

Myths, Miracles, Mysteries, Mission – following the Saints

Introduction



Adam Court/flickr St Mary's Church, Beddgelert, Wales, UK

Have you ever walked past a church and noticed that its name is that of a saint? And have you ever wondered why so many churches seem to be called after saints?

By the fourth century, it began to be the practice to dedicate new churches to a 'patron' saint. Images of that person were often displayed in the churches and the name of the saint would be displayed. Today, many churches are dedicated to all kinds of saints, but some Christian denominations now do not use them to dedicate their buildings.

The Christian creeds, our statements of what we believe, say that 'we believe in the communion of saints', - holy women and men who have been faithful followers of Jesus Christ and who have often lost their lives through persecution of the Christian faith. Some Christian denominations recognise saints 'days' in the Christian calendar when particular saints are especially remembered and churches dedicated to particular saints hold special services, 'patronal festivals', on those particular days. Across the world, some of these dates are very well known outside the Church, such as St Valentine's Day on February 14th or the St Patrick's Day celebrations on March 17th.

Some saints are said to be 'patron saints' of particular groups of people, sometimes because of some event or legend about their own story. In the UK there are four 'nation' saints, St George for England, St David for Wales, St Patrick for Ireland, and St Andrew for Scotland.

This set of sixteen resources is designed to offer you a range of ways of finding out more about a saint called St Winefride (Winifred or Gwenffrewi) and finding out about the mission, myths, miracles, and mysteries associated with her and to ask how we understand these things today.

There are four 'pathways' for you to follow, and you can mix and match them if you like. They are:

YELLOW JOURNEY – word-based resources for people who like to read information, talk about things and consider questions, perhaps in a study group. The Yellow Journey also guides you through the best information we have (eg the Bible for biblical saints) moving on to how we learn from, evaluate and use other traditions about the saints.

BLUE JOURNEY – for people who like to engage with Scripture, use prayers, and use Christian reflections. The Blue Journey also begins from the best information we have (eg the Bible) through to prayers and traditions associated with particular saints.

GREEN JOURNEY – image and activity based for people who like to explore, create, look at images and get out and about. The Green Journey also delves into things like the traditions of saints around the world, seeing them through the eyes of other Christians.

PINK JOURNEY – for people who want to explore Christian faith more deeply, find out more about following Jesus, and using the 'lens' of the saints to create opportunities for thinking about how we live our lives.

Another way to mix and match the resources is to follow the information across the four journeys about the person first and as much factual material as is available, then think about the mission of that person and where and how that was recorded, then move on to the miracles associated with that person and finally the mystery of the saints and what their stories might mean for us today.

You can use these resources whether you are a Christian or not, as an individual study or in a group of friends.

This grid shows you the range of the resources for St Winefride and how you can mix them:

	The Woman	The Mission	The Miracles	The Mystery
Yellow Journey	Winefride	Winefride and Beuno	Winefride is Restored	The New Spring of Water
Blue Journey	Susanna – faithfulness and obedience to God	Mary's obedience brings Jesus into the World	The Pool of Bethesda	Tabitha – a disciple restored to life
Green Journey	Seeing Winefride	Dedication to Christ	Death and Restoration to Life	Healing and New Life
Pink Journey	Safety and Harassment	Living a Consecrated Life	Bringing Healing to the Hurt	Inspiring and Transforming the World