

Westminster Cathedral Animal Trail

1. Welcome to the Cathedral

Introduce yourself and the Cathedral to the pupils. Ask them questions such as:

- What do you notice?
- What colours do you see?
- What sizes and shapes can you see?
- Can you see any words?

Give a brief explanation of what mosaics are – small, coloured pieces of glass or stone (*tesserae*) set in mortar to create an image.

Explain the dedication of the Cathedral (Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ) hence the colour red and the Latin words. There is a bell tower (with a bell called Edward). More information is on p2 of the booklet (slide 2 of the PP).

Encourage discussion about the following:

- What do you think you will find inside the Cathedral?
- There are lots of animals inside this Cathedral. Can you think of any you might find? (Point out the trail on p13/slide 13)
- What is your favourite animal that you might hope to find? (Write it on p2)

Explain that there is one animal we will be looking at and that's the pelican and his name is Sang (see p2). We'll find out much more about Sang later.

There is a whole variety of animals here and they all have a special job to do in our Cathedral and tell us something about Jesus, his life, and our faith. What special job would you like to do/what career would you like to have? (Write it on p2).

You may ask the pupils if they have any questions before we go inside...

When you go inside, get the pupils to look around briefly – at the vault and domes, the Great Rood, the altar, the rows of chairs Explain that we will be looking at lots of these later but for now we are going to look for animals in the side chapels as this is where many of them can be found...

Aside: Look at the size of the Cathedral. How big do you think it is? The Cathedral is about 54,800 sq. feet, nearly the size of a football pitch (standard ones are 76,900 sq. feet although some are smaller)

2. Chapel of St Patrick and the Saints of Ireland

You may wish to ask the pupils questions such as:

- What do you see?
- Can you see any animals? Do you know why?
- What colour is used here?
- Who is St Patrick? What do you know about him?
- Can you see any symbols associated with him? Do you know what it means?

- Are any of you Irish or have Irish relatives?

Explain that St. Patrick is also the patron saint of Nigeria. In 1961, Irish bishops in Nigeria named Patrick as the country's patron saint.

Look at the different images of snakes and encourage pupils to design their own (on p3) as an artist. Highlight that St Patrick didn't get rid of snakes, this is just symbolic as he brought Christianity to Ireland. (You might also ask them to think of another story in the Bible which mentions a snake which symbolises sin).

Explain a little about St Patrick (information on p3), you may even wish to dramatise briefly with a few volunteers.

Emphasise that he used the shamrock because of the Trinity and look for examples of these. Show other symbols of the Trinity on p3 and encourage pupils to either copy one they see in the Cathedral or design their own (on p3).

Explain that St Patrick when Patrick was in Ireland and worked as a shepherd, he was often cold and alone, at first, he couldn't even speak the language. But Patrick had a strong faith even as a young boy and he prayed to Jesus for strength and protection. His famous prayer is called St Patrick's Breastplate (you may wish to discuss briefly).

Explain that many people come into the Cathedral to talk to Jesus as St Patrick did, not only when they are scared and alone, but because he is their friend, just as he was to St Patrick. We must be very quiet when we are going around the Cathedral as other people are praying, and we will get an opportunity to pray later too...

3. Chapel of St Andrew and the Saints of Scotland

As before, you may wish to ask the pupils questions such as:

- What do you see?
- Can you see any animals? Do you know why?
- What colour is used here?
- Who is St Andrew? What do you know about him?
- Are any of you Scottish or have Scottish relatives?

Explain that St Andrew is also the patron saint of Greece (among other countries).

Look at the different images of fish, which ones can you find/identify? How many can you find? In the box on p4 encourage pupils to copy an image or design their own fish/sea-life creature.

Explain a little about the meaning of the fish in Christianity (information on p4). You might even demonstrate doing the early Christian's secret code (draw a doodle and have one of them draw the eye).

Explain the meaning of Ichthus and have the pupils repeat each Greek word after you so they can learn words in several languages today (first Latin, now Greek...) Have pupils write the meaning of each of the Greek words in English on p4. HINT: They are all in black at the bottom of p4.

For those pupils who have finished, you might encourage them to learn the Greek words (and perhaps quiz them). You could also get them to think about their own Christian code. Would they use an animal?

You might point out the light fittings and the ornamentation on the gates. The light bulbs represent ostrich eggs which are a Byzantine symbol of rebirth and God's eternal love for humankind. Along the top of the gates alternate a thistle and an egg.

Before you leave, highlight that St Andrew followed Jesus' call to be 'fishers of men'. Jesus calls each one of us to follow his call, and to live like him, although each of us are called in a different way.

Can you think which saint or animal we might find next?

You might want to point out St David on the way and his symbol and why.

4. The Lady Chapel

Point out that this is bigger than the other side chapels and perhaps ask:

- Why is this chapel bigger than the others?
- Why is Mary special?
- What do you know about Mary?
- Look around this chapel – what do you see?
- Do you think this is suitable for Our Lady?

Look at the Tree of Life (see information on p5). You may discuss how a tree provides shelter to animals and ask them if they can think of examples. Encourage them to think how they can provide shelter and safety for other people, through their words and actions.

Discuss how Mary provides us with protection and care because she is Jesus' mother, our mother, and Mother of the Church. Allow pupils time to say their own prayer to Mary. They may wish to record this on p5. If they wish to, pupils can also decorate it, or they could draw an image instead (associated with Mary and the chapel) after their prayer.

You may wish to ask pupils if they have any special intentions and then say the Hail Mary together.

Explain that we are now going to walk to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel where we **MUST** be silent. We will also be walking at the very front of the Cathedral so we must do so respectfully. You may wish to point out various special bits on the way e.g. altar, cathedra...

5. Blessed Sacrament Chapel

Remind pupils that Jesus is present in the Tabernacle so we must show a sign of respect (bow, genuflect or kneel).

Ask pupils which animals they see here and what they think they symbolise (*Lamb, pelican, peacock, phoenix, dragon*). You may give them some information and then get them to match them up in the table on p6 (either one by one or all together – might do when you leave as people are praying so you might stay here for a very short time).

Remind them about Sang/the importance of the pelican in this Cathedral and point out where it might be. There is a photo on p6 and a sketch by a primary school pupil on all pages.

Depending on the age of pupils, you might ask pupils questions such as:

- What do you know about the blood of Jesus?
- When might we hear about this?
- Why did Jesus offer his body and blood for us?
- Is there a link between the Blessed Sacrament and the image of the pelican?
- Do you think the pelican is a good symbol for the Eucharist/this Cathedral?

Remember to show respect as you leave.

6. Holy Family/St Joseph's Chapel

You may discuss questions such as:

- What do we mean by the Holy Family?
- What do you know about St Joseph?
- Can you find an animal here that hasn't been mentioned before?
- What does it symbolise?
- Why do you think it was specifically chosen for this chapel? (Link family and peace)
- How can you show peace with members of your family?

Look at information on p7 and encourage pupils to complete the box on how they can be more peaceful at home. Look at other symbols. Ask pupils if they have seen them before and where. Explain the *chi-rho* and encourage pupils to draw one in the box on p7 (they could do their own design). Encourage pupils to say a short prayer for their families before they leave.

7. St George and the English Martyrs

Explain that we are nearly finished as this is the last of the side chapels we will look at, the very last one is the Holy Souls side chapel which we will pass, but there are some more animals to learn about. You may consider questions such as:

- What do you know about St George?
- What animal is associated with him? Do you know why? Was it a real dragon?

Explain that a dragon can signify a challenge or difficulty in our own lives, things that scare or threaten us or our family. You may ask pupils to give examples.

Ask the pupils if they know what a martyr is and explain how they are different to a saint. Ask them to write the name of their favourite saint in the box on p8. Some pupils may also include why.

See more information on p8 and point out the image of St John Fisher and St Thomas More. You may mention that they used to be a monkey in the image and ask if pupils can see it. You can also ask if they think it should have been removed or not and encourage them to give reasons.

Explain that like St George and the English martyrs we can try to overcome these with Jesus' help. We can also help others with their challenges and difficulties. Encourage pupils to reflect on how they can do this and give them time to record this on p8.

You may wish to ask pupils to share any ideas they wrote about.

You will probably point out St John Southworth and explain a little more about him too.

You might also remind pupils about the animal hunt at the back so that they can cross off any other animals they have seen along the way.

8. The Great Rood

Explain the difference between a cross and a crucifix briefly. You might want to ask pupils questions such as:

- What do you see?
- There are 4 animals on the cross? What are they?
- Can you think of why these have been chosen and what they represent?

There is a little more information on p9. Encourage pupils to match the symbol up with the Gospel writer in the table on p9.

Ask them to think of an animal that would represent themselves and record it on p9. Perhaps they could share some ideas and reasons (or draw the animal if they would prefer to).

Explain that the four Gospels are part of the New Testament and that there are lots of true stories and stories that Jesus told here. Remind them that the most important events are when Jesus shed his blood on the cross on Good Friday and then rose again from the dead at Easter. (You might quiz pupils about some details).

There are also other stories and events that are recorded in the rest of the New Testament as well as the Old Testament. Ask the pupils what their favourite Bible story/quote is and why (they just need to reflect on why). They can record it in the box on p9.

Explain that they are going to learn more Latin and explain *INRI* and alpha and omega. See if they remember any other Latin and Greek that they have already learned today...

9. Goodbye

Explain that it's almost time to go... but ask them to look at p10. Did anyone remember this Latin phrase?

Encourage them to have a look now and see if they can learn the English (or Latin!) by heart.

Read the information on p10 about pelicans, charity and giving. Explain the Passage and what it does.

Explain why the vault of the nave and the domes are still unfinished. You could ask them questions such as:

- Do you think it is right that the vault is unfinished?
- What do you think the money should be spent on?
- Do you think the vault should be finished?
- What do you think it should look like?

Invite pupils to look at p11. Depending on time, they might want to write/draw some basic ideas here. It will be best to focus on ideas for a single dome - perhaps using a paper plate.

Explain that the artwork is something that they could do in much more detail when they get home/back to school as this might be something that the school will follow up.

Ask pupils about their animal hunt. See p12. Reassure them that it's very difficult to find them all and that they might need to come back several times to find them all. In fact, for some of them they would need to look through a camera as they are so far away so perhaps their parents could come back with them if they are interested in finding out more.

Finally, ask pupils what they enjoyed most about their visit and what they will remember. They may wish to record this on p10 if they wish.

Perhaps, before they leave, you could say together the prayer on p10. Encourage them to leave quietly and show respect to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Other ideas for the Animal Trail

Have pupils dramatize the story of St Patrick. You may include props etc shepherd's staff, sheep hat, bishop's mitre etc

Have a sea-life/fish craft session (clean and simple) There are very many options for this e.g., they could cut/tear and design a fish using card and write their name on it as a follower of Jesus...

Create a chi-rho or fish using pipe cleaners

Have some laminated photos of other animals from the trail so pupils can see what they look like and where they might be found (see some of Diana's photos)

Have pupils create a freeze-frame or a kind/peaceful act at home etc

Create a pelican badge/keyring (colour in an image on card)

Create a crown (i.e. put tape on a bit of card for their heads) and write the Latin words on it. They can then decorate it.

Have laminated cards with the letters *INRI* on them and then the meaning on the back. Put them in order as a whole group.

Have laminated images (or even cuddly versions) of each of the Gospel writers with their names on different cards so that you can match them as a group.

Give pupils a certificate at the end of their trail. It can have a picture of Sang on it.

Note that these are some very simple, quick, cheap, and clean ideas that can take place to make the experience fun and memorable for the pupils. They can also provide various opportunities for photos or writing back at school so that teachers can put them on their website/in newsletters and promote the Cathedral even more!

You could have a mosaic art competition at some stage and promote it even further in all our schools e.g., a free visit for the winning class/pupil.