



Precious Things

Teachers' Resource

Age Range

EYFS

Key Stage 1

Curriculum Links

RE

Number of Lessons

One

Location

Church





Precious Things

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About this publication

Lesson Aims

- To introduce students to key features within Christian churches
- To help students understand the term 'precious' and why churches and their key features may be considered 'precious'

Description

'Precious Things' is a common and popular topic that is found on several RE syllabuses currently being implemented in British primary schools. This lesson provides students with the opportunity to explore the topic within the unique and inspiring setting of their local historic church. They will see and experience the key features of a church in situ and consider for themselves why these features, and the building itself, might be considered precious.

Precious Things

Overview

Suitable For

Churches with intact interiors.

Find your local CCT church at visitchurches.org.uk

If you wish to deliver this activity in a church cared for by Churches Conservation Trust, please contact learning@theccct.org.uk to confirm availability and book the building.

If you wish to use a church not cared for by Churches Conservation Trust, please contact the relevant parish or diocese in advance.



Precious Things

Lesson Plan

You Will Need

- Trail Stop sheets x 5
- Stained glass window photo (if required)
- Precious Things recording sheets
- Boards
- Pens / pencils
- Crayons / colouring pencils
- Watch or clock to time trail stations

Introduction

Upon arrival at the church assemble the whole class together and introduce the word 'precious'. Ask the students what 'precious' means and if they would consider the church to be a 'precious thing'. Expected responses might include statements such as, 'Yes because it is beautiful', 'Yes because it so big', 'Yes because it is where people come to pray to God', 'Yes because it is very old'. Discuss their responses and invite feedback from other students.

Activity

Explain that within the church there are many objects that themselves may be considered precious for different reasons. Tell the students that they will now follow a trail around the church to discover these objects and consider what makes each of them special. Split the class into five small groups, each with an adult supervisor, to undertake the trail.

(Trail instructions in Teachers' Notes)



Precious Things

Lesson One

You Will Need

- Camera(s)
- Paper and pens/pencils to record names and inscriptions on memorials

Activity continued...

Students then each choose their favourite 'precious thing' from the trail, draw a picture and write a sentence about it.

Plenary

Assemble the whole class back together and ask students to show their drawings and share the sentences they wrote explaining which feature they chose as their favourite and why they think their object is a 'precious thing'.

Extension Activities

Discuss 'precious things' that are found in other places (e.g. school, home, community).

Instruct students to choose the thing that is most precious to them in their personal lives and do a small projects or presentations about their 'most precious things'.

Precious Things

Teachers' Notes

A preliminary visit is strongly recommended to familiarise yourself with the identification and layout of the key features that will be on the trail and to ensure that the key features are all safe for the students to approach/touch/access.

The Precious Things Trail

The key features are:

- Altar (sacred table where wine and bread are placed during church service)
- Font (basin that holds holy water used for baptisms)
- Pews (benches that provide seating for the congregation)
- Pulpit (elevated platform from which vicar reads out sermons)
- Stained glass windows (colourful glass that tells stories through pictures)

Precious Things

Teachers' Notes

Upon arrival, the trail sheets should be placed beside the key feature it describes. The sheets will act as markers so that the groups know where to stop as they are doing the trail and also provide information and prompts for the adult supervisors to read aloud to their groups at each trail stop.

Each group should spend about 10 minutes at each stop and rotate around in a clockwise direction. One adult should keep watch of the time and instruct the groups when to move on to the next stop.

As a follow up activity and depending on time, you may wish to complete the recording sheet back at school as a follow up for your church visit.



Precious Things

Teachers' Notes

Please Note

- Some churches do not have pulpits but do have lecterns. If this is the case in the church you are visiting you may wish to substitute the lectern for the pulpit on the trail as they serve similar purposes in the church.
- If the stained glass has been removed from the church you are visiting you can print out a copy of the stained glass window photo to imagine what the windows would have looked like in the past.



Precious Things Trail Stop One

The Altar, or Communion Table

Adults Please Read:

The altar is a special table in a church made from wood or stone. The special cups that hold the bread and wine that are used during a church service are set on top of the altar. Other things that are often set on the altar include a Bible, candles and a cross.

Christians believe that the altar and the area around it is the part of the church where you are closest to God. This is one of the reasons why the altar is so precious to Christians.

In many churches the altar area is the most beautifully decorated part of the church. Fancy materials like marble and alabaster stone and beautiful carvings and paintings are often found on or around the altar. This beauty is meant to reflect the glory of God and is another reason why the altar might be called precious.

You may now have a closer look at the altar.

What is it made out of?

Is it decorated?

Does it have objects on it?

What are they?

How do you feel knowing that you are in most special or sacred part of the church?

**Adults please advise students to take care when they are interacting with the features of the church and be mindful of step or uneven surface.*



Precious Things Trail Stop Two

The Font

Adults Please Read:

The font is used for baptism or christening ceremonies. Most fonts are made out of stone. The top is carved like a sink to hold holy water that has been blessed by a priest. This water is poured over a baby's head when it is baptised or christened.

The font in most churches is found near the back of the building, close to the main doorway into the church. This location symbolises that, just as people are welcomed into the church through the main doorway, new Christians are welcomed into the religion through baptism or christening at the font.

All fonts are precious because they are the place in the church where babies are welcomed into the Christian religion. In many churches the fonts are also very old or very beautifully decorated. These are other reasons why a font might be considered a precious thing.

You may now have a closer look at the font.

How does it feel when you touch it?

Can you see and feel how the top is carved out like a bowl to hold the holy water?

**Adults please advise students to take care when they are interacting with the features of the church and be mindful of steep or uneven surface.*



Precious Things

Trail Stop Three

The Pews

Adults Please Read:

Pews are wooden benches that are found in most old churches and they are the seats where the people attending church services sat.

Some old churches have long pews set out in neat rows all facing the front of the church. Other old churches have shorter pews set out in squares with wooden walls around them. These were called 'box pews' and the walls helped to keep the people sitting inside them warm during services in drafty old churches long ago.

Pews may be considered precious things because they are the place where people sit side by side to say their prayers and worship God together. Some pews might also be precious to people because they are very beautifully carved and decorated. And other pews might be considered precious because they are very old and historic.

Sit with your group in a pew. Is the pew decorated?

Is it old?

Is it comfortable?

Do you like sitting in the pew with all of your classmates side by side?

** Adults please advise students to take care when they are interacting with the features of the church and be mindful of steps or uneven surface.*

The Pulpit

Adults Please Read:

The pulpit is where the vicar stands to read his or her sermon during a church service. Sermons are like lessons where the vicar uses stories from the Bible to teach people how to behave in a Christian way. Because the pulpit is the place in the church where the word of God and stories from the Bible are shared it is considered precious.

The pulpit is usually found at the front or in the middle of the church and is raised up above floor level, like a little stage, so you have to climb up stairs to get into it. This height helps the vicar's voice carry all around the church and so that their important words can be heard by everyone.

Pulpits are usually made out of wood or stone and are often beautifully decorated. Their beauty may be another reason why they are considered precious.

You may now climb up into the pulpit.

How does it feel to stand up high and look out over the rest of the church?

Does it feel special?

** Adults please check in advance that the steps into the pulpit and the pulpit platform are safe for children to access. It is advised that you send them up one or two at a time and closely supervise them during this activity.*



Precious Things Trail Stop Five

Stained Glass Windows

Adults Please Read:

You will find stained glass windows in many old churches. They were made from lots of small pieces of coloured and painted glass all put together to create a picture. Stained glass windows were not just used to decorate old churches, they were also used to tell the stories of the Christian religion through their pictures.

In some old churches the stained glass has been broken or removed and replaced with clear glass. So you have to use your imagination to picture what the church used to look like with colours and pictures in every window.

Stained glass windows are precious to Christians because they tell stories from their religion. They are also precious because they are beautiful works of art. Many of the stained glass windows you see in churches are very old which also makes them special.

Look closely at the stained glass windows in this church:

What colours and shapes can you see?

Are there people in the stained glass pictures?

Are there animals?

Do you recognise any of the stories being told by the pictures in the windows?

If there is no stained glass left in this church, can you imagine what it would have looked like when the windows were filled with colourful pictures?

** Adults please advise students to take care when they are interacting with the features of the church and be mindful of steps or uneven surface.*

Precious Things Stained Glass Example





Precious Things

Name _____

Date _____

My favourite precious thing in the church is _____

I think it's precious because



This resource was created by CCT's Heritage Learning Team. To book a workshop, or if you have any feedback, questions or notice any problems with the resource, please get in touch:

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Precious Things

Learning at CCT

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Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) is the national charity caring for historic churches and their heritage. With over 350 beautiful church buildings in its care, CCT's collection includes irreplaceable examples of art, architecture and archaeology from over 1,000 years of history.

Our churches are unique spaces that inspire creativity and learning at every age and stage of life. For centuries, these special buildings have witnessed personal moments and the collective histories of the local community they sit in. Today, we work with diverse communities across England to encourage the use, enjoyment and appreciation of these important places; a fundamental part of our shared heritage.

CCT's Learning and Participation Team offers a range of inclusive activities for schools, families and adults taking place in local churches, within communities and online. We welcome people of all faiths and none to engage with the stories and investigate the questions contained in these historic places. Our churches are free to access and open to all.

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