

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

**Teacher's notes for
STORIES IN GLASS
The Three Trees**

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

PREPARING FOR A KEY STAGE 1 VISIT

Topic Material – The Tale of Three Trees

A traditional folk-tale

Three trees are growing on a hill, and each has a special ambition. One wishes to become a treasure chest and hold valuable treasure. The second desires to be a strong sailing ship, carrying kings over oceans. And the third simply wants to stay on the mountain and grow to be the tallest tree. The story looks at how the trees' ambitions are fulfilled.

Before most people could read and write they would learn their stories of the life of Jesus through pictures on church walls and in the stained glass windows.

In Rochester Cathedral the Lady Chapel has a set of windows that cover the story of Jesus from the annunciation to his mother, Mary, by the angel Gabriel, through to the ascension into heaven forty days after his resurrection at Easter.

Easter is the most important festival of the year for Christians, showing the love of God, who gave his only son to redeem Mankind, and the love of Jesus, who suffered and died for the sins of Mankind. His resurrection shows the power of God over death. And Christmas had to come first, because without the birth of Jesus he could not have died.

Using the windows to tell the story, we focus on your choice of either Christmas or the crucifixion and the resurrection.

Not only will the pupils learn about important facets of Christian belief, their visit will cover a number of curriculum areas which are outlined below.

As communication through means other than the written word is central to this visit it is suitable for pupils whose learning difficulties make reading and writing hard for them.

PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT

Your visit will incorporate a number of curriculum areas

Religious Education

History

Literacy

Art and Design

Design Technology

Citizenship

Careful preparation before you come to the cathedral greatly enhances the educational benefits obtained from your visit.

Preparing for the Religious Education element

- ❖ **Look at the Christmas story, told in Luke 2, and Matthew 2**
- ❖ **Focus on visits (Angel Gabriel to Mary, Mary to Elizabeth) and visitors (the shepherds and kings to Jesus in the stable)**
- ❖ **Discuss the how the feelings of the different participants in different situations (How did Mary feel when she was told that she would be Mother of God? What would it be like to arrive somewhere in winter and have nowhere to stay?)**
- ❖ **Talk about birth and new life (spring, animals, plants)**
- ❖ **Look at the Easter story, told in all four gospels**
- ❖ **Focus on sadness and happiness (relate to children's experience, e.g. lost and found)**
- ❖ **What symbols are associated with Easter**
- ❖ **Recap on spring and new life, birth and re-birth (plants grow again each year)**

Preparing for the History element

- ❖ **Make a timeline for Jesus**
- ❖ **Make a timeline for yourself**
- ❖ **What differences are there between how Jesus lived to how we live today (practicalities – no electricity, no piped water etc.)**

Preparing for the Literacy element

- ❖ **Discuss family festivities at special times of the year (Christmas, Easter, birthdays, Diwali, Chanukah etc.)**
- ❖ **Write a diary of a festive family gathering**
- ❖ **Make an invitation for a special gathering**

Preparing for the Art and Design element

- ❖ **Look at some pictures of art in churches**
- ❖ **Why were there pictures and stained glass windows in churches**
- ❖ **Make a picture to tell a story to someone who can't read**

Preparing for the Design Technology element

- ❖ **Find out about how stained glass windows were made**
- ❖ **Find examples of very old stained glass windows and modern stained glass windows**
- ❖ **See if there are any differences (colour, design)**

Preparing for Citizenship

- ❖ **Why is it important to take a census (why do we have class register)**
- ❖ **Talk about ambitions and aspirations (like the ambitions of the three trees)**

Background Information

RE - The Annunciation is covered in Luke 1:26 – 38 and the Nativity in Luke 2: 1 – 20 and Matthew 2: 1 – 12. There are Bible narratives of the Easter story in all four gospels – Matthew chapters 21 – 28, Mark chapters 11 – 16, Luke 19:28

– 48 and chapters 20 – 24, and John 11:55 – 57 and chapters 12 - 21. A children’s Bible, such as The New Light Children’s Bible, will provide easily understood versions of the gospel stories.

The Christmas narrative is familiar to most children, even those of non-Christian backgrounds, and is generally associated with pleasure because of the modern trend of present giving. It is worth touching on aspects such as a long journey in uncomfortable circumstances (Mary and Joseph having to go to Nazareth to register in the census) and maybe to compare the efforts many families make to be together at festive times. Also, look at the plight of homeless in relation to Mary and Joseph not being able to find a place at the inn.

The Easter narrative is much longer and more complicated, and, dealing with aspects of death, is, perhaps, more difficult to cover. A simple way to symbolise death and resurrection may be to use the death of plants in autumn and their re-emergence in spring.

Symbols of Easter include palm crosses (triumphant entry into Jerusalem), crucifix (death of Jesus), empty cross (resurrection), eggs (new life / spring). The word “Easter” comes from the Anglo-Saxon word “Oestre”, the goddess of the dawn, or new life.

History – The gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The stories were related orally at first, and later written down on clay tablets followed by papyrus scrolls. Finally, in about the 4th century, they were written on vellum. The word “bible” comes from “byblos” – Greek for “book”. Discuss the use of oral history (family stories told by parents and grandparents) and how the story might change over time with many re-tellings.

Literacy – Using a children’s Bible (The New Light Bible: Children’s Version, ISBN 0-304-68670-7, published by Hodder and Stoughton) look at the narratives mentioned above. The children’s version could be compared to a standard version, particularly to find archaic language.

Art and Design – Pictures (paintings and stained glass windows, nativity scenes, and Stations of the Cross in particular relating to Holy Week / Easter) existed in churches when the majority of people were unable to read. Through these they learned their stories of Christ.

Design Technology – Stained glass windows and wall paintings were an important way for those who could not read to learn Bible stories and stories of the life of Christ and of the saints. In England, at the time of the Reformation much church art was destroyed, as it was thought to be a distraction rather than an aid to prayer.

Citizenship – A census is taken every 10 years in the UK. Information gathered is used for all sorts of statistical purposes, as well as looking at

future needs (e.g. for schools and hospitals). It also shows how things have changed.

At Rochester cathedral the first fresco to be painted in an English cathedral for 800 years was completed in 2004. The technique of Fresco (“fresh” or wet) painting directly onto wet plaster so that the paint sinks right down into the wall, is different to that of mural or secco (“dry”) painting.

Background Research

Useful internet sites:-

History of the Bible – Medieval writing –	www.education.bl.uk/projects/bibles www.beaconlc.org/ctech/medieval/SCRIPT.HTM www.medievalwriting.50megs.com/writing.htm
Stained glass -	www.sgm.abelgratis.com/ www.agsa.org/history.html www.bbc.co.uk/history/culture
Fresco Painting	www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/6981/fresco.htm www.ikonsworld.com/fresco.html
Citizenship	www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/default.asp

Booklist:-

Medieval Cathedral	Fiona MacDonald Simon and Schuster 1991 ISBN 0-7500-0787-7
Medieval Monastery	Fiona MacDonald Simon and Schuster 1994 ISBN 0-7500-1415-6
Life in a Medieval Abbey	Tony McAleavy English Heritage ISBN 1-85074-592-7
Life in a Medieval City	Francis and Joseph Gies Harper Collins 1981 ISBN 0-06-090880-7
Life in a Medieval Village	Francis and Joseph Gies Harperperennial Library 1991 ISBN 0-06-092046-7
The Tale of the Three Trees	Re-told by Angel Elwell Hunt Lion Children’s Books ISBN 0-7459-4649-6
Cathedral	David Macaulay HarperCollins Children’s Books 1991 ISBN 0-00-192160-6
The Christian Faith and its Symbols	Jan Thompson Hodder and Stoughton 1996 ISBN 0-340-66379-0

Vocabulary List

CHURCH	CATHEDRAL	SYNAGOGUE	LADY CHAPEL
NAZARETH	JERUSALEM	GALILEE	MANGER
PASSOVER	STABLE	PROPHET	SABBATH
CRUCIFIXION	EASTER	RESURRECTION	ASCENSION
SCRIPTURE	BIBLE	PARABLE	CHRISTMAS
APOSTLE	DISCIPLE	PHARISEE	JUDAS
CAESAR	HEROD	PONTIUS PILATE	CENSUS
NATIVITY	GABRIEL	KINGS	SHEPHERDS

RE Writing Frames

Events

A major event in the life of Christ was
The main people involved were
The event is important to believers because
Believers remember this event today by

Stories

An important story in Christianity is
The part I remember best is
The story teaches that
It also teaches believers
The message in the story for me was

Visit to a place of worship

We visited the Cathedral
First we looked at
Then we saw
We also looked at
It was interesting to me because
I learnt that

General

I was puzzled about
I also wondered why
A question I would like answered is

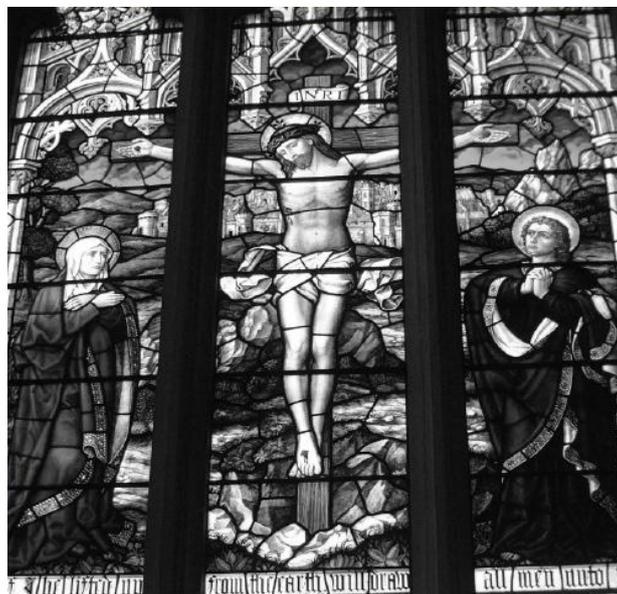
YOUR VISIT

Your visit will divide into sections

- ❖ Discussion of the need for stained glass windows and church art as a way of telling the story of the life of Jesus without using the written word
- ❖ Looking at the stories in the windows in the Lady Chapel
- ❖ Story telling – using the story The Tale of Three Trees (a traditional folk-tale, re-told by Angela Elwell Hunt, published by Lion Children’s Books, ISBN 0-7459-4649-6)
- ❖ Discussion about the above story
- ❖ Activity – designing a stained glass window based on any element of the story
- ❖ Sharing ideas on the design of the window and how to tell the story in pictures, giving story clues non-verbally
- ❖ Reviewing the whole story

The pupils will need clipboards and pencils. A template will be provided for the design session.

We also offer “mini-tours” for Key stage 1 visits. During the mini-tour we think about what it feels like being in the cathedral and why it is a special place. We visit important parts of the cathedral, explaining about chapels, altars, pictures and the names of different parts of the cathedral and furniture found there. We compare the cathedral to other places of worship, and show the special feature that makes this church a cathedral. A “mini-tour” greatly enhances the learning achieved in Stories in Glass, and covers much of QCA Unit 1F “What can we learn from visiting a church?” and 2D “Visiting a place of worship.”



CLASS-ROOM EXTENSION WORK

RE - Having learnt about the events of Christmas and / or Easter look at some of the religious festivals of other faiths that occur at about the same time. How do people celebrate the different festivals.

How do pupils of other faiths celebrate new life and what other faiths have celebrations in the springtime.

History – Look at the ways in which history was passed on before the majority of people could read / write and before the printing press made books more available to more people. Find out some family oral history.

Literacy – Write your own version of the events of a holiday period, using different genres (personal diary, newspaper article, letter to a friend etc.).

Art and Design – Complete the stained glass window design, and select colours for the window. Make sure you “tell the story” in the picture.

Design Technology – Make the window designs in materials such as coloured tissues, coloured acetates etc.



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