

LINDISFARNE GOSPELS

School Assembly Outlines

Assembly 1

Age Range: 4 – 8

Objective: To reflect on the care and effort we take with some projects because they are intended for something special or someone we value, using Eadfrith and the Lindisfarne Gospels as an example.

You will need: Background information (provided in Starting Points and in the book *Painted Labyrinth: the world of the Lindisfarne Gospels* by Michelle P. Brown, donated for your school library by the British Library), School Bible, OHP transparency of a carpet page, and each Gospel page.

Project the carpet page image as the pupils enter the assembly hall.

What colours can you see?

What shapes can you see?

Do you know what it is?

Some pupils may guess at it being a carpet or rug. Explain that this is so called today (not at the time of Eadfrith) because of the colours and design which looks like the intricate designs you might find on some carpets. (Pupils may be interested to know that a limited edition carpet, based on the Carpet page before St Mark's Gospel has been produced. They may be surprised to hear that in England, at the time the Lindisfarne Gospels were written, people only had rush mats.)

This is only one page in a book called the Lindisfarne Gospels. This book is a copy of part of the Christian holy book, the Bible, called the Gospels. The Gospels (possibly explain Gospel = God's Spell = Good News in Anglo Saxon) are four different accounts of the life of Jesus as told by four different people. Because different people have told the story, each account is a little bit different. Show the Four cover pages for the Gospels. (Use the background notes here if required). We can see these four Gospels in the Bibles we have in school but they will look very different from the page we can see here (refer to overhead). Most Bibles only give the words of the story of Jesus, but the book that contains this page is very different and very special from those that we usually see. Now we know why the book has the word Gospel in its title But it also has the word 'Lindisfarne'.

Does anyone know why it is called 'The Lindisfarne Gospels'? Lindisfarne was the name of the island in the North Sea where the person who wrote this special book lived. He can be described as an artist-scribe because he both drew and wrote his special book. We think the person who wrote and designed this book was a man called Eadfrith who lived over 1200 years ago. He must have spent a long time carefully drawing, and then painting his designs.

Who likes to draw and paint? What do you use? Are your drawings and paintings for anything or anyone special? Why? (Could use some examples of pupils' work here)

Why do you think Eadfrith wanted to decorate his book in this way? Perhaps it was a sign that God was very important to him. Perhaps he also felt that God was very important to others. Perhaps it was Eadfrith's way

of saying 'thank you' to God for being good at drawing, writing and painting. Perhaps he was saying 'thank you' to God because he believed God gave us (created) all the wonderful things in the world, like the animals, colours and materials.

Explain that as they leave the assembly they will be given a special card for them to colour. It shows a design that is found in the Lindisfarne Gospels. You could use it as a bookmark – or perhaps give it to someone who you think is special. Have fun when you colour it, do it very carefully, and think of why you want this to be special.

REFLECTION

Think of all the beautiful things you like to look at. Think about the shapes and colours of all the wonderful things in the world.

Think about who you would like to make something for and decorate in a special way. Why?

FOLLOW – UP

The bookmark could be completed at home but, if done in curriculum time, it should be part of a lesson, which is taking a broader look at the artistry of the Lindisfarne Gospels. 'Colouring in' may have little educational value in itself (although it does hone the fine motor skills of younger or less able pupils), but in this instance teacher's should encourage a reflective approach to the colouring process – pupils will examine the image more carefully, consider: what colours should I choose? Why will this be special? Why do I want it to be special? Will it reflect the person I wish to give it to? Do I enjoy doing this? How does this make me feel?