Rituals and Belonging

Compare ceremonies across religious traditions and life events.

SS24.HG.7b "Compare and contrast ceremonies based on religious traditions in a variety of cultures, including marriages, funerals, and coming-of-age rituals."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline a purpose shared by two ceremonies, circle ritual actions that differ, and number the wedding, funeral, and coming-of-age sections 1, 2, and 3 in the margin. Use your marks to compare what the ceremonies share and how they differ.

Ceremonies at Life's Turning Points

1 At a wedding in a synagogue, a Jewish couple may stand beneath a chuppah, a canopy that marks the home they will build. A rabbi may recite blessings, and the couple may exchange rings. In many Hindu weddings, the couple circles a sacred fire and takes seven steps, often with promises about their shared life. These ceremonies use different sacred objects and actions, but both bring loved ones together to witness a new partnership. Customs vary within each tradition. For example, Jewish and Hindu families may choose different songs, languages, or clothing without changing the ceremony's central purpose.

2 When a Muslim dies, members of the community often wash the body, wrap it in a plain shroud, and gather for a funeral prayer before burial. In many Muslim communities, burial follows as soon as practical. In many Hindu communities, relatives prepare the body, offer prayers, and arrange cremation; ashes may later be placed in a river. Both traditions invite family and community to honor the person who died. Yet the common practices of burial and cremation reflect different religious customs. Local laws, family choices, and circumstances can also affect how either funeral takes place.

3 Coming-of-age ceremonies also connect a young person with a religious community. In Jewish communities, a bar or bat mitzvah may include reading from the Torah and leading prayers. It celebrates a young person's new religious responsibilities, usually around age 12 or 13, depending on the community. In some Hindu communities, an upanayana includes receiving a sacred thread and learning a prayer from a teacher. It marks the start of a period of religious study. Both ceremonies involve learning and responsibility, but their ritual actions and rules about who participates differ among communities. Neither practice represents every Jewish or Hindu family.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the Jewish and Hindu weddings use different actions to serve a similar purpose?

2. What do the Muslim and Hindu funerals have in common, and what is one difference between them?

3. How do a bar or bat mitzvah and an upanayana both relate to religious learning? Give one ritual action that differs.

4. Compare the role of other people at a wedding and a coming-of-age ceremony in the passage. How do the ceremonies' purposes differ?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 90 word museum label comparing a wedding, a funeral, and a coming-of-age ceremony from the passage. Include one detail about each ceremony, a similarity shared by at least two, and a contrast that explains how their purposes differ.

ANSWER KEY

Rituals and Belonging

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HG.7b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline a purpose shared by two ceremonies, circle ritual actions that differ, and number the wedding, funeral, and coming-of-age sections 1, 2, and 3 in the margin. Use your marks to compare what the ceremonies share and how they differ. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the Jewish and Hindu weddings use different actions to serve a similar purpose?	**A Jewish couple may stand beneath a chuppah, while a Hindu couple may circle a sacred fire and take seven steps. Both ceremonies bring loved ones together to witness a new partnership.**
2	What do the Muslim and Hindu funerals have in common, and what is one difference between them?	**Both involve prayers and community members honoring the person who died. Muslim funerals commonly include burial, while Hindu funerals commonly include cremation.**
3	How do a bar or bat mitzvah and an upanayana both relate to religious learning? Give one ritual action that differs.	**Both connect a young person with religious learning and responsibility. A bar or bat mitzvah may include reading from the Torah, while an upanayana may include receiving a sacred thread and learning a prayer.**
4	Compare the role of other people at a wedding and a coming-of-age ceremony in the passage. How do the ceremonies' purposes differ?	**Loved ones witness a new partnership at a wedding. A coming-of-age ceremony connects a young person with a religious community and new responsibilities or study.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a Jewish wedding, a couple may stand beneath a chuppah as loved ones witness their partnership. At a Muslim funeral, the community gathers for prayer before burial. During an upanayana, a young person in some Hindu communities receives a sacred thread and begins religious study. All three can bring people together at an important turning point. Their purposes differ: the wedding recognizes a partnership, the funeral honors someone who has died, and the initiation begins religious learning. Each ceremony gives a community a way to mark change.

Accept other accurate details from the passage. Students should distinguish practices described as common or possible from practices followed by every family.