

Living Religions Fieldwork Project

Participant Observation Research - Site Visit

1,000 word minimum (12 point, double-spaced)

Submit as a Word attachment via email to your instructor

Name your file with your last name, followed by a space, followed by “site visit” (e.g., Maaia site visit)

One submission per Researcher.

Due:

Attend a public, regularly scheduled religious service conducted at your research site. This kind of research is called “Participant Observation” because you are observing something in which you are also participating.

Write a report of at least 1,000 words describing what you observed when visiting your research site. Remember that you are writing this report for someone who wants to learn about this religion, but who is unable to do so firsthand.

Helpful Tips:

- Remember your “Skyscape-Mindscape” and use those same skills for noticing and describing outer details and inner thoughts and emotions
- Remember Smart’s phenomenology and 7 Dimensions – try and notice as many of those dimensions as you can.
- Use the materials on the back of this sheet to help you in assessing the congregation.
- Title your report :

Name of Congregation
Town, State
Date & Time of Visit
Your Name

- Required Supplementary Personal Reflection

Put this on a separate page and labeled “Supplementary Personal Response.” Although this is required, it is not assessed and is not included in the word count requirement. You don’t need to answer all the following guiding questions. Choose as many as you think appropriate to explain what you learned in doing the assignment. This is the time for you to sit back, think about the entire process, and figure out what you’ve gained from the experience. Reread your notes and your report. Which question was the most interesting, the most difficult, the most important, or the most intractable? What was easiest or hardest? Doing the visit? Writing up your notes? Writing the report? The bottom line here is to ask yourself what the key feature of the entire process was that best gives insight into what is fundamental to the experience of being a living human being. What did you learn from this process of analysis about yourself?

**Guide to Studying
Religious Congregations**

Size of Congregation

- 0-75 (10 percentile)
- 76-125 (20 percentile)
- 126-180 (30 percentile)
- 181-275 (40 percentile)
- 276-400 (50 percentile)
- 401-600 (60 percentile)
- 601-1,000 (70 percentile)
- 1,001-1,700 (80 percentile)
- 1,701-3,000 (90 percentile)
- More than 3,000

Length of Service

- Less than 30 minutes
- Around half an hour
- About an hour
- Significantly more than an hour

WORSHIP ACTIVITIES¹

- Adults jump/shout/dance spontaneously
- Announcements
- Applause
- Bowing
- Chanting
- Communion
- Dance Performed by Teens or Adults
- Discussions
- Donations
- Drums
- Electric guitar

¹ Adapted from Mark Chaves, *Congregations in America*

- Incense
- Kneeling
- Laughter
- Men and Women
- Separated or Together
- Organ
- People calling out ‘amen’
- People greet one another
- People other than the leader raising hands in praise
- People Speak/Read/Recite Together
- People speaking in tongues
- People testify/speak about religious experience
- People told of opportunities of political activities
- Performance by Paid Singers or other Performers
- Piano
- Processions
- Sacrifices to Deities
- Sermon/Speech
- Silent Prayer/Meditation
- Singing by Choir
- Singing by Congregation
- Singing by Soloist
- Skit or Play Performed by Teens or Adults
- Something specifically directed at children
- Special Announcements or Distinctions Directed to Visitors
- Taking off Shoes
- Teens speak/read/perform
- Visual Projection
- Equipment
- Written Program

**SOCIAL SERVICE
ACTIVITIES²**

- Cash to the Needy
- Clean highways or parks
- Clothing
- Community Safety
- Disaster Relief
- Domestic Violence
- Education (not religious education)
- Employment
- Ethnicity (Heritage or anti-racism)
- Family Support
- Food
- Fund Raising
- Habit for Humanity
- Health Programs
- Homelessness
- Household Support
- Housing/Shelter
- Immigration Support
- International Programs
- Job Training
- Prayer Requests
- Prison-related Programs
- Programs aimed at children or students
- Programs aimed specially at women or men
- Programs for the Elderly
- Recreation
- Social or Political Activism
- Substance Abuse
- Support for the Sick
- Tutoring or Mentoring

² Adapted from Mark Chaves, *Congregations in America*