

The Church – the House of the Gospel	Year Group: KS2	No. of lessons: 3+
Links: Cambs: CPE2, CPE3, CPE5, CWO3, CPL1, CWR4 P'borough: CPE3, CPE4, CPE5, CWO3, CPL1, CPL4, N'folk: CP, CLS, CKF		
Learning objectives: To explore how beliefs and stories about God and Jesus can be portrayed in art and symbols. To begin to learn how to read religious art and artefacts.		
Questions for reflection: What kind of things do I like to use to decorate my own personal space and why do I choose them? What can I find out about other people (family, friends) when I look round their special rooms? What stories about Jesus do I remember; and are they the same ones we have found in the church? Are all the pictures and carvings in the church special, or are some just decoration? What have I found out about the Christians who decorated the church by looking at their building?		
Activities and experiences: The heart of the Christian faith is the proclamation of the Gospel or “Good News” of Jesus Christ. A church building should be designed to promote this. What evidence does your church contain of the message of Jesus i.e. what part of his story can you reconstruct from the fabric and artefacts? You may need a good symbol dictionary for this, if only to eliminate some of the saints’ stories from the equation. Look at the following : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is portrayed in the stained glass windows, the textiles and the carvings? • Is there a reredos (a carving behind the main altar – often showing the Last Supper or the Crucifixion)? If so does it help you work out what the altar is for? • Can you find any crosses (including the shape of the church)? What form do they take? • Are there any symbols which need interpreting? Are they readily understandable or do you need a symbol dictionary? Do they refer to Jesus / God / Holy Spirit, or to the saint to whom the church is dedicated? • Where can you find the words of the Gospel e.g. Bible on the lectern, banners, noticeboards and displays? As a class (group, individuals) construct a jigsaw like display of the evidence you have collected about Jesus from the church building. Discuss together whether this is an adequate portrayal of the story of Jesus (and what Christians believe about him) or whether there are obvious parts of the story you feel are “missing”. Create a final jigsaw piece to list the “missing details” you feel are important. There is a basic website of Christian symbols at http://home.att.net/~wegast/symbols/symbols.htm although this unfortunately does not contain saints’ symbols.		

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