ELY CATHEDRAL

Learning at Ely Cathedral

Key Stage Three

Key Stage 3 Religious Studies Workshops at the Cathedral

Cracking the Code of Prayer (60 minutes)

From gratitude and forgiveness to hope and concerns for others, explore what a cathedral can tell us about why, how, and when Christians pray in this hands-on workshop. Through challenges and clues around Ely Cathedral, uncover the different purposes of prayer and decide for yourself: does a special place make a difference?

Creation, Cosmos and Care (60 minutes)

This workshop takes students on a journey from the beginning of the universe to the challenges of today. Comparing the biblical creation story with scientific explanations for the origins of the cosmos, they explore how different perspectives can shape our understanding of the world. Along the way, they will tackle big questions about belief, discovery, and our responsibility to care for creation.

The Life of Jesus Trail (60 minutes)

Step into the story of Jesus and explore Ely Cathedral in a whole new way. Working in small teams, students follow a trail through the building to discover key moments from Jesus' life and teachings. As they complete their booklet and piece together the story, they will find out more about the people, places and ideas that continue to shape Christian belief today. This trail is independent and supported by your school staff.

Place of Worship Trail (60 minutes)

What makes a cathedral more than just a historic building? This self-guided trail explores the signs, symbols, and sacred spaces of Ely Cathedral, revealing how they shape Christian worship and belief. As students investigate key features of the building, they discover how Christians use them for prayer, reflection, and celebration, and encounter the many different ways faith can be expressed.

Saints, Heroes and Role Models (60 minutes)

This workshop explores one big question: *Who deserves to be remembered?* Using the story of St Etheldreda and clues hidden around Ely Cathedral, students investigate faith, courage, and leadership. Through discovery and discussion, they consider the qualities we value and what makes a lasting legacy.

Shared Origins Trail (60 minutes)

What do the world's major religions have in common? Using Ely Cathedral's art and architecture as a starting point, this guided trail explores the shared stories, beliefs, figures, and traditions that connect six major world faiths. Through discussion and investigation, students uncover surprising links between religions and reflect on both their similarities and their differences.

Key Stage 3 History Workshops at the Cathedral

Building Ely Cathedral (60 minutes)

How was Ely Cathedral built, and how has it changed over the centuries? Through a series of interactive activities, students explore the architecture, art, and design of this remarkable building. Along the way, they uncover the skills, ideas and innovations that helped shape one of the greatest achievements of the Norman age.

Herbs, Humours and Healing (60 minutes)

Step inside the medieval infirmary and uncover the secrets of medicine in the Middle Ages. Students investigate ancient ideas about health and disease, race to diagnose and treat patients, and create their own herbal remedies using inspiration from real medieval cures. Along the way, they discover a world of strange symptoms, surprising treatments, and fascinating beliefs.

Monastic Life (60 minutes)

What was daily life really like in a medieval monastery? Taking on the role of a monk at Ely, students experience the rhythm of monastic life through prayer, work, and worship. From illuminating manuscripts and making candles to learning plainsong and communicating in silence, they discover how faith shaped every part of a monk's day.

Pilgrims Progress (60 minutes)

Why did thousands of people travel to Ely in the Middle Ages? Taking on the role of medieval pilgrims, students make choices about supplies, spending and survival as they prepare for their journey. Following the historic route through the Cathedral to the shrine of St Etheldreda, they experience the challenges, motivations, and rewards of pilgrimage for themselves. Please ask us about group size when booking this activity.

Rebel or Surrender? The Fall of Ely (60 minutes)

Step into the world of rebellion and resistance in Norman England. In this immersive roleplay workshop, students become the monks of Ely Abbey as they face the growing conflict between Hereward the Wake and William the Conqueror. As events unfold, they must decide whether to risk it all and support the rebellion or surrender to the king.

The Great Cathedral Build-Off (60 minutes)

In 1322, Ely Cathedral's central tower collapsed—and a remarkable rebuilding challenge began. Taking on the role of medieval engineers, students design, build and test their own towers in a hands-on competition to create the strongest structure possible. They then compare their ideas with the real solution devised by Alan de Walsingham and discover how one of England's most iconic architectural feats was achieved.

FAQ's

At Ely Cathedral we are passionate about learning and we can't wait to share our wonderful building with you and your students. Expect to meet characters from history, enjoy hands on workshops and get creative when you visit.

How many students can I bring?
We usually like to limit student numbers to around 100. This means we are able to work with manageable group sizes to ensure that everyone has a great experience. However, we can sometimes accommodate slightly larger groups depending on the activities you choose.

Can you accommodate different learning needs?
Absolutely. Everyone is welcome at Ely Cathedral. When you complete your booking form, you will be able to give us some more information about the needs of the students you are bringing with you. We have a range of resources to support all learners, including sensory resources and a sensory room for children who might need a break.

Do you have risk assessments?
Yes. You will be able to find downloadable Risk Assessments for visits to the Cathedral in the Schools section of the Learning and Families pages of our website.

Do you offer pre-visits?
Yes. Please ask us about these when you send your initial enquiry and we will be able to arrange for a pre-visit. Please do note that we are not able to accommodate pre-visits during the weekends but can often arrange them during school holidays if you are not able to come during working hours.

Do you have materials that I can use with my students before we visit?
A number of our current workshops do have pre-visit materials that we can send you so please do ask.

Do you have a lunch room?
Yes, we are able to accommodate your students in our classroom for lunch. In the case of larger groups we may also be able to offer you an additional space or we may have to build a split lunch into your timetable to ensure that everyone can eat comfortably. If you are booking a full day with us the use of the lunch room is included in the cost of the visit.

FAQ's

Can visiting staff leave the site during breaks?

All of our staff and volunteers have up to date and relevant DBS checks. However, for safeguarding purposes we do ask that all staff remain on-site with students throughout the day. We are pleased to provide tea, coffee and light refreshments to all visiting teachers to reduce the need to leave the site.

What are the timings of school visits?

A school visit will usually start at 10.00am. A half day would usually finish at 12.00pm and a full day at 2.00pm. If you need a slightly different arrival or departure time we can usually accommodate this so please do ask. You will be sent a timetable for your day as part of the booking confirmation. Please check these timings carefully and let us know if you need to arrive or depart at a different time.

How much does a visit to the Cathedral cost?

Full day (3 learning sessions, use of the lunch room and refreshments for staff): **£7.50 pp**
Half Day (2 learning sessions): **£5.00 pp**
Self-Guided Visit: **£3.50 pp**
Use of the lunch room (if not visiting for a full day or self-guided): **£50.00**
A **10% discount** is applicable for all visits during **September** and **January**. We are also pleased to be able to offer some free places for pupil premium students. The number of places offered will be detemined by the FSM % published for your school on SchoolDash. All accompanying staff and adults visit for free. There is a minimum charge of £100 for full day visits and £75 for half day visits.

How do I book?

Email us at **learning@elycathedral.org** with your **preferred dates** and **workshop choices**. Once your date is secure, we'll ask you to complete a booking form, which we will use to put together your itinerary for the day. We sometimes work with other providers in Ely such as the Stained Glass Museum, Ely Museum and Oliver Cromwell's House so do ask us about joint visits.