

Whatton St John of Beverley Triptych

Aim: To explore the church

Objective: Children will have the opportunity to look round the church and will encounter the term 'triptych'.

Curriculum links:

KS1 Visiting places of worship

KS2 Symbols and religious expression

Activity: The children will look in detail at the triptych above the altar and consider the importance of the different sections. They will have the opportunity to look round the church and record their responses to what they see on their own triptychs.

Resources:

A3 or A4 paper, cut in half longwise and then folded into three

Pencils

Information for Leader

Introduction (15 mins)

- Start with the children sitting where they will be able to see the altar. Ask them to look around the church and see if they can find something that comes in a three. Hear one response then ask the children to walk around and see how many things they can find that come in threes. Remind them about not running as they look.

Activity (30 mins)

- Bring the children back together and listen to some of the things they have found. If they don't mention it, ask if anyone noticed the three pictures behind the altar. Even the name of this includes a clue about there being three; it is called a triptych. The word triptych comes from the Greek for three-fold (*tri* = three, *ptysso* = to fold). Older pupils will recognise tri- as relating to three from triangle. Check the children can see how it folds into three. Look at the picture and ask the following questions:
 - What is the picture in the middle? Why is this here? Why do you think it is in the middle?
 - What colours are used in the pictures? Why do you think these colours are used?
 - Where is gold used? Why?
 - What are the people carrying?
 - Who do you think the people in the smaller pictures might be? Look at what they are wearing on their heads for clues. (They are St Paulinus and St John of Beverley, who were both bishops, on the left and Ethelburger and Edwin, king and queen, on the right.)
 - Why do you think this is placed here, and not at the back of church?
 - Which picture do you think is the most important? What makes you say this?
- A triptych is a device used in art, and particularly in churches. The most important picture is placed in the middle, and related pictures in the other two spaces. So, here we have the nativity in the middle.
- The children can then make their own triptychs. On the outside they can draw the outside of the church. In the centre they can draw the inside of the church. In the right-hand wing they can write what they have learned today and how being in church makes them feel. In the left-hand wing they can write or draw something they have seen today they would like to know more about.



heritage learning welcome



Plenary (5 mins)

- Ask a few children to share what they said or drew about how they have felt being in church. Allow a few moments quiet while the children think about this.

Extension

- The children can explore further the things they highlighted on their triptychs as things they would like to know more about.

- Look at other examples of triptychs. What is the important message each is trying to get across?

Examples in Nottinghamshire:

- <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/plumtree/hfitting.php>
 - <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/cinderhill/hfitting.php#trptych>
 - <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/nottingham-st-peter/hfitting.php>
 - <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/newark-st-mary/hfitting.php>
 - <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/carlton-in-lindrick/hfitting.php>
 - <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/collingham-north/hpics.php>
 - <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/nottingham-st-mary/hfitting.php>
- Children can create their own triptychs based on stories they know from the Bible.
 - Find out more about St Paulinus and St John of Beverley and Ethelburger and Edwin.