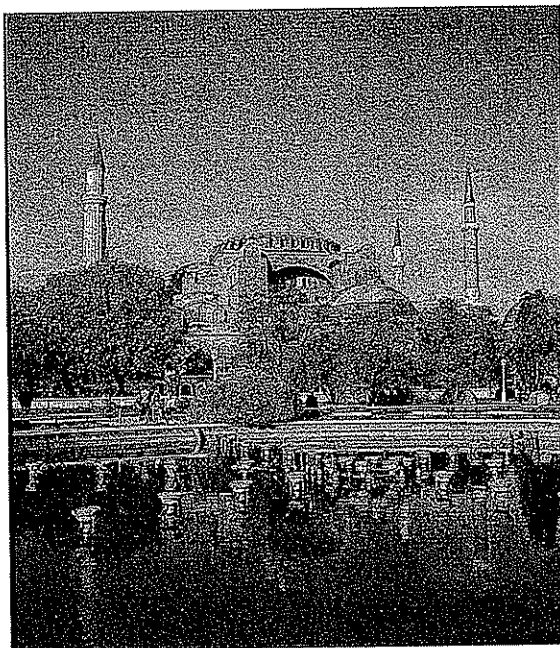




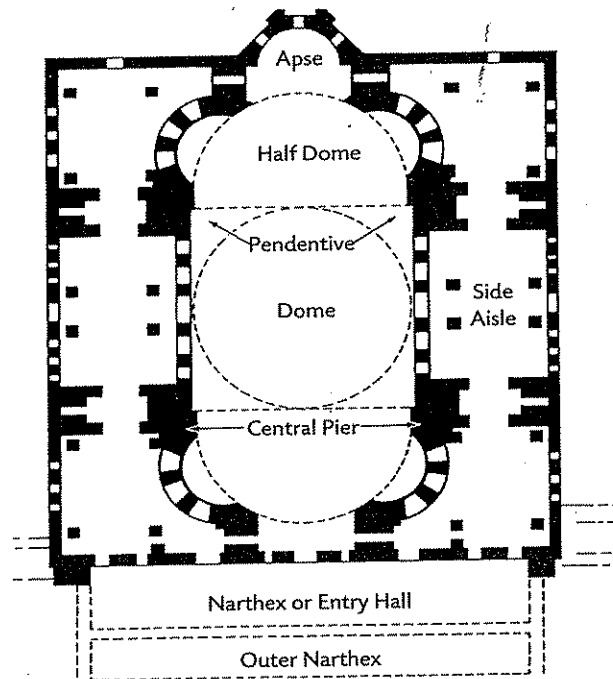
WORLD ART and MUSIC Activity 10

Hagia Sophia

Emperor Justinian wanted Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, to have the greatest building in the world. The result was Hagia Sophia (Church of the Holy Wisdom), which remains an architectural masterpiece 1,500 years later. Read the passage below about this Byzantine church, then answer the questions that follow.



Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey



Ground plan of Hagia Sophia

Most buildings are designed by architects. However, Emperor Justinian chose two Greek mathematicians to design Hagia Sophia. The resulting church, especially its huge dome, combines Greek balance and proportion with Roman engineering skills.

The church is a vast rectangle, measuring 102 feet (31 meters) by 265 feet (81 meters). In the center is a square area topped by a dome. At the front and back of the square are half circles topped by half domes. Along the other sides are aisles, separated from the central nave by pillars. The great central dome has a diameter of 102 feet (31 meters), and the nave rises to a height of 184 feet (56 meters). The dome rests on four corner supports. Since these "legs" hold up the dome, the walls underneath the arches aren't needed for support. Instead, they are made up of

columns and windows, which allow light to stream into the church's interior. According to a contemporary observer, the dome seems to float "like the radiant heavens."

The church's interior decoration had to be large and brightly colored so worshipers could see it from many feet away. The entire interior is therefore covered in colored marble and glowing golden mosaics. The mosaics illustrate stories from the Old Testament and from local history. One of the most famous mosaics is *The Virgin and Child with the Emperors Justinian and Constantine*. On the left side of the Virgin is Justinian, carrying a small church. On the right is Constantine, holding a small city. This symbolically shows that the Byzantine church and state are both in service to heaven.

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WORLD ART and MUSIC Activity 10

Reviewing the Selection

1. Describe the form of Hagia Sophia.

2. What was innovative about the dome?

Critical Thinking

3. **Making Inferences** Worshipers of the time had never been in such a large building. What elements of Hagia Sophia do you think made them feel welcome and comfortable?

4. **Predicting Consequences** Imagine that the mathematicians hired by Emperor Justinian had been unable to design a system of arches to hold up Hagia Sophia's huge dome. How do you think the design of the church would have been affected?
