

PILGRIMAGE



LEADERS GUIDE

PRIMARY RESOURCES



The Friars
Aylesford Priory

A place of Transformation

Welcome to The Friars

It is with immense pleasure I welcome you to The Friars or Aylesford Priory. This is not a museum or an ancient monument but the home of a praying community of Carmelite Friars. This is a place of transformation, prayer, and reflection.

We are fortunate to have some of the finest religious modern art in the country. Through paintings, sculptures, ceramics, and stained glass the Christian and Carmelite story is told. Aylesford has been described as “a prayer in stone.”

Your visit is not simply an excursion but a pilgrimage, following in the footsteps of many pilgrims who have gone before us. Pilgrims come here on their way to Rochester or Canterbury or simply to spend time here.

This has been a place of prayer since the first Carmelites arrived from Mount Carmel in 1242. The tale of The Friars reflects the national story. The building of the medieval church was delayed due to Black Death. The Carmelites, like so many other religious orders, left at the dissolution of the monasteries in 1538. The priory became a country house known as The Friars where diarist Samuel Pepys once visited. Soldiers stayed here on the way to the D-Day landings in 1944.

Finally, the Carmelites returned in 1949. Since then, the medieval buildings have been restored and the new shrine built. The Priory has now become a pilgrimage and retreat centre. The first prior, Fr. Malachy Lynch, hoped that The Friars would be an Open Door where everyone would be welcome. So dear Pilgrim, welcome.

Michael Cox, O.Carm.
Prior



Active Contents

Click on title

- Introduction
- Map

Reflections

- Prior's hall (a short intro to Pilgrimage)
 - Handout
- Cloister (Beginning the Journey)
- Cloister chapel (Awareness)
- Choir chapel (Community)
- St. Anne's (a new Hope for the journey)
- High Altar Outside (Promises)
- Relic chapel (the place of Transformation)
- St. Joseph's (our Mission)
- Peace Garden and Rosary Way (finding Peace to rest in God's love)

Supporting Information

- Information to support your pilgrimage
- Glossary of words you may encounter
- Prepare for the Journey or continue after- related curriculum ideas
- Basic resources you need to bring for onsite activities
- Aspects to include when considering your own risk assessment



Introduction

This resource has been prepared to help provide a [pilgrimage](#) experience at [The Friars](#). Pilgrimage can benefit everyone, not just spiritually; it also supports wellbeing and can give you space to connect with yourself and others.

The theme of our pilgrimage is transformation. Today, you have joined a search for transformation that has spanned over 800 years. The [Carmelites](#), (named after their place of origin, Mount Carmel), are men and women dedicated to transformation. The purpose of our life is this search for God, being transformed by God's love.

Each part of Aylesford Priory (the chapels, gardens and artwork) is designed to help us in our transformation. Sometimes it might be beautiful artwork that stirs in our imagination the wonders and beauty of God. In other places, it could be emptiness and silence - a reminder to be focused on our searching.

Sometimes the journey is difficult. Transformation makes us face things that are more easily ignored. But this is ok! We must always remember that we are journeying, we all have different experiences and are at different stages. The key is to be open, to listen and to enter into an experience that will allow you to become aware of God, who is love itself.

Put simply, transformation is a change. As Carmelites, the journey of transformation is where we move from our current way of life to a place where God is at the centre.

Practical information

We know that the best resource is the person who accompanies the children and young people!

When developing these materials, we were considering school years 5 & 6. We know that younger children also visit - please adapt the resource to the needs of your group.

As you follow this short guide you will find reflections to aid you on your pilgrimage. Sometimes there will be questions to ponder, or small tasks to complete. The guide works well when viewed on a tablet (to save printing). You may want to use the Chapel guides as a handout - these can be printed separately. Hopefully any unfamiliar words are explained in the Glossary.

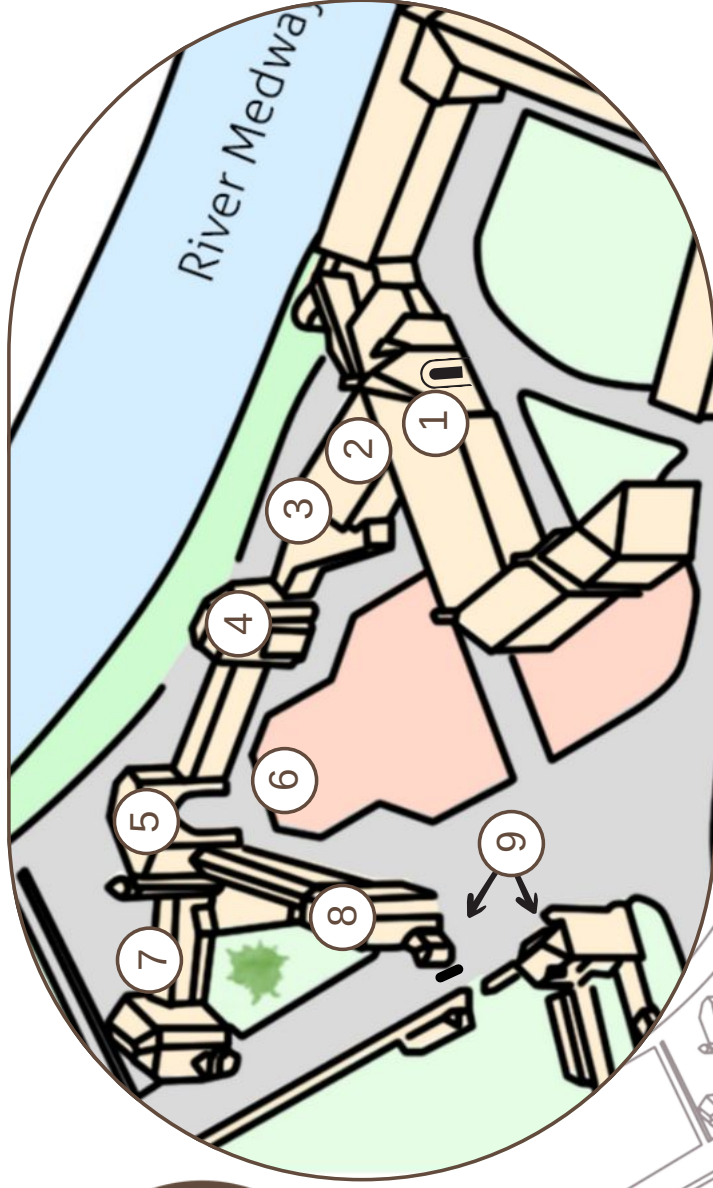
Some of the suggested activities require you to bring resources that are not provided at Aylesford. You may choose to use the more involved activities as a follow up back at school or Church.

Take your time and enjoy the journey!



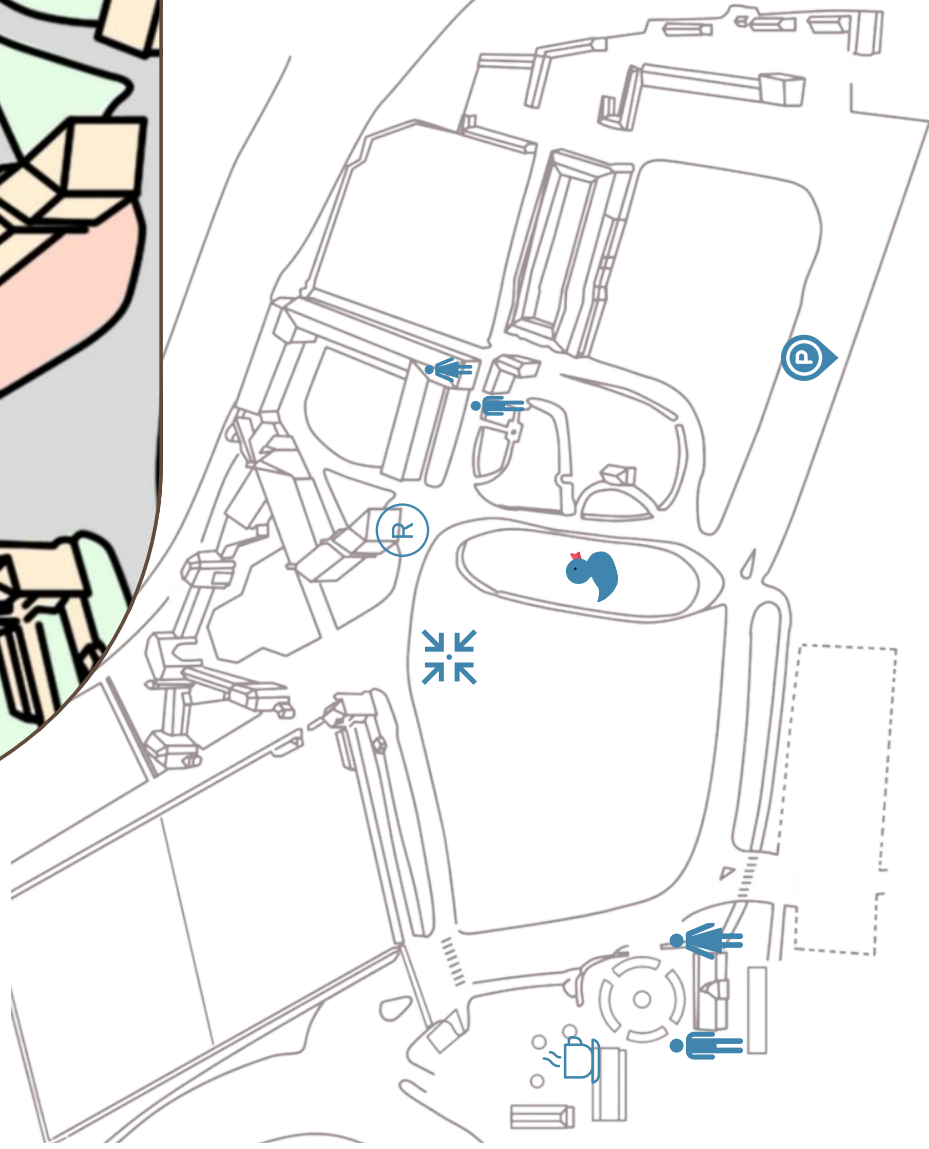
*Please remember other people will be enjoying the site today, many for contemplation and prayer. Please remind your group to be **Considerate and Respectful** in use of space and volume.*





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|---|--|---------------------------|
| 1 | | Prior's Hall |
| 2 | | Cloister |
| 3 | | Cloister Chapel |
| 4 | | Choir Chapel |
| 5 | | St. Anne's Chapel |
| 6 | | High Altar Main Shrine |
| 7 | | Relic Chapel |
| 8 | | St. Joseph's Chapel |
| 9 | | Peace Garden & Rosary Way |

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| | Toilets |
| | Cafe |
| | Car Park |
| | Reception |
| | Fire Assembly |
| | Pond |



The Priars
Aylesford Priory



In each space it is important that the first 5 minutes is left for exploration. So much can be missed when just asked to listen to the input.



Basic Information about the Prior's Hall

- This is one of our oldest buildings at Aylesford and was originally used to feed pilgrims on their journey from London to Canterbury.
 - The statue in the recess is of Edith Stein (St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross). She was a German Jew who converted to Catholicism and became a Carmelite nun before WW II. During the war she was arrested because of her Jewish ancestry and was murdered in Auschwitz in 1942.
 - The paintings on the walls show the history of the Carmelites from their early beginnings in the Holy Land (modern day Palestine) and their journey through history to the present day.
1. The first picture depicts the early Carmelites on Mount Carmel asking the local bishop (Albert of Jerusalem) to approve their way of life. We call this our 'Rule'.
 2. During the political turmoil of the [Crusades](#), the Carmelites fled the holy Land. They brought with them their Rule, and the memory of Mount Carmel.
 3. An English knight invited the Carmelites to build a monastery on his land in Aylesford, Kent.
 4. The Friars begin to construct the first priory on these grounds in around 1242.
 5. A great meeting ([General Chapter 1247](#)) of the whole order happened here in Aylesford, and they decided to reform the Order to suit their new way of life outside of the Holy Land.
 6. The English [Reformation](#) and the Dissolution of the monasteries forced the Carmelites to leave Aylesford in 1538. After this date the buildings became a private house.
 7. The return of the Carmelites in 1949 marked the restart of our life here at Aylesford Priory. From our return to now, Aylesford Priory has been a place of welcome, prayer and pilgrimage.



THE PRIOR'S HALL

Things to point out / allow the children to explore:

- The paintings on the wall which tell the story of the Carmelites.
- The statue of Edith Stein.
- A small sculpture tucked away on one wall. It shows Mary and the Prophet Elijah, two great figures and role models for the Carmelites.

Intro:

Just like when we go on holiday or start any journey, we need to prepare! But how do we prepare for a journey where we are going to meet God?

The best thing we can do is remember who we are. What makes us an individual, what makes you, you?

Our family and our friends, our hobbies, and our skills. These are all very important things to remember as we start our journey. On the walls you can see the story of the Carmelites who live here at Aylesford. But who can you see? In every moment, in every painting, there is never just one Carmelite. There is always a small group of them. We call this a community, and it is like a family.

As we prepare to start our journey of transformation, take a moment to tell your story. Who is in your community? Who gives you confidence? But most importantly, who are you?

There was once a very young Carmelite nun, Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, and she says that 'holiness is simply being who God wants us to be.' Today is your chance to be exactly who God wants you to be!



'Holiness consists simply in being who God wants us to be'
(St. Therese of Lisieux)

Questions to ponder

Who am I?

What makes me an individual?

What is my story?

Suggested Activity

Work through the 'reflection sheet' to tell your story. Think about who you are, and what makes you an individual. Perhaps you could break into groups to share. You can share as much or as little as you like.

Lord, thank you for all the blessings in my life, big and small. Thank you for surrounding me with people who love and care for me.

Amen.

Pilgrimage Self Reflection

Name:

My Friends

My Family

My least Favourite
things



My Favourite
things 😊





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Basic Information about the Cloister.

- Cloisters can be found in nearly all monasteries around the world. They are normally a corridor in the shape of a square around a courtyard or small garden. They represent a continuous journey of transformation of the monks, nuns or friars that live there. Our cloister would have been a square, but two sections were demolished when the community house became a private home.
- Many of the paving stones are original and have carried the footsteps of thousands of pilgrims over the centuries.
- The great seal at one end of the cloister is the original symbol for this Priory. It would have been a large stamp or wax seal that was placed at the end of all official documents.
- When this was a private house, the entrance with the steps and red tiles was the front door. You can still see the metalwork that was the doorbell!
- As you pass through the archway past the great seal, you step forwards in time by nearly 750 years! It marks the connection between the medieval building and the new complex of chapels built in the 1950's and 60's.



CLOISTER

Things to point out/allow the children to explore:

- Memorial donated by the Polish community to remember those who died innocently during World War II.
- The cross at the entrance – Christ meets us at the beginning of our journey and will walk with us.
- The Great Seal of Aylesford.

Intro:

Your pilgrimage is about to begin! Like all adventures, we need to start somewhere.

Sometimes in our lives, starting something new can be difficult or scary. Why might this be? But today is different. We are starting our journey together with each other and with God. We can be certain that God won't leave us or let us get lost.

You are standing in the doorway of the cloister, and this would have been the front door to the old house. Look who is on the other side of the door ready to greet us. It's Jesus. He waits for us to start our journey with Him so that we can share it with Him.

A long time ago, there was a Carmelite friar who lived in France. He said that our lives are a journey that we walk with God, where we learn to love ourselves. Let today be the start of that journey and we will all grow and transform in God's love.



'Walk with God continually and you will learn to love.'
(Br. Lawrence of the Resurrection)

Suggested Activity

As you take the first step on your journey make a pledge for what you want to achieve on your pilgrimage. You can say it out loud to a friend or you can keep it to yourself. Why not say the prayer together as you all start your journey?

Lord God, you call me to follow you, and I choose to walk with you

CLOISTER



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Chapel

Basic information about the Cloister chapel

- It is thought that originally, this was the kitchens or storerooms of the old priory.
- When the site was a private house, this was the family's personal chapel.
- During WW2 American soldiers were based here at Aylesford and they used this chapel.
- The statue of St. Jude by the stained glass window is the patron saint of difficult situations.

- The stained-glass window was a gift to the priory when the artist became a catholic. It shows Mary the mother of Jesus and the Carmelite title for her 'Flos Carmeli' (Flower of Carmel).
-

- The Infant of Prague (Back of Chapel). This is a replica of a famous statue in a Carmelite Church in Prague (Czech Republic). It may appear strange, as it is like a doll. The idea is that by depicting Jesus as a child, it emphasises His humanity, and how we are all children of God.
-

- Behind the [Altar](#) - notice the [Tabernacle](#) (behind curtains) and light in a red glass holder (see [glossary](#))
-



CLOISTER

Things to point out/allow the children to explore:

- Altar (see [glossary](#))
- Stained glass window - shows Mary the Mother of Jesus with the Carmelite title 'Flos Carmeli,' (Flower of Carmel')
- Statue of St. Jude - The patron Saint of difficult situations
- View of the river from the window.

Intro:

Explore the chapel! What do you see? How does it make you feel?

This is the oldest chapel here at Aylesford.

It is very plain and that is so that we remember what is most important. For us to be healthy and happy, we must have a space where we can be comfortable and ourselves. For you, this could be your front room with your family, your bedroom where you can relax or maybe somewhere else. What is most important is that we can relax and work out what makes us happy and what we need help with. And this is ok!

For the Friars here at Aylesford, this chapel reminds us of ourselves. Every time we pray here, we remember that God just wants us to be ourselves. All God wants for all of us is to feel safe, and to love ourselves for exactly who we are. It's difficult to try and be someone else!

May today there be peace within.



*Carmelite
Wisdom*

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.

It is there for each and everyone of us.

(Minnie Louise Haskins)

Questions to ponder

Where do I feel the safest?

What are my gifts?

Why do we need to be ourselves?

Suggested Activity

Find a space in the chapel and write a list (or think of) three things that you love about yourself. It could be a talent, your family, what makes you feel special.

Lord, You knew me before I was born and have made me in your image. When the world tells me who I should be, grant me the courage to be who I truly am so that I can be a witness of your love to others. Amen



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Chapel

Basic information about the Choir chapel

- The community of Friars gathers here many times during the day to pray together and to celebrate the [Mass](#).
 - The name 'Choir' comes from the benches on either side of the altar. They are 'in choir', which means that the friars sit in two groups and take turns reading the psalms. It reminds them that sometimes their job is to proclaim and at other times, their job is to listen to what is being said.
 - The space is very plain compared to the other chapels here at Aylesford. This can help us to not get distracted! Our focus is on God.
- On the right-hand side of the chapel is a carved image of Mary. For Carmelites, she is a model of prayer - following Jesus and trusting in His words and actions.



CHOIR

Things to point out/allow the children to explore:

- Altar (see [glossary](#))
- Benches facing each other to show that we are ready to listen to our brothers and sisters.
- Statue of Mary – our model of prayer.
- Can you see much decoration? Why do you think it's so plain?

Intro:

Take a seat in the benches on either side of the altar. Look around you. Who do you see?

When the friars gather every day in this chapel, the first thing they see is the person sitting opposite them. This isn't just because they like how the benches look! It is to remind us that we live in a community, and we are not alone on our journey.

Communities are important. They give us support and help us to grow. If we are struggling, we should be able to turn to our community to ask for help. At the same time, we should be ready to listen and help when someone in our community comes to us. The most important thing is that we are together and that we are not alone.

For us here at Aylesford, another important thing is that we listen. Listening is just as important as sharing! You can see that the altar is in the middle of the benches. This reminds us that at the centre of our community is Jesus, and when our community looks at us (and we at them) they should see His love in our words and actions.



'Christ has no body now, but you. No hands, no feet but yours.
Yours are the eyes which he looks compassion into
the world'
(St. Teresa of Avila)

Questions to chat about (in pairs or as a group)

Who is in my community? (class, school, friends, local area or church community)
Why is it important to belong to a community

Suggested Activity - Paper-chain

Write your name on a strip of paper. During a time of prayer or silence, join your names together to form a paper chain -a symbol of the strength of your community.

Discuss what you can do as a group to support your school community. e.g. Environmental projects, SVP etc..

Lord, we thank you for the gift of community and for all those who are part of our communities. In our journey help us to be open to those around us. Help us to always be supportive of those we meet and those who we journey with through our lives. Amen.

Chapel

CHOIR



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Chapel

Basic Information about St. Anne's Chapel

- This is one of the smallest of the chapels here at Aylesford, but one of the most interesting.
- The walls are not painted green - in fact it is green plaster. The artist (Adam Kossowski) scratched designs into the plaster whilst it was still wet. The term for this technique is 'sgraffito'.
- St. Anne is the mother of Mary
- The Statue of St. Anne with Mary and Jesus is unusual and not an image we are used to seeing (grandmother, daughter and grandson).
- The ceramics show the story of Mary – from the angel telling her father St. Joachim that she was going to be born, to her birth and finally her presentation in the temple.
- There are large books of remembrance, commemorating those who have died. Many people visit the priory on special days during the year to see their relative's name. This can be a helpful focus and bring comfort and peace.



ST. ANNE'S

Things to point out/allow the children to explore:

- The green walls with designs scratched in plaster when it was still wet.
- The story of Mary in the ceramics
- The large books of remembrance

Intro:

Hope is important. It helps us to continue our journey and stops us from giving up. But sometimes our journey seems impossible, and the last thing that we want to do is stop and listen to God. We can all feel like this sometimes, but it is important to remember that even when we give up, God doesn't.

To help us, Carmelites have the example of Mary. She is our hope because she was just like us. She was a young person who was asked to complete a big task for God. She was able to say 'yes' to God because she knew that God had created her for this special task.

Hope is powerful. Br. Lawrence of the Resurrection (who we heard from earlier in our journey) tells us that all things are possible for people who believe, and that they are made easier for those who hope! Sometimes, like Mary, our tasks seem impossible and difficult. Our journey of transformation can be like this. However, it is hope that keeps us going. The hope that we will be transformed by love into who we are meant to be.



'All things are possible to those who believe. They are less difficult to those who hope. They are easier for those who love'

(Br. Lawrence of the Resurrection)

Questions to ponder

What are my hopes for the next few years ?

Have there been times when I wanted to give up? What stopped me?

Suggested Activity

Spend a moment with a partner and share your answers. If you want to think about them on your own, that's ok too!

Lord, fill me with your hope, joy, and peace. Let me be overflowing with hope in you so that I may continue my journey with you in love.

Amen.

(Prayer based on Romans 15:13)

Chapel



ST. ANNE'S

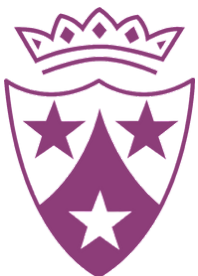


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Basic Information about the High Altar

- If you stand at the altar and look out across the piazza, you will see that some of the paving stones are yellow. These mark the foundations of the original, medieval church. The altar here stands in the exact position of the original altar 800 years before.
- The red wall behind the altar shows images and names in Latin. They are all symbols and titles of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in the Catholic tradition.
- Above the altar is the statue of Mary. For many Christians (and especially Catholics) Mary is an important figure. She shows us how to trust in the plans that God has made for us and to be always searching for God.
- Look up! All around you will see the angels. We hear in the Bible that when Jesus was born the choirs of angels sang about the glory of God. Here, they watch over us, reminding us of God's presence in our lives. You might even recognise one angel holding a star. Can you see the one holding Aylesford?
- The altar itself. On the front of the altar, you will see lots of different images. They represent different stories from the Bible and more importantly for us on our journey of transformation, they remind us of the promises that God has made throughout history.



Things to point out/allow the children to explore:

- Statue of Mary
- The angels looking down from the top of the shrine.
- The High altar and the ceramics on the front of it.
- The piazza and the yellow stones marking the foundations of the medieval chapel. You can also see the foundations of the other half of the cloister.

Intro:

Look out over the piazza, it's a bit like a theatre! And right in the centre, in the most important place is the altar. Maybe you've seen one before. It is where many Christians gather to celebrate the [Eucharist](#). At the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus promises his disciples that he will always be with them. It's a big promise but it is true: every time we gather in prayer, Jesus is with us.

Promises can be very important. They give us hope and confidence. When we find someone that we trust (like our family, teachers, close friends) we feel better because we know that we can share something difficult if we need to.

On the front of the Altar, you can see lots of images showing the promises that God has made with people over history. Can you see Noah's ark, or maybe the burning bush? In all these promises, God's love transformed the person, and they were able to do amazing things when God worked through them. They were filled with confidence and the love of God to simply be themselves.



'We cannot touch God with our hands, but we can see
Him in each of his works'
(St. Teresa of the Andes)

Questions to ponder

Which is your favourite promise that you can see on the altar? Can you tell the story?

When is it important to make promises? When is it important not to make a promise?

Suggested Activity

Create a tile showing a promise that you have made to someone, or to God. It could be on paper or other materials. Why not make a clay tile like the ones here at Aylesford?

When you return to your school or parish, create a pledge board. It can be a place to record your pledges to one another, to yourself or to God. It could be a pledge to always help those in need, or to make space to pray everyday.

Lord, we thank you most of all for your love for us. We thank you
for all those that love us and help us to be confident and happy.
Help us to be ourselves and not be afraid to be who we really are.
Amen.

High Altar

MAIN SHRINE



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Chapel

Basic Information about the Relic Chapel

- Behind the altar is the **relic** of St. Simon Stock, a Carmelite friar who was influential in the development of the order when it first came to Europe from the Holy Land. The reliquary (the place a relic is kept) is shaped to look like Mount Carmel with the little huts of the first Carmelites. A relic does seem a strange thing. However, it is simply a reminder of the transforming power of the love of God. Here we have the skull of St. Simon Stock. We can physically see it, and when we do, it reminds us of his journey of transformation. He is another example to us of our own potential.
 - Martyrs chapel is on the left of the main chapel. This is to commemorate the 40 martyrs of England and Wales who died defending the faith during the English Reformation. Red is traditionally the colour of martyrs, as are the symbols of the crown and palm leaves that you can see in the stained glass windows. Below you will see depictions of the Tyburn gallows and the Tower of London (the sites of many of the executions).
 - On the opposite side of the chapel is the Carmelite Saints chapel. You may notice some of the well-known Carmelite saints and many others. These will be the focus of our reflection.
- Around the main part of the chapel you will see something that is very
- common in Catholic Churches - the images of Jesus' journey with the cross, called 'The Stations of the Cross'. This is a prayer meditation that takes us through the fourteen events in Jesus' Passion (his arrest, trial and suffering, ending with his execution by crucifixion). Each time we journey with Jesus through the final events of His life, we remember how much He loves us and how He suffered for us. It is a prayer traditionally prayed during Lent.
- In this chapel above the **sanctuary** we also have a fifteenth station depicting
- Jesus' resurrection – the ultimate story of transformation.



RELIC

Things to point out/allow the children to explore:

- Reliquary (see [glossary](#))
- Saints of England and Wales chapel (to the left of the chapel with red ceramics)
- Carmelite Saints chapel (to the right of the chapel). The gold rings around their heads tells us that they are saints.
- Candle stands and statue of St. Simon Stock (to the back of the chapel behind the altar)

Intro:

Explore the chapel! What do you see? How does it make you feel?

In this chapel, Carmelites gather to remember their family. In that family are many women and men who allowed God to completely transform them. They started their journey just like you are today. In their stories and their lives, we hear amazing things that can only happen when we allow God to love us, and when we love God. The first (and best) thing we can do is to be exactly who we are and not to try to be someone else!

If you look at the men and women on the walls in the Carmelite saints chapel, you'll notice something unusual. Can you see the saint without a halo? She represents us! The saint without a halo shows us that we are all on a journey of transformation, where bit by bit we allow God to change us into who we are meant to be - saints!

This chapel reminds us on our journey that we must be ourselves! Only then will the love of God be free to transform us into saints!

Be yourself! Love who you are! Be transformed!



'I have found my vocation. My vocation is to love!'

(St. Therese of Lisieux)

Questions to ponder

How would God's love transform me? What gift would it bring? (E.g. confidence, patience, courage.)

What would I be a saint for?

Suggested Activity

The stained glass windows allow the light of God to shine through. Create your own stained glass window to represent how God's love will shine through you and transform you. You could use tissue paper, empty jam jars, glass paint etc.

Lord, we thank you most of all for your love for us. We thank you for all those that love us and help us to be confident and happy. Help us to be ourselves and not afraid to be who we really are. Amen.

Chapel



RELIC



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Basic Information about St. Joseph's Chapel

- This is the most decorated of all the chapels here at Aylesford.
- On one side of the chapel, we see the story of St. Joseph, the husband of Mary. Maybe you can recognise some of the stories depicted in the ceramics?
- Behind the altar is the large statue of St. Joseph. For many, he is the protector of the Holy Family and a role model for Christians on how to listen to the Word of God, and how to trust in God's plan for our lives.
- On the opposite wall you will see depictions from the life of the Prophet Elijah. For Carmelites, Elijah is the inspiration for their way of life. He constantly searched for God in his life, from the silence of the mountain tops, to his interactions with the people of Israel: listening, searching, and proclaiming the love of God.
- Look at the floor surrounding the altar. You will see the names and symbols of the four writers of the Gospels (the Evangelists) Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
- Over one archway is a depiction of the Transfiguration. This comes from a story in the Gospels where Jesus was transformed in front of His disciples. 'His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light' (Matthew 17:2).
- The wall with the green ceramics (directly behind St. Joseph) depicts churches and holy buildings of all denominations and religions around the world. This will be the focus of our reflection.



Chapel

ST. JOSEPH'S

Things to point out/allow the children to explore:

- The floor around the Altar with the names of the Gospel writers.
- The story of St. Joseph on one wall and the story of the Prophet Elijah on the other.
- Depictions of St. John the Baptist.
- Behind the statue of St. Joseph are ceramics of all the churches around the world.

Intro:

We are nearing the end of our pilgrimage here at Aylesford, but this doesn't mean that our journey is over! It has only just begun...

In the chapel, we remember key figures in the Bible that are sometimes forgotten. But they remind us that whilst searching for God's love in our lives, we must show love to those we meet. This is what we mean by the challenge of Jesus 'to go out and to share the Good News!'

Look at the wall behind St. Joseph. You will see lots of different churches from all over the world. It reminds us that although we have our own relationship with God in our hearts, God wants us to share His love with everyone we meet. Often this can be difficult, but we are not alone, we have a helper! Look above the churches - what can you see? The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. It fills us with joy and confidence. It is the Holy Spirit that helped St. Joseph and Elijah to hear the Word of God in their lives and then gave them the courage to complete what God asked them to do!

So, be confident in who you are and who God wants you to be! St. Thérèse of Lisieux was very young when she became a nun and also when she died, but she was so sure of her mission! It is a powerful reminder for us that our first mission is to love God, and our second is to help others to love God.



'I feel that my mission is about to begin – to help others
love God as I love Him'
(St. Therese of Lisieux)

Questions to ponder

What gives me courage?

Was there a time when I have shared the Good News?

How can we spread the Good News of God's love?

Suggested Activity

Look at the ceramics behind St. Joseph. Take a picture or a wax rubbing so that you can research what sort of Holy place or building it is when you go home.

There are other symbols on this wall too. Hidden around are some Greek words and some fish. What do you think they mean?

Lord, where will your Holy Spirit lead me today? Help me to be fully awake and ready to respond. Give me the courage to try something new, to spread the Good News and to become a model of your love and kindness in the world. Amen.

Chapel

ST. JOSEPH'S



In each space it is important that the first 5 minutes is left for exploration. So much can be missed when just asked to listen to the input.



Basic Information about the Peace Garden and Rosary Way

Peace Garden

- This garden is designed to be a journey. As you walk through the garden you will experience different sights and smells. It is a journey that engages all our senses.
- It is named the Peace Garden and on the stones in each section is the word 'peace' written in every language in the world (including British Sign language, Makaton and Braille).
- Here is a place to simply 'be' and to spend time quietly with yourself and God.

Rosary Way

- As you look up the path of the Rosary way you will notice a large Stone Shrine of St. Simon Stock and the [scapular](#) vision
- This prayer walk is lined with smaller ceramics depicting the different 'mysteries' or events of Jesus' life used in the Rosary
- The word 'Rosary' means 'chain of roses' (the roses are the prayers)
- These are the events depicted in the ceramics:

The Joyful Mysteries

- The Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to Mary
- The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth
- The Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem
- The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple
- The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

The Sorrowful Mysteries

- The Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
- The Scourging of Jesus at the Pillar
- The Crowning of Jesus with Thorns
- The Carrying of the Cross
- The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus

The Glorious Mysteries

- The Resurrection of Jesus
- The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven
- The Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost
- The Assumption of Mary into Heaven
- The Coronation of Our Lady in Heaven



Things to point out/allow the children to explore:

Peace Garden

- The stones in the ground that have the word 'peace' in every language. Can you find the word in Braille?
- This is a place of silence. It is in silence that we can listen to God's creation and God's voice.

Rosary Way

- Look at each of the ceramics telling some of the stories in Jesus' life. Which one is your favourite, and why?

Intro:

When we are tired, have worked really hard or have had a long day at school, the first thing we want to do is rest. To have a rest is to completely relax and enjoy not having to do anything. It's also when we are completely ourselves because there isn't anyone else around!

This garden is called the peace garden because it gives us that little moment of peace and quiet in our day. Here at Aylesford, we use this garden to remind people (and ourselves) that when we rest, we are resting with God. When we are at peace with ourselves, it is because only God is with us. When we are transformed by God's love, we will want to spend more time with God.

The Rosary Way helps us reflect on the life of Jesus through the eyes of Mary, his mother. Each image and prayer can help us to focus. At different times we may relate to different events depending on our own lives.

When people find something amazing or beautiful, they often say that it is 'heaven on earth'. For us, on our journey to God, moments of peace are heaven on earth because we can spend time with God who is in our hearts.



*Carmelite
Wisdom*

**'I have found heaven on earth because heaven is God,
and God is in my heart.'**

(St. Elizabeth of the Trinity)

Suggested Activities

Find a space in this garden. Maybe it is near some of the flowers, or perhaps you have found the word peace in your own language. Sit down for 5 minutes with your eyes closed. You don't have to do anything, simply relax, breath in and out and spend time with God in your heart.

If you are familiar with the rosary and comfortable to do so, you could pray a decade of the rosary as a group.

Lord, help me to be still and know that you are God. Amen.

Information to support your pilgrimage

What is a Pilgrimage?

Journeying to a special or significant place plays a part in almost all cultures and religions. The location or place has prominence due to events or connection to significant people e.g. Rome, Holy Land, Mecca.

People go on pilgrimage for many reasons:

- Christians go on pilgrimage to find space to encounter, and draw closer to God
- An opportunity for reflection
- To step away from the busyness of our everyday lives
- For discernment at times of transition

Here at Aylesford, we have the 'Shrine to Our Lady', which continues to attract pilgrims today. Welcomed by the Carmelite Community, people visit for different reasons and enjoy the Shrine, Chapels, Art, history, and the natural environment.

Why Aylesford Priory ?

'The Friars' Aylesford is the house of the Carmelite Religious Order.

It was founded in 1242, when hermits from Mount Carmel in the Holy Land were invited to settle in Kent by the crusader knight Sir Richard de Grey; he gifted them the land. In 1247, at the first General Chapter meeting, the Carmelites took the momentous decision to change their lifestyle from one of hermits to [mendicant](#) friars.

In the late Middle Ages, the Priory at Aylesford grew as a centre of hospitality for pilgrims en route to the shrine of St. Thomas Becket at Canterbury. However, with the Reformation of the Church in England, King Henry VIII dissolved religious communities, and the Carmelites were forced from their priory in 1538.

Given the significance of Aylesford, in 1949 the Carmelites were able to purchase 'The Friars' Aylesford from private ownership, 400 years after leaving. The Carmelite Community began the work of rebuilding and restoration, creating the shrine, Chapels, the guest house, and hospitality facilities.



The Carmelite Order (O'Carm for short)

The Order originates from pilgrims who travelled to Palestine, the Holy Land, settling on Mount Carmel. They were part of a movement in search of a simple Christian life, focused on following Christ and living out the Gospel. Mount Carmel is associated with the Old Testament Prophet Elijah, who they adopted as their patron and spiritual inspiration.

Their principal patron is the Virgin Mary. They called her their sister as they wished to share in her values: centred on Jesus, lived out in the community of disciples, faithful to God's call, prayerful, sensitive to the needs of others and generous in service.

The official name of the order is 'The Order of the brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel'.

In approximately 1207 the Carmelites asked their local bishop Albert of Vercelli, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, to write a rule of life for them which brought together their spiritual values and the practical realities of living together in community.

Soon after the community was established on Mount Carmel, the continued fighting over the Holy Land (The Crusades), forced the hermits to leave, many returning to Europe. By the end of the thirteenth century the brothers of our Lady of Mount Carmel had become part of the well-established mendicant movement.

Today 'Carmel' is being lived out in many ways: thousands of people describe themselves as Carmelite, living out their calling from God as hermits, friars, nuns, sisters, and laity.

The Charism

A Charism is the distinct spirit that animates a religious community and gives it a particular character and identity. The Carmelite charism is a gift that has come from eight hundred years of Carmelite history and consists of three elements: Contemplation, Community and Service.



Glossary of words you may encounter

Altar A table in the sanctuary of a church, usually fixed in place, at which the central part of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, is celebrated. The 'table top' is usually made of fine stone such as marble or granite, but possibly also of wood.

Ambo The lectern in the sanctuary from which the Bible readings are read.

Crusades were a series of religiously motivated military campaigns. The most well-known Crusades took place between 1095 and 1291 in the Near East, where European Christian armies attempted to recover the city of Jerusalem from Islamic rule.

Eucharist The name used by Catholics for the consecrated bread and wine which are the body and blood of Christ. During Mass, which is also called the eucharistic liturgy, most Catholics receive the Eucharist at Communion.

Mass From the Latin Missa - which is related to 'missio,' meaning 'sending forth' or 'mission' - from the dismissal at the end of Mass: 'Go, the Mass is ended' (in Latin, 'Ite, Missa est'). The eucharistic liturgy is commonly called the Mass throughout the English speaking Catholic Church, or simply the liturgy.

Mendicant orders are Christian religious orders that have adopted a lifestyle of poverty, travelling, and living in urban areas for the purposes of preaching the Gospel, and ministry. Alongside the Carmelites, some other examples are The Augustinians, The Dominicans, and The Franciscans. Mendicants avoid owning property and embrace a poor lifestyle.

Prior The word is derived from the Latin for 'earlier' or 'first' and is used to describe the person in charge of a priory.

Reformation The English Reformation took place in 16th-century England when the Church of England broke away from the authority of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church.

Relic is an object or article of religious significance. It can be the actual physical remains of a saint, such as bones, or pieces of clothing or some other object associated with the person.

Reliquary is a container for the Relic (see above). In our Relic Chapel the large tower object behind the main Altar.



Glossary continued...

Sanctuary The area of the church that holds the altar, ambo and celebrant's chair.

Scapular a type of work apron, consisting of large pieces of cloth front and back, joined over the shoulders with strips of cloth. It forms part of the habit of some religious orders including the Carmelites.

A much smaller 'devotional scapular' was also developed consisting of two small rectangular pieces of cloth, with religious images and text. These are joined by two bands of cloth and placed over the head so one square sits on the chest and the second square on their back.

Note of Interest - *The tradition of the devotional scapular holds great significance here at Aylesford. St. Simon Stock, an Englishman who lived in the 13th century, was an early [Prior](#) of the Carmelite Order. Tradition says that the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to him and gave him the Carmelite habit, the Brown Scapula. This image is depicted in the Ceramic Shrine on the Rosary Way.*

The Carmelite scapular is worn all around the world and serves to remind the wearers of their commitment to live a Christian life.

Tabernacle A locked type of cupboard in a church, usually ornamental in appearance, and permanently fixed to a wall or on a plinth. This container is where consecrated bread not used at Mass is reserved. In some churches it is placed prominently in a small chapel, in others, it is on the sanctuary. The reserved hosts in the tabernacle may be used to bring Communion to the sick. You will also notice a burning candle near the tabernacle, usually in a red glass container, signalling that the Eucharist is present in the tabernacle.

Many Catholics, out of reverence for the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, genuflect towards the tabernacle when they pass in front of it.



Prepare for the journey or continue after

Ideas to use in school (Curriculum links)

Geography

Use aerial photographs and plan perspectives to recognise landmarks and basic human and physical features; devise a simple map and use and construct basic symbols in a key.

Use basic geographical vocabulary.

Describe and understand key aspects of human geography, including types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water.

- You could create an aerial plan of Aylesford priory. Why not include a key to all of the chapels or interesting features that you found? (skills and fieldwork)
- Describe the natural features you find in and around the Friars. You could produce a field guide to the wildlife and plants here in the priory. (Human and physical geography)
- Look at maps old and new of the area around 'the Friars'. What has changed? Why do you think the friars chose this spot for their priory? (Human and physical geography)
- Why do you think the river was so useful to the Medieval builders and Pilgrims? (Human and physical geography)

History

To investigate significant historical events, people and places in their own locality.

To investigate changes within living memory. Where appropriate, these should be used to reveal aspects of change in national life.

Britain's settlement by Anglo-Saxons and Scots – Christian conversion (Canterbury, Iona and Lindisfarne)

Conduct a local history study.

- Investigate the original priory. When was it built? What would the local area have looked like?
- Investigate the life of the early friars. What was daily life like? How is that different to the life of a friar today?
- You could investigate the impact of the English Reformation by Henry VIII. What did this mean for the friars at Aylesford?
- In more recent history, investigate the return of the friars to Aylesford. Who was a key figure in the re-modelling and re-founding of the priory?



Art and Design

To use a range of materials creatively to design and make products.

To investigate the work of a range of artists, craft makers and designers, describing the differences and similarities between different practices and disciplines, and making links to their own work.

To create sketch books to record their observations and use them to review and revisit ideas

- Use wax crayons to take rubbings of some of the ceramics (take care not to damage the ceramics!)
- Recreate your favourite piece of artwork from around the priory using a variety of materials.
- Practice your observational drawing skills with a drawing of your favourite view of the priory.
- Investigate the life and work of Adam Kossowski. Develop and produce a piece of artwork that is inspired by his distinctive style. It could be a clay tile or a painting!
- Observe in the chapels how the ideas of the artist have developed over time. What do you notice as his technique and ideas develop?



Basic resources you need for onsite activities

- Leaders / teachers may want to take pictures of the different spaces to use back at School
- To save printing (and the planet) this guide can be read from a tablet device
- Students could use clip boards
- Every Student should have a pen or pencil

Priors Hall

- Pen / pencils printed shield handout from pack

Cloister

- Pen /pencil small pieces of paper (A6)

Choir Chapel

- Strips of Paper to make paper chains
- Stapler or glue to join the chain together
- Pen/pencil
- Colour pencils to decorate if time allows

Main Shrine

- Square of Card / paper to make a tile
- Pen / pencil / Colour pencils to decorate
- You could use this as a plan to make clay tiles when back at School

Relic Chapel

- A4 Paper / Card to design a stained-glass window
- Pens / pencils / colour pencils
- You could use this as a plan to make Stained glass using tissue paper or Jam jars back at School

St Joseph's

- Wax rubbings – A3 paper and wax crayons



Aspects to include when considering your own risk assessment

We appreciate it is the responsibility of teachers and group leaders to complete a risk assessment prior to any site visit. The following information is intended to support you and not replace your own risk assessment.

General Considerations

- The site is open to the public
- Ensure you wear sensible footwear and dress appropriately for the site and weather
- Our grounds and maintenance staff may pose a temporary hazard on site, we can advise of any major works when you visit
- We have two large toilet blocks on site

Moving vehicles may pose a hazard

- There is parking for coaches and minibuses on site
- There is vehicle movement around the site; with a 10 miles per hour limit

The walking surfaces may be uneven and change level

- All surfaces may be slippery when wet
- Steps may be worn or uneven; single steps may pose a trip hazard
- Be aware of animal holes in grassed areas
- Wooden ramps may be slippery

Large Pond

- The pond is deep and has no physical barriers / fence
- The ducks and geese can become aggressive

All group visits must be pre booked by contacting the shrine secretary on

mark.coatsworth@thefriars.org.uk

Your school is responsible for:

- Completing its own risk assessments
- Ensuring an adequate ratio of staff to students
- Ensuring a first aider is present in your group
- Having public liability insurance

