



'Northern Saints'

An RE cross-curricular topic for Key Stage 2

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'Northern Saints'

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Northern Saints' – an RE cross-curricular topic for KS2

About the topic

This scheme of work provides a series of classroom activities for teaching and learning about the 'Northern Saints', whose lives and thought shaped the early days of Christianity, both in these islands and across Europe. The different units give children the opportunity to learn something of their personal history, relate it to local geography and history, and develop a variety of artistic and literary responses - but it also allows for reflection on what it means to dedicate oneself to God, to a faith, or towards any other strong belief. In particular, this topic explores the themes of worship, pilgrimage, sacred places, religion, community, symbols and religious expression, and the role that beliefs can take in influencing personal moral decisions.



Please remember that Religious Education must have a contemporary relevance for pupils, even if it is based on a historical theme. This entails allowing the pupils to explore how the issues studied relate either to life in the modern 21st Century world, or their own lives. Each of the study units tries to do this, but you may need to craft the material further for it to achieve this 'resonance' with your pupils.

Prior learning

It is helpful if pupils have:

- talked about what it means to have a sense of 'calling' or dedication to a cause greater than themselves
- been made familiar with the local geography of the North-East, especially the locations of Holy Island, Durham Cathedral, Jarrow, Whitby, Tynemouth, Hexham Abbey, and Bamburgh castle. The island of Iona (on Scotland's West Coast) is also significant.
- been taught about the Roman occupation of Britain, including the building of Hadrian's Wall.

Future learning

Children could go on to:

- explore more stories about other Celtic saints, or similar figures from the history of Christianity or other world faiths.
- interview members of modern religious communities who have made similar personal vows of dedication today, and reflect further on what it means to dedicate oneself to a particular belief or cause.

Where this topic fits in

This topic complements History work on Invaders and Settlers, especially the Anglo-Saxons. It also complements Art and Textiles work relating to decorative patterns and the use of inlays, the study of stained glass, and heraldic religious symbols. In IT, pupils can study a range of texts including Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English-Speaking People, and go online to study Anglo-Saxon artefacts such as the treasures of Sutton Hoo, the Staffordshire Hoard, or the Lindisfarne Gospels.

This topic links with the following key stage 2 guidelines

QCA Non-statutory National Framework for RE for England and Wales	Roman Catholic	Church of England
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning about religion: 1a, 1b, 1e, 1g• Learning from religion: 2a, 2b, 2e• Religions and beliefs: 3a, 3b• Themes: 3g, 3i, 3k, 3l• Experiences and opportunities: 3n, 3r.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beliefs, teachings and stories AT1i)• Celebration and ritual AT1 ii)• Social and moral practices and way of life AT1.iii)• Engagement with own and others beliefs and values AT2 i)• Engagement with questions of meaning and purpose AT2ii)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beliefs, teachings and sources (AT1)• Practices and ways of life (AT1)• Forms of expression (AT1)• Identity and belonging (AT2)• Meaning, purpose and truth (AT2)• Values and commitments (AT2)

Attitudes in the scheme of work

This topic helps children to develop the following attitudes outlined in the non-statutory national framework for RE, and the curriculum directives of the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, and Diocesan guidelines for RE in Church of England schools.

- respect for all
- being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others, eg: about different places regarded as sacred by members of religious communities
- being ready to value difference and diversity for the common good, eg: in the way religious communities worship
- attitudes towards oneself, to others, towards living in a religiously plural and multicultural society, and towards the world

Differentiated outcomes for Religious Education

During this topic children have opportunities to show their knowledge, understanding and skills, and reflect on different meanings and experiences. It is up to the individual teacher to plan work with an appropriate level of challenge for their own class. If differentiation is working well, then pupil responses could produce the following as evidence of attainment:

Children working at level 2 could:

- use religious words such as saint, pilgrim, sacrifice, baptism, monk, cross, God
- suggest meanings for some Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Christian symbols and images
- recognise the key values expressed in particular stories of the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon saints
- recognise their own experiences of commitment, and those of others
- Be able to retell faith stories and describe the values expressed.

Children working at level 3 could:

- make links between some religious words and Celtic / Anglo-Saxon Christian symbols and images, explaining their significance for a Christian
- identify the key values exemplified in the stories surrounding a particular saint
- make links between the value placed by some on their Christian heritage, and the things that are of value in their own lives, and say why
- make links between the stories of saints, and give reasons for their own attitudes and behaviour
- identify a place that is important or sacred to them, and say why.

Children working at level 4 could:

- ask questions and suggest answers to questions, about the dilemmas faced by the Saints in the light of both their own religious teaching and other beliefs
- describe and explain how these stories and ideas still could inspire believers and others
- show understanding of how religious belief shapes life.

Children working at level 5 could:

- use an increasingly wide religious vocabulary to explain how these stories and ideas including symbols, illustrate distinctive beliefs and suggest possible reasons for their still being valued by Christians and others today
- Explain what inspires and influences them
- Express their own and others views about the challenges of following a faith

Resources- websites

This 'Northern saints' resource is due to be hosted on a variety of websites, and may be subject to revision. Current intended hosts will be:

Barnabas (www.barnabasinschools.org.uk), Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle (www.rcdhn.org.uk/index.php) and the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle (www.newcastle.anglican.org)

The British Library's online 'Sacred' exhibition allows visitors to turn the pages of a virtual Lindisfarne Bible, and study the artwork in close-up.

www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/index.html

The *Internet Medieval Sourcebook* at Fordham College (USA) is an excellent resource for More Able pupils to make their own researches into the history and literature of the period, and has a large selection of original texts available online for free. However, the provided modern translations may be a little dense for some. <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/bede-book1.html> accesses Book 1 of Bede's *History*, but the menus will take you to many other sources.

Buckfast Abbey – this modern monastic community's website contains some downloadable education resources. www.buckfast.org.uk/page-home.html

British Museum – their online programme enables pupils to study Anglo-Saxon artefacts such as the treasures of Sutton Hoo.

www.britishmuseum.org/explore/world_cultures/europe/anglo-saxon_england.aspx

National Association for the Teaching of RE (NATRE): this subject association's website contains resources and support for teaching RE. www.natre.org.uk/

Barnabas in Schools is dedicated to 'Exploring Christianity Creatively' with children. Our schools website is an excellent source of free teaching material for use with children, and also provide further details of books and publications. We also provide a series of RE Days for schools that enable pupils and teachers to engage with Christian themes using storytelling, drama and music – and our *Northern Saints* workshop is especially popular! For more details, please visit www.barnabasinschools.org.uk

Resources- sites for school visits and teacher information

Holy Island – Lindisfarne Abbey, and the visitor centre run by English Heritage. The village visitor centre also has a ‘virtual’ Lindisfarne Bible.

Bede’s World, a ‘Living Museum’ in Jarrow which includes a ‘monastic workshop’ for pupils.

Durham Cathedral, which still houses the shrine of St Cuthbert, the accompanying head of St Oswald, and a very hard-working Education Service producing good teaching materials – especially about Saint Cuthbert.

Hexham Abbey, whose crypt was put in place by Wilfred as an intended site for pilgrimage. Visitors may notice that the crypt’s layout is remarkably similar to the catacombs of Rome which would have featured on the travel itinerary of devout visitors even then – including Wilfred.

Publications

Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English-Speaking Peoples (Bede, Penguin Classics, 1990) is a crucial source text for this unit, available online and in print in a number of cheap modern translations. His chronology does jump around a little as he retells the stories of a variety of kingdoms simultaneously, but he does provide helpfully detailed chapter headings, a list of important dates at the back, and his own autobiography.

The Anglo-Saxons Activity Book (John Reeve and Jenny Chattington, British Museum, 2007) Good visual source of general teaching material.

The Lindisfarne Gospels (Janet Backhouse, Phaidon, 1981) *The book for anyone wanting to know more.*

The Lindisfarne Gospels – A Beginners Guide (Marygate House, 1982) Helpful booklet for children.

Celtic Key Patterns (Ian Bain, Constable, 1993) For exploring artwork motifs.

The Staffordshire Hoard (Leahy and Bland, British Museum, 2009) Best book to date on this new find – but expect more!

Aidan, Bede, Cuthbert – Three Inspirational Saints (David Adam, SPCK, 2006) Devotional history for personal prayer and meditation. (See his other titles.)

Restoring the Woven Cord - Strands of Celtic Christianity for the Church Today (Michael Mitton, Bible Reading Fellowship, 2010) Recently reprinted, an excellent devotional guide to the Celtic saints.

The Stapleford Centre has published a series of helpful booklets supporting the teaching of challenging and innovative RE, including:

REthinking 5: Planning challenging RE lessons (Margaret Cooling)

REthinking 7: Story and Storytelling in RE (Heather Butler and Chris Hudson)

REthinking 20: Stardust and Stones- RE and Learning Outside the Classroom' (Chris Hudson)

Visit their website at www.stapleford-centre.org.uk

A personal note from the author about ‘source material’

Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* remains a key document for understanding much of life within these islands during the first millennium, and there are vast fields of scholarship devoted to unpicking his rendering of our shared early history. However, doubt has been shed on the quality of some of his work, especially at the way in which he records miraculous happenings in the same matter-of-fact way that he uses to record other events. This is an issue – but in his defence I would add that he was nearer to the events than we are, and (with a few caveats), should still be respected as our first English historian, even if we can now disagree about the way history ought to be written. The child-friendly versions of his history offered here in this resource, are *not* intended as scholarly replacements of his original, and should not be treated as such. I am a teacher putting Bede’s words into the vocabulary of a reasonably literate British primary school child, aged about 10. Teachers should therefore feel free to take this text and use it accordingly in line with the note below.

Feedback and ideas for enhancing this project

This version of the resource is dated 25/10/10, and will hopefully be added to as schools use and adapt it to suit the needs of their pupils. Teaching staff may also develop further ideas for using this resource. If you do, and want to share it with others, please let me know at: chris.hudson@brf.org.uk



Authorship and Copyright Issues


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1) Introduction - Who were the Northern Saints?


Learning objectives	Teaching and learning	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>Pupils should:</p> <p>History Identify the story of at least one Northern saint and place it on a time-line</p> <p>Geography Identify some key locations on a map of Northern Britain</p> <p>RE Discuss the meaning of 'commitment' Understand the significant impact made by religious figures on believers' lives Consider the positive impact that any person can have on others. Devise an appropriate symbol for a saint.</p> <p>Numeracy Find locations on a timeline Place time slots in approximately the right place Calculate life-spans based on dates</p>	<p>The beginning of this RE topic provides a necessary introduction of the historical and geographical context, but adds a challenge to pupils to think about the positive impact they could also make in the world.</p> <p><u>Lesson plan 1 – who were the Northern Saints?</u></p> <p><u>What is a saint worksheet</u></p>	<p>Pupils will:</p> <p>Use the internet / other provided materials to profile the life and work of one saint</p> <p>Annotate a provided outline map of Northern Britain with key locations, and the names / symbols of saints associated with those locations.</p> <p>Create a timeline, and add names / symbols to show where they 'fit' into the period.</p> <p>Reflect on the personal qualities that make someone a hero or a 'saint', and which are the qualities most likely to make a positive impact on the world.</p>	<p>Different websites will display a range of attitudes to the lives of saints. Some take a purely historical approach, whilst others take a more devotional one. You may wish to point this out to pupils to discuss the relevance of a saint's life for modern Christian believers – and those not sharing that faith.</p>



2) Saint Oswald

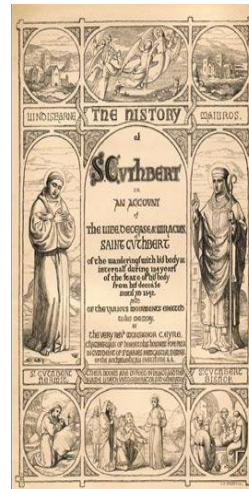
Learning objectives	Teaching and learning	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>History Understand Oswald's significance as an Anglo-Saxon king prepared to support the spread of Christianity.</p> <p>RE Explore the appeal of Christianity at this time. Research how people pray Discuss opinions about miracles</p> <p>Literacy To write a historical account from a given character's point of view.</p> <p>Drama Restage a historical event</p> <p>Citizenship To ask questions about whether it is ever right to fight.</p>	<p>This unit details events crucial to the early establishment of 'Christian England', but also examines some of the reasons why Christianity appealed to so many people.</p> <p><u>Lesson plan 2 – Saint Oswald</u></p> <p><u>Worksheet- Saint Oswald</u></p> <p><u>Oswald - source material from Bede's History</u></p> 	<p>Pupils will:</p> <p>Re-enact a historical moment in drama and analyse its significance</p> <p>Consider how people are persuaded to change their behaviour</p> <p>Explore beliefs about prayer and miracles</p> <p>Analyse the motives and methods of a significant Christian leader and role-model</p> <p>Discuss the merits of fighting a 'just war'</p>	<p>All dramatic re-enactments should be made appropriately with regard to Health and Safety....</p>

3) Saint Aidan

Learning objectives	Teaching and learning	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>History To use a fictional story and its source material to explore the beliefs of an early Christian saint</p> <p>RE Consider what it means to give. Ask questions about materialism, personal comfort and wealth, relating a story to Jesus' warning about possessions. Analyse motivation in a key religious figure. Research pilgrimage.</p> <p>Literacy Compare a story with its source material, asking what the second author has added – and why. Imaginatively write from the point of view of a character in a story.</p>	<p>This unit uses a fictional story to highlight the key beliefs of an influential saint, and to raise further questions about the relative importance of possessions.</p>  <p><u>Lesson plan 3 – Saint Aidan</u></p> <p><u>Story – Aidan and the Gift Horse</u></p> <p><u>Source material – Bede on Aidan</u></p> <p><u>Worksheet – Aidan of Lindisfarne</u></p> <p><u>Worksheet – Aidan and the Gift Horse</u></p> <p><u>Extension work - Factfile on Saint Aidan</u></p>	<p>Pupils will:</p> <p>Weigh up some of the actions and motives of a significant Christian leader and teacher</p> <p>Relate experiences of giving and receiving to discussion of materialism and key Christian teachings.</p> <p>Consider and give judgements over how an author treats source material to create a fictional story.</p>	<p>This unit has a lot of support materials and suggested activities. Select carefully from them to suit the needs of your class.</p>

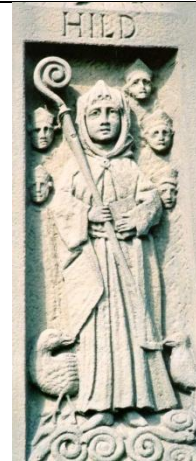
4) Saint Cuthbert

Learning objectives	Teaching and learning	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>History Explore the life and beliefs of an early Christian saint</p> <p>RE Explore the spirituality of being alone' in the contemplative tradition of Christianity and other faiths Consider what it means to have a sense of vocation Consider attitudes to the natural environment.</p> <p>Literacy/ History Study, ask questions, and draw conclusions from source material.</p> <p>Art Create a piece of artwork from natural materials on a provided theme, selecting ideas and motifs from a range of stimuli. To explore the use of visual symbols to convey ideas.</p>	<p>This unit of work focuses on the idea of using moments of stillness or quietness to extend powers of perception.</p> <p><u>Lesson 4 – Saint Cuthbert</u></p> <p><u>Worksheet – Saint Cuthbert and Prayer</u></p> <p><u>Source 1 – Cuthbert, from Bede's History</u></p> <p><u>Source 2- The Life of Saint Cuthbert</u></p> <p><u>Source 3 – Cuthbert and the Eagle</u></p>	<p>Pupils will: Analyse the actions and motives of a significant Christian leader and teacher.</p> <p>Discuss and explore the idea of having a sense of vocation.</p> <p>Use source material as a stimulus for creative writing.</p> <p>Create a presentation that shows appreciation of the natural world.</p> <p>Develop and present their own ideas about the natural environment, and nature conservation.</p> <p>Use natural materials to create an artwork.</p>	<p>All outdoor activities should be made with due regard for Health and Safety.</p> <p>For further ideas about providing RE experiences outside the class room, see <i>Stardust and Stones- RE and Learning Outside the Classroom'</i> (Chris Hudson, REthinking series 20, Stapleford Centre, 2009.)</p>



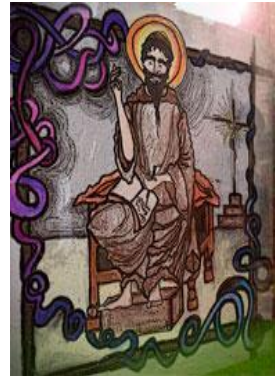
5) Saint Hilda and Saint Caedmon

Learning objectives	Teaching and learning	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>History To explore the lives and beliefs of two early Christian saints</p> <p>RE Consider what it means to have a talents or skills, and the responsibility that Christians believe everybody has to develop and use them well.</p> <p>Literacy/ History Study, ask questions, and draw conclusions from (adapted) source material</p> <p>Music Create an original piece of music to accompany a script. Compare different treatments of the same source material.</p> <p>Citizenship Consider personal skills and talents to share with others. Explore methods for resolving disputes.</p>	<p>This unit covers the lives of two significant saints whose lives interacted closely, but also the injunction to encourage others and value one's own skills and talents.</p> <p><u>Lesson plan 5 – Hilda and Caedmon</u></p> <p><u>Worksheet – Hilda's advice for life</u></p> <p><u>Source 1 – Hilda by Bede</u></p> <p><u>Source 2 – Caedmon by Bede</u></p> <p><u>Source 3 – The song of Caedmon</u></p>	<p>Pupils will:</p> <p>Be encouraged to think about and value their own personal abilities, those of others, and consider how these could be developed or used in future. Design 'trophyes' for particular skills and talents from a personal / faith perspective.</p> <p>Produce an original piece of creative writing or music.</p> <p>Explore how disputes can be resolved and positive friendships generated.</p> <p>Discuss the importance of rules for making life fair and safe.</p>	<p>For a variety of reasons, some pupils lack a sense of positive self-worth. Teachers will need to give serious thought to ensuring that every child present can identify something good about themselves.</p>



6) Saint Bede and Saint Eadfrith

Learning objectives	Teaching and learning	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>History Discuss the role of primary sources, opinion and bias in the understanding of history.</p> <p>Art Experiment creating colour and lettering using a range of materials. Study motifs, symbols and lettering styles from the Lindisfarne Gospels, then select ideas for use in another piece of artwork. Study the work of a modern commercial artist.</p> <p>RE Relate Bede's understanding of the world to modern world events Explore Christian signs and symbols. Discuss what 'truth' means.</p> <p>Literacy Retell a story from a different point of view. Express responses as poetry or prayers Study Latin word-roots</p> <p>Citizenship Create a presentation designed to share or teach an area of knowledge to other children.</p>	<p>Bede and Eadfrith were scholars who separately provided us with a wealth of information about the Anglo-Saxon period in English history. Bede's <i>Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i> (amongst other writings) is a primary source for understanding the period. Eadfrith's crafting of the <i>Lindisfarne Gospels</i> reveals much of the intellectual, artistic and technological achievements of the age.</p> <p>Lesson plan 6 – Bede and Eadfrith</p> <p>Worksheet – Bede and Eadfrith</p> <p>Source – Bede on Bede</p>	<p>Generate a considered response to a contemporary event.</p> <p>Use the story of the Gospels for a piece of creative writing</p> <p>Develop thinking about an area of personal interest that is then worked up into a presentation for others.</p> <p>Use motifs, symbols and other ideas from the Lindisfarne Gospels to create original pieces of artwork.</p>	<p>You will need to show good examples of Bede's <i>History</i> and the Lindisfarne Gospels to achieve a good level of discussion. These may be accessed online and displayed on a whiteboard.</p> <p>Pupil investigation of the Gospels will require use of the IT suite.</p> <p>There are many publications analysing the designs of the Lindisfarne Gospels, some with child-friendly colouring sheets. Try not to over-use them, but instead set tasks that encourage pupils to study and use the motifs in other pieces of artwork.</p>



Lesson plan 1 - Who were the Northern Saints?

Teacher notes

This introduction provides the historical overview of the period, relating it also to local geography. It will require you to organise your timetable to allow a large group of pupils to either access the internet, or access the downloaded material indicated through your school's intranet. Websites and other resources change or grow out-of-date. Always check that any resource offered is age-appropriate and accessible for your pupils.

It will help if part of your classroom display can involve a large map showing the physical geography of Northern England and Southern Scotland, and the key locations indicated, with a large timeline for the years 0-1000 AD. These should be annotated / adjusted as the unit progresses.



Introduction

Ask the class to briefly discuss who their 'heroes' are – and why. Share a few instances. Explain that we are going to be learning about some people who had a powerful effect on our national history over 1000 years ago. They changed the way people thought about themselves and their neighbours – and may still have something to teach us now.

Development

Show a physical map of Northern England / Southern Scotland, if possible with an overlay to show the various 'kingdoms', key locations and Hadrian's Wall.

Explain that after the Roman legions left Britain in the year 400 AD after occupying and ruling it for 470 years, these islands became a patchwork of small kingdoms ruled by powerful families who were often at war with each other. Other peoples such as the Saxons came over the North Sea (*add some incoming arrows from the East to show the direction of migration*) to settle here too.

Christianity had been spreading across the Roman Empire, but the Roman retreat from Britain stopped that. The main religions were pagan, worshipping gods such as Thor or Woden.

But this changed over the next few hundred years as missionaries came from Ireland and Europe (*more arrows from the North-West and South*) to spread a different idea – called Christianity. For these people, God wasn't someone distant and uncaring – but someone prepared to become a human being called Jesus to live among normal people. It was a powerful idea – that God knew what it was like to be hungry, to be thirsty – and to suffer, and that God cared about everyone.

The people spreading this idea were often monks, nuns or priests who were completely committed to serving God. Many of them chose to work in one place, setting up small teams to run schools or hospitals for local people. Sometimes they had the protection of local rulers – and sometimes, not. Gradually, their influence grew, until Christianity became the most popular faith across these islands. Many of these 'saints' have stories associated with them. Many people have since called them Heroes, because they did amazing things and were often seen as miracle-workers. What can you find out about them, today?

Pupil Tasks

1) Recap on key information [Who were the Northern Saints](#) cloze procedure worksheet and extension questions.

2) Religious Education reflection

Follow up the research by discussing what it means to be 'committed' to a cause. Can pupils name anyone famous who has dedicated themselves to protecting others or meeting their needs? These Northern Saints were determined to serve God and their fellow human beings in a variety of ways – and 1500 years later, their names and deeds are still remembered.

Ask pupils if they would like to achieve something important that makes the world a better place, that would still be remembered in the future – what would it be? Note that none of these saints was particularly interested in being 'famous.' In fact, some almost ran away from it! What are the most important things that somebody could achieve in their life? Set a short writing task about personal ambitions that could really change the world.

See also the [What is a saint worksheet](#)

3) Personal Research – Literacy and IT

Set pupils the task of researching the published lives of at least one saint to retrieve some key biographical details.

Beware pupils having to decipher or consider downloading masses of irrelevant information – use prompts to clarify the key questions about these people:

What are they remembered for?

What did they think God wanted them to do?

General websites include:

www.britannia.com/bios/saints

www.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_saints

www.rcdhn.org.uk/about_the_diocese/saints/cuthbert.php

For particular saints:

Bede

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/walk/timestrip/bede_al.shtml

Cuthbert, Aidan, Oswald

<http://www.lindisfarne.org.uk/general/index.htm>

Oswald, Cuthbert, Caedmon

<http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/adversaries/bios/>

Recording should be in the terms of a simple autobiography.

'My name is... I lived between the years I am famous for

I think God wanted me to The most difficult choice I ever faced was when.... I am especially remembered at (location) because '

4) Making a Map and Timeline Create your own map of Northern England at the time. Mark on it the locations associated with this particular saint, using symbols/ small drawings / labels. Also place their 'time' (birth dates, significant events, date of death) on a timeline. Keep things small, as you will be added more details to the map in future lessons.

5) Geography / History

Use a map to find local place-names with Anglo-Saxon roots. Research other words with roots in Anglo-Saxon. www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Homework/saxons/placenames.htm

The British Museum's Explorer website is a good source of further information about the Anglo-Saxons. www.britishmuseum.org/explore/young_explorers-1/discover/museum_explorer/anglo-saxon_england.aspx

Differentiation

SEN- provide sentence prompts for the research task. Add initial letters to the 'gaps' in the cloze procedure worksheet [Who were the Northern Saints](#)

More Able- Consider one of the miracle tales associated with one of the saints. Have you come across any similar stories to it elsewhere? What is a miracle? Do you believe that miracles can happen? What do you think this story is saying about the connection between this person, this place, and God? Write your thoughts under the heading 'My thoughts about miracles.' See also 'To think about', below.

Plenary – Discussion questions

What have we discovered about *who*? Use your large display map and timeline to check pupil understanding of where the key locations are, and where different saints' lives fit into the historical record.

Imagine you were given a mission to go and do something very important – but had to leave behind, everything you have now. What would it hurt you the most, to leave? Is there anything you could think of now that might make you want to do that? What questions would you have? Who would you want to say goodbye to, most of all? This is what many of these saints did – but their sacrifice had incredible consequences for the future.

Who were the Northern Saints?

The Romans occupied _____ for 470 years. They made peace with the local tribes (or beat them in _____) and so they ruled most of England and Wales. To help keep their empire safe, they built roads, towns, fortresses and _____. However, when they left, the different _____ began fighting amongst themselves, and other raiders, invaders and settlers arrived from mainland Europe. _____ from Western Europe settled in large numbers. Britain had been a mix of religions, including Christianity, but that ended as the Anglo-Saxons took control and brought their own _____ with them.



However, thanks to Saint _____ (who was British), Christianity had spread across Ireland – and Irish monks decided to do their best to spread their faith across Britain again. Columba made his base on the island of _____, near the coast of Scotland. From there, more monks journeyed across _____ – and then Northern England. Sometimes, they met _____ – and sometimes, they received help.

Over the next few hundred years, Northern England became increasingly _____ again, although it was a complicated story. Saints like Oswald, Aidan, Cuthbert, Wilfred, Hilda and Caedmon all had a part to play. That's why they are still _____ by many people – and many places are named after them.

Britain gods Christian tribes Saxons Iona remembered
Scotland Hadrian's Wall resistance battle Patrick

What is a Saint?

Name _____



1) A saint is someone who has served God and served other people in a very special way. Many saints are remembered for their lives and deeds although they were in many ways quite normal people.

Circle the names of two of these *Northern Saints*, and record what they are still remembered for.

Aidan Hilda Caedmon Oswald Cuthbert Columba Wilfred

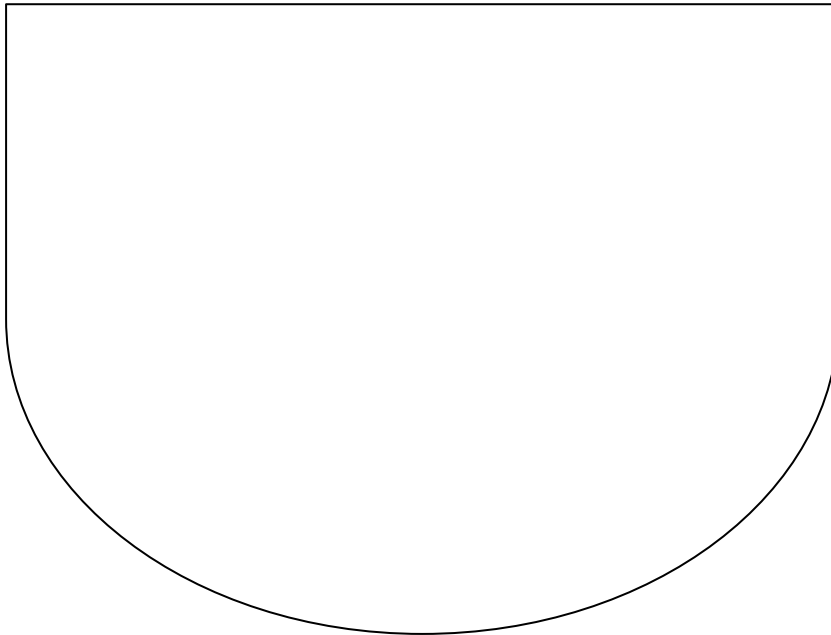
2) Some saints have symbols. Name one, and draw their symbol.

3) Many places and people are named after saints too! Name some.

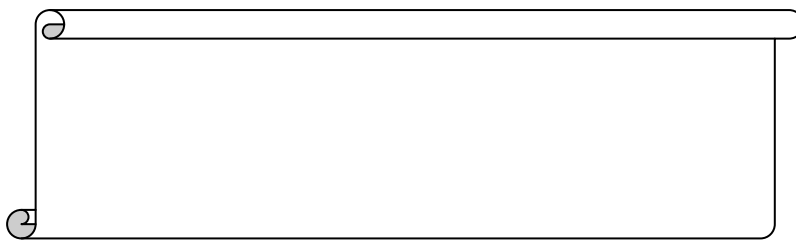
4) How would you make the world a better place? Write about it.



5) If I was a saint, my coat of arms would look like this!



6) My special message to the world.



7) What would you like to have named after you - and why?

Lesson plan 2 – Saint Oswald

Background

This unit details events crucial to the early establishment of 'Christian England'. After Saint Columba founded a monastery on the Scottish island of Iona in 563, the message of Christianity was spread by monks across Scotland and Northern England. Many noble families sent their children to Iona to be educated – and the young Oswald's status as a 'political refugee' enabled him to build enough support to reclaim his throne in Northumbria after fighting the decisive battle of Heavenfield, preceded by prayers for victory to the Christian God. Oswald then used his power and prestige to encourage the growth of Christianity within his realm by inviting monks from Iona to establish a base on the island of Lindisfarne. He died in battle a few years later – but by then, Christianity was becoming well established. Bede recounts the miracles associated with Oswald's memory afterwards, and he was venerated across Europe as a Christian warrior-king.



Teachers should 'set the scene' for this unit by re-staging the battle, using the suggestions listed below. This will require use of a large performance space such as a school hall, and access to a loud CD player. (Alternatively, book a Barnabas RE Day on Northern Saints, and get someone else to do it!)

Oswald's Story in Drama

The battle of Heavenfield makes a fascinating subject for re-enactment, with a strong element of the battle of Agincourt scene from William Shakespeare's Henry the Fifth. In planning a drama lesson based on Bede's text, pick out the key moments. These could include...

The pagan King Cadwallon initially murdering the young Oswald's family.

Oswald escaping to Iona Abbey in Scotland, where he is protected and taught the Christian faith.

His return to Bamburgh, and the raising of a small army.

The moment before the battle when his army prays around a cross.

The battle itself.

The aftermath – in which Oswald chooses to invite the monks on Iona to send someone to teach the Christian faith to his people.

Any 'battle scenes' should be staged carefully with clear rules (see next page) and invisible 'weapons of the imagination' and mime to ensure no-one is hurt. The teacher can decide on 'casualties' by touching victims on the shoulder, after which the victims could choose a 'stage death' or sit down at the edge of the space.

Your 'rules' could include:

- a) clear positioning of 'opponents' by the teacher with no movement beyond that location.
- b) no bodily contact allowed at all.
- c) All action to be in slow motion – preferably accompanied by loud rousing music such as 'Mars' from the *Planet Suite*, by Gustav Holst.

Any drama lesson should begin with a physical 'warm-up', and some short games / activities to prepare pupils for the movements and ideas of the main session. For this lesson, you could include moving in slow-motion to convey the impression of strength, facial expressions to convey different moods including anger and fear, and general body language to show a strong purpose – such as soldiers standing at attention, or marching towards an enemy.

After this session, encourage reflection by asking questions and comments such as:

What's the most interesting question you can ask about this story?

Oswald was a Christian. What were his reasons for fighting the battle? Do you agree? Should Christians fight? When? Why? Were there other choices available?

Oswald's family sent him away to a safe place on the other side of the country to be educated. Do you agree this was a good idea?

In acting out the battle, we used violent body language to show what was happening. Can you give examples? When can that get people into trouble in real life?

'You shall not kill'. Cadwallon paid with his life for breaking that rule. What can go wrong in school life when school rules are broken? Name a few and discuss the consequences.

Pupils could retell the story in simple cartoon form using 'pin-men' illustrations on a single piece of A4 paper folded into 8 rectangles. They should then circle / highlight the key scene – and explain why this one is the most significant for them.

‘What Oswald Did Next’ – Introduction

Begin by asking how advertisers persuade people to change their buying habits to choose a particular product. In pairs, ask the pupils to list the key ‘triggers’ that are used in TV adverts targeting children and young people. (If possible, show an age-appropriate advert that blatantly does this.) Possible ‘triggers’ are: music, catch-phrases, recognisable characters to identify with, clear messages about the product, benefit to the customer in terms of taste, style, excitement, styles of font in lettering, animations, logos, etc.

Development

Explain that Christianity spread across England and Scotland because many people saw it offering lots of positives that weren’t there before. Some of the most powerful ‘products’ were:

- Hope in a life after death
- Belief in a loving God who cared about people and as Jesus, knew what it meant to suffer
- Rulers who respected and upheld the law
- Schools that encouraged literacy and learning
- Hospitals, caring for the poor and the sick

Some of the most powerful ‘key triggers’ were:

- Committed Christians prepared to sacrifice everything for their God and for others.
- Healings and other events that were seen as ‘miraculous’.
- Christian teachings about compassion such as Luke 10.33, Galatians 6.2, Romans 15.1
- Beautiful music and song used in church services
- Stunning artwork created to decorate buildings, Bibles and other sacred objects

King Oswald wanted all this for his new kingdom, so his support for monks like Aidan was also important – he came with royal approval and protection! He was also prepared to allow Aidan to tell him off if he got things wrong – which was very unusual!

Pupil Tasks

1) Recap on key information [Saint Oswald worksheet.](#)

2) Religious Education reflections

a) A Good King?

For centuries, Christians have used the Bible as one reference point for judging a king’s behaviour. What do the following Bible passages reveal about how Christians might think a ‘good king’ should be? How well do you think they fit Oswald? Draw a crown for each quality, write a few words on the crown describing the quality, then give Oswald a mark out of 10 for it – and say why. 1Kings 3.11-14, 1Kings6.11-14 1 Kings 8.22-24, 27-30

b) How People Pray

Oswald used to pray for long times sitting on a chair with his hands upturned, on his knees. Sit like that for a short time and try to work out why you think he prayed like that. Research the postures in which people of different faiths pray – what does this reveal about their attitude to the one they are praying to? Draw them as pin-figures, with a thought-bubble explaining what they are thinking.

c) What is a Miracle?

Brain-shower with others your thoughts on what constitutes a genuine miracle. After Oswald's death in battle, many miracles of healing were attributed to him across Western Europe. Read 3 of these accounts - what do they have in common? What do people like to remember about Oswald? (His head is now kept in Durham Cathedral.) Some churches still keep the 'relics' of saints that are visited by thousands of people every year. Why do you think they do this? List as many reasons as you can. When do you think people are most likely to pray for a miracle? Write the word 'Miracles' as a heading, and produce a short reasoned written discussion of different beliefs about miracles, concluding with your own.

3) Research and Literacy

a) The Young Oswald and Ebba

Research the life of a monk in a monastery during this period. Imagine you are the young Oswald (or Ebba, his sister) who are staying as guests on the island of Iona. Write a letter to a friend, telling them what you see happening around the monastery. Add some opinions about what you do/don't like about the place, explaining why you think both Oswald and his sister Ebba have decided to be Christians. What experiences might have brought them towards this decision?

b) Does he convince you?

Read the provided passages from *Bede's History describing Oswald*. With a partner, discuss which of these would be the most impressive if they were seen by ... a palace servant... a local rich landowner... a Christian monk... a soldier. Rank them in order. Imagine you were one of these witnesses - which events would impress you most, and least? Turn these thoughts into a diary entry for one of these days when you see something happening. As you describe it in your own words, say what you think about Oswald and his Christianity. (Do you like him? Why – or why not?)

Citizenship - Is it ever right to fight?

In pairs, create lists of reasons that would make it right or wrong to get involved in a fight. (More able pupils could consider the question whether it is ever right for a nation to go to war.) What were Oswald's motives for raising an army to fight King Cadwallon? Do they 'tick any of your boxes'? Imagine Oswald had two advisors, each trying to persuade him to fight, or not fight Cadwallon. What would each be saying? Try to create 3 strong reasons from each advisor. Afterwards, have a class vote (by writing signatures on a provided 'graffiti wall' under the two sets of arguments, then discuss which were the winning arguments. Extend this further – when could it be right for our own country to go to war?

Differentiation

SEN – support in using use the worksheet initially, then create a poster (Oswald Needs You!) appealing for warriors to join him set his country free. What are the most attractive things it will say to attract men to join him? What are they defending their people from?

More Able – Imagine you have a script for a blockbuster film about Oswald. How would you ‘sell’ it to the film producers to make them invest in your project? What are the most appealing things about him for a modern audience? You have a speech of 50 words to make them take you on – how would you begin your ‘pitch’, and how would you end it? If this story was going to be made into a film, what would its title be? What would the poster and DVD cover look like?

Plenary – Discussion questions

Oswald has an interesting story. Why don’t you think many people have heard of him?

If there were three key things to remember him for – then what would they be?

How Oswald became King – adapted from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*

Book 3 Chapter 1

After killing King Edwin, the British King Cadwalla ruled over Northumbria for a year. He was a cruel man, killing any who crossed him, even those trying to make peace. But this came to an end when Prince Oswald, (a man loved by God), attacked Cadwalla with a new smaller army. Oswald's men were strengthened because of their belief in Christ, so in the battle that followed, Cadwalla was killed at a place called Denisbury, near Hexham.



Chapter 2

It happened like this. Oswald was about to lead his men into battle against the enemy, but he first set up a Christian cross in the ground. On his knees, he prayed to God for help in this dangerous situation – because many of his soldiers were frightened. The cross was made quickly out of two pieces of wood, and when they were digging the hole for it to stand in and throwing in the earth, Oswald held it upright with his own hands, until it was set firmly.

When this was done, he raised his voice, shouting to his army "Everybody kneel! Together, let's ask the true and living God Almighty, in his mercy, to defend us from our proud and fierce enemy; for God knows that we have taken up our swords to fight a just war for the safety of our people!"

All his soldiers did as he had commanded, and then at daybreak, they charged the enemy at daybreak – and won a powerful victory. It was their faith in God that made it happen.

Ever since then, many people have had sicknesses cured at that very place, because of the King's faith. Even today, many people cut off small chips from the wood of the holy cross which is still there. These are put into water for men or cattle to drink or be sprinkled by – and it restores them immediately to good health.

The place is called Heavenfield, or the Heavenly Field, an old name which predicted what was going to happen, because it was here that the great trophy of Heaven was raised up, the Heavenly victory won, and heavenly miracles are still made today. It is near the wall built by the Romans from sea to sea, to hold back the attacks of the Northern tribes.

Book 3, chapter 6

King Oswald brought into his kingdom all the nations of Britain who speak four languages: the Britons, the Picts, the Scots, and the English. But even when he was given all that power, it never went to his head. He was humble, friendly, and generous to the poor and strangers.

Once, he was sitting at dinner with Bishop Aidan on Easter Sunday, and a silver dish full of tasty food was lying before him. They were just getting ready to bless the bread, when a servant came into the room. This servant was the one in charge of giving out money and food to help the poor. He said that a great crowd of needy people had arrived and were sitting in the streets, begging for the King's help.

Oswald immediately told his own servants to send his food out to the poor, and the silver dish was to be cut in pieces and divided among them. Bishop Aidan was amazed at this, and took Oswald by his right hand, and said, "May this hand never perish."

Oswald's rule brought together peoples who had previously hated each other (the Deiri and the Bernicians), and moulded them together to make one people.

Saint Oswald of Bamburgh

Illnesses Aidan Ireland Scotland
translated Denis-burn Cadwallon
miracles Hadrian's Wall Iona
defeated cross kingdom reigned
Bamburgh province



1) What do you think are the 5 most important things that we know about Oswald? List them here, using some of the words in the box to help you.

2) Oswald's army must have been terrified on the night before the battle of Heavenfield. List 3 things they might have said as they saw the enemy approaching.

3) Why do you think Oswald spent time making that cross before the battle?

4) Draw a cross sticking in the ground. List nearby it all the qualities that you think made soldiers follow Oswald into battle even though he had the smaller army. Circle the most important quality. Why have you chosen that one?

Lesson plan 3 – Saint Aidan

Background

Aidan has been suggested as a better ‘patron saint’ for England than the mythical Saint George – and he certainly had a greater impact. He was invited to Northumberland by the victorious Christian king Oswald as a replacement for a failed predecessor – and made his base on the island of Lindisfarne. (Notably, *not* the royal palace at Bamburgh ... as they say in exam questions – ‘Discuss!’) His ‘Celtic’ mission transformed the ideological and political landscape of England, introducing a Christian ethic that valued education, law, and compassion for the weak. Christianity arrived in these islands by two main routes: in the North, from Ireland as the ‘Celtic mission’ - and in the South, from Rome, through the work of Augustine. These two strands of Christianity differed markedly in style and theology. The hierarchical Roman model prevailed after the great Synod at Whitby in the year 664, but some still say that the wrong team won. The pioneering missionary work of Aidan in Northumbria won a great deal of respect for its Celtic emphasis on a personal spirituality based in everyday life.



Introduction

Recap on the previous session with Oswald. Explain that after winning the battle of Heavenfield, King Oswald invited the monks of Iona (where he’d stayed as a teenager) to send him someone to teach Christianity to his own people. The first man they sent was a monk called Cormac, who set up a school in the castle at Bamburgh, but gave up after a time, claiming that the skulls of the Northumbrians were ‘too thick’ to take in any learning. When Cormac returned to Iona in frustration, another monk suggested that perhaps a little more ‘gentleness’ was needed. And that monk, Aidan was put in charge of the next team to be sent to Oswald.

Aidan had a different approach. He made his base on the island of Lindisfarne, not Bamburgh castle. Once his team had constructed some buildings (including a church and a school), he mastered the local language and spent a lot of time travelling around the North-East on foot, speaking and listening to people. Later, another Christian King came to the throne, named Oswin- which is where this story begins.

Development

Read/ share the story using the text from: [Story – Aidan and the Gift Horse](#)

Afterwards – discuss: what do you think King Oswin did when he heard what had happened to his present? Share what actually happened from the source material. See:

[Aidan - Source material from Bede’s History](#)

Discuss - What risks did Aidan take in challenging the King? What risks did the King take, in finally agreeing with him? (*Losing face with his nobles. This story illustrates a sea-change taking place in attitudes to authority, and the relationship between the Church and local rulers.*)

Pupil Tasks

1) Recap on key information [worksheet – Aidan of Lindisfarne.](#)

2) Religious Education reflections

a) Giving

Discuss –

Have you ever been given a present that you didn't want? What happened?

Have you ever had a gift refused? How did it feel?

Have you ever nagged your parents/carers for something, just because your friends had one? (Was there another way you could think about it?)

What 'giving' takes place in this story? Consider answers beyond the literal. (Respect? Attention? Dignity?) List the pros and cons of Aidan accepting, or not accepting the gift of the horse and saddle. How did the gift affect him?

b) Materialism

In a Bible, find Jesus' parable of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25.31-46. Which bits do you think would have been important for Aidan – and why?

What warning did Jesus give about possessions in Luke 12.13-21? How it could relate to this story? Copy verse 15 out and illustrate it.

c) Motivations

Study the extract from the dedication prayer (See: [Aidan factfiles- for extension work](#)) made by Aidan on the island of Lindisfarne, the original base of the Celtic mission. What could it reveal about Aidan's approach to life? (eg: God at work in other people.) How important do you think personal possessions would be to him? Why? Write your own version of Aidan's prayer, based on your daily life at school – or a prayer that a Christian could use on the same lines. 'God be in my pen...' (?)

d) Values

My lord, surely you cannot mean that the foal of a mare is more important to you than a beggar who is the child of God?' Aidan's pointed question to the king asks him to weigh up the relative value of an expensive horse and an apparently worthless beggar. Is a human being worth more than a horse? Why? Discuss.

e) Pilgrimage

Lindisfarne (Holy Island) is still a pilgrimage site. Every year, thousands of people make their way over the causeway to visit key sites such as the Priory, to stop, think and pray. Research the reasons why people do this using websites such as <http://www.northerncross.co.uk/>

3) Literacy

a) Retell the story in cartoon form, selecting what you think is the key moment. See:

[Worksheet – Aidan and the Gift Horse](#)

b) Comparing a story with its original source material

Compare 'The Gift Horse' with the original version written by Bede. Set the following tasks:

- List the main points of the plot in both versions. What events has the author added to the story? Working in pairs, use copies of both versions and highlighter pens to mark out common plot elements – and then list which have been added in 'The Gift Horse.'
- Discuss: why do you think the author of 'The Gift Horse' has made these changes?
- Do you think it is fair to change an original story in this way?

c) Study the way Aidan's thoughts are described in the story. Which phrases and sentences show his feelings most?

d) Write a letter from Aidan to the king, explaining what happened while trying not to hurt his feelings. ('Do you remember that horse?...')

e) Many historical stories are told from a point of view. Re-tell this story from the point of view of the horse....or the saddle.

f) Invent and illustrate some new Anglo-Saxon riddle-poems on the lines of the one quoted in:

[Factfile on Saint Aidan](#)

eg: What is a brother? What is a sister? What is a school? What is a lesson? What is the rain?

4) Citizenship – Listening to Others

a) Empathy means....?

'Don't criticise a man until you have walked a mile in his moccasins.' What does this American Indian proverb have to say about this story? Find a dictionary definition of 'empathy', copy it out – then create an acrostic poem about EMPATHY based on the initial letters of the word, where each letter marks the beginning of a new line.

b) Speaking and Listening

Discuss the meaning of the last sentence in the story. What personal communication skills do we need to develop nowadays to ensure that *we* understand what *other* people are thinking, and so *they* can understand what *we* are thinking? Play a game in threes, where two people are simultaneously trying to explain about different things they've done to one person in the middle. Discuss: why is it difficult? How can we show someone that we are *really* listening? (By feeding back what they say to them at intervals, and making comments.) How can we explain ourselves clearly? (By thinking about what we want to say first, and keeping eye-contact.) Set an exercise where each

child has to tell a personal story to someone else, who then has to explain it to someone else or the whole class. How accurate are they?

c) Exploring a theme

Generosity can take a wide range of forms. List the titles of as many stories and films as you can, that include the theme of giving. (eg: '*Miracle on 34th Street.*') Explain your choice, next to each title, saying 'What' is given away, 'To Whom' and 'Why?'

Differentiation

SEN - The story of Aidan and the Gift-Horse should be delivered orally.

[Worksheet - Aidan and the Gift horse](#) is especially suitable for SEN, but it will need initial support to explain the task clearly.

More Able- [Aidan factfiles – Extension work](#)

Plenary

Discuss: what impresses you most about Aidan as a person?

Does he have any qualities that you think people could adopt today? What would their effect be?

How would our friends and neighbours react if we copied him?

Would he make a better 'patron saint of England' than Saint George? Why?

The Gift Horse – a Story about Saint Aidan

By Chris Hudson

‘Here! She’s all yours! What do you think?’ King Oswin’s face lit up as he was talking. ‘She’s three years old, can do 30 miles in a day without stopping, and her father’s one of my best. She’s all yours. What do you think, Aidan?’

Aidan didn’t know what to think. To hide his confusion, the monk walked over to inspect the present. The horse was a magnificent chestnut mare, 15 hands high, the colour of gingerbread, with a bushy blond mane and tail. He stared into the large dark eyes, and stroked her forehead. The horse neighed in appreciation. Yes, she was a beautiful creature.

‘I...I’m amazed, my lord.’ He turned to face the king. ‘I don’t deserve it. She’s...she’s wonderful.’

‘She’s yours. I thought you’d make good use of her on your travels. I hear you’ve been all over my kingdom in the last year, and it’s always on foot. I know you see it as your duty to visit every little village, and I’m glad you’re doing it, but you’re putting yourself in danger.’

‘That goes with the territory, my lord. God called me to be a messenger to your people, so I have to go there.’

‘But you don’t need to do it on foot. A man of your learning and leadership needs to go places quickly. You need to be safe from bandits – and you’re not getting any younger, either. I know you like the simple life, but there must be limits, even for a man of God! You need a horse and you need a saddle to help you ride it. Would you accept them as a gift, from one friend to another?’

Aidan sighed, smiled, and then nodded. The king had given him so much help already. It would be the height of bad manners to refuse the horse – and Aidan knew that Oswin had enemies. They would love to hear it, if the royal generosity was insulted by a mere priest.

Later that morning, the monk set out from King Oswin’s fortress, to head for the new monastery being constructed on the island of Lindisfarne. Had the school been built yet? He was hoping to start taking in new students before Christmas. They would be learning how to read and write, and instructed in this new Christian faith that the King wanted the whole kingdom to hear about. This Christianity was something new and special. It had a God who knew what it was like to suffer as a human being. He wasn’t something distant and cruel,



like the old gods who feasted on the blood of their victims. This God cared, and people mattered to him.

Aidan's eyes drifted from the road ahead down to the saddle he was sitting on. It was a wonderful piece of work, with tiny stitches sewn in intricate patterns around strong brass studs. Wait a minute - they *were* made of brass weren't they? They weren't something *else*, like silver or gold? Aidan wasn't sure, but he knew that the saddle was probably worth more than the horse. It was all quite a gift. He trotted past some peasants who were heading towards the fortress. Beggars? Their clothes showed a great deal of wear and tear and filth. One or two looked up at him as he passed, the rest kept their eyes to the ground. It doesn't do to stare the rich and powerful in the face. They might think you're being cheeky, and you don't do that to people with guards and horses and swords. Aidan trotted on, feeling a little odd. Normally, he'd have said hallo to those people and stopped to chat, but today, he hadn't. He wondered why.

Was it the horse? He was high off the ground, and they weren't. Yes. It didn't feel right. Then he thought of the faces of the two men who did look up, and how they hadn't been smiling, either. They'd been looking at the saddle. Aidan wondered if they were thinking of trying to get their hands on it. He glanced over his shoulder, nervously. No, they were gone. That nervousness was new, and it felt odd as well.

As a monk, Aidan normally didn't have any personal possessions. Everything he had was owned by the Church. Years ago, he'd dedicated his life to God, trusting him to meet his needs in this life and the next. Any money Aidan had was given to the monastery, to help with the construction. It left him free to get on with the real business of meeting people and spreading the Word.

But this horse was starting to worry him. He felt trapped. What if he met someone who fancied taking it? Aidan wasn't a weakling, but the idea of fighting someone for a horse felt wrong. What would happen when he made camp for the night? Someone could just creep up and steal it while he was asleep! He glanced up. There, up ahead, was a crossroads – and a large man standing, just standing there, facing this way. He seemed to be waiting. For the first time in years, Aidan wondered if he ought to have some kind of weapon on him.

Meanwhile, further up the road, Cedd saw a horseman coming. He felt desperate. There was no pride left in him – he couldn't afford it any more. Perhaps this one would help. As the sound of trotting came closer, Cedd fell to his knees, head bowed to say the words he'd been crying out to every traveller on that road all day.

'Please, sir, my family is starving, my wife is dead, there are five children to feed! Bandits took everything. Can you help me? Please?'

Most travellers hadn't even looked. A few threw coins. Cedd bowed lower. This horseman had to be rich. Surely he could help?

He heard the horse come to stop, then the sound of someone dismounting. Cedd kept his head bowed. What was going on? Then he heard a voice.

'Brother, could you please tell me why you are begging?'

People normally didn't ask, so Cedd just blurted it all out at once to the stranger. 'I'm a farmer. Our crops failed, then last week, bandits came and took all our stores. They left us nothing. I was away at market with the children. When I came back, I found...' Tears were welling up in the big man's eyes as he remembered the scene. 'The house was burning, everything burning...and my wife...dead...everything's gone...' His shoulders heaved as he fought back the tears.

'Where are your children now?'

'With a neighbour. I'm trying to find work, but there's nothing. I'm trying! I really am trying...'

Aidan sat down beside Cedd. 'Listen, I want you to do something for me.'

The big man looked up, suspiciously. 'What?'

'See that saddle?' He pointed to the horse. 'What do you think it's worth?'

Cedd shook his head in confusion. 'A hundred, two hundred gold pieces, perhaps... a lot. Why?'

'It's yours. I want you to have it.' There was an embarrassed silence. This didn't make sense.

'The saddle? What would I do with a saddle? I haven't got a donkey now, let alone a horse!'

'I want you to have the horse as well.'

There was a shocked silence. 'This is a rich man's joke, isn't it?'

Aidan shook his head. Cedd stared at him, wild-eyed.

'You're offering me the horse, and the saddle. For what?'

'For you. And your children. Sell the horse and saddle, and that'll buy your family a fresh start – and it sounds like you all need it, don't you?'

Cedd didn't know whether to shake his head or nod. Things like this just didn't happen. 'But...don't you want them?'

Aidan shrugged. 'They're more trouble than they're worth, believe me. Tell you what – I'll accompany you to the next town, and introduce you to a man who'll give you a decent price. Is that all right? And on the way, you tell me more about your children. Tell me, are any of them bright? Would any of them want to read and write?'

They walked together down the road, talking, with Aidan showing Cedd how to lead the horse. There were some things that are so much easier to do on foot.

How Aidan came to Lindisfarne

Adapted from Bede's: Ecclesiastical History

Book 3, chapter 3

Oswald wanted all of his people to receive the Christian faith, because he was so pleased to have won the battle. So he sent to Iona, asking them to send him a bishop, to teach and care for the English people he ruled. He was finally sent Bishop Aidan, a man of true humility, holiness, and self-control in all things, who cared deeply about doing God's will.



When Aidan arrived he asked to be given the island of Lindisfarne, and the king agreed. At this place, the tide rises and falls twice a day, so it is surrounded by the waves of the sea like an island; and again, twice in the day, so when the shore is left dry, it becomes part of the land.

The king willingly gave Aidan all the help he needed to build up the Church in his kingdom. It was wonderful to see the king himself interpreting the words of God from Aidan to his commanders and ministers, because he had perfectly learned the language of the Scots and Irish during his long time away on the island of Iona.

From that time on, many Scottish and Irish monks came to help. Churches were built in several places, and the people joyfully flocked together to hear the word. Oswald provided money and lands to build monasteries. And so the English, great and small, were, instructed in how to live the good Christian life.

Chapter 5

Aidan didn't teach people to do anything that he wouldn't do himself. He wasn't interested in possessions – if any rich man gave him anything, then Aidan delighted in giving it away to the poor as soon as possible.

He would often travel through towns and countryside on foot, never on horseback unless he really had to. Whoever he met, be they rich or poor, he would invite them (if they were unbelievers) to share his faith, or if they were believers, to strengthen them, stirring them up by words and actions to do acts of charity.

Everyone who worked with him were told to spend time thinking hard on the things of God – which meant either reading the Bible, or learning to sing psalms. This was his daily routine wherever he and his team went. If he was invited to eat with the king, he went with one or two clerks, and having eaten a little, would hurry to be get on to something else important, such as reading or writing.

Many people copied his habit of fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year, except during the fifty days after Easter. He never gave money to the powerful men of the world, but only food, when they were visiting; and, if (on the other hand) *he* was given gifts of money by rich visitors, he either shared it out among the poor, or used it to ransom ('buy back') slaves so they could be set free. Many of those he ransomed later became his followers, and some even became priests.

It has to be said, that when King Oswald first asked the monks of Iona to send him a teacher, they first sent to him another man (Corman) who was a lot more strict. He met with little success, and the English really disliked him. When he returned home to Iona, he complained that he hadn't been able to do any good in England, because the English were uncivilised, stubborn and good-for-nothing. What was to be done next? The Council of Iona felt embarrassed that King Oswald had been so disappointed.

Then Aidan, (who was also present in the council) said to the complaining priest (Corman),

"I think, brother, that you were stricter with your listeners than you should have been. You should have started with teaching them the simpler, easier things from God's word before moving on to the harder things."

Having heard these words, everyone weighed up what he had said, and decided that Aidan deserved to be made a Bishop, and ought to be sent to instruct the unbelieving English. After all, he knew when to speak and when to be silent. So they sent him to their friend, King Oswald, to preach – and time proved him to be the right man.

Saint Aidan of Lindisfarne

1) Aidan could have chosen to stay in the royal castle at Bamburgh, and work from there. Instead, he chose a base further away from the King – which first meant a lot of hard building work, creating something new. Why do you think he did this? Discuss it with a partner.

Draw the island near the picture of Aidan, and the Castle at the bottom of the page. List all the possible reasons for making a base next to each of the locations. Tick what you think might be most important for Aidan.



Aidan and the Gift Horse

A large stone cross was often used in Celtic and Saxon times to tell a story. Here's your chance to create one!

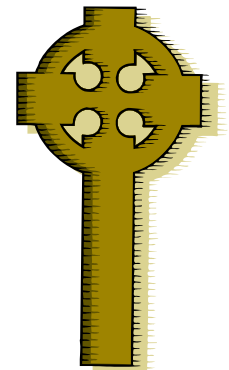
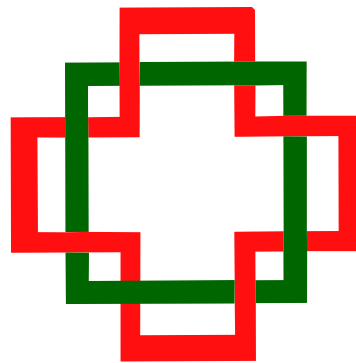
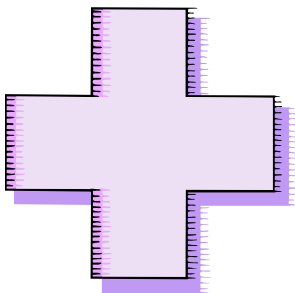


1) Decide which are the five most important scenes in the story of *Aidan and the Gift Horse*. Choose the one which you think is the most important. It usually involves someone making a 'key decision.'

2) Using a ruler, on a blank piece of A4 paper draw a large cross with thick 'beams' big enough to draw small cartoons inside. Choose an idea from one of the designs below.

3) Draw the most important part of the story (with the key decision) at the centre, with other scenes on the other four parts of the cross. Then explain why you have placed them in the way you have.

4) Jesus once said: *'Don't be greedy! Owning a lot of things won't make your life safe!'* (Luke 12.13-21) What do you think he meant? What's it got to do with the story of Aidan and the horse?



Aidan Factfiles- for extension work

Aidan Factfile 1– His Prayer of Dedication

*God is within
God in my head and in my thinking
God in my eyes and in my seeing
God in my mouth and in my speaking
God in my heart and in my loving
God in my hands and in each action
God in my feet and on each journey
God within me and without me
God in the heart of friend and stranger
God in the other who comes to me.*



What does this tell you about Aidan’s attitude to his work? Write your own prayer of dedication for someone to use at the beginning of a school day (‘God be in my pen’....?)

Aidan Factfile 2- Warrior Monks!

When they were given the island of Lindisfarne, Aidan decided to cast out and destroy any ‘Evil’ that might live there, by first dedicating this island to God. With his helpers, he set up a large wooden cross, then prayed and fasted by it for forty days. It was like a gardener having to take out all the weeds before putting in a fresh crop.

Research ‘Fasting’, and how different faiths and beliefs use it for prayer or meditation.

Aidan Factfile 3 - Riddles

The Anglo-Saxons liked to use poetry to play with words and word-pictures. What does this describe?

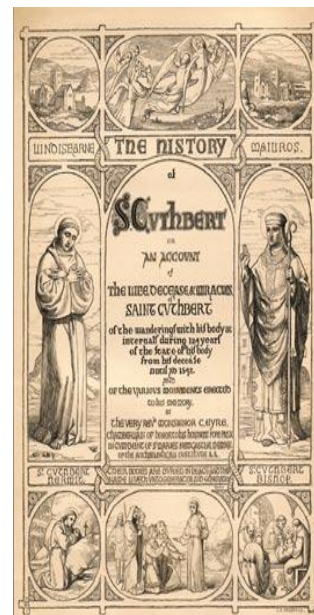
‘It is a bird that flies into your hall on a dark night. You don’t know where it’s been, or where it’s going. For a few moments, there is light and colour – but before that, nothing, and after that – nothing.’

Answer – ‘Life’. But as Christians, Oswin and Aidan believed in something much more interesting – life after death in the kingdom of Heaven, as guests of the King! *Write another riddle that would describe ‘Life’ from the point of view of Oswald, Oswin or Aidan.*

Lesson plan 4 – Saint Cuthbert

Background

As a young herdsman, Cuthbert claimed to see Aidan's spirit ascending to Heaven, as he gazed over towards Holy Island from the mainland. Miracles seem to accompany Cuthbert as he gradually developed a sense of personal calling to the life of a monk – but there's also a great sense of struggle, as he repeatedly sought out the life of a hermit whilst others wanted him to use his talents more widely. Cuthbert is sometimes seen as a mystic or 'visionary', in touch with things that are slightly beyond our own, and vainly attempting to explain what he sees to those around him – but his empathy with the natural world strikes a chord with many today.



Introduction

Ask the pupils whether they have any strong feelings about what they want to do when they are older. Share some of their thoughts. If you are comfortable with it, share a few snippets of your own ambitions when you were younger – and what brought you into teaching. Explain that often, the ambitions we have when we are young can have a powerful effect on what we do when we are older, even if life doesn't quite turn out the way we originally hoped.

Provide some basic information about the life of Saint Cuthbert – how he became a monk at a relatively young age, but quickly gained a reputation for his goodness and his powerful prayers that could work miracles. Many people came to respect his wisdom and knowledge, wanting him to take on important jobs organising people – but Cuthbert preferred to go off by himself to pray as much as possible. He had many 'people-skills', but simply preferred to be alone with God.

Pupil Tasks

1) Recap on key information

[worksheet – Cuthbert.](#)

Pupils could develop their responses by reading some of the tales of Cuthbert's life recounted by Bede, and illustrating them on a single A4 sheet of paper folded into 8.

2) Religious Education

a) Reflection time

Give your class the opportunity for some 'alone' time by themselves like Cuthbert, but supervised. Take your pupils outside to a large open space (preferably on grass) on a clear warm day, and ask them all to sit at some distance away from each other, having established a shared understanding of what's being intended – 'to have some thinking and reflection time'. Suggest a posture (sitting comfortably, hands raised upwards?) and provide something for note-taking. Set a time-limit. (10 minutes? 20? You know your class.) Use the questions / prompts such as:

Create a sound map on a blank sheet of paper, noting or drawing any of the sounds you can hear from where you are.

Tree gazing – lie, sit or stand looking up at a nearby tree. What do you notice? Try gently hugging the tree. Do you notice anything, or feel anything?

Framing – create a small rectangular frame from twigs, lying flat around a small area of ground. Look hard at everything you can see inside the frame. What do you notice?

Ask yourself – what’s nice or difficult about being alone like this?

Do you like to be alone, sometimes? Why?

Cuthbert believed God spoke to him during moments like this. What do you think he meant?

Back in class, ask pupils to share any discoveries, thoughts or other impressions of the time alone. Expect a range of responses!

b) Cuthbert’s life and message

Read the life of Saint Cuthbert, then find and read Matthew 5.1-12, Mark 12.30-31, John 13.35 Galatians 5.22 in the Christian Bible. Which of these passages remind you most of Saint Cuthbert? Copy a section out, explain your reasoning, and add a visual symbol that sums up what you are saying.

c) Cuthbert’s Creator God

‘The whole of creation praises God by just being there.’ Discuss what impresses you most about the natural world and our wider universe. What do people of faith say this reveals about the mind of God? Do you agree? Why?

3) Literacy

a) Summarising a passage

Read some of the stories of Cuthbert recounted by Bede. Use a few words (or highlighters) to summarise the big ideas in each paragraph. Then with a partner, create a list of the 10 most important pieces of information that these accounts describe. Now reduce that list to 3. Which are the most important ideas of all, in your opinion – and why?

b) Developing questions

Take one passage, and create 5 interesting questions about it, using any of the initial words *What, Where, Why, How, When, or Who*. Afterwards, decide on the best questions as a class, put them on display. How do we think Bede – (or Cuthbert) would answer them?

b) Nature in the Bible

Some of the Psalms in the Bible celebrate the wonders of the natural world as signs of God's power and creativity. See psalms 8,98,107,148,150. Set pupils the task of creating either a Powerpoint presentation or some other illustrated version of one of these psalms. If possible, use photos / artwork associated with the island of Lindisfarne.

4) **Citizenship**

a) Creating a personal life-path

Explain that life can sometimes be seen as a 'journey' along a road. Cuthbert had a clear idea of what he wanted for his life, but still had to make difficult decisions about how to make that happen. Set pupils the task of mapping out their life so far as a series of landmarks along the side of a road, then add further milestones for when they are 13, 15, 18, 20, 30, etc.

-Ask them to consider career ambitions, hopes for family life, travel and anything else of personal concern.

-Mention that many Christians (and other people of faith) talk of having a sense of vocation, rather like Cuthbert – they feel 'called' to serve God or other people in a particular occupation. What do you think of that idea? Would you like to have something of that sense of purpose? Where do you think it comes from? What decisions would a believer put as milestones on their life-path?

-Explain that they will be discussing the final results with at least one other person, and that some of life-paths may go on display, so avoid putting on any personal or family information that may be embarrassing. You may wish to promise not to put any of them on display!

-Run a discussion about having a reasonable ambition – they won't win X-factor if they don't have singing lessons, and they won't be a doctor if they're not trying very hard at school.

-Encourage them to think about 'Growing up' as a series of decisions to take on more and more responsibility for one's actions, and responsibility for others too. (By that measure, some adults never get to be grown-ups!)

-Add on – what choices will I have to think about at age 11, 15, 18, 25, 35?

Afterwards, discuss what's been created. Any surprises? Any potential for further discussion?

b) Caring for the Natural Environment

Cuthbert forbade local people from hunting certain species of local birds on his island, including the breed now known as 'St Cuthbert's ducks' or 'Cuddy ducks'. Some say this was the world's first effort at conservation. Visit the REEP and A Rocha websites to explore modern faith ideas about preserving the natural environment. Are there any other environmental issues about which you care deeply, such as protecting animal species, or litter? Create any of the following: illustrated poster / poetry / instructions list for people visiting the beach or the countryside / advert to visit a nature reserve, etc.

See www.reep.org and www.arocha.org/gb-en/home.html

Differentiation

SEN – when using Bede’s stories of Cuthbert, focus on the story of his early life and the one with the otters.

More Able- [study source 3 - Cuthbert and the Eagle](#)

This is one of the original passages from Bede’s story of Saint Cuthbert’s Life. Set pupils the task of annotating it as a document (pasted on a larger sheet of A3 paper, allowing margins for written comments). Ask for responses to the following:

- Do you notice any unfamiliar words and phrases? What do you think they mean?
- How do Bede’s sentences and punctuation differ from the way your teacher tells you to do? (Don’t consider paragraphs – the paragraph breaks here have been inserted to make it easier for you to read.)
- What is this story saying about Cuthbert, and about God? What message do you think Bede intended it to convey?

Develop this as a pupil-generated storytelling session for use with younger children, where pupils write their own version, putting it into their own words as clearly as possible for an audience of 7-year-olds, only using words and phrases that they can understand.

Art

a) Ephemeral artwork

Cuthbert was fascinated by the wonders of the natural world, and experienced a strong connection with them. Set pupils the task of creating (in groups) an outdoor patterned artwork composed completely of natural materials, which can be recorded on a digital camera. Provide visual ideas and motifs as an appropriate stimulus (Celtic crosses, stars, the Sun, simple figures, etc). Another approach would be to construct one large class artwork, divided up into zones for each ‘team’ to add to as they see fit. You will need to establish rules about:

- What constitutes a ‘natural material’, what sorts of items can be collected, and what can’t. Are you going to pillage flower petals from the school garden?
- Which are the boundaries and other areas of the school where gathering of materials can/can’t take place, and where pupils cannot go. Your school’s Health and Safety policy will require a risk assessment for this activity, and this must be followed, especially in ensuring adequate supervision of the children. Your pupils must stay within the line of sight of an adult member of staff.
- How big the piece of artwork will be. Small and good is better. Framing it with twigs gives you a limit to work within.
- Where the artwork will be made – preferably not in a spot liable to be invaded by other pupils at break times!

You should be aware of any health issues affecting your pupils (asthma, hay fever and other allergies) and take appropriate steps for this, and also check that the area concerned is reasonably safe as part of your risk assessment. Areas open to the general public should be studied especially closely on the day prior to this activity. Ensure that other school staff (including the senior management team) know about this activity prior to the event (and sort out any timetabling clashes about use of the space accordingly), and that caretaking staff also know what you are doing.

b) Spiritual gardens

Many world faiths (including Christianity) value gardens as a place for prayer, meditation and contemplation. Pupils can research some (see www.reep.org) and plan their own on a map, with appropriate plantings, pathways, seating, shelters and sculptures. These ideas could go towards creating some long-term gardening project for the school.

c) Symbolic artwork

Design and make a badge or medal for a pilgrim visitor to buy near Cuthbert's tomb in Durham Cathedral. What visual images and text would best celebrate Cuthbert's life?

Plenary: Discussion points:

Cuthbert has been by far, the most popular saint of all in the North of England for a very long time. What do you admire / find weird / surprising about him? What other questions do you have?

A lot of this unit has used artwork and visual images to create patterns and symbols that convey a message. These ideas have been around for thousands of years, long before most people could read or write. When do we use a picture to say more than a piece of text? Why?

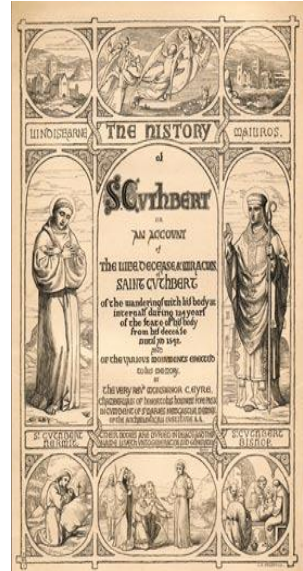
Discuss how we use our personal time, when alone. Have you ever considered spending time at home just being alone, but not playing on the Wii, watching TV, reading or doing anything else? We don't have to be frightened of being alone with nothing to do, with electronic devices, books or magazines to keep us company. We can just enjoy being alone!

Saint Cuthbert and Prayer

1) As a child, Cuthbert was strong, tough, and always wanting to be the best at everything. When he was older, he spent a lot of time teaching himself to be still and quiet. Sometimes, he would go out for long walks to pray, or even do it standing in the sea.

Draw Cuthbert underneath, with different thought bubbles to show what he might be praying about. In the thought bubbles, draw/write:

- something he might be praising God for
- something difficult he needs help with
- a 'thank you'
- a request



Where do you go to be still and quiet?

What do you think about?

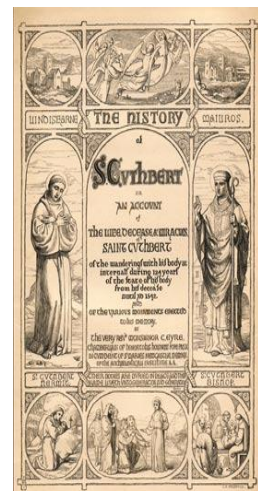
How can exercise or sitting quietly help us to think more clearly?

3) Cuthbert was famous for praying powerful prayers that seemed to be answered in amazing ways. If there was one prayer that you would want answered, what would it be? Why? Draw the answer to your prayer.

‘Tales of Cuthbert’ - Source material adapted from Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*

Book 4, Chapter 27

From the time he was a boy, Cuthbert had always wanted to become a monk, and as soon as he could, he joined the monks at the monastery of Melrose by the River Tweed. While he was there, Cuthbert was taught how to live as a Christian, and how to read and understand the Bible. In time, his talents were recognised by the other monks, and he was made Prior in charge - so he trained the other monks just as he had been taught before.



However, he didn't just stay inside the walls of the monastery, but went out to teach the common people, urging them to stop trusting in witchcraft or spells to save them from illnesses, but rather, to stay faithful to the Christian God who could save them. Cuthbert sometimes went out on horseback, but more usually on foot, to visit people in the neighbouring towns. In those days, the common people were always interested in listening to Christian priests and teachers. However, when Cuthbert spoke, it really changed people. He was such a skilled speaker, and when he talked, it was as if a light was shining on his face – he really cared about his message. People would tell him about their awful mistakes, and he would show them how to put things right. He especially liked to go out to the little villages up in the hills, where other priests were scared to go – and sometimes, he would be away from the monastery for weeks. Because he was so good at doing what he did, Cuthbert was later sent to the monastery at Lindisfarne to teach the monks there.

Book 4, Chapter 28.

But while he was at Lindisfarne, Cuthbert became sure that he wanted to become a hermit, a different kind of monk. A hermit spends his time in silence with God, thinking and praying hard about life, the universe, and everything. That was Cuthbert's goal, and he wanted to be a hermit on the island of Inner Farne. So, just before he left for his little island, he told the other monks this:

‘If God allows it, I'll gladly survive out there, living on just what I can gather, grow, and catch from the land and sea. But if it doesn't work out, then God willing, I'll be back.’

Now – Inner Farne had no fresh water, corn or trees. Evil spirits lived there and made it a hard place for people to live – but when Cuthbert landed on the island, he demanded that they leave the island, and they did. So, the island became a reasonable place for someone to live. Some monks helped him to build a tiny hut to live in, a small chapel – and even a shelter for greeting visitors. Cuthbert told the monks to dig a hole there – which they did, although it was hard and stony. But after he prayed, it began to fill with fresh water – and it is still there now. He also asked the monks to leave him some wheat seeds and farming tools, but none of it grew. Then he tried growing a crop of barley, and that did grow well – so in the end, he was able to feed himself by growing his own food. Cuthbert lived there for many years, serving God in prayer.

However, when King Egfrid called a meeting of all the priests and monks at Twyford to help choose a new Bishop of Lindisfarne, they all voted for Cuthbert. Messengers and letters were sent to him out on his little island, asking him to take on the job – but he said no. Then the king went out to see him and beg him to be the next bishop. Eventually, Cuthbert agreed, but he didn't want to come, and he was in tears as he left his island.

And so he was made Bishop of Lindisfarne. Cuthbert continued to pray and teach the people in his care, but he never asked anyone to do anything he wasn't prepared to do himself. He loved people, was patient with them when they were difficult, and was kind with anyone who was sad or depressed. He thought helping those in need was as important as praying, remembering that the Jesus who said '*You shall love the Lord your God*' was the same one who said '*Love your neighbour*'. Cuthbert continued to work hard at keeping control of his mind and body, and he would regularly fast. When he prayed at Holy Communion, it wasn't with a loud voice – but he often had tears in his eyes.

Book 4, Chapter 29.

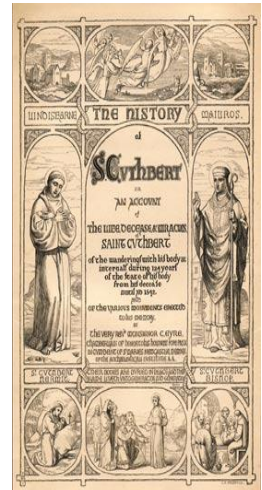
Cuthbert worked for two years as a bishop, but later returned to Inner Farne, and it was there that he finally died. He had asked to be buried there, because it was the place where he had served God for so long. But others persuaded him that the church on Lindisfarne would be a better place, so that is what happened.

'The Life and Miracles of St. Cuthbert'

(Adapted from Bede)

Chapter 1: How Cuthbert was told of his future by a child

Cuthbert wanted to be a monk from the age of 8 – but before then, he was just like the other boys he played with. He loved games, was agile by nature and had a quick mind – and loved being best at everything, whatever they were playing. He was always the last to give up! He could jump, run, and wrestle others to the ground. Who was the strongest or fittest? It was always Cuthbert who had to be the best – and he boasted about it a lot. He could even wrestle with boys who were older than him – and win!



But one day, he was outside, doing gymnastics in a field with some other boys – when something strange happened. A little boy (about 3 years old) ran up and started telling him off. 'You're being silly!' said the toddler. Cuthbert smiled and made a joke about it – but then the toddler flung himself on the ground and started sobbing. Feeling a bit embarrassed, Cuthbert and his friends stopped what they were doing, and gathered round the child to find out what was wrong. But then the little boy stared at them angrily and shouted, 'Cuthbert! You're going to be an important priest! Why are you being so silly? God's chosen you to teach children to be good!'

It was a strange thing to say, but as he calmed the little boy down, Cuthbert was thinking hard. The toddler's words had affected him deeply. Later, as he walked home, he realised that something had changed deep inside him. God had spoken to him that day, and he knew it.

Chapter 3: How Cuthbert's prayers saved some people at sea

From then, Cuthbert became passionate about God, praying often for his own protection and praying for others in danger too. And the Lord God listened.

There is a monastery at Tynemouth where some monks were once using the river to float logs down on five rafts, for building work. Having completed the journey, they were just approaching the beach to land – when a violent wind blew up, powerfully pushing them out to sea. This was dangerous, and the men on the rafts became terrified. The monks on shore tried to launch rescue boats, but the force of the tide and the winds pushed them back on to the beach. Some began praying on their knees to God for help. It didn't look good.

Meanwhile, on the other bank, a large crowd of local people gathered to see what was going on. The rafts were now much further out to sea, looking like little sea-birds floating on the waves. The crowd thought this was rather funny. 'Those monks deserve it!' they said. 'Who do they think they are, with their weird clothes and teaching and praying and singing?' (They didn't like Christian monks, or the Christian message.)

But the young Cuthbert was with them, and he was disgusted. 'What are you doing?' he shouted at the crowd, 'laughing at people about to drown? Why aren't you praying for God to save them?' But that only made them angry. 'You must be joking!' some said. 'Those monks are always taking away all the old things we've done and believed in, and teaching us new things we don't understand!'

Cuthbert fell on his knees to pray, bending his head towards the earth. Immediately, the power of the wind was calmed, and the rafts were carried back towards the beach. The crowd of people fell silent. They had been wrong, they knew it, and many would remember this moment for a long time.

Chapter 10: How Cuthbert prayed in the sea – and met two otters.

Many people noticed how Cuthbert's prayers were powerful. Once, when he was visiting a monastery near the sea, he went out to pray in the middle of the night, only coming back next morning. One night, another monk noticed him leaving, and followed. He saw Cuthbert walk down to the sea, wade out until the water was covering his neck and arms – and stayed out there all night, praying and praising God. As morning came, Cuthbert returned to the beach where he knelt to pray again. At that moment, two wild sea otters came up from the water, and, lying down before him on the sand, breathed upon his feet, warming them and wiping them with their hair. Cuthbert blessed them – after which they hurried back into the sea. Then he walked back up to the monastery to join the others who were gathering for morning prayer.

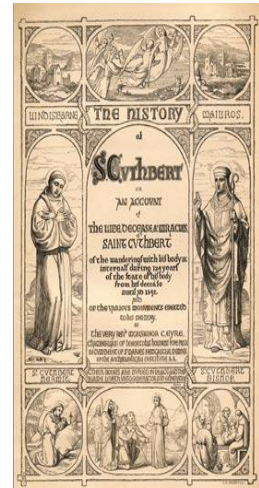
This terrified the monk who had been watching all this. Later that morning, he came and fell at Cuthbert's feet, asking for forgiveness for not trusting him. But Cuthbert replied, "What's the problem? I forgive you, providing you tell this to nobody while I'm alive." The monk agreed – although after Cuthbert's death, he told everyone!

An original story about Cuthbert, from Bede's 'Life'

HOW HE FORETOLD THAT, ON A JOURNEY, AN EAGLE WOULD BRING HIM FOOD, AND HOW THIS TOOK PLACE ACCORDINGLY

It happened, also, that on a certain day he was going forth from the monastery to preach, with one attendant only, and when they became tired with walking, though a great part of their journey still lay before them ere they could reach the village to which they were going, Cuthbert said to his follower, "Where shall we stop to take refreshment? or do you know any one on the road to whom we may turn in ? "

" I was myself thinking on the same subject," said the boy; "for we have brought no provisions with us. And I know no one on the road who will entertain us, and we have a long journey still before us, which we cannot well accomplish without eating. "



The man of God replied, " My son, learn to have faith, and trust in God, who will never suffer to perish with hunger those who trust in Him." Then looking up, and seeing an eagle flying in the air, he said, " Do you perceive that eagle yonder? It is possible for God to feed us even by means of that eagle."

As they were thus discoursing, they came near a river, and behold the eagle was standing on its bank. "Look," said the man of God, "there is our handmaid, the eagle, that I spoke to you about. Run, and see what provision God hath sent us, and come again and tell me." The boy ran, and found a good-sized fish, which the eagle had just caught.

But the man of God reproved him, " What have you done, my son? Why have you not given part to God's handmaid? Cut the fish in two pieces, and give her one, as her service well deserves."

He did as he was bidden, and carried the other part with him on his journey. When the time for eating was come, they turned aside to a certain village, and having given the fish to be cooked, made an excellent repast, and gave also to their entertainers, whilst Cuthbert preached to them the word of God, and blessed Him for his mercies; for happy is the man whose hope is in the name of the Lord, and who has not looked upon vanity and foolish deceit. After this, they resumed their journey, to preach to those among whom they were going.

Lesson plan 5 – Saint Hilda and Saint Caedmon

Background

The lives of Caedmon and his patron Hilda are interlinked. Hilda (born in the year 614 AD) had been baptised as a child in a noble family influenced by the evangelism of Bishop Paulinus. At the age of 33, she decided on the monastic life, but her ambition to seek the cloistered life in France was altered by an encounter with Aidan of Lindisfarne, who obviously saw a lady with potential. Under his tutelage, she led the devotional life of a small community, transformed the failing community of Coldingham, then supervised the creation of a large monastery at Whitby, housing a mixed community of monks and nuns. (This was a British phenomenon, not thought to be really ‘proper’ on the continent or in Rome – but she made it work.)



Whitby abbey became a place to pray, worship, study and share scholarship. In 664, it hosted the strategic Synod of Whitby, chaired by King Oswy. The Synod’s key purpose was to decide on the politically sensitive date by which Easter should be celebrated. This was the crux of a fundamental dispute between the two competing Christian jurisdictions and models of church, emanating from Rome (influencing Britain from the South), and Ireland (influencing Britain from the North and West.) After a long argument, the Roman model won out, largely through the influence of Wilfred, who had been trained by Hilda. Hilda (like Cuthbert) did her best to smooth over the bitter atmosphere created by the dispute and its aftermath. And on the way, she discovered the talent of an older man working on the Abbey farm.



Introduction

What are you good at doing? Get the class to discuss this in pairs, each partner listing some of the skills and talents they see displayed in each other. Then referring to the variety of talent-spotting shows on TV at the moment, ask what qualities the ‘judges’ are looking for when they seek to discover a new talent. (eg: raw ability, a willingness to improve, a sense of single-minded dedication....) Explain that today’s story is all about someone’s talent being discovered. It’s also about the ‘judge’ who discovered him and brought his talent to a wider audience.

Development

Tell / share the story of Caedmon, using [Source 2 – Caedmon by Bede](#)

Note that Caedmon himself didn’t have a clue about his hidden abilities until the dream happened, and that he was not a young man by this time. In fact, he sounds a slightly anti-social, a ‘bit of a loner’. Anyone looking at him would not have spotted anything unusual. He had no ‘X’ factor. Can you name any other singers / entertainers who weren’t expected to be talented when people first saw them?

Now consider what the ‘Judges’ in talent competitions do when they discover a new talent. (They offer training, a chance to live in a new environment, opportunities to perform elsewhere...)

Compare this with what Hilda offered Caedmon – what’s similar. She saw his talent, and was determined to encourage him... but why? Discuss. (Not for the purpose of making money.) She wanted to encourage as many people as possible to use their talents to love God and serve him to the best of their ability. So Caedmon’s song-writing ability needed more material to work with, (Bible passages), and he was taken away from his farming duties, to concentrate on developing that talent.

What talents do you have hidden away inside you, waiting to be discovered and developed?

Pupil Tasks

1) Recap on key information

[worksheet – Hilda and Caedmon](#)

2) Religious Education

a) Hilda

Hilda was an encourager. She actively searched for talented people who could serve God by supporting or joining the Church. Create and write a card / letter of encouragement to someone you know. What do you admire and like about them? Write about a time when you really appreciated something they did. Do you need to say thank you to them?

b) Caedmon’s talent

Caedmon enjoyed using his new ability. (He doesn’t seem to have been interested in becoming famous.) Ask your pupils - is there something you really like actively doing? Ask them to write about all the things you like doing for fun which don’t involve just sitting and watching. Try to name the things that really make you feel ‘alive’ when you do them. Design a trophy for excellence in a skill/talent you already have.

Now read the parable of the talents in Matthew 25.14-30 and Luke 19.11-26 A talent was a large Roman sum of money – but in English, it also describes a natural ability. One writer suggested that these parables have something to say about everyone using the abilities they have been given by God. What do you think? And what are your talents? Are you using them to the full yet? (It is easy for discussion on these lines to get fixed on sporting skills or music lessons. Try to open up the discussion to include skills at working with other people and general creativity, including ability in other school subjects. This could be a good time to praise up pupils who don’t normally get noticed.) If God was to award you with a trophy, what do you think it would be for? Design and label it.

c) Talents and ambitions

Do you have any secret talents that nobody knows about in school? What could you do with your talents to make the world a better place? Give each child a rectangle of paper that will each serve as a ‘brick’ in a wall display. Set the task of writing and illustrating a sentence, about what they would like to do with their talents to make the world a better place. Having created the class ‘wall’, create a class quiz to encourage children to read each others’ bricks, using questions such as ‘Who’s wanting to be a builder?’

3) Literacy

a) Caedmon's dream

Our brains are making connections between different sections of our memory all the time, and we call it 'thinking'. Dreaming is often what takes place just before we wake up – and the thoughts can sometimes be rather disconnected! But sometimes, a dream can have a powerful effect. Write about a dream you once had. Most dreams seem to end too quickly – this time, keep the story going until you are happy with it. Why have you remembered this one so clearly?

b) Wow! Poetry

Caedmon's first song praised God for his creativity. What amazes you most about our world, its place in the Universe, and the creatures and other life-forms that live here? Name some of the most amazing things you know in the natural world, then collect some interesting adjectives, verbs and adverbs to describe both them, their habitat and the things they do. Turn this words and phrases into a poem or prayer that says 'Wow!' It could be a praise poem that a believer could write, thanking God for this marvellous world. Consider using a variety of verse-forms for this, including kennings, haiku and tanka.

4) Music

A great deal of early English music was religious, much of it based on texts from the Christian Bible. This was partly because singing enabled people to remember large chunks of the Bible by heart at a time when few could read or write.

a) Composing a percussion-based piece of music

Set pupils the task of creating a percussion 'sound-picture' to accompany a Bible passage, such as the creation of the world from Genesis 1, or one of the Psalms. They will need to have a large copy of the text with space on the copy for adding their own symbols to show their planning. Begin by encouraging them to explore the different sound possibilities of their instrument, running a few shared exercises on a 'copy-my-beat' basis, and explore the dynamic range too – experimenting with the volume too.

Set the task of providing an appropriate sound-effect for each line of the passage, which somebody will have to read out aloud. Encourage them to aim for variety in sounds, sometimes using a beat, and sometimes not. Give personal 'support' to those determined to just hit it louder! Children should work in small groups, preferably at some distance to each other so they can hear themselves think and work. (This is a good activity for a sunny day, when they can work outside.) You may need to provide shortened simpler texts for some children.

If possible, record and playback the results for general admiration. As follow-up, get them to play the pieces again but without anyone reading the Bible passage. They've now created an original piece of music.

b) Caedmon's song

More able children should be encouraged to study Caedmon's original lyrics,([The song of Caedmon](#)) and produce their own accompaniment to it. There are a variety of modern versions available to choose from. Give them a free hand in altering certain words or phrases to make it flow better in their own opinion.

Firstly, ask them to identify the key ideas that Caedmon is trying to express. Then set the task of putting his words into their own speech. Are there any lines worth repeating? Might there be any rhymes or nearly-rhymes you could use? (It doesn't have to rhyme, anyway!) Is this something to sing, or to recite instead, with appropriate mood-music accompanying it? If Caedmon's song was 'Part 1', then what would 'Part 2' be all about?

5) **Citizenship**

a) Sharing your talents

Ask pupils to take a large piece of paper and draw three large concentric circles, rather like an archery target or dartboard. In the centre, pupils should draw themselves or write their own name. In the middle ring, they should write or draw any talents they think they have. In the outer ring, they should draw or write the names of any places or people or situations who could benefit from these talents being used responsibly.

b) Peacemaking – a drama role-play

Hilda (like Cuthbert) was adept at sorting out disputes. This role-play encourages children to think about the strategies for doing this in a real-life situation.

After a few verbal warm-up activities, (eg: sorting the group into two halves, each half taking turns to recite a nursery rhyme using alternate words) seat the children in pairs, facing each other, and ask them to generate an imaginary dispute between two schoolchildren who can't agree on what to play next in the playground. (No fighting, no bodily contact allowed.) Everybody should 'act' this for the course of a minute. Ask if any would like to replay their 'argument' as a short performance for the others. Then ask for suggestions as to how each dispute could be resolved. Point out the fact that a lot of arguments start as people stop listening to the other person and thinking of *their* needs. Then set everybody the challenge of replaying their own arguments so that there are no losers, and the two schoolchildren settle things amicably. Ask some of the original 'replays' to display their improved conversations, and praise them for thinking through like this.

c) Rules of life

Hilda discovered that all sorts of problems can arise when a group of people are living and working together – and she sorted these problems out in a variety of ways. One was to encourage people to rediscover the reason for their membership of a monastery in the first place – which is why reading the Bible was so important, because it taught essential truths about God. Another was to encourage strict discipline in observing the monastic Rule – a set timetable that gave a structure to the day,

including times for worship, work, and rest. She also set a personal example for others to follow, and took an interest in everybody – she wasn't called 'Mother' for nothing!

Recap on why we have rules (eg: driving left on the road in the UK.) Set pupils the task of creating a set of positive rules about something that affects them personally. (Rules for the classroom, Keeping a safe playground, Watching TV without arguments, Using the internet safely...etc.) Remind them that a good set of rules should be positive – not negative (as in lots of 'Don't's). Illustrate them with a poster.

d) Positive peacemaking

Does your school have any strategies for generating friendship and peace amongst pupils, such as a Friendship Bench or Playground Buddies? How do they relate to the teachings of Jesus in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5.9)? Pupils may wish to suggest further ideas that could be passed on to the School Council for further development.

e) Complementary skills

It's easy to envy someone with talent, but most activities need a variety of skills from different people to be made to work. Discuss how we don't necessarily have to just choose friends who are 'like' us, and that diversity of talent and personalities is an asset for any team.

6) Differentiation

SEN – this might be a useful time for an SEN pupil to have a positive discussion about the things they find difficult in class – and why. Point out that Caedmon didn't have a clue to his secret ability, but there was just something that needed to be 'unlocked' with a word of encouragement. In fact, he had amazing qualities unspotted by everyone else. Identify some of their current targets, and give them a pat on the back for progress made in the year.

More Able- Hilda was a peacemaker - research the life and work of some famous modern peacemakers – Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela. What key beliefs did they have that make their achievements possible?

7) Plenary: Discussion points

Have you noticed anything surprising or amazing about anyone else in this class, during this session?

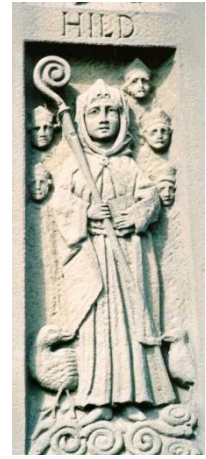
Have you learned anything about yourself in this session?

Is there something that puzzled you?

Do you need to give a bit more thought to anything else?

Hilda's Advice for Life

1) Hilda wrote these instructions for her monks and nuns, called a *homily*. Underline or circle any strange words – then work out their meaning. Choose three phrases you really agree with, and put them into your own words, on the right, with illustrations.



Trade with the gifts God has given you.

Bend your mind to holy learning that you may escape the fretting moth of littleness of mind that would wear out your souls.

Brace your wills to action that they may not be the spoils of weak desires.

Train your hearts and lips to song, which gives courage to the soul.

Being buffeted by trials, learn to laugh.

Being reprov'd, give thanks.

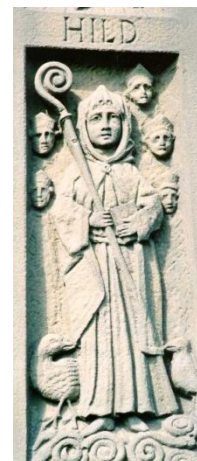
Having failed, determine to succeed.

The Life of the Abbess Hilda of Whitby

(adapted from Bede's History)

Book 4, Chapter 23.

In the year 680 AD, Hilda of Whitby died at the age of 66, after serving as abbess of the monastery there for many years.



She had been born into a noble family, but after becoming a Christian, Hilda decided to become a nun at the age of 33. At first, she planned to leave England and live with her sister at a monastery in France. However, Bishop Aidan had other ideas - and found her another house to stay on the banks of the river Wear – where she lived as a nun for a year, with a few friends.

After this, she was made Abbess of Hereteu monastery, where there were some serious problems with the monks living there. Hilda organised it so that everyone had to pray, work and rest according to a clear timetable. It made a difference. Bishop Aidan visited her often to see how things were going, and to offer advice, because he respected her wisdom and saw her serious wish to serve God.

After this, she took on the monastery at Whitby. Just like before, she gave the monks and nuns a strict timetable. She also taught them about being fair to everyone, about taking their promises to God seriously (especially the promise about not having any girlfriends!), and about living a peaceful life that cared for other people. Under her rule, no person there was rich, or poor, because they had no personal property, but shared things like the first Christians.

Hilda's wisdom became so famous that kings and princes would come to ask and receive her advice when they had a serious problem that needed sorting out. She told everyone who listened to spend more time reading the Bible, and more time making life fair and just

for other people. That way, she thought, some of these important people might one day be good enough to serve God at a monastery too.

She certainly had an effect. Five of the men she trained were eventually made Bishops, because of their learning and love of God. (One of them was Wilfred, who made a journey to visit Rome. This experience made him a powerful preacher and teacher when he came back.)

Everyone who knew Hilda called her 'Mother', because her own lifestyle helped so many to live better lives. In fact, Hilda's own mother once has a dream in which she was looking frantically everywhere for her husband, but then found a most precious jewel shining under her clothes. In the dream, she took it out to look at it closely – and the light spread out across the whole land of Britain. Hilda was that jewel. Her life was a bright example to all who wanted to live well.

After ruling this monastery many years, Hilda had a long sickness that lasted for six years. But she remained cheerful, continued teaching and encouraging others, telling them all to serve God as much as possible while they had good health, and to be thankful to God anyway. On her very last day, she was teaching some monks, urging them to make peace with each other when she finally died peacefully. She had joyfully passed from death to life.

That same night, a nun called Bega in another monastery (13 miles away), dreamed she heard the sound of a bell, and woke up. Opening her eyes, as she thought, she saw the top of the house open, and a strong light pour in from above. Looking closer, she saw the soul of the Hilda in that same light, being carried and led up to heaven by angels.

Caedmon Discovers his Song

(adapted from Bede's History)

There was in Hilda's monastery a certain monk who was gifted in music – whenever he heard a passage from the Bible, he could turn it into verses of amazing poetry using English, his native language. His songs could make any listener, hungry for Heaven. It is a rare quality – because unlike others, Caedmon learned his art directly from God. As a result, he never wasted his talents on writing about other subjects. He only wanted to sing about his Creator.



For many years, he had lived a normal life working for the monastery, and hated poetry and singing. If he was at a party, and people were taking turns to sing a song whilst strumming an instrument, he would leave the table and go home. But one night, something special happened. Caedmon had left the house, and gone back to the stable where he took care of the horses, and settled down to sleep. But then he had a dream.

In the dream, someone appeared to him, and said, "Caedmon, sing me a song."

He answered, "I can't sing! That's why I left and came to bed! I can't sing!"

The other replied, "Yes you will sing!"

"Sing what?"

"Sing about how everything was created in the beginning," said the other.

With that, Caedmon began to sing a song in praise of God, a new song which he had never heard before. It went like this:

*'We are now to praise the Maker of the heavenly kingdom,
The power of the Creator and his wisdom,
The deeds of the Father of glory.
How the eternal God, became the author of all miracles,
Who first, as almighty preserver of the human race,
Created Heaven for the sons of men as the roof of the house, and after that,
the Earth!*

(Bede adds - This is what the song was about, but not the words he actually sang in his sleep. Even the most beautiful poetry loses something in the translation.)

Awaking from his sleep, Caedmon remembered the song, and added more words to it. Next morning he told his manager about what had happened, and was taken to see the Abbess. He told Hilda about his dream, and sang her the song. Hilda arranged for some other learned monks to listen as well, to see if they could make sense of what was happening here. After some discussion, they decided – the song could only have come from God.

Could Caedmon do it again? Someone tried reading him another Bible passage. Next morning, he was back with another excellent song. With that, Hilda, (who was becoming rather excited at what God was doing) told Caedmon he should join the monastery as a monk. He agreed. Soon, he was being taught all the things of the Bible that he had never heard before, and he didn't forget a thing. It was like seeing a cow chew the cud as he took the words, thought about them, and repeated them in songs. His teachers became his audience!

He sang about the creation of the world, the creation of man, and all the history of Genesis. He made many verses about the escape of the God's people from Egypt, and their entering into the land of promise. He sang about many other Bible stories, especially the birth, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and his ascension into heaven. He sang many more songs about the good life, hoping to turn away all men from the things that spoil life, and to excite them with the love of doing good.

Caedmon did all this because he was full of faith in God. He was prepared to do whatever it takes to serve God even when it hurts, and encouraged others to do the same – and so he lived happily for the rest of his life. He served God with a simple and pure mind, and when it was time for him to die, he left the world quietly. His tongue, which had composed so many holy words in praise of the Creator, spoke its last words as he signed himself with the cross and offered himself to God. Perhaps he knew that this was the time when he would finally meet his Creator, face to face.

The Song of Caedmon

Caedmon's Song, as recorded by Bede

Now we must honour
the guardian of heaven,
the might of the architect,
and his purpose,
the work of the father of glory
— as he, the eternal lord,
established
the beginning of wonders.
He, the holy creator,
first created heaven as a roof
for the children of men
Then the guardian of mankind
the eternal lord,
the lord almighty
afterwards appointed
the middle earth,
the lands, for men.

Caedmon's Song – a version by Chris Hudson

Praise our creator, his power and wisdom
Maker of Heavens, of Earth, sea and sky
Wonder of wonders, this world that we live in
Bright glowing sun and the stars shining high
Creator!! My creator!!

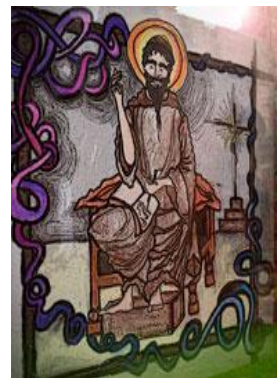
Poured out the oceans, filled it with creatures
Thrust up the mountains, built up the land
Filled every valley with life multiplying,
Beautiful planet, the work of his hand
Creator!! My creator!!



Lesson plan 6 – Saint Bede and Saint Eadfrith

Background

Saint Bede (673-735 AD) was an Anglo-Saxon monk based in the monastery at Jarrow, who spent most of his life teaching, researching and writing. His *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* is the first contemporary instance of the 'English' being one people, so we could even say that he invented the idea of 'England'. His narrative begins by describing the geography and people of these islands prior to the Roman invasion of Julius Caesar – and then tells what can only be called 'our island story' from that point up to his own time - the year 731. Bede's narrative arc jumps around as he attempts to tell the story of different kingdoms simultaneously, but he retains a grip through the use of detailed chapter headings. However, the *History* was written in Latin, the language of all scholarship of the time, so modern non-Latin readers are dependent on the quality of the translations. For all that, Bede's work remains highly readable, although the extracts provided here are my own adaptations for younger readers – so do not treat them as the last word. Although some of his scholarship has been questioned by modern historians (especially his moralising and recording of miraculous happenings as pure unquestioned fact), he remains the first 'English' historian who researched, compiled and wrote the first draft of our island story. Oh, and he was possibly married.



Eadfrith (? -721 AD) was Bishop of Lindisfarne from the years 698 to 721, and his tenure marked the creation of the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. Many historians agree that he was the scribe and illustrator, which seem to be the work of one man – and it is likely that the *Gospels* were created prior to his being made Bishop. Alternatively, some say it was he who commissioned the work, as he certainly commissioned many others, including Bede's own *Life of Saint Cuthbert* (completed 720 AD). The *Gospels* themselves are remarkable for the diversity of influences on their creation. The language is Latin, the common speech of European scholarship derived from Ancient Rome. The lettering is in the North European Teutonic (Anglo-Saxon) style, whilst the illustrations and patterns are unmistakably Celtic, similar to the Irish-Gaelic *Book of Kells*. The materials used come from a range of sources, notably the blue lapis lazuli colouring that can only have been traded along the Silk Road into Southern Europe, from the region of the Himalayas. So the *Gospels* are concrete evidence of a remarkable cross-cultural fusion of ideas and trade networking across Europe – an important point for our own age, when 'Community Cohesion' has become a big issue.



Introduction (on Bede)

Ask the class – how good is your memory? Play a version of the classic 'Kims's game', showing a large selection of objects for a set time, hiding them, then asking pupils to list/sketch as many as they can. In the 5 minutes you allow for them creating their lists, stage a short unannounced piece of drama with another adult in the room (Searching around the room for a lost mobile phone, talking about it loudly – making the action increasingly outrageous, providing it doesn't unduly unsettle the class.)

When the children have completed their lists, ask them also to recount in pairs what happened in your short drama. Together, create a list of the events in the right order. Point out the difficulties of remembering exactly what happened, and when – because that is what historians have to do all the time. And that is what Bede did all those years ago when he recounted the stories of the Northern Saints in his *History*. (An alternative activity to the ‘drama’ would be to all view a previously unseen piece of appropriate video material, and then try to agree on what happened.)

Development

If somebody nowadays wanted to find out more about an event in the Second World War 80 years ago, what could they do? (Consult the internet for sources and comment, read books, study films and radio broadcasts of the time, read newspapers and documents of the time, interview people who were there, visit some of the locations, and talk to specialists who are experts of the period.)

Explain that Bede did much the same thing, trying to make sense of the whole story by looking at different sources. Read / share Bede’s own account of his project to write the history of the English people, and his account of his own life. ([Source – Bede on Bede](#)) He doesn’t mention that he also made journeys to libraries at different monasteries to check their information. But his *History* isn’t just a collection of facts and dates. He tries to make sense of it all – and as a Christian monk, Bede saw God’s hand at work in English history, punishing the bad and helping the good to flourish. For Bede, ‘The Earth is the Lord’s and everything in it’, and the historian’s job was to explain what was happening, and encourage his readers to play their own part in God’s plan.

Pupil Tasks

1) Recap on key information

[worksheet – Bede and Eadfrith](#)

2) Religious Education reflections

a) Whose world?

Provide a wide range of newspapers (having removed any salacious content). Set pupils the task of compiling a collection of newspaper headlines and pictures detailing different aspects of ‘Our World’. Bede took prayer seriously, and would want people to pray for our world. Which aspects would he be worried about? Which would he be glad to see? Write a prayer or poem concerning something happening ‘out there’ that might matter to him, or you. But Bede was also enthusiastic at giving thanks to God. Is there something you would want express thanks or gratitude for? Put these different offerings on display near a picture/ model of our world.

b) Signs and Symbols

Study the ‘Saint Matthew carpet’ page in the Lindisfarne Gospels, asking pupils to see if they can spot any Christian symbols. (The Cross, Chalices, the use of the 5 chalices to indicate the wounds of Christ.) Christianity uses a wide range of signs and symbols to convey complicated ideas. Research other Christian symbols and their meaning, then turn this into a piece of artwork using repeating patterns in the style of Escher. Also note that the famous first ‘Saint Matthew’ page which begins the

genealogy of Christ is purposely left unfinished (Note the lack of colouring in two letters, whilst others are fully illuminated. This conveys a show of humility on the part of the artist – because only God can make something completely perfect.)

The British Museum's Webquest programme is an online research tool for pupils to explore themes using artefacts from the collection. One of these ('I Spy Symbols') can be used for RE to explore their significance for Christians. <http://nmolp.britishmuseum.org/webquests/>

c) Telling it like it is?

Bede was deeply concerned with telling the truth about what had happened in England over the last few hundred years, and tried hard to be as accurate as possible. But his History goes further than that – he saw God's hand at work in the events of human history. Bede wasn't simply going to record the bare facts – he wanted to interpret them, and explain what was moving things along. Ask pupils to discuss what 'Truth' is. How do we find out what the truth is? Why is it important to tell the truth? When is it wise not to say everything you're thinking? Do advertisers tell the truth when they tell you about a product they want you to buy? What do they think Jesus meant when he declared 'I am the way, the *truth* and the life?' Ask what that would mean for a Christian believer. In the Bible at Exodus 20, the ninth commandment says 'You shall not lie about anyone.' Ask pupils to write a story, poem, explanation or a report entitled 'Telling the Truth.'

3) Literacy- Bede and Eadfrith

a) The Gospels tell their own story.

Research the history of the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, (their creation and subsequent story) which were written 'in honour of God and Saint Cuthbert' who had died 11 years previously. Retell this as an autobiographical story or poem, from the point of view of the *Gospels* themselves.

b) What interests you?

Study the list of subjects that Bede also wrote about 1400 years ago. List all the different things he was interested in. (Before 'Science' was invented, Bede had worked out that the Moon was affecting the rise and fall of the Earth's tides, just by studying records, making observations and doing the Maths.) He loved finding out about the world and how it worked, because as far as Bede was concerned – it was all God's world. He was discovering the mind of God at work.

Create a mind-map in the style of a flow-chart, tree diagram or other Thinking skill diagram (in the style of Tony Buzan's Mind-Maps), about an aspect of the world that interests you. What would you like to find out more about, and why? Make a list of 3 interesting questions you don't know the answer to, and why you want to find out about them. What would be the next steps in finding the answers? (You might want to use this as preparation for the Citizenship activity.)

c) Latin word-roots

Bede wrote mostly in Latin, the language of scholarship, diplomacy and law. Research the Latin roots of many words we still use today.

4) Art - Eadfrith's work on the Lindisfarne Gospels

a) Create a colour-wash sampler

This is a useful warm-up for pupils experimenting with colour. Eadfrith used at least 45 different colours for illuminating the Gospels. Using one colour of paint, some white, and some black, how many different shades can you create, starting with the white and then gradually adding more of the colour, and then finally the black? As you go, create a series of gradually darkening strips across a thin rectangle of paper. Develop this by using the technique to create a larger 'sunrise over the sea' effect painting (start from the sub on the horizon then work out in 'waves') that can be used for mounting other smaller pieces of work.

b) Making paint and ink.

Eadfrith used a variety of materials to make his own ink and paint, especially from plants and minerals. (He used vinegar poured on copper to produce verdigris, a brilliant green.) He would grind his colours to a fine powder, and then mix them with the white of an egg before applying them to the page. Ink was a mixture of soot, glue, soft honey and water. He wrote with either a thick reed or a goose-quill feather. Set your task the task (after you've tried it out for yourself) of writing or drawing a little, with self-created ink, paint or pens. Food colouring, crushed charcoal or normal ink will do if you're desperate, and some fruit and vegetables such as blackberries or blueberries have quite a strong colour in their juice. Don't expect much in the way of results – but it's fun if your class can at least write their own names for display.

- A development is to investigate different styles of lettering from the period and the Gospels, and set the challenge of writing one's name in that style. Eadfrith used faint guidelines to guide his pen – a useful point for your pupils.
- Then pick a Bible verse or prayer that you think would be important for Bede, and write that out in the same style.

c) Decoration

Eadfrith used 4 main types of decoration in the Gospels.

- birds and dogs, often, with very long necks, and all sorts of added details (559 birds in all.) The Wild Goose was a Celtic symbol for the Holy Spirit.
- straight-line patterns, often in a series of steps.
- curved-line patterns, often called Celtic or Irish, with spirals.
- interlace: long curving lines that go over and under the others.

He used lots of small dots to guide this – on one page, there are 10,600. Set pupils the task of studying closely some pages from the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, with online or on high-quality photocopies, looking for any of the above, and encouraging them to copy any particularly attractive decoration into a sketchbook. Afterwards, these sketches should be 'worked up' on plain, spotty or

squared paper. (Symmetrical is good, too.) Having done this, larger pieces of artwork can be created, especially by projecting images on to larger pieces of sugar-paper so that proportion is maintained. A variety of paints could be used, but also use shiny coloured paper, foil or sequins to achieve the 'inlay' effect familiar in Celtic art - although perversely, Eadfrith hardly used any gold leaf!

d) Mary Freeson

Study the 'Celtic' artwork of Mary Freeson, who references the Lindisfarne Gospels, other Celtic imagery, the landscape of Holy Island and other motifs to illustrate passages of scripture and other devotional material. Use this as a stimulus for pupil work. Mary's work can be seen and purchased at: www.lindisfarne-scriptorium.co.uk

5) Citizenship

a) Sharing what you know

Bede was an enthusiast for explaining what he knew to others as clearly as possible, so they didn't have to waste any time finding it out again for themselves. Ask each member of the class - is there something interesting that you know about, or know how to do well? (Try to avoid computer games...) Set the task of preparing a short (1-2 minute) presentation for children in another class about 'How to...' or 'All About'... with the main points listed on a card. Encourage them not to prepare a full written set of instructions, but rather to use one or two simple props and maybe a card listing the key points. Ideas include skills derived from cooking, pastimes such as fishing, enthusiasms for animals, places where they've been

6) History

a) History, reporting and bias

Bede's History is the first written about early Anglo-Saxon England. He attempted to put all the events in their proper order, explaining the chain of events from Roman times up to the present. He did this from a Christian Anglo-Saxon perspective, which could be said to have 'biased' his work in certain directions. But Bede would have answered this by saying that he was wanting to explain God's purposes at work. How should we try to understand history? Choose a contemporary controversial event (appropriate for your class) that is in the media, and select a few headlines and pictures to illustrate what seems to be happening. What are the actual apparent facts, and what would the different 'sides' have to say about the subject? What further questions do we have, where the answers would help us to make up our own minds? Present pupil responses as a classroom display.

b) the importance of sources

Refer back to the introduction. Establishing the 'truth' of historical events can be very difficult, especially when they happened a long time ago. This is why it is very important to make the most of any historical sources we do have. Display a page of one of the Lindisfarne Gospels (illustrating Saint Matthew the gospel-writer, with 'Jesus' looking from behind a curtain), and brain-shower everything that this artefact tells us about the period it was created in. Display two more artefacts, such as the

helmet from Sutton Hoo or the cross from the Staffordshire Hoard. What do these also tell us? What don't they tell us? What other questions can we generate that would help us to find out more? Display pupil questions next to pictures of these artifacts.

7) Differentiation

SEN – pupils will need support to access Bede's text, even the provided adapted one. If a 'reader' can't be provided, then a recording of the oral text may be of help.

More Able pupils - should study '*Cuthbert's letter on the life and death of Venerable Bede the priest*' which can be found online, to give a short first-hand account of Bede from someone who knew him. Ask pupils to list 10 key points of information revealed in this account, and then use it to write a character study of the man.

Compare the adapted version of Bede's autobiography with an online version for similarities and differences. Use a highlighter / annotation to point out difficult words and phrases. Are there sections where the adapter hasn't done a good job, and you could do better? Pick a section of the original, and write it in your own words!

8) Plenary: Discussion points

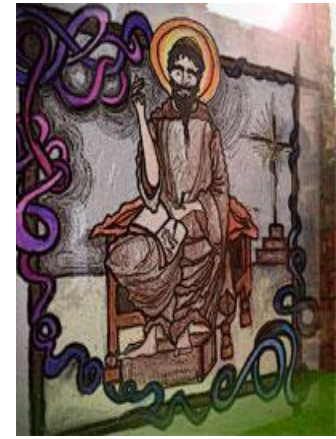
What has surprised you about the Literacy / Citizenship activity concerned with finding out / sharing what you know? (Did someone else's enthusiasm or knowledge change the way you thought about them?)

What do you think Bede or Eadfrith would like about our school or this classroom? What questions would they have? Could you answer them clearly?

Bede was passionate about all sorts of things, which is why he wrote lots of books about them to tell others what he knew. What are you passionate about? Would you want to tell others, or write a book about it? Why?

Saint Bede and Saint Eadfrith

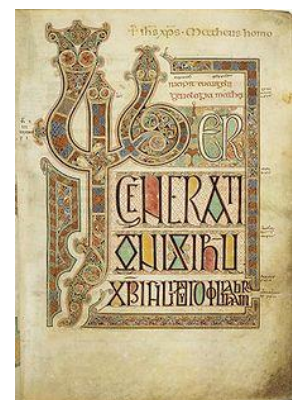
Bede was a monk who spent a large part of his life finding out about the world, trying to _____ it, and then explaining what he knew. He wrote many books on all sorts of subjects, and his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* is the first written history of _____.



In fact, you could say that he invented England, because nobody else thought all these different _____ could be one people – but Bede did!

Anyone wanting to find out what life was like in these islands 1500 years ago usually has to start by reading Bede's *History*. He wrote in Latin, the language of Ancient _____, because that was the written language used all across _____ and especially in the Christian Church. (Anybody reading his work now usually uses a modern translation.) However, Bede was pleased to hear about people worshipping God in their own _____ – as Caedmon did. Bede spent most of his working life in a monastery at Jarrow, but created a book that is still thought a masterpiece by people across the world.

Eadfrith lived as a monk at the _____ of Lindisfarne. He loved dogs, birds, creating artwork, reading the Bible and writing with a goose-quill pen made out of the _____ of a bird. 11 years after the death of Bishop _____, it was decided to create a special _____ copy of the Gospels to honour God and remember Cuthbert. Eadfrith was chosen to do this because he was good with a pen and had some excellent ideas for decorating the _____ afterwards.



The task took him two years – but the book is still thought to be an amazing piece of work, using designs, lettering and materials from across Europe. You can see it now in the British Library, but you can also see it online using their website at:

www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/index.html

On this _____ you can also turn the pages of the Lindisfarne Bible and examine it very closely. See if you can spot:

- strange _____ and dogs, often, with very long necks.
- straight-line patterns, often in a series of steps.
- curved-line Celtic _____, with spirals.
- interlaces: long curving lines that go over and _____ the others.

monastery	Rome	birds	Cuthbert	understand
England	Europe	pages	tribes	website
language	feather	hand-written	under	patterns

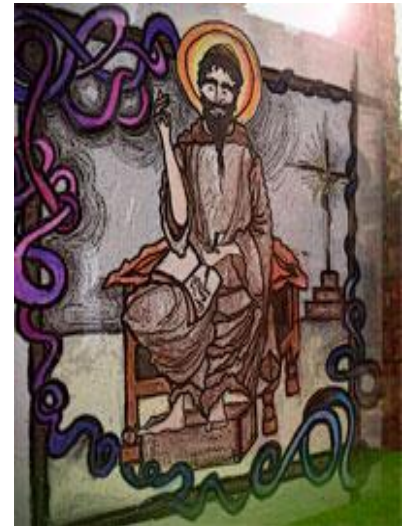
- 1) Write these words in the right places so it makes sense.
- 2) List the names of the 3 furthest places you have been to in your life so far. _____

Think about this – Neither Bede or Eadfrith travelled as far as you, but look what they learned and did! What could you do with all the things you have seen and done?

- 3) Take your pen for a swirly pattern walk. What are the best swirly patterns you can make down the margins of this worksheet? Keep the patterns neat, and try to be symmetrical!

Bede's Autobiography, from his *History*

To tell the story of the English nation and its Church, I studied ancient writings, listened to the stories of those living in these islands, and used my own personal knowledge. It has all, by the help of God, been digested by myself, Bede, a priest living at the monastery of Saint Peter and Paul at Wearmouth. I was born within its lands, and at the age of 7, sent to be educated by the Abbot Benedict, and then Ceolfrid. During my time there, I worked hard at studying the Bible. Through all the daily life of being a monk, and choirmaster, I always delighted in learning, teaching and writing. When I was 19, I was made a Deacon, and was made a priest at the age of 30 by Bishop John and Abbot Ceolfrid. Since then, (I am now 59) I have made it my business to bring together and compile everything written by all those who came before me, to interpret and teach what they are saying so everything can be understood well. I have copied out and then written explanations for:



Most of the 66 books in the Christian Bible

A book of letters on the 6 ages of the world, the Leap-Year and the Equinox

The Histories of saints, including Saint Felix, Saint Anastasius, and Saint Cuthbert

The History of the abbots of this monastery including Benedict, Ceolfrid and Huetbert

The 'Ecclesiastical History of our Island and Nation' in five books

The stories of the holy martyrs

A Book of hymns in several sorts of rhyme

A Book of wise thoughts in verse

A Book about the nature of things

Two Books about the calculation of time

A Dictionary in alphabetical order

Also a Book about how to write poetry.

And so I ask you, good Jesus, who has allowed me to learn so much about yourself and your world – to let me finally meet you, the source of all wisdom and knowledge, and always appear before your face, the one who lives and reign, world without end – Amen!