

# Christianity through the Ages

## Watch together: Teacher notes

The video begins with a visual timeline showing first the Christian symbol that would be painted on the wall of a Romano-British church, then a series of images of a market cross like the one found just outside the Gatehouse at Worksop Abbey. The earliest is Anglo-Saxon, then we see a medieval cross with a stepped base. Many of these were pulled down following the reformation and then re-instated as war memorials.

The Anglo-Saxon period is represented by the Saxon cross combined with Saxon art in the form of the Trumpington Cross and Sutton Hoo Helmet that were recovered from Anglo-Saxon burials. The illustration of a Saxon King comes from the late 10<sup>th</sup> century Refoundation charter of the New Minster, Winchester.

The Norman invasion is represented by the Bayeux Tapestry, which also provides the image of the king flanked by nobles and a bishop. Images taken from the Bayeux Tapestry are also used to illustrate the Feudal system.

To illustrate the connections between medieval life and religion a series of medieval paintings are presented. These are from the Tickhill and Luttrell Psalters. Psalters were books or Psalms and they were often decorated (or illuminated as it is called) with a variety of images showing bible stories, scenes from everyday life and little cartoons that probably described a specific medieval moral – many of which we no longer understand.

The hierarchy of church buildings is significant as it is a physical demonstration of the Feudal system within the church.

The first illustration connects the Bishop and the Cathedral The image of Notre Dame was specifically chosen as it represents the typical early (Romanesque) architecture that was remarkably consistent across western Europe. Later Cathedrals would be extended and decorated in a more insular English style.

The examples of decoration are a stained glass window from Canterbury and wall paintings from Salisbury. The decorated church is the Church of St Teilo removed from Llandeilo Tal-y-Bont and painstakingly reconstructed at St Fagan's Museum, Cardiff.

Medieval illuminated manuscripts have been used to illustrate the idea of monastic orders and religious hermitage. Modern British society is largely resistant to the idea of withdrawn spiritual life, or even a life withdrawn from a materialist society at all. It is important to show that these things were not only common in medieval England, but also held in high regard.

A contemporary illustration from a 14<sup>th</sup> century Belgian manuscript shows the citizens of Toumai burying their dead during the black death. The following image is from Chroniques de France ou de St Denis and shows the looting of a house in Paris in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The reformation has been tackled with a 'broad brush' and is presented as a part of a general trend in Europe rather than something that was caused by a single monarch.

Whilst the individual actions and events are significant in terms of the timing and pace of change, there were stronger underlying events that extended from the crisis of the 14th century through to the creation of a constituted state at the end of the 17th century. This is illustrated with images of the Royal Family in the mid 16th century and the products and effects of the reformation.

Two 17th century political woodcuts illustrate the division within the church and the civil war that had a significant religious dimension.

The 1708 painting of Queen Anne and the House of Lords illustrated a fully established constitutional monarchy, which would preside over a growing divide between state and church.

The final image is a modern civil council image promoting the idea of a multi faith country.