

# Learning Outside the Classroom

## And did those feet in ancient times?

Encountering the sacred in Glastonbury  
Glastonbury, Somerset

### What were we trying to achieve?

- to give students direct experience of a pilgrimage site to enhance their own understanding and inform their own life journeys
- to give opportunity for students to ask questions about the sacredness of place
- to help students appreciate how pilgrimage can be a deeply transformative experience
- to help students appreciate shared human experience, that different religions and heritages are not completely separate with many areas of exchange and similarity

### Cost:

£10 for each student plus travel costs

### Who went? How many?

179 Year 8 students over two days, with teachers, parents and support staff.

### Preparation:

Learning began with a module on sacred space and looking at relationship between inner and outer life. Students then built a model of a place of worship (of whatever tradition) and, using and developing their ICT skills, turn it into an interactive presentation, often with a virtual tour. They then studied pilgrimage and did preparatory research on the various stories and legends surrounding Glastonbury.

### How did we organise the learning?

A visit to the Abbey included:

- an interactive presentation, in which students heard about life in a monastery, dressed in Saxon clothes and enacted making bread
- time to wander and experience the Abbey grounds and visit King Arthur's grave

The climb up the Tor, included:

- tasting water from the Chalice Well
- an opportunity to spend time alone, practise being still, and reflect on the sensations, thoughts and feelings that arose from the experience

The visit also included receiving a 'pilgrimage badge' as a memento and souvenir

### What was the impact of the experience?

Positive and varied impressions. For some it was mainly a relaxing and interesting day out, for others, a deeper experience that promoted reflection on life's ultimate issues, and the relevance to their own lives. One student commented: 'I thought it would be ... a bit boring, but it was different and really atmospheric. I sat on the Tor in silence and could really let my imagination run wild.'

### Follow up:

With guided questions, students wrote about their experiences, with the focus on recording evidence, evaluating its significance and giving reasoned arguments to support their ideas. They were also encouraged to use alternative, creative means of self-expression, such as writing poems. Subsequently, they shared their experiences in groups.

### Contacts and links:

<http://www.glastonburyabbey.com/>

<http://education.guardian.co.uk/schools/story/0,,2285902,00.html>