History Curriculum Links

**KS1**
- Significant historical events, people and places in their own locality.
- Lives of significant people in the past who have contributed to national/international achievements.

**KS2**
- A study of an aspect of history or a site dating from a period beyond 1066 that is significant in the locality.

**KS3**
The development of Church, state and society in Medieval Britain 1066-1509
- British, local and world history.
- Religion in daily life, parishes, monasteries, abbeys.
- Christendom, the importance of religion and the Crusades.

RE Links

**KS1**
- What makes some places sacred to believers?
- What makes a building ‘holy’ and ‘sacred’?

**KS2**
- Exploring the metaphor of life as a journey.

**Upper KS2**
- Why is pilgrimage important to some religious believers?
- The spiritual significance of York Minster; sights, sounds, practices and beliefs.
- Actions completed on pilgrimage e.g. praying at the shrine.

**KS4**
- The role and importance of pilgrimage.
- Contrasting examples of pilgrimage.

The Aims

In this session pupils will explore the significance of pilgrimage in the medieval period. They will understand why pilgrims came to York, and experience how a pilgrimage would have taken place by going on their own mini pilgrimage across York Minster. They will learn the key role that the church had in people’s lives and how pilgrimage was seen as a core part of that faith. They will be introduced to York’s own St William, learn about his life, his miracles, and the strange relics he left behind. The tour will conclude with a visit to the shrine of St William in the candlelit crypt.

Pupils will learn some key terms such as purgatory, indulgence, Saint and relics. They will discuss the reasons for pilgrimage in the Medieval times and make comparisons to pilgrimage today. There will also be an opportunity for
two pupils to dress up in outfits that mirror pilgrims from the 14th century, and which are represented in our stained-glass windows. Pupils will then be taken on a pilgrimage route around the Minster, finishing up at the shrine of St William for a quiet moment of reflection.

Background information
St William of York was the Archbishop of York twice in the 12th Century. He was related to King Stephen and so the Cistercian monks at the time, who were trying to reform the Church, thought he shouldn’t be the Archbishop based on his connection to the King. They also had various other grievances, for example accusing him of ‘luxurious living’. William was deposed and left York for some years. In 1154 William returned after three of his key enemies died and he was again appointed Archbishop of York. As he was returning to York the town’s people came out to meet him and the bridge over the river Ouse collapsed. The town’s people were in danger of drowning, but William prayed for them and nobody drowned. This was considered his first miracle. Unfortunately, three weeks later William became ill after celebrating the Mass on Trinity Sunday. It is thought the chalice had been poisoned by Osbert of Bayeux, the Archdeacon of York who had remained an enemy of William. William died a week later and was buried at York Minster. His tomb was placed in the nave in a massive shrine and a second shrine was also built at the High Altar. In 1177 many miracles were reported at his shrine and in 1226 William was canonised and became the Patron Saint of York. York Minster and the shrine of St William became a pilgrimage site. Some pilgrims would bring models of limbs they wanted William to heal or bless and the St William window shows images of this which can be viewed here on the York Glaziers Stained Glass Navigator.

Pilgrims would collect badges on their travels and maps of pilgrim sites were created that included illustrations with an explanation of the stations along the way. Reliquaries, beautiful boxes to house relics from saints, were created. These were often covered in precious jewels and were highly regarded items and would draw pilgrims from far away.

Resources
Pilgrim outfits, a replica of a reliquary, pilgrim passport. For the classroom, pilgrim outfits could be researched and the outfits we have designed are based on images in our Pilgrim window which can be viewed here.
Question prompts to help pupils engage with the session.

- What makes a place sacred or holy?
- Why did people go on pilgrimage in the 14th Century?
- Why do people still go on pilgrimage?
- What might be the key differences between then and now?
- Why was St William so significant to the history of York Minster?
- What might be the physical and emotional and spiritual benefits of going on a pilgrimage?
- Who benefitted most from pilgrimage? The Pilgrim or the Pilgrimage site?
- What is the difference between a tourist and a pilgrim?
- If you were to go on pilgrimage, where would you like to go?
- Do you need to be religious to go on a pilgrimage?

Suggested Activities

- Create a Pilgrim’s Map of York Minster.
- Write a diary entry from a pilgrim’s visit to St William’s shrine. Think about what you can see, hear, smell, touch.
- Create an animation showing a pilgrim on their pilgrimage route around the Minster.
- Create a Pilgrim’s Badge to represent St William.
- Research what a medieval reliquary would have looked like and either design and draw your own or create a model of a reliquary.
- Create a guide to the medieval pilgrim aimed at younger children. Include illustrations and labels.
- Write a poem about the experience of a medieval pilgrim to York Minster.
- Write a persuasive letter to a friend encouraging them to go to York Minster and visit the shrine of William.

Ideas for further research

- Choose another place of pilgrimage to research such as Walsingham, Iona, Lourdes, Jerusalem or the Santiago de Compostela. Create a table of similarities and differences between this place and York Minster.
- Research the life of St William of York, St Cuthbert, St Wilfrid or St Thomas Beckett. Create a fact file on one of the Saints or create an information sheet comparing their difference stories.

Outcomes

Please feel free to email learning@yorkminster.org with examples of creative work that are inspired by this resource.