

Key Stage 4

Local Church (Practices)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Understand** Reformation iconoclasm.
- **Understand** the impact iconoclasm had on Protestant Church buildings.

Students will be able to answer the question:
What is church for?

PRIOR LEARNING

This lesson frames the role and purpose of church with differences between Protestant and Catholic Church decoration. Students will explore how far religious imagery and ritual serve a purpose in church, and how far they distract people from the business of church. This lesson does not cover rites of passage conducted in church, such as baptism, marriage and funerals, but they are not necessary to have learned in advance of this lesson.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1: STARTER: WHAT'S IN A CHURCH?

LESSON CONTENT

Brainstorm 'what's in a church'. Play an informal game of bingo, calling out words and phrases such as: font, image of Jesus crucified, Mary, Virgin and child, saints, statues, stained glass, pulpit, empty cross, Bible, heraldry and flags, local colours and symbols, organ, seats/pews, collecting boxes, confession boxes, etc. Students tick off any words they have written. Can students suggest words you did not think of?

Teach that after the Reformation most trappings people were familiar with were stripped away leaving a bare church. In this lesson students will learn how the Reformation radically changed the appearance of churches in Europe, and explore whether this changed the essential nature of church.

2: ICONOCLASM

LESSON CONTENT

a. Define ‘iconoclasm’

(Teacher notes: the destruction of religious images or objects, seen as necessary to assert new beliefs, often occurs at a time of great upheaval).

Do the class know of examples of iconoclasm?

(Teacher notes: Henry VIII’s dissolution of the monasteries, Prophet Muhammad’s destruction of statues inside the Ka’aba, Da’esh’s widespread destruction of ancient monuments and items).

b. Display some late-medieval art to give students a sense of its richness. For example:

- Van Eyck’s *Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele*. This shows both a belief in Mary’s powers to help human prayers find God, as well as the powerful patronage behind most great works.
- Rogier van der Weyden’s *Beaune Altarpiece* depicts medieval notions of judgment.
- Find images of ‘rood screens’ in English churches. They were built to shield the Eucharist from coarse or malevolent influences and over time became highly decorated.
- Italian *quattrocento* artists such as da Vinci, Botticelli and Fra Angelico presented Christian themes in a classical style.

These are the visual worlds rejected by Protestant groups during the Reformation and removed from churches.

c. Read the information section and complete the questions on the ‘Iconoclasm’ sheet on pp. 4–5.

d. Find images online of practices in Catholic churches used to evoke the senses, such as candles, images of saints and the Virgin and child. Contrast this with Protestant, possibly Puritan, churches, such as plain wooden churches with plain glass, communion celebrated at a wooden table, etc. Discuss what feelings each evokes.

Ask for students’ reactions to iconoclasm. Do they think the iconoclasts were protecting people from committing idolatry, or do they think religious imagery plays an important role in religion?

3: WHAT IS CHURCH FOR?

LESSON CONTENT

- Ask the class if they think the visual art and statues are necessary for a church? Gather arguments why and why not. Ask what students think church is for. Read how Paul describes the Church in Corinthians and Romans on p. 6. What is Church for? Questions for discussion are given with these passages. Either answer them in small groups or as a class.
- Peter uses another analogy to describe the purpose of a church. Read the final passage on p. 6. Answer questions for discussion on the sheet either in small groups or as a class.
- Summarise as a class what these passages tell Christians about what church should *do* and the people that make up a church.

Out of this discussion, ask each group to create a slogan advertising church in ten words or less.

4: EXAMPLES OF CHURCH

LESSON CONTENT

- Look at '**Fresh Expressions**' for new forms of church, and images of **street pastors** using Google. Identify how these churches aim to support people both spiritually and practically. Do the Bible passages present spiritual or practical support as superior, or are they of equal value?
- Recap why Protestant churches objected to the visual arts in the Reformation. Search Google Images for 'Anglican Church vestments'.

Teach that in the 1600s Elizabeth I passed a law that all clergy must wear such 'vestments', and that some ministers in the Protestant **Congregationalist Church** refused, seeing them as a distraction. These Congregationalist ministers were forced to leave their churches and try to support their flock in precarious situations.

Discuss whether fine clothes are indeed a distraction from the business of church. How far can fine clothes be seen as *part of* the business of church and ministry?

- Search YouTube for **Salvation Army** Christmas adverts, or look on the Salvation Army's website to find out what work they are engaged in. Note the highly practical ways this church reaches out to those in need. Discuss the name 'Salvation Army', with its combination of spiritual promise and military organisation. Discuss if setting out to improve the lot of the most vulnerable is indeed like a military operation. How far does this church appear to be about faith and how far about practical action?
- Finally, return to the earlier question: 'What is church for?' Answer with reference to the biblical teachings and at least two examples of churches studied.

Iconoclasm

Iconoclasm: destruction of precious or sacred images or objects deemed unacceptable

A key feature of Protestant churches is their lack of decoration. Before the Reformation churches were highly decorated, as Reformation historian Peter Marshall notes, ‘religion was intensely sensual, engaging the full range of worshippers’ senses’ (Marshall 2009). As the Protestant Reformation gathered pace there was removal, desecration or destruction of images, statues, carvings and painting. In Marshall’s words, the reformers ‘ruthlessly destroyed a priceless artistic and cultural inheritance’ (Marshall 2009). In some regions churches were ransacked, artwork burnt and carvings smashed, in others there was a more orderly removal of art now deemed unacceptable.

In England there were approximately 9,000 rood screens before the Reformation, but every one was either destroyed or damaged by reformers. The statue of Jesus on the cross in Basel’s Minster was publically burnt in 1529, a statue of St Francis was hanged in Dundee in 1537 and in the 1560s John Knox preached such emotive sermons that people would surge into the churches of St Andrews, laying them bare.

The reformers believed that the beautiful and awe-inspiring imagery could lead worshippers into idolatry if they venerated the images instead of God. Idolatry is forbidden in two of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3–4):

You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourselves an idol.

The Catholic use of such images was designed to teach illiterate people about Christian belief and show them how they should behave, as well as to be inspired by the lives of Jesus and the saints. Even though some reformers, such as Zwingli, personally appreciated the skill and beauty of much religious art, they feared that people could start to revere the artist instead of God, and supported iconoclasm.

Scripture quotations taken from the World English Bible.

Marshall, P. (2009), *The Reformation: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Questions

What was removed from Protestant churches?

What were reasons for iconoclasm?

What purpose did the art and decoration serve originally?

In your opinion, is commissioning and displaying religious imagery for everyone an essential part of what a church should do? Explain:

What is Church for?

1 Corinthians 12:12–21

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. And so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now if the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’

Romans 12:4–8

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then

give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Questions for discussion:

- What different types of people does Paul refer to? (A ‘gentile’ is a non-Jew. Most Christians were Jews in Paul’s day but increasing numbers of non-Jews were joining.)
- What is a good alternative word to use for ‘gifts’?
- What different ‘gifts’ does Paul mention?
- How successful do you think Paul’s analogy of the body is in explaining belonging and diversity?

1 Peter 5:1–4

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Questions for discussion:

- What ‘suffering’ does Peter refer to?
- What ‘glory’ does Peter refer to?
- What image does Peter draw of the ‘elders’ relationship to their church members?
- Why should elders support others in this manner, according to Peter?

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Local Church in the Specs

<p>AQA Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the Church in the local and worldwide community. • The role of the Church in the local community, including food banks and street pastors. 	<p>WJEC Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the Church in the local and worldwide community. • The role of the Church in the local community, including food banks and street pastors. 	<p>Edexcel A & B</p> <p>The role and importance of the local church in the local community: how and why it helps the individual believer and the local area; local parish activities, including interpretations of 1 Peter 5:1-4, ecumenism, outreach work, the centre of Christian identity and worship through living practices.</p>
<p>OCR Practices</p> <p>The meaning and importance of rites of passage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of rituals that mark rites of passage to individuals and communities. • The ways in which church communities nurture and support families, for example Sunday schools, youth clubs, mother and child groups, visiting the elderly and the sick. • Common and divergent attitudes towards and practices connected with membership of the Christian community, including infant baptism, dedication, believer’s baptism and confirmation. • Common and divergent attitudes towards and practices connected with the celebration of marriage. • Common and divergent attitudes towards and practices connected with funerals. • Different interpretations and emphases given to sources of wisdom and authority. 		<p>OCR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matthew 3:13-17 • Ephesians 5:31-33 • John 11:25 • 1 Corinthians 15:51