Special people, special places

Making connections between Christian pilgrimage and everyday life

Ideal for Key Stage Two

Janet Marshall

Foreword by Lat Blaylock, Executive Officer, Professional Council for RE
Preface

Pilgrimage is a wide-reaching concept. In essence it is about making journeys.

It starts with us. We all share a common pilgrimage—life! Life is a journey. It is not a solitary journey; it is one that we all share with those around us. Life is never static; we are continually growing, changing and moving. For Christians, there is also the important belief that pilgrimage continues after earthly lives have ended, that the spiritual part of our being continues on another heavenly journey to everlasting life with God.

Cardinal Basil Hume OSB had this to say about pilgrimage:

Life is a pilgrimage… So here I am, a pilgrim through life, restless indeed, looking, searching all the time for that which will make me truly and fully myself… The way is often rough for a pilgrim and hard going, but pilgrims must keep going resolutely and courageously. They are lost if they stop looking for the right way to reach their destination.

From To Be a Pilgrim: A Spiritual Notebook (Triangle, 1988)

Another contemporary Christian writer, Brother Ramon SSF, wrote, ‘We all go on pilgrimage. It is part of our human yearning to associate places with people we love, with experiences which are precious, with events which are holy’ (from The Heart of Prayer, Zondervan, 1995).

Pilgrimage is also about places—special, holy destinations that lie at a journey’s end. These places have often become sacred for individual believers because they experienced a desire to serve God in a particular way while they were there.


Pilgrimage sites are associated with holy people, with saints, sometimes in the sense of the presence of relics, or with the miraculous, for example, the location of visions or healing events. Acts of healing are often sought and sometimes reported by pilgrims… The hopeful traveller seeks to meet with the holy as a means of bringing meaning to this life.

There is nothing new about pilgrimage. It has been a feature of religious belief all over the world for hundreds of years. It is not something that is exclusive to Christianity. It is a key part of many world faiths.

The first recorded Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem was around AD170. The pilgrim was a man named Melito of Sardis. He wanted to see for himself the places written about in the Gospels. The great Christian writer Jerome said that he felt a visit to the Holy Land would enable pilgrims to understand scripture better. The emperor Constantine gave state recognition to pilgrimage by excavating sites in Jerusalem that were of particular interest to Christians. He then marked these sites by building magnificent churches.

Desert pilgrimages also became popular in those early years. Christian hermits and monastic communities began to make journeys into the desert in Egypt. It was thought that the Christian faith had become too worldly and there was therefore a need to ‘retreat’ into the desert to escape the world and pray for it. Many of these early pilgrims were monks and nuns.

Pilgrimage gradually spread. Missionary monks known as ‘ascetics’ on the outer fringes of Western Europe began to make pilgrimage more imaginative. The Celtic ascetics, who later became saints, saw pilgrimage as a spiritual adventure. They set sail in boats called coracles and allowed the wind of the Spirit to take them wherever it would. It was also about mission, spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. Wherever their boat landed would be the place to start spreading the gospel message.

Other Celtic saints, such as Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, planned specific destinations for their journeys, in order to spread the gospel. For these pilgrims, pilgrimage was about leaving their homelands and setting out with a purpose into the unknown. They were making these journeys for Jesus, to take his message to places where it was yet unknown. They were also imitating what Jesus himself did during his ministry: he travelled from place to place, teaching and caring for others.

By medieval times, pilgrimages had become important acts of faith. People made pilgrimages to holy places in order to develop their own spiritual lives. Pilgrimage journeys were often long and arduous. Many were sent on them as a penance—punishment for their wrongdoings. It was a popular punishment for thieves and murderers. They had to obtain a certificate from the holy site to prove they had actually got there. Wealthy pilgrims often paid others to go on pilgrimages on their behalf, to offer prayers for them at holy sites.

So what is pilgrimage all about in the 21st century?
Does it still have a part to play in the lives of modern-day Christians? In short, the answer is yes! This book aims to bring alive ten pilgrimage sites in Great Britain that are still popular destinations for today’s Christian pilgrims. Indeed, there are busy sites of pilgrimage all over the world.

What is the difference between a pilgrimage and a ‘holy holiday'? After all, the word ‘holiday’ comes from ‘holy day’. Throughout history, pilgrimages to holy sites have held even more significance when undertaken on holy days. For example, pilgrims to the Shrine of St James in Compostela, Spain, always used to aim to arrive on the feast of St James, 25 July. Many pilgrims today use a pilgrimage as a time to unwind and relax, to explore the area around the site.

But is a pilgrim just another type of tourist? The main difference between a pilgrim and a tourist is that a pilgrim seeks to be changed by the experience of pilgrimage. The journey is an important part of that experience. It is a time to reflect and prepare so that the pilgrim is then ready to offer himself or herself to God in prayer on arriving at the holy place. The time spent there will then be a time of reflection about his or her life. Many pilgrims see it as a time to recharge their spiritual batteries, ready to go back to their busy working or home lives again, strengthened and renewed. At particular sites there may be a special focus on healing and renewal.

Pilgrimage is a fascinating topic and it is very much ‘alive and kicking’ for Christians today. This book aims to bring it alive for children. It seeks to inform and inspire teachers of Key Stage 2 to enable them to introduce their children to this exciting and challenging concept as part of their RE lessons. It seeks to introduce places of pilgrimage across Britain that are still important for Christians today.

It is well worth taking the children on visits to cathedrals, shrines and other places of pilgrimage. There is nothing like experiencing the places and meeting the people for whom they are special today. There are ten sites featured in this book and most of them have education departments. Details about the services they offer to schools are set out in the relevant sections of the book.

Children are fascinated by pilgrimage, and I hope you enjoy exploring it with your children as much as I do.

Janet Marshall
Contents

Foreword ................................................................. 8
Introduction: How to use this book ................................................................. 9

SECTION 1: LIFE AS A JOURNEY
Part 1: The journey of life ................................................................. 12
Part 2: Special people, special places in our lives ................................................................. 16

SECTION 2: CHRISTIANS ON THE MOVE: PILGRIMAGE SITES ACROSS BRITAIN
Part 1: Introducing pilgrimage ................................................................. 22
Part 2: Pilgrimage in medieval times ................................................................. 26
Part 3: Places of pilgrimage around Britain ................................................................. 28
  Canterbury Cathedral, Kent: the Shrine of St Thomas à Becket ......................... 30
  Durham Cathedral: the Shrine of St Cuthbert ....................................................... 33
  Walsingham, Norfolk: the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham ......................... 36
  Holywell, St Winifred’s Well .................................................................................... 40
  Chester Cathedral: the Shrine of St Werburgh .................................................... 42
  Lincoln Cathedral: the Shrine of St Hugh ............................................................. 45
  Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk: the Shrine of St Edmund .......................................... 47
  The Island of Iona, Argyle and Bute, Scotland: St Columba .................................. 50
  Westminster Abbey, London: the Shrine of St Edward ....................................... 53
  Westminster Abbey, London: the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior ..................... 55

SECTION 3: PILGRIMAGE IN THE BIBLE
Part 1: The story of Noah ................................................................. 58
Part 2: The story of Moses ................................................................. 63
Part 3: Jesus on the move! ................................................................. 67
Part 4: Jesus chooses his first disciples ................................................................. 72
Part 5: The story of Paul ................................................................. 74

WORKSHEETS
Worksheet 1: ‘Journey of life’ ................................................................. 80
Worksheet 2: ‘I’m a star!’ ................................................................. 81
Worksheet 3: Master Cedric, the pilgrim leader ................................................................. 82
Worksheet 4: Do we need safe places (sanctuaries)? ................................................................. 83
Worksheet 5: The Walsingham legend ................................................................. 84
Worksheet 6: Come to the water! ................................................................. 85
Worksheet 7: Goosey! Goosey! ................................................................. 86
Worksheet 8: St Hugh fact file ................................................................. 87
Worksheet 9: St Hugh: What would you do? ................................................................. 88
Worksheet 10: A Celtic Christian prayer ................................................................. 89
Worksheet 11: Design a Celtic cross ................................................................. 90
Worksheet 12: He has no name ................................................................. 91
Worksheet 13: Rainbow messages ................................................................. 92
Worksheet 14: Making a prayer journey with beads ................................................................. 93
Worksheet 15: Jesus’ last journey ................................................................. 94
Worksheet 16: Spotlight on Paul ................................................................. 95

BIBLIOGRAPHY ................................................................................................. 96
How to use this book

This book is a resource for teachers of Key Stage Two to introduce and explore the wide-ranging concept of pilgrimage.

All the material is curriculum-linked in order to supplement teaching of various units of study in County syllabi and in the QCA units for RE. Specific links are set out below and throughout each section.

The book is set out in three sections that follow on from one another sequentially in order to extend the children’s knowledge and understanding of the concept of pilgrimage. The three sections comprise:

- Section 1: Life as a journey
- Section 2: Christians on the move: pilgrimage sites across Britain
- Section 3: Pilgrimage in the Bible

Breadth of study

- Religions and beliefs a: Christianity.
- Themes e: Beliefs and questions: how people’s beliefs about God, the world and others impact on their lives.
- Themes h: The journey of life and death: why some occasions are sacred to believers, and what people think about life after death.
- Experiences and opportunities p: Considering a range of human experiences and feelings.
- Experiences and opportunities q: Reflecting on their own and others’ insights into life and its origin, purpose and meaning.
- Experiences and opportunities r: Expressing and communicating their own and others’ insights through art and design, music, dance, drama and ICT.

SECTION 1: LIFE AS A JOURNEY

This section begins where the children are. Through stories and activities they are encouraged to look at their lives as a journey and explore ways in which relationships, places and experiences shape us as people who are constantly growing and developing spiritually as well as physically.

NB: It is advisable to work through the whole of Section 1 in the order that it appears so that the concept might be introduced thoroughly.

Curriculum links

Non-statutory national framework: RE KS2

Knowledge, skills and understanding

- Learning from religion e: Pupils should be taught to reflect on sources of inspiration in their own and others’ lives.

SECTION 2: CHRISTIANS ON THE MOVE

This section is in two parts. Part 1 introduces the concept of special and holy places through stories and activities. It also introduces the fact that pilgrimage has taken place for hundreds of years. Through the eyes of Master Cedric, a medieval pilgrimage group leader, children are encouraged to think about what pilgrimage was like at that time. There are suggested follow-up activities. Part 2 offers introductory information and a range of texts and activities on ten pilgrimage sites across Britain.

NB: If time is limited, you may wish to select particular pilgrimage sites. You may, for example, wish to prioritize a site that is geographically closest to your area of the country, so that follow-up visits can take place. A selection of sites that are further afield could follow this study. Alternatively, you may wish to introduce the children to all ten of the sites outlined in this book. The sites may be explored in any order. Some sites may link with particular history topics you are teaching.
Curriculum links

Non-statutory national framework: RE KS2
Knowledge, skills and understanding

- Learning about religion d: Pupils should be taught to investigate the significance of religion in local and national communities.
- Learning about religion e: Pupils should be taught to consider the meaning of a range of forms of religious expression, understand why they are important in religion and note links between them (for example, pilgrimage and prayer).
- Learning from religion e: Pupils should be taught to reflect on sources of inspiration in their own and others’ lives.

Breadth of study

- Religions and beliefs a: Christianity.
- Religions and beliefs c: A religious community with a significant local presence, where appropriate.
- Themes e: Beliefs and questions: how people’s beliefs about God, the world and others impact on their lives.
- Themes g: Worship, pilgrimage and sacred places: where, how and why people worship, including at particular sites.
- Themes j: Inspirational people: figures from whom believers find inspiration.
- Themes k: Religion and the individual: what is expected of a person in following a religion or belief.
- Experiences and opportunities n: Encountering religion through visitors and visits to places of worship, and focusing on the impact and reality of religion on the local and global community.
- Experiences and opportunities p: Considering a range of human experiences and feelings.
- Experiences and opportunities r: Expressing and communicating their own and others’ insights through art and design, music, drama and ICT.

QCA units 2000

- Unit 5D: How do the beliefs of Christians influence their actions?
- Unit 3E: What is faith and what difference does it make? (In particular section 3: the impact of faith/responses to stories of faith.)
- Unit 4B, section 1: Christmas journeys: pilgrimage.
- Unit 6E: What can we learn from Christian religious buildings?

SECTION 3: PILGRIMAGE IN THE BIBLE

This section explores pilgrimage-like biblical journeys that had life-changing consequences for the characters involved. The aim is to show how the concept of pilgrimage stretches throughout the Bible story. The material explores the stories of:

- Noah’s obedient response when God asked him to set off on a journey into the unknown.
- Moses, who was called by God to lead the Israelites through the desert on a journey of risk and bravery.
- Jesus’ pilgrimage to Jerusalem as a child and how Mary and Joseph discovered what a special person he was growing up to be.
- Jesus’ choice of his first disciples and how they each embarked on a personal pilgrimage. They left their homes behind to travel around with Jesus.
- How Paul was travelling to Damascus when God called him in a very dramatic way. He then embarked on many journeys to tell others about Jesus.

Curriculum links

Non-statutory framework: RE KS2
Breadth of study

- Religions and beliefs a: Christianity.
- Themes f: Teachings and authority: what sacred texts and other sources say about God, the world and human life.
- Themes j: Inspirational people: figures from whom believers find inspiration.
- Experiences and opportunities r: Expressing and communicating their own and others’ insights through art, design, music, dance, drama and ICT.

QCA units 2000

- Unit 6C: Why are sacred texts important?
- Unit 3D: What is the Bible and why is it important for Christians?

ACTIVITIES

All three sections suggest various activities to help extend and consolidate each topic area. Many of these activities can be linked to English and drama units.
**Durham Cathedral: the Shrine of St Cuthbert**

**Teacher fact file**

- Durham Cathedral houses the tomb of St Cuthbert. His body was brought here from his monastery in Lindisfarne in the year 995, after the monks had fled Lindisfarne under threat from Viking raids.
- At first, the cathedral was a small church called the White Church, built by the monks to house the tomb. It was then enlarged and a monastery was built too.
- Durham Cathedral became an important place of pilgrimage because of Cuthbert’s tomb. It became a shrine.
- The Venerable Bede is also buried in the cathedral, in the Galilee Chapel. Bede was a monk from Jarrow who died in 735. He wrote the first history of England and many other books about saints. Bede wrote the life story of St Cuthbert.
- On the great north door there is a large Norman door knocker. It is in the shape of a lion’s head and is known as the Sanctuary Knocker. This is a sacred sign that reminds people that this is a special, holy place.
- From 1464 until 1524, 331 people were given sanctuary in the cathedral. This means that the church gave them protection from the law. If they could reach up and grasp the knocker, they were entitled to 40 days’ protection inside the cathedral. This ancient English right of sanctuary was abolished in 1623.

For resources and information about school visits to Durham Cathedral, contact the Education Officer. E-mail: Elizabeth.baker@durhamcathedral.co.uk.
The official website for the cathedral is www.durhamcathedral.co.uk. Find out more about the Venerable Bede by visiting www.bedesworld.co.uk.
The education centre for Bede’s World is www.bedesworld.co.uk/education-visits.php.

**Activity 1: Sanctuary**

There is an obvious link between the monks wishing to find sanctuary for the body of St Cuthbert and the door knocker, which offered a place of safety in the cathedral for people in danger or in trouble with the law.

This provides a useful and interesting opportunity to explore the whole concept of sanctuary with children, including issues presently affecting Britain and many other countries such as asylum seekers, human rights issues, racism, suffering and poverty around the world. This could be linked into work on Citizenship and RE units.
For resources and information about other agencies to contact for additional information, visit the following websites:
www.christian-aid.org.uk;
www.amnesty.org; www.redcross.org.uk;
www.salvationarmy.org.uk.

Activity 2: Cuthbert's journey

This dramatic reading uses choral speaking to tell the story of how St Cuthbert came to Durham. Legend has it that Cuthbert’s body was carried from Lindisfarne by the monks who were fleeing from Viking invasion. After wandering around the north of England and southern Scotland for seven years, they eventually laid his body to rest at Chester-le-Street near Durham. Here it remained for over a hundred years.

When new invasions were threatened, they again removed his body—this time to Ripon—but a few months later they carried it back to Chester-le-Street. On the way back, however, when the monks reached the place where the city of Durham now stands, their wagon came to a halt and would not move. Tradition has it that St Cuthbert appeared to them in a vision and indicated that he wished to be finally laid to rest on that very spot. This is why they buried him there and built the church.

After reading this piece together, you may wish to discuss the following points with the children:

❖ Why was it so important for the monks to put St Cuthbert’s body in a safe tomb?
❖ Is it still important for people today to have a funeral and a special place to remember someone they love after that person has died? (Memories of a person always live on. Christians give thanks to God for someone’s life when they die and they believe that the person’s soul rests in peace with God.)

You may also wish to find out more about St Cuthbert’s life and why he became such a famous saint.

CAST

★ Chorus (whole class or as many as you wish)
★ Voice 1
★ Voice 2
★ Voice 3
★ Voice 4

Chorus: (Start quietly, then increase volume)
	Whooosh… roar! Whooosh… roar!
The waves were whirling all around.
Whooosh… roar! Whooosh… roar!
The waves were roaring all around.

Continue making a ‘whoosh, whoosh’ sound, rhythmically and quietly in the background, while Voice 1 is speaking the next line.

Voice 1: The boat set out one stormy day with a special cargo stored away. The little boat was tossed and blown as the monks headed far away from home.

Chorus: (Start quietly, then increase volume)
	Whooosh… roar! Whooosh… roar!
The waves were whirling all around.
Whooosh… roar! Whooosh… roar!
The waves were roaring all around.

Voice 2: Soon they reached the safe, dry land where a wagon waited on the sand. Cuthbert’s body was placed inside and they all set off on a long, long ride.

Chorus: And the wheels went round on the rocky ground.
And the wheels went round on the rocky ground.

Voice 3: Away from the Vikings they must go. Quickly, horses, don’t be slow! They travelled around from town to town, but they could not find safe resting ground.

Chorus: And the wheels went round on the rocky ground.
And the wheels went round on the rocky ground.
Voice 4: They wanted Cuthbert to rest safely soon, but where could they build his final tomb? Then they came to Durham town and stopped to rest on the stony ground.

Chorus: They stopped to rest in Durham town; the wagon stood still on the stony ground. They stopped to rest in Durham town; the wagon stood still on the stony ground.

Voice 1: One monk said, ‘Brothers, it’s time to go! So come along now, don’t be slow! Let’s get going while the sun still shines—the resting place we’re sure to find!’

Chorus: Heave ho, heave ho! Heave ho, heave ho!

Voice 2: They pushed and pulled, but the wheels were stuck! Stuck in a great big, dirty rut! The wagon stood still on the dusty ground; they were stuck in Durham town!

Chorus: Dig, dig, dig, dig! Dig, dig, dig, dig! Dig, dig, dig, dig! Dig, dig, dig, dig! Dig, dig, dig, dig! Dig, dig, dig, dig!

Voice 2: They dug a grave and built a tomb; they built a church, then very soon a monastery and cathedral grand they did build upon this land.

Chorus: So come on, pilgrims, head that way, to Durham, hurry, don’t delay! Remember all who brought him there, and stop to say a little prayer.

Activity 3: Do we need safe places (sanctuaries)?

This activity offers the opportunity for children to explore why symbols are important for giving information, reminding people of things, or encouraging them to think or pray. You could also use the activity to encourage children to think of a symbol of their own that they could use to communicate something important to them, such as being kind to one another, being a true friend and so on. Have a discussion about this to help them decide on the symbol they would use.

Follow up with a discussion about why the cross or crucifix is used by Christians as a symbol, and the significance of the other symbols on Worksheet 4 (p. 83).

Activity 4: Modern-day examples of sanctuary

Use the following information as a springboard for further discussion or research.

❖ Asylum seekers have taken refuge in churches in this country.
❖ Animals who are injured or species in danger of extinction are often placed in animal ‘sanctuaries’.
❖ Should holy places like churches be places of sanctuary for people in need, even if they have broken the law?
❖ When modern-day pilgrims reach the north door at Durham Cathedral and see the Sanctuary Knocker, this gives them the opportunity to think and pray about all those people and creatures across the world who are in danger or need help—for example, in countries where there is war, violence or famine. What other symbols or objects could be placed in a church or other building, such as your school, to help people to think or pray?
Pilgrimage is a fascinating topic and very much ‘alive and kicking’ for Christians today. This book explores the wide-ranging concept of pilgrimage and seeks to inform and inspire Key Stage Two teachers, enabling them to introduce children to this exciting and challenging topic as part of their RE lessons.

All the material is curriculum-linked in order to supplement the teaching of various units of study in the QCA national framework for RE and QCA non-statutory guidelines. The book is divided into three separate, yet interdependent, sections comprising:

- **Life as a journey**: designed to encourage children to explore ways in which relationships, places and experiences shape us as we grow and develop spiritually as well as physically
- **Christians on the move**: featuring ten famous Christian pilgrimage sites across Britain
- **Pilgrimage in the Bible**: examples of journeys from both the Old and New Testaments, showing how the concept of pilgrimage has been instrumental in shaping the lives of God’s people

Each section includes teacher fact files outlining background information, followed by creative activities to apply the learning, including dramatic readings, play scripts, poems, reading texts, photocopiable activity sheets, questions for discussion, drama, art and craft ideas, dance and music.

**Making connections between Christian pilgrimage and everyday life**