

Bingham St Mary and All Saints Wood and Stone Carvings

Aim: To look at the variety of carvings in the church and consider why they are there.

Objective: Children will explore the church and the variety of sculptures in and around the building. They will consider why the sculptures are there and what they add to worship.

Curriculum links:

KS1 Visiting places of worship

KS2 Worship, pilgrimage and sacred places

Activity: The children will begin by looking for sculptures around the inside and outside of the building. They will then look at one of their choice in greater detail and may make their own to go in a place of their choice in church.

Resources:

Paper, pencils, clipboards or card to rest on

Air dry modelling clay, water, soap and towels, trays for the completed work

Information for Leader

This session is based on the many sculptures inside and outside the church. Some of these have specific religious meaning and value (angels, saints, etc.) others add beauty (poppy head pew ends, pillar capitals) some speak of God less directly (the house martins, leaves) others are purely for fun for a God with a sense of humour (faces). As the children draw their chosen faces encourage them to look carefully at what they see. When making their own sculptures they can be as creative and fun as they like.

School staff may like to take photos of the children near, or pointing to their chosen sculptures for follow up work in the classroom on why they made the choices they did.

Introduction (15 mins)

- Start with the children sitting in the pews. Ask them to wander round the inside and outside of the church (weather permitting) at the carving they can see. They are to choose three carvings:
 - The funniest one
 - The most beautiful one
 - The one that says most about the God who is worshipped here

For example they might choose one of the gargoyles outside for the funniest, one of the pew ends for the most beautiful and the house martin as the one that points to a God who cares for all his creation. Why might each of these categories have been included in the church? You may need to remind them about not running and watching where they are walking.

- Allow the children time to look round the church. You will need to make sure there is someone outside to supervise the children there. As they look around encourage them to look up and point out things they may not have noticed.

Activity (45 mins)

- Bring the children back together. In pairs, they tell their partner the three sculptures they have chosen and why they have chosen those three. Ask for a few children to share one of their choices.
- Ask the children to each choose one of their three and to make a drawing of it, looking carefully and making sure they see the details.



heritage learning welcome



- When they have finished their drawings and you have brought them back together, ask them, if they were invited to add another sculpture to the ones in church, what would they add and where would they add it? Encourage the children to think about which category they are working in – funny, beautiful or telling about God, and to think carefully about where they would want it to be placed, and why. The children can make their faces from clay, or describe what they would do, depending on the time available. If you are using clay make sure there is a hole for hanging the sculptures if appropriate and the child's initials are on the back. Have plenty of bowls of warm water and towels for washing hands. Keep the finished work on trays for transporting back to school later.

Plenary (5 mins)

- Ask the children to think about their three sculptures for a moment, particularly about the variety and the skill involved in making them. Then to focus on the one they drew and to think about what this adds to the church and to the worship in church. What might people think when they see this sculpture on a Sunday? How do they feel about this sculpture?
- If appropriate you could say a prayer, with the children saying Amen at the end if they agree:
 - Dear God, Thank you for the people who have made sculptures to go into this church over many hundreds of years. Thank you for their skill and imagination. Help us to look around and notice their work and appreciate what they made. Amen

Extension

- The work could be kept in church for the congregation to see on Sunday, before being returned to school.
- If photos have been taken the children can write about their choice of sculpture, why they chose it and what it means to them.
- If there isn't time for the clay work in the session this could be done in school.