Westminster Abbey
Learning

Remembrance lesson for primary – teachers' notes

Thank you for downloading this resource. We hope that it will be a useful teaching tool in your classroom.

As we continue to grow our free catalogue of teaching resources, we'd really appreciate a few minutes of your time to let us know what you liked and what could be improved. Please complete this five-question survey.

SLIDE 3: This is a very old and important church in the centre of London, just next to the Houses of Parliament. Does anyone know its name? Christians have prayed in Westminster Abbey for more than a thousand years. For almost a thousand years kings and queens have been crowned here and buried here when they died. One hundred years ago something very special happened here. Let's work it out from some pictures.

- What time of the year is it in the photograph on the right?
- What happens at this time of the year at Westminster Abbey?

SLIDE 4: These photographs show Prince Harry opening the Field of Remembrance outside Westminster Abbey in 2019. Allow students 2-3 minutes to look carefully at the images and to discuss them with a partner.

SLIDE 5: We could work out what was happening at Westminster Abbey because we recognise the ways that we come together each November across the country to remember those who have died fighting for our country.

SLIDE 6:

Learning objectives:

- To discuss who are we remembering at Westminster Abbey
- To discuss how we remember
- To be able to explain why we remember
- To understand that at Westminster Abbey, we remember together.

In Westminster Abbey more than 3,000 people are buried or remembered with some words or a statue, including kings and queens. Today we are talking about one man who was probably quite ordinary. He was buried one hundred years ago. He is buried where everybody can see him and everybody pauses to look and wonder: who is he?

The image shows the single vigil candle at the 2014 service to mark the outbreak of the First World War. At the end of the service the light was extinguished.

SLIDE 7: Click to play the film to introduce the Grave of the Unknown Warrior.

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SLIDE 8: This is the Grave of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey and nobody knows who is buried here.

- A warrior could have been a soldier, a sailor or an airman. He died fighting in the First World War.
- He could have been from England, Scotland, Wales or Ireland or from other countries across the world, such as India, Canada and the West Indies who sent many men to help win the war.
- Even one hundred years later he helps us to remember all those who have died fighting in wars. Look at all the poppies, each one showing that someone is remembering.

This image shows the Grave of the Unknown Warrior at Westminster Abbey after the Remembrance Sunday service in 2014, 100 years after the outbreak of the First World War.

SLIDE 9: One hundred years ago, on Armistice Day 1920, two years after the end of the First World War the body of this one man was buried in Westminster Abbey.

- King George V was there, along with men who had fought and women who had served as nurses or ambulance drivers in the war.
- Most importantly, there were a thousand women who had lost loved ones in the war and did not know where their bodies were buried.

This image shows the Burial of Unknown Warrior by Matania.

SLIDE 10: Everyone was very sad and everyone was thinking 'Could this be my son?' 'Could this be my brother?' Could this be my friend? Could this be my dad?' He was home at last and the waiting was over.

This image shows crowds filing past the Unknown Warrior's Grave after the funeral on November 11th 1920. One and a half million had visited by 27th November 1920.

SLIDE 11: Over one hundred years later could we now find out who is buried here using scientific tests? Should we? Why is it important that he is *unknown*?

- So he represents all those who died in the First World War.
- He can even represent those who have died in wars since the First World War because he's not fixed by name and dates.
- He could be from anywhere in Britain and Ireland or from other countries across the world, such as India, Canada and the West Indies, who sent many men to help win the war.
- Because he doesn't belong to any particular family, he belongs to all.

SLIDE 12:

- Do you recognise anyone in this picture? Queen Elizabeth II is standing next to the President of Germany. One hundred years ago our countries were at war, and were again in the

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Second World War. Now a British and a German serviceman lay wreaths together at the Grave of the Unknown Warrior.

- What is different about the Grave of the Unknown Warrior in this picture? What message do the fresh flowers send, do you think?

This image was taken on the centenary of the Armistice, November 11th 2018. Wreaths were laid to fill the gaps in the fresh flowers surrounding the Grave of the Unknown Warrior on behalf of Queen Elizabeth II and the President of Germany.

SLIDE 13: On each Remembrance Sunday the words 'We will remember them' are heard at the Grave of the Unknown Warrior and in services across the country. People wear poppies and some lay wreaths. Many fall silent at 11 o'clock. They hear the Last Post being played by a bugler. At the end of the service they join to sing the National Anthem.

- You can watch key elements of the Remembrance Sunday service also happening at the annual opening of the Field of Remembrance outside the Abbey: the laying of crosses (by the Duke and Duchess of Suffolk in 2019); the Last Post; the reading of a verse from *For the Fallen* and its refrain 'We will remember them'; the Two Minute Silence, beginning after Big Ben has struck 11 o'clock. Follow this link to the Abbey's You Tube channel and watch from 3:55 – 6:00: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNFHVexKdbU

- You might like to continue the silence for a minute in your classroom.

This is an image a service booklet from A Service of Thanksgiving to mark the Centenary of Blind Veterans UK held at Westminster Abbey in 2015.

SLIDE 14: Use the document "Remembrance-lesson-KS1-activities" to discuss poppies with your class before making your own. The document includes a resource list, step-by-step instructions and templates.

SLIDE 15: Use the document "Remembrance-lesson-Lower-KS2-activities" to read about First World War epitaphs before asking pupils to write their own for the Unknown Warrior. The document includes background information and examples of epitaphs, along with templates for creating a word bank and the epitaph.

SLIDE 16: Use the document "Remembrance-lesson-Upper-KS2-activities" to read about First World War epitaphs before asking pupils to write a message from the perspective of the Unknown Warrior. The document includes background information and examples of epitaphs, along with templates for creating a word bank and the epitaph.

SLIDE 17: Recap learning objectives. A wreath has been laid at the Grave of the Unknown warrior and children have written their own poems to soldiers who died in the First World War. The Unknown Warrior helps us to remember all those who have died fighting for our country. We can all remember in our own ways.

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