

Educational Visits

at

Great St Mary's

for UK state and private school teachers, and home educators



- Church history
- Christianity
- Sustainability
- Ethics
- The Tudors
- The Reformation
- Local history
- Art and creativity

Welcome!

We warmly welcome all educational groups to visit Great St Mary's, whether you are linked to a school or nursery or engage in home schooling. **We are able to tailor visits to your needs in terms of subject content and age appropriateness.** We offer sessions that give a general overview of the church and Christian faith, or we can go into greater detail on a particular topic. If you have students sitting exams, then please let us know which specification you are following and we can consider that in how we deliver your visit.

This pamphlet outlines the areas of interest/subjects on which we can offer sessions – the Christian faith, history, sustainability, and art. The church holds lots of exciting history, and is simply a fun building to explore – especially for those who do not often visit churches. The most important thing is that you and your students enjoy the visit and feel welcome in the church, so do let us know how we can best accommodate your needs when you get in touch.

Please contact our Education Officer, Natalie Lealand, at nataliel@gsm.cam.ac.uk if you would like to book a visit or would like to enquire further.

Christianity

There has been a worshipping community on this site for over 1000 years. People still gather for worship today, attending our services of Communion, joining us for Evensong, and praying Morning Prayer together. We celebrate Baptisms and Weddings, and remember those who have died at Funerals and Memorial Services.

Visiting the church is a good way of learning more about Christianity, because so much of what we believe is reflected in our building—in the furnishings and stained glass, and in what the lectern and pulpit stand for. Visitors will hear about the Christian faith from our Education Officer, and will then be free to explore the church. We can offer worksheets and treasure hunts (to locate different items within the church) as desired, or some teachers prefer to bring their own resources.

What you will learn about:

- **What do Christians believe?**
- **Symbols and Sacraments (Baptism, Holy Communion, the crucifix)**
- **Furnishings and architecture - pews, the lectern, altar, stained glass, pulpit, font (how these help to express the story of the faith and aid in worship)**



History

Standing at the centre of the city of Cambridge, and having been a founding location for The University of Cambridge, Great St Mary's has witnessed a lot of history. Indeed, it has helped to shape some of it.

Sessions can be tailored, so that we focus on one topic while you are with us, or combine several areas of history. We are happy to welcome pre-school and primary aged pupils, and secondary school students (including those studying for GCSE and A Levels).



Topics we can cover:

- **Kings and Queens/The Tudors (King Henry VII's donation of trees for the roof of the church; King Henry VIII's influence; Queen Elizabeth I's visit to the church)**
- **The Reformation (Cambridge's part in the Reformation, and the burning and reinterment of Martin Bucer)**
- **The history of Cambridge and the marketplace (hear how the church was originally joined to other buildings and destroyed by fire; the building as the foundation of the university; the public fountain for the health of the city)**
- **First World War Stories (the window in St Andrew's Chapel was installed in memory of the local men who died in WWI—learn about their stories)**

Sustainability

Great St Mary's is an Eco Church, which means that members of the church have worked hard to improve various aspects of sustainability relating to the church buildings, land, and every-day operations. This work is ongoing, and therefore the church is a great place to consider questions of sustainability, whether you approach those questions from a faith-perspective or not. We know that children and young people are often the most enthusiastic about sustainability, and keen to learn. It is our hope that we might offer the space and topics for discussion with which to build on their natural enthusiasm.

While sustainability most obviously links to the Geography and Science curriculums, elements of Literacy can also be incorporated through writing formal letters for change, or prompting creative pieces in response to the climate crisis and nature.

What you can learn about:

- **Climate change**
- **Biodiversity (local and global)**
- **Sustainable food production**
- **Sustainable fashion**
- **Creation in the Bible - the story of creation in Genesis; creation in the psalms; the call to good stewardship**



Art and Creativity

The church is an inspiring building to visit, with our stained glass windows often being the first thing that visitors notice. Alongside our stained glass, we also have wonderful animal carvings on our wooden pews, the golden 'Majestas' that hangs behind our altar, a beautiful high ceiling (that could be mistaken for an upturned boat), and various sculptures and intricately decorated furnishings. The work of John Wastell, Royal Architect for King's College Chapel, can be seen in our beautiful stone tracery.

Students can hear about the history of the church building, and we have binoculars for them to take a closer look at the windows. They may like to sketch their favourite part of the church, make their own stained glass window out of card and coloured paper, or create some brass rubbings. We have various creative materials for them to use.



We also enjoy using picture books and poems to think about the world and our place in it, and you can book for younger children to listen to a story in church. Older children can exercise their literary talents by engaging with poetry or by writing a creative reflection on their visit and what they have seen.

Climbing the tower

There are 123 steps to the top of the tower, and when you reach the top you will be rewarded with a 360° view of Cambridge. Climbing the tower offers an extra bit of excitement on school trips, and we find that students are much more animated once they've shared the adventure of climbing to the top.

The chimes from the tower are the chimes that you will also hear from Big Ben. The chimes originated here, and were known as the Cambridge Chimes before becoming known as the Westminster Chimes.

From the top of the tower you can see other historic and cultural sites across Cambridge, such as the University Colleges, the River Cam, and the Botanic Gardens. If you have a map with

On Ascension Day—the day when Christians remember Jesus ascending to Heaven to be with God—a service is held at the top of the tower. If you visit us to illuminate your Religious Studies lessons, this is worth remembering.

Group visits to the tower should be booked in advance and there is a charge (see overleaf).



Arranging your visit

In the first instance, please email our Education Officer, Natalie Lealand, at nataliel@gsm.cam.ac.uk with any enquiries or requests to book a visit. For the best chance of securing your preferred date, please contact us in good time, although we will always do our best to accommodate visit requests.

We can discuss your requirements via email or in person, and each visit will be individually prepared to suit your needs.

Cost

We invite schools and home education groups to make a donation in exchange for educational sessions. All sessions will include a talk from our Education Officer and time to explore the church (excluding the tower, which involves a cost). Other activities can be provided depending on the nature of the session requested, and the time being spent in the church.

If you would like to climb the tower as part of your visit, this comes with a cost. Please email our Education Officer, as above, for details.

Please note that private summer schools, alongside other similar groups, are subject to a charge for a tour of the church.