

Mini-Pilgrimages

Welcome to our Mini-Pilgrimages, with routes inspired by Gavin Wakefield's book '[Saints and Holy Places of Yorkshire](#)' which can be done as a family, or as a children's or youth group activity. You could even encourage your whole school or church to have a go, and share your stories



Sacred Walks

route information including details of available toilets, parking and accessibility

Sacred Themes

the theme for this mini-pilgrimage and how it might help us to be Children of Light

Sacred Places

Interesting information about the places on your walk



Sacred People

the story of the saint(s) associated with these places

Sacred Spaces

time to pause and pay attention

Sacred Pastimes

things to do as you walk or when you get home

Sacred Conversations things to talk and wonder about together as you pilgrimage

Rievaulx - Helmsley



Sacred Theme - Friendship

Jesus told his friends to love one another just as he has loved them. He even washed his disciples smelly, dirty feet to show them how

important it is to serve and look after each other as part of our friendship. We might think that we can't do anything spectacular like some saints, but being a good friend is something we can all do, and this mini-pilgrimage might be an opportunity to think about how we can do that better!



Sacred Walks

There is a route all the way from the car park in Helmsley to Rievaulx Abbey or vice versa. It is well marked, and although quite muddy in places not a difficult walk (see the map from English Heritage for more details). It can however take the best part of two hours each way, so we recommend that families with small children

choose to do the shorter route from Helmsley to the top and back, or arrange a pick up at the other end.

Both the car parks at Rievaulx and Helmsley have clean toilets which appear to be open every day. You will need to pay for the parking which starts at £1.70 for an hour. There are lots of lovely tea shops and cafes in Helmsley to enjoy, and an English Heritage café at Rievaulx Abbey.

Entry into Rievaulx Abbey costs nearly £27 for a family ticket unless you have membership. The views of the Abbey from the road are great though, and there is a lovely spot near the bridge over the river where you can have a picnic.



For the shorter route we recommend that you park at Helmsley and walk from there up to 'Wendy Tait's bench' near the lodge house on top of the moor and back – this means your total walk is about one and half hours and you can sit on the bench and eat a picnic while looking at the fantastic view over the valley.





Sacred Pastimes

When you get to the top of the steps that lead down into the valley and up the other side, before you start to descend get everyone to say whether they think there are more steps going down or going up. Count together and see who is right.

Sacred Places

Rievaulx Abbey

(it's a French word, say 'ree vo') is in the countryside. The nearest town is



Helmsley, which is about two miles away. The monks who built it must have been keen on peace and quiet. They were called Cistercian monks because of the name of the town in France where they started. They are also known as the White Monks because they wore white robes.

The monks kept a lot of sheep. They must have been hard to spot in the fields in their white robes. They sold the sheep's wool all around Europe. They also had mines nearby, where they got lead and iron. At one time there were over six hundred monks and other people here.

Helmsley Castle

Helmsley Castle is a great place to play and wonder about what friendship was like before cars and wifi! It does cost nearly £23 for a family ticket but there is a lovely picnic area outside the grounds which is only a short walk to Helmsley Church where there are also interesting things to look at.

Helmsley Church

Is free to enter but check their website/facebook page for opening times.

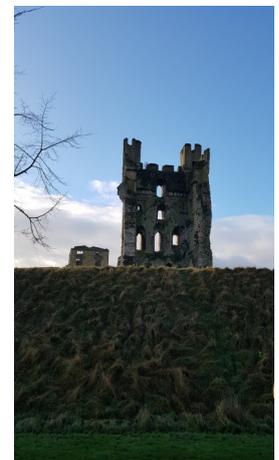
www.helmsleyparish.org.uk www.facebook.com/AllSaintsHelmsley/

It is a 12th century church but there is a Viking 'hogsback' gravestone which dates back to the 10th century.

Above the font is an old wooden 'slave yoke' from a liberated slave from South Africa—a reminder of the cruel slave trade that still goes on today.

There are two chapels - one dedicated to St Columba which has a stained glass windows depicting Saint Aidan visiting Helmsley, and St Columba on his journey to bring Christianity to North Britain. The altar is made of marble. The second chapel is dedicated to St Aelred .

In the chancel which contains the choir stalls is a mosaic of a pelican feeding its young In ancient times it was believed to feed them from the blood and flesh of its own breast and so became a symbol of the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ.



Sacred People

Aelred was the third person to take charge at Rievaulx. His first job was to train the people who came to be monks at the abbey. He wrote a book to help other people who train monks, called *The Mirror of Charity*. In this book he talked about how we love our brothers and sisters and love Jesus. That shows us how God loves us and how we can love God more.

As a young man he served King David of Scotland. On an errand for the king, he stayed at Helmsley Castle and heard about Rievaulx. The next day he went to Rievaulx and asked to join the monks, even though it meant giving up all the luxuries of the royal court.

The abbot of Rievaulx saw that Aelred had a lot of common sense, and he was good at sorting out arguments. He sent him to Rome to see the Pope and sort out the trouble over the new Archbishop of York. When he came back he started a new monastery in Lincolnshire, and then he returned to Rievaulx to be the abbot. Under him, the monastery grew to six hundred monks and the cloisters and infirmary were built. He also started other monasteries in England and Scotland.

As you can see, Aelred worked very hard during his life. It made him ill. During the last ten years of his life, he lived here at Rievaulx in the infirmary and wrote more books about prayer and friendship, writing about how we love ourselves, our neighbours and God. He said: "Scarcely any happiness whatever can exist among humanity without friendship."

For more information about Aelred see pages 17-20 in ['Saints and Holy Places of Yorkshire'](#)



Sacred Conversations

Friendship is so important, but sometimes we can take it for granted. We have different friends for different reasons. Some are easy to get on with, others are more challenging. On the hill at the midpoint of the long walk or endpoint of the shorter walk is a house that looks over the valley.

Imagine that you are stuck in that house and then decide which friend you want to share that house with for each of the different scenarios...

- It is the middle of winter but you have everything you need
- It is pouring with rain, there is no electricity, heat or food
- You have four hours to arrange a surprise party and invite as many guests as possible

Now imagine that you are stuck in the house with Jesus. What are you going to do? What are you going to talk about?

Sacred Spaces

At the bottom of the steps take some time to pause and catch your breath. Listen. This is the quietest place of the whole walk. What can you hear? What can you not hear? Take some time to breath in and out slowly and enjoy the peace.