

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

Sacred Theme - Wisdom

The Bible says that God is the source of all wisdom. Sometimes we forget that wisdom is not necessarily about being clever and having lots of qualifications, or even about being old or boring. In Exodus God gave Bezalel the wisdom he needed to create all the beautiful objects for worship in the temple. In Proverbs wisdom is described as 'common sense'. It also says that knowing, loving and respecting God is the beginning of all wisdom.

We can be wise by asking God's Spirit to help us make wise choices and to fill us with his creativity no matter what our age or how clever we are!



Sacred Walks

Head to Whitby Abbey, where there is plenty of parking in the English Heritage car park. You will also find toilets there (all toilets in Whitby are council-managed and charge 40p per visit, cards accepted). If you are visiting the abbey, the entrance is in the car park, just next to the toilets. Admission to the abbey is free for English Heritage members, or £26 for a family of two adults and up to three children and £16 for one adult and up to three children.

Follow the pavement around the walls of the abbey to get to St Mary's Church. Be prepared for what awaits you inside – you won't have seen a church like this before. Caedmon's Cross is in the south-west corner of the churchyard, just by the top of the 199 Steps, which will take you into the town.

At the bottom of the steps, if you turn sharp right and you will see a small garden, which features a statue of Caedmon. Carry on down the steps next to the garden and you come out by the harbour. From here you can walk out along Tate Hill pier or carry on into the town along the harbour. There is a swing bridge which you can walk over to get to the west side of town (or sit and wait for it to open to let the boats into the harbour). Carry on walking along the west side of the harbour until you get to the railway station. Carry on up the hill past the station to get to Pannett Park, which has a great play area and the Whitby Museum and Art Gallery.



If little legs don't fancy walking back up 199 Steps, there is a gentler route back to the car park. Caedmon's Trod, which can be a little hard to find, leaves the town from Church Street, opposite Hadley's Fish Restaurant.



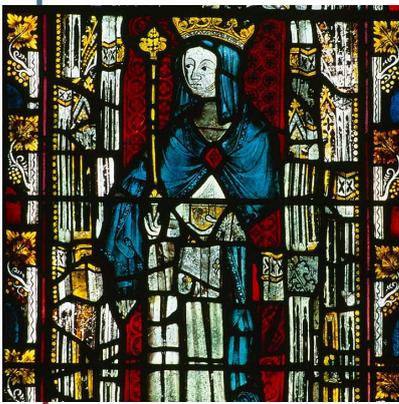
You can also get to Whitby by train – there are direct services from as far away as Manchester and a wonderful service from Hexham with great views of the North Sea. The station is in the middle of the town on the west side of the harbour, five minutes' walk from Pannett Park. If you'd like to combine your visit with a glamorous steam train ride, you can start your journey in Pickering and take the North Yorkshire Moors Railway steam train to Whitby – see nymr.co.uk/freedom-ticket for details.

Sacred Pastimes

For a long time, St Mary's was the only church in Whitby. Every Sunday, people would walk up the 199 Steps to get to church. How would you feel if you climbed all those steps to get to church? Sometimes they had funerals at St Mary's and people – called pall bearers – would carry the coffin on their shoulders all the way up the steps. That's why there are benches – so the pall bearers could put the coffin down and get their breath back.

Imagine you were in the crowd going up the steps on Sunday morning. Would you need to rest on a bench on the way up?

Would you count the steps? Are there really 199 steps? Or is it only 198 steps? Look for the little black discs in the steps, like this one. What do you think they mean?



Sacred People

When she was an old woman – she was 66, which was very old in those days - Hilda heard about a man who kept animals for her monastery at Whitby. His name was Caedmon and he had a gift for writing poetry. In those days, people sang their poems at feasts, but Caedmon didn't think his singing was very good so he avoided going to the feasts. One night he had a dream that he should make songs about the whole history of the Bible. Hilda heard about this and encouraged him to write, and also to join the monastery so that he would have more time to use this precious gift.

Hilda was very good at getting the best out of people. She came from a royal family but her life was spent with people from all kinds of backgrounds, and it seems she got on with everyone. She set up religious communities up and down the east coast. In those days, there weren't many churches, so these communities made sure that people knew about Jesus and also helped poor people. Hilda was very good at leading these communities. In 657 King Oswiu asked her to set up two monasteries at Whitby, one for men and one for women. She carried on running these monasteries for the rest of her life, and all kinds of people lived and worked there – Whitby became famous as a place where people learned things.

Lots of people came to Hilda for advice, kings and nobles and ordinary people. In 664, King Oswiu asked her to hold the Synod of Whitby to sort out arguments between Christians about what date Easter should be and other things they disagreed on. Hilda organised the synod and everyone was able to sort out their arguments.

For more information about St Hilda and Whitby see pages 12-21 in

['Saints and Holy Places of Yorkshire'](#)



Sacred Places

St Mary's Church sits on the cliff-top, looking out over Whitby and the North Sea to one side and to the magnificent ruins of the abbey on the other. Nothing prepares you for what awaits inside – it's like no other church.

From the main door, you enter a small low ceiling area, and then go through double doors. The ground floor is full of box pews, with doors and walls so high you can barely see into them. Up above are galleries, which were put in when they needed more space to fit everyone in. There is room in this church for over two thousand people.



No matter where you sit in the building you can be seen by the person using the top level of the three-decker pulpit. At the back of the pulpit parts of an ear trumpet device are fitted so that the wife of the Rector, who was quite deaf, could hear the sermon given by her husband.

The Lord of the Manor's pew is up high, so that those seated there could see all that was taking place, and also see if any of their workers were absent from church. This pew has its own outside door so they didn't have to come in the main door with everyone else. Outside the church there are very many grave stones. Many of the grave stones have names of ships, trades or professions.



Sacred Spaces

In the churchyard at St Mary's there's a big stone cross called Caedmon's Cross. There are all sorts of things you can notice as you walk around the cross. There's a carving of the Lamb of God, together with the four Evangelists and their symbols. Do you know who the four Evangelists are?

On the other sides is Jesus giving a blessing, King David playing a harp, the Abbess Hilda, and finally Caedmon in the stable being inspired to sing his hymn. Pause and think as you look at the Cross and turn round to gaze out over the harbour. What must it have been like for Caedmon? His work in a stable meant in those days that a lot of people looked down on him. But he had a gift for poetry and making music and, luckily for him, he met Hilda who encouraged him.

Sacred Conversations

A couple of the pews in St Mary's are marked 'For Strangers Only'; these were reserved for people visiting the church – remember Whitby is a seaport and people would arrive by sea from lots of places and want to get to church on a Sunday.

Talk about how we can be welcoming to strangers whilst also being wise about keeping ourselves safe.

Hilda was wise enough to encourage Caedmon's wisdom in poetry and song. Tell each other about the wisdom and gifts you can see in them or in yourself that you would like to encourage.

