialization, large-scale rural-to-urban migration, and massive immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe.
- 11.3.4 Discuss the expanding religious pluralism in the United States and California that resulted from large-scale immigration in the twentieth century.
- 12.2.1 Discuss the meaning and importance of each of the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and how each is secured (e.g., freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition, privacy).
- 12.3.3 Discuss the historical role of religion and religious diversity.

STUDENT WORKSHEET

Name _____

Wilshire Boulevard is full of sacred spaces – places where people gather to practice their religion. You can find many faiths and cultures represented as you walk along the boulevard. From ancient to modern architecture, you'll see buildings of all shapes and sizes. Read more below about two sacred spaces on Wilshire: St. Basil's Catholic Church and Wilshire Boulevard Temple.



Wilshire Boulevard Temple (Photo by Julius Shulman, © J. Paul Getty Trust, The Getty Research Institute)

Wilshire Boulevard Temple was built in 1929 in the Byzantine Revival style, an architectural style that includes details from Roman and Turkish architecture. From the outside, you can see the rounded dome of the temple. Look down (closely!) and you'll see the dome actually rests on an octagon base. The building is full of beautiful designs and elaborate windows, including a rose window with the Star of David in the middle.



St. Basil's Catholic Church (Photo by Anne Laskey)

St. Basil's Catholic Church was built in 1969, in the modern style. The architects used materials like concrete and focused on abstract shapes and designs. Take a careful look at the windows – unlike a traditional church, the stained glass does not show specific images or pictures. Let your eye follow the windows upward, and you'll see that the glass changes near the top and looks unfinished.

HELPFUL VOCABULARY.

Take a closer look at these words. They will help you to understand more as you explore St. Basil's Catholic Church and Wilshire Boulevard Temple.

arch: a curved structure for spanning an opening. Arches can be rounded or pointed.

Byzantine Revival: a style from the Byzantine Empire (400-1200) that blended Turkish and Roman architectural styles. Characteristics include domes, round arches, circular windows, and elaborate carvings and mosaics.

congregation: members of a church or temple.

dome: a half-sphere roof or ceiling. From the inside, a dome is concave (curved like a segment of the interior of a ball). From the outside, a dome is convex (like the outside of a ball).

modern: In the 1950s, some architects tried to create new architectural styles that did not copy from the past and that tried to avoid extra decorations. Modern churches try to express feelings and meanings through simplified, sometimes abstract shapes and forms.

mosaic: a picture made from small pieces of colored glass or tiles.

rose window: a round window with panes of stained glass resembling the petals of a rose.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST.

As you explore St. Basil's Catholic Church and Wilshire Boulevard Temple, observe closely and take detailed notes. Use this chart to guide you. When you have finished, use your notes to write an essay that describes how these two spaces are similar and different.

| | St. Basil's Catholic Church | Wilshire Boulevard Temple |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Does the building look older or newer? What clues did you use? | | |
| Materials | | |
| Windows | | |
| Statues | | |
| Domes/Spires | | |
| Rooflines | | |
| Entryways | | |
| Decoration | | |
| The "feel" of the building | | |