Seven Dimensions of Religions
- Ninian Smart

1. The Practical and Ritual Dimension
2. The Experiential and Emotional Dimension
3. The Narrative Dimension
4. The Doctrinal and Philosophical Dimension
5. The Ethical and Legal Dimension
6. The Social and Institutional Dimension
7. The Material Dimension

physical forms in which a religion is embodied

a. Structures: churches, temples, synagogues.

b. Architecture, theology, religious practice are interconnected.
   i. Cathedral:
      nave and transept = A cross, merging heaven and earth, divine light.
   ii. Doctrine and theological debate embodied in architecture:
      simplicity of Cistercian, Calvinist churches (transcendent God).
   iii. How people build their homes and communities can reflect their religious worldview:
      Navajo village: map of the cosmos. Shrines, dwellings are organized according to four cardinal directions, points where spirit connects to the world of the living

c. Representations of divine beings
   i. Orthodox and Protestant Christianity:
      Icon: devotional painting, carving, or statue of holy figure. Debate over idolatry:
      worship of idols as divine. Rock, wall, relics:
      hair, bones, finger nails.
   ii. No representation of Allah in Islam.
      Representations tell us a great deal about a religion, more you know, the more you see: Tangkhas, Hindu and Buddhist

d. Ritual objects and substances:
   the physical objects used in religious ritual:
   i. Cross; Masks (South American); Scripture itself (Torah); Food.

e. Natural Features:
   sacred landmarks such as mountains, rivers, trees....
   i. Ganges River = a Hindu goddess, pure and purifying.
   ii. River Jordan: Baptism. Mount Sinai. Fujiyama

f. Sacred Cities:
   Banaras (death), Jerusalem, Mecca (birth place of Mh) Pilgrimage Sites.

Source: http://danbhai.com/wr/l01.htm