

Example by StudyDriver

Source: <https://studydriver.com/hindu-temple-in-the-woodlands/>

Hindu Temple in the Woodlands Example

I visited the Hindu temple in The Woodlands, while I was there a festival was going on for the Hindu holiday, Diwali. The outside of the temple was decorated with flags and colorful decorations. When I went in I saw many people dressed in traditional South Asian clothing, such as saris and lungis, but some people were also dressed in American clothing as well. For the festival there were multiple stalls which all depicted the Hindu culture displaying different gods that make up the religion. Most stalls had paintings or statues of the Hindu gods, others had accustomed South Asian clothing and food. There was also a main place outside that had a large statue of a god and people would go there and pray to or offer the statue a variety of snacks and drinks. The different statues represented different deities of the Hindu religion. I also took a tour of the temple while there was a service going on, before we entered we had to take off our shoes, everyone was sitting on the floor, behind the Hindu priest or at the different statues which represented different deities and were carefully placed around the room. We were also not allowed to take pictures inside the temple where the puja(prayer) was happening, as it was a standard rule in every Hindu temple. The Hindu priest sang a hymn, most likely from the Vedas, and followed it with some words, then everyone joined and put their hands together to sing the hymn. After they all got up rotated around the sacred statue in the temple and then offered the different gods food, water, and even

flowers. When it ended, there was also a dance/ceremony going on outside where children and adults dressed up and told a story with music and instruments. Though I didn't understand the dance or the music, everyone cheered and laughed while it was happening, which gave off a soothing vibe.

The service I attended was a different and new experience for me as a follower of Islam. In Islam there is only one god, Allah SWT, whom his followers pray to, unlike Hinduism which consists of millions of gods. When entering the place of worship there is a distinct difference between the scenery of each, both beautiful in their own way, Islamic mosques don't portray god through pictures/statues like Hindu temples, because Islam prohibits idolatry. When praying in a mosque men and women are separated, to allow devotees to possess a clear state of mind while praying to god, which is different to the ways of a Hindu temple. Also when Muslims start their prayers followers are in sync with the Imam (Islamic leader), until the prayer is over. Muslims also pray in the direction of the Kaaba, as compared to the Hindu temple where devotees pray towards the Murti, which is facing east, and while they offer prayers they face west.

There are a few similarities between Islam and Hinduism. Some similarities between the two consist of actions like removing shoes before entering the place of worship and sitting on the floor, these are considered a common form of respect in both religions. Both Hinduism and Islam have certain words/prayers that are recited and multiple hand/body gestures used during ceremony. The clothing that the followers wear when going into a temple or mosque are similar as well, in both religions men and women dress modestly and abjectly. The religious texts are also similar, the Vedas and Quran are both collections of holy words written that set a guideline for each religion, which are also read during each service.

My experience visiting the Hindu temple was a time of joyful observation. I learned many things that I was not exposed to in the past. I was surprised to see many similarities between the Islamic and Hindu services and the religions in general, but there were also a few key differences of course. Without this experience, I would have not been as knowledgeable as I am currently on the Hindu religion and practices.