

Edwinstowe St Mary

Carved heads on arches

Aim: To recognise that everyone is different and special

Objective: Pupils will find and look at some of the carved heads on the arches and recognise that they are all different. They will explore how people are different.

Curriculum links:

KS1 Myself and Belonging

Activity: The children will begin by looking for some of the sculpted heads and then make their own heads, thinking about how it might feel to have a model of your head in church.

Resources: Photos of the faces (these could be taken from <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/edwinstowe/hpics.php>) enough for one between two children

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

Information for Leader

This session is based on the sculptured corbel heads on the arches. These may have been inserted between 1260 and 1280, when two light windows were inserted in the north and south walls. One of the heads is said to be of Geoffrey Plantagenet son of Henry II and 'Fair Rosamund' who was Archbishop of York in 1191, and next to it that of Archbishop Thomas Beckett, killed 1170, canonised 1173, who is opposite to that of Henry II.

Introduction (5 mins)

- Start with the children sitting in the pews. After they have taken off their coats and settled down, tell them you have some 'friends' hiding in the church, but they ran away and hid when they heard the children come in. Can the children help you find your friends? Give out photos of the heads, one between two (ask the school staff to help with this) and allow the children three minutes to look around and see if they can help you find your friends. (You may need to remind them about not running in church and the need to be quiet, so as not to frighten the friends.)
- When several pairs have found their 'friend', call the children back together. As they tell you where your 'friends' are hiding, thank the children for their help. If any haven't been able to find their 'friend' suggest they are still hiding, and ask all the children to keep watching and see if you can see them.

Activity (30 mins)

- Did they find their 'friends'? Some of them are a bit similar and it might have been hard to work out which was which, but when the children looked closely they should have seen that each one was different.
- Explain that the 'friends' were put there over 800 years ago to decorate the church. Some of them are models of famous people (Geoffrey Plantagenet, Thomas Becket and Henry II). Why might the people of Edwinstowe at that time, have wanted these people in the church? Some of them, we don't know who they were. They may have been based on the stonemasons who carved them, or they may have been made up people. What might the stonemasons and their families have thought and felt when they looked at their faces in the church? Sometimes in churches there are really ugly horrid faces. Why do you think they might have made those?
- What might it have felt like to have your face in church like that? (Encourage answers around feeling important, valued, that you belonged, being special in the community).
- If you were making models of faces to go in church now, who would you include? (With younger children this is most likely to be people they know – encourage them to say why they would have that person.)



heritage learning welcome



- Give each child a piece of clay (about the size of an apple) and ask them to make a head. You could quickly demonstrate this so they realise they only need the front of the face and how to make a hole in the back so they can be hung on a nail. As the children make their heads, talk to them about who they are making and what that person is like.
- When they are finished make sure each has a hole for hanging and the child's initials on the back. Have plenty of bowls of warm water and towels for washing hands. Keep the finished heads on trays for transporting back to school later.

Plenary (5 mins)

- Point out any previously unfound 'friends'.
- Pause to look at the heads and to appreciate the variety there is in them, though each one is unique. If appropriate say a prayer together:
 - Dear God, Thank you for the men who made the faces on the walls a long time ago, and that we can still enjoy them. Thank you for making each one of us different and special. Help us to remember that everyone we meet is special to you. Amen

Extension

- The heads could be kept in church for the congregation to see on Sunday, before being returned to school.
- Look at other examples of faces in churches. The best nationally are at Kilpeck in Herefordshire (<http://www.britainexpress.com/counties/hereford/Kilpeck.htm>). In Southwell and Nottingham Diocese look at Averham (<http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/averham/hfitting.php>), or Holme (<http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/holme/hfitting.php#extcarvings>) for some carvings of unusual beasts and people outside the church.