

Overview Life in a Scottish Medieval Monastery

This Education Pack has been developed by Haddington's History Society for use in primary schools. It is aimed at First and Second level pupils and is primarily linked to the Experiences and Outcomes for Social Studies, although it could also be used to help with outcomes for Literacy and Numeracy.

The Education Pack is not based on an actual site but draws on information from a range of Scottish monastic houses. Practising teachers have helped shape its content but the Society would appreciate feedback to help with future revisions. Contact us with your suggestions.

Contact Us

The activities you choose and the sequence you follow will depend on the teaching time available and the interest and ability level of your pupils. You can pick and mix suitable activities from any unit. Units 1 to 6 can be easily differentiated for all abilities in First or Second Level. Units 6 and 7 are likely more suitable for Second Level. Each unit has a talking point and then activities.

Where possible, a class visit to a nearby monastery (ruined or active) would add greatly to the pupils' understanding. The Pack includes Teachers' Notes for those who would like more background.

The units are:

- 1 The Monastery
- 2 Daily Life
- 3 Food and drink
- 4 Why did people join a monastery?
- 5 Objects from the past
- 6 Monastery people
- 7 What's true and untrue about the past?

Links to Experiences and Outcomes

First Level

I understand that evidence varies in the extent to which it can be trusted and can use this in learning about the past. **SOC 1-01a**

By exploring places, investigating artefacts and locating them in time, I have developed an awareness of the ways we remember and preserve Scotland's history.

SOC 1-02a

Second Level

I can use primary and secondary sources selectively to research events in the past.

SOC 2-01a

I can interpret historical evidence from a range of periods to help to build a picture of Scotland's heritage and my sense of chronology.

SOC 2-02a

I can use evidence to recreate the story of a place or individual of local historical interest.

SOC 1-03a

I can compare aspects of people's daily lives in the past with my own by using historical evidence or the experience of recreating an historical setting.

SOC 1-04a

I can investigate a Scottish historical theme to discover how past events or the actions of individuals or groups have shaped Scottish society.

SOC 2-03a

I can compare and contrast a society in the past with my own and contribute to a discussion of the similarities and differences.

SOC 2-04a

Online resources

General

Investigating Abbeys and Priors in Scotland (Useful background for teachers.)

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=f32845ec-e2de-4ab2-b573-a58500daa5e2>

Video

Meet a Medieval Monk (English Heritage) – 4 mins 14 secs (for children)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewbjWSAVDLI>

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/members-area/kids/medieval-monasteries/monk-interview-pma/>

A day in the life of a medieval Cistercian monk – 4 mins 30 secs (presented by young people in Yorkshire)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPvUQwW-Y9w>

A Mini Guide to Medieval Monks – 2 mins (English Heritage)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbT6IkMQxck>

Nuns: powerful women of the middle-ages (German with English subtitles) – 4 mins 30 secs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewbjWSAVDLI>

What's my job? Proud to be an archaeologist – 4 mins (BBC for KS 1/2)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/pshe-ks1-ks2-proud-to-be-an-archaeologist/zmqg92p#:~:text=An%20archaeologist.,live%20a%20long%20time%20ago.>

Activities

Making manuscripts – 6 mins 30 secs (Getty Museum)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuNfdHNTv9o>

Make your own illuminated initial –

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/members-area/kids/kids-rule-things-to-make-and-do/design-your-illuminated-initials/>

How to make a medieval pilgrim's badge

<http://smallfindsdesign.co.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Medieval-Pilgrimage-WORKSHEET.pdf>

How to make a medieval priory floor tile

<http://smallfindsdesign.co.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Medieval-tile-WORKSHEET.pdf>

How to play Nine Mens' Morris - 4 mins 20 secs (silent, graphic presentation)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvblKOHikRE>

Medieval Irish Cabbage Pottage – 3 mins 50 secs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HmqIBh7TBM>

What's for dinner in a medieval monastery? Colouring sheet to download.

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/members-area/kids/kids-rule-makes-and-bakes/whats-for-dinner-monasteries/>

How to make a quill pen (from a plastic straw) - 5 mins 34 secs (Messy)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYQ1VQ2iPsk>

Visits

A class visit can add immeasurably to classroom study.

<https://www.paisleyabbey.org.uk/>

At the time of writing, many Historic Environment Scotland sites are closed for safety reasons. Check their websites for the current situation.

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/culross-abbey/>

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/dryburgh-abbey/>

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/dunfermline-abbey-and-palace/>

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/inchmahome-priory/>

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/jedburgh-abbey/>

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/melrose-abbey/>

Further afield

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/fountains-abbey-and-studley-royal-water-garden>