

Carlton-in-Lindrick St John 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. They will have the opportunity to look round the church and record on their own triptychs, their responses to what they see.

Resources:

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

Pencils



heritage learning welcome



Information for Leader

This triptych is a copy of one by Rubens which is to be found in Antwerp Cathedral. It follows the theme of bearing Christ, with the central section showing Jesus being taken from the cross, the left section Mary handing Jesus to Simeon in the temple, and the right section Mary pregnant with Jesus as she visits Elizabeth. The theme continues on the original in Antwerp with St Christopher carrying the child Jesus on his back.

Introduction (15 mins)

- Start with the children sitting in the south aisle. 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. Listen to some of the things they have found. If they don't mention it, ask if anyone noticed the picture in front of them which is split into three. 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, *ptyssō* = to fold). Often the side pictures are hinged, like doors, and fold over to cover the main picture. This one doesn't fold over, but it is a copy of another one, which does fold over. Older pupils will recognise tri- as relating to three from triangle. Look at the picture and ask the following questions:
 - What is happening in the picture in the middle? Who is the figure in the middle? Who might the other people be? (They are two anonymous helpers, Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, Mary, John, Mary Cleophas and Mary Magdela)
 - What is happening in the other two pictures?
 - Which part of the picture do you think is the most important? What makes you say this?
 - These pictures have a theme of Jesus being carried. How is he being carried in each section?
- A triptych is a device used in art, and particularly in churches. The most important part of the picture is placed in the middle, and related pictures, or marginal scenes of the main picture, in the other two spaces. So, here we have Jesus being taken from the cross 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 that they would like to know more about.

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/nottingham-st-peter/hfitting.php>
- <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/newark-st-mary/hfitting.php>
- <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/collingham-north/hpics.php>
- <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/nottingham-st-mary/hfitting.php>
- <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/whatton/hfitting.php#reredos>
- <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/plumtree/hfitting.php>
- <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/cinderhill/hfitting.php>

- Children can create their own triptychs based on stories they know from the Bible.