

Shrines and Sukkots

The home corner in a KS1 classroom, (or its KS2 equivalent) can masquerade as many different places - a veterinary surgery, a greengrocers, a card shop, a kitchen - but have you ever tried using it to support your RE work?

METHOD

When you are constructing a home corner it is important that the pupils know not only what is in the corner but also why. Here are some variations on a theme to start you thinking:

(a) a Kosher Kitchen. If you are doing work on Judaism and the Jewish family why not turn your kitchen into a kosher kitchen? For this you will need two sets of all the main kitchen items, one for meat dishes, one for milk dishes, and these should be clearly differentiated (e.g. red and blue stickers). Make sure whoever uses the kitchen doesn't get them mixed up! Make a mezuzah for the doorpost. Perhaps plan some kosher menus together. Try and stock with kosher food packets.

(b) Are you fortunate enough to be able to put up a small house like structure in the corner of your classroom? You could make a **booth (sukkot)** for the Jewish festival of Succoth (Tabernacles). It is a shelter of branches constructed with gaps in the roof so that the family can live in it and see the stars through the roof (don't forget to make the stars too!). Hang (plastic) fruits from the roof beams. Tell the Exodus story.

(c) Set up a shrine. For a **Hindu Shrine** you need: murtis or pictures of some Hindu gods (these could be made by the pupils), a puja tray, offerings of flowers and food, a pot of water with a spoon, an incense stick, a bell, a pot of kumkum powder (you can improvise with red powder paint), a

lamp or candle. If you do not have a Hindu puja set in your school artefacts collection then you can improvise all of the above.

For a **Buddhist Shrine** you need a Buddha rupa or picture (place the rupa on a small dais), seven offering bowls (either empty or filled with water), an incense stick, flowers and a candle. You may choose to use the "shrine" for a worship simulation - see the sheet on simulations.

(d) For the ambitious amongst you, it is possible to "build" a **small scale building** with its religious furnishings either created out of card or drawn on to the side walls. Pupils should research the different type of buildings carefully. We have seen a small size Ely Cathedral taking up a corner of a Y5/Y6 classroom! Of course, if you haven't that much space, you could make a miniature model inside a large cardboard box instead!

(e) What about opening a **card shop**? This will require pupils to research appropriate artwork and greetings for festivals and rites of passage for the different faith communities in order to create the "stock".

POSSIBLE PITFALLS

Don't get carried away and lose sight of the RE amongst all the craftwork!

If you decide to create a mosque remember that Islam does not permit figurative art of any kind.

If you are creating a sacred building of any faith think carefully about the materials you are using e.g. a Torah scroll on the back of a roll of wall paper, or an altar which is very obviously a cornflake packet would be both insulting to a member of the faith community, and send a subversive message to your pupils about how the faith is valued.