

Church Experiences



The opportunity for children to visit a church building is still seen as an important learning experience. This provides churches with a wonderful chance to offer an experience to your local school. Whilst different syllabuses used by schools have a variety of specific objectives, each one refers to children identifying features of a church and how these are used in worship.

For example, an end of Key Stage 1 outcome found in syllabuses used in multiple Local Authorities states that children should: ***"Recognise key features of a church building, such as a font, altar and lectern and recognise there are similarities and differences between different churches. Talk about how a church is a community of people and not just a building, and how it is important for Christians to belong."***

The purpose of this objective is not just about church architecture but also about the sense of belonging found in church communities. In order to enable children to meet this objective, they not only need to see a church building but also hear from a member or members of the church.

A church experience could take many different forms - chat to your local school about what they would like to get out of the experience.

Some examples include: a tour of the church with a member of the church explaining the significance of different features and parts of the building, a scavenger hunt where children have to find different features, different stations set up around the church (see the Experience Church resource) and role play opportunities - this could be a mock wedding and/or baptism with children able to dress up and take different roles.

As schools are busy places, ideally a church experience should be offered to the school, rather than waiting for the school to ask to visit.

Church experiences can be offered to enhance learning across the curriculum (not just RE):

History:

- The age of the church may lend itself to learning - for example Norman or Saxon architecture.
- The graveyard can be used for history visits - especially if there are any famous locals buried there.
- War memorials or war graves can be used to enhance Year 5 or 6 with their learning about the World Wars.

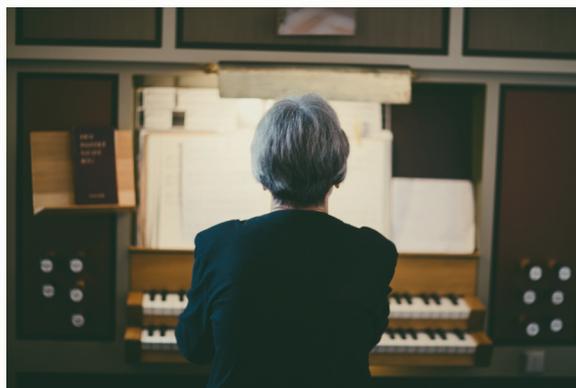


Art:

- Lots of churches contain features that demonstrate creative skill and can be used to inspire others to be creative. For example: stained glass, statues, wooden carvings, church architecture and gargoyles.

Music:

- A demonstration of the organ or musical instruments used at that church.
- An explanation about choirs, their role in many churches and the wider musical community.
- Musical and choral workshops for children to experience different musical styles.



For other potential curriculum links, please see the resources below from Inspired Classrooms and The Churches Conservation Trust.

It may be beneficial to offer the church for school events, such as carol concerts and end of term Collective Worship and assemblies. Please see the information sheet about Practical Support for more guidance on this.

Resources and further information

- [Experience Church – Jumping Fish Publications](#)
- [KS1 & KS2 School RE Resources](#)
- [SPCK Assemblies - School Visitors - A Church Visit](#)
- [RE:quest - video examples of church visits](#)
- [Inspired Classrooms - Lesson Plans for different Keystages and Subjects](#)
- [The Churches Conservation Trust - Selection of teaching resources](#)