# **Disposition: Appreciating Beauty**

## **Lesson:** Three

Question/LO: How do flowers and Mandalas help religious people to appreciate the world around them? How do they enable people to worship God?

| **Dimension of learning** | **Activities** | **Resources** |
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| Learning about religious traditions and non-religious world-views | **Flowers**  How do flowers help religious people to appreciate the world around them? How do they enable people to worship God?  Introduce the following information to pupils and then either select the activity to complete (could be completed in groups) or create a carousel where pupils visit different ‘stations’ to complete activities.  Flowers are used in many religious traditions: as an offering to God; to celebrate God’s creation; to make the place of worship a brighter and sweeter smelling place.  The Arts Society sheets on Flowers and Plants contain useful information on this topic.  **Churches**  In many Churches, flowers arrangements are made and placed at the front of the church, as an offering, for the place to look and smell nice.  **Gurdwaras**  In Sikh places of worship, flowers are often placed on or near the raised platform, where the Guru Granth Sahib is kept.  **Mandirs**  In Hinduism flowers are used as a sign of respect and offered to deities. Very often on a puja tray, flowers might be part of the worship in the Mandir and at home. In many Mandirs, garlands are made to decorate the shrine of the deities.  Rangoli patterns are an ancient Hindu art form using dry flour, rice, petals or stones. The purpose is to welcome Hindu deities as Rangoli patterns are often placed by the front doors of homes, and mandirs. They are very often flower shaped.  Mendhi patterns are used during times of celebration (typically during weddings and Diwali). Henna paste is applied to hands and feet in natural and flowery patterns. The paste is then washed off and the dye lasts for about a week afterwards.  Ask pupils to use the outline of their hand to create their own mendhi pattern. Remember if you were using henna paste – it would be on your hand for a week or longer, so think carefully with their design!  **Viharas**  In Buddhism flowers are used as a sign of respect and offered to the Buddha. In other places of worship the flower offerings and decorations will be replaced when they start to wilt and die, so that they are fresh. In a Vihara, the flower offerings may well be left to die, wither and rot on the shrine… Why do you think that this might be? (Think back to the Four Noble Truth – Y4 Autumn 2).  Lotus flowers are also important within Buddhism as symbols of purity and awakening; where the roots in the mud are seen to develop the whole flower reaching the sky above.  **Mosques**  As living creatures with souls cannot be depicted within Islam, flowers and plants are important as they can be used within artwork, textiles calligraphy.  There are many floral and geometric designs in prayer mats. Watch the following film of a contemporary prayer mat designer talking about his designs.  Use the information to produce your own prayer mat designs.  **Mandalas**  ‘Mandala’ is from the Sanskrit word meaning ‘circle’. Mandalas are used by some Buddhists and Hindus. They are intricate circle patterns to aid concentration while meditating. They can be painted, made from coloured sands or grains. They are images that support the concentration of the mind. By concentring on the mandala, the person meditating is encouraged to forget other things and think and enter into the mandala. Many mandalas are made up of concentric circles with each ring symbolising a step or attribute that the person meditating should go through in order to progress further.  Explain the following symbols used in creating a mandala:   * Flames symbolise negative concerns that need to be burnt before entering the mandala. These are found in the outer ring * Gateways show the directions of North, South, East and West and are guarded to keep out negative influences * Lotus petals at the centre stand for purity and also the peace of mind which comes from meditating. * Colours are also important: white – purity, red for the Buddha’s compassion, blue for the far-reaching truth and teachings of the Buddha   Ask pupils with these guidelines and symbols create their own mandala. | <https://birmingham-faith-visits.theartssociety.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/Blue%204%20-%20Flowers%20and%20Plants.pdf>  Google ‘church flowers’ to find lots of examples  Sikh wedding photographer’s website, but many flowers in situ: <https://shaadiwish.com/blog/2017/09/18/real-gurudwara-weddings/>  <https://grottepastenaecollepardo.org>  <https://whatsapplover.com/best-rangoli-designs-diwali-2017-free-hand-rangoli-colors/>  With paste and after paste examples:  <http://mehndi9.blogspot.com/2015/07/awesome-indian-mehndi-designs-pics.html>  look in clip art for outlines of hands or pupils could draw around their own  <http://satisfiedbuddhist.blogspot.com/2010/09/buddhist-altars-creativity-in-offerings.html>  https://www.learnreligions.com/the-symbol-of-the-lotus-449957  <https://islamicartssociety.org/islamic-arts/>  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaI-Lu3i-_0>  Google ‘Buddhist Mandalas’ to see some examples |
| Learning from faith and non-religious world-views | Discuss, how does beauty in the world help me to see a purpose in the world around me? | n/a |
| Learning to discern | Question: Are there times when it is not right to focus on beauty? Where is beauty? Is it only things that can be seen?  There different ways of ‘seeing’ beauty. These can change throughout history, with different cultures. You may want to use the PETA campaign against the use of fur on cat walks as an example – here the beauty is seen by the animal wearing its fur, rather than a model wearing it to look beautiful. Be mindful of the naked images and the violence to animals that appears in some of the links. You’ll need to be selective with what you show.  OR  The fact that pieces of art are sold for thousands and sometimes millions of pounds – How else could this money be used? Is it right to focus on beauty in this way? (Research into diseases, support homeless people etc…). | <https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/peta-naked-fur-campaign-ends/index.html>  <https://www.peta.org/issues/animals-used-for-clothing/fur/>  <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/336503403379297504/> |