

Saint Richard of Chichester

Age: Primary

Theme: St Richard of Chichester – Saint's day 16th June also 'Sussex Day'

Resources: Pair of well-worn shoes; set of door keys; accompanying power point slides

Gathering: Use your usual gathering greeting as welcome

Engaging:

- **[Slide 2]** Hold up set of keys. Have any of you ever been locked out of your house? Share stories. Make link to being locked out of school and other places at the moment.
- 16th June is called 'Sussex Day'. The date for Sussex Day was chosen because it is the Saint's day for St. Richard of Chichester, the patron saint of Chichester Cathedral and the County of Sussex. **[Slide 3]** St Richard would understand what it feels like to be locked out of places, as he was also locked out of homes and churches and his own cathedral.
- I'm going to tell you the story of St Richard. Before he was made a Saint he was Bishop of Chichester. [See Story Sheet below]
- Today a simple stone remembers St Richard **[Slide 4]** but 750 years after his death the Cathedral commissioned an ikon of St Richard to be painted by a renowned artist called Sergei Fyodorov **[Slide 5]**. It was carried from Dover to Chichester in 2003 and parishes along the route held celebrations. Saint Richard found a different way to reach out to other people when he was locked out of his cathedral and churches. At the start of this pandemic we found new ways to greet people and during lockdown have found new ways to reach out to people. **[Slide 6 and 7]**.
- To remember the good work of St Richard the cathedral has set up an annual award to recognise exceptional contributions from people across the Diocese in their churches, parishes and communities. Every year 10 people are awarded the Order of St Richard. This is a picture of the medal that recipients are given at a special service held at the cathedral **[Slide 8]**
- St Richard's good work across the Diocese is continuing to this day and particularly at this time of need during the pandemic. I expect there will be a lot of candidates for the award this year!.

Responding: Let's be still and quiet together today we have been thinking about St Richard And remembering how when he was locked out of his cathedral he travelled on foot visiting the whole of this diocese relying on the goodness of people to help him. This must have been a tiring and sometimes difficult journey. St Richard knew that God was with him on that journey... our lives are a bit like a journey and at the moment some of us are locked out of places – some of our friends still cannot come to school. Richard reached out to his diocese and communities and received help from them. He knew that God was travelling with him as he is with us.

St Richard is most well known for his prayer. This prayer was turned into a song and it is sung every year at the Y6 leavers' services. **Sing or listen** to **The Prayer of St Richard by Peter Stanley**. If your school takes part in the Leavers' services you will have it on the CD you are sent.

If you don't have a recording of the song you could say or reflect on the words of the prayer. **[Slide 9]**

Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for St Richard and his example of reaching out to others in difficult times. Help us to remember that you are always with us, wherever we go, just as you were with St Richard as he walked on foot for many miles around the Diocese. Help us to find ways to reach out to others in our school and community at this difficult time. Amen

Sending: Hold up a pair of worn shoes.

Question to think about: have a look at the shoes on your feet. Are they well worn? I expect you do a lot of walking – perhaps even more at the moment. Are your shoes worn away? What kind of things are you doing? Are your shoes ‘well’ worn? How might you reach out to someone else at this time? [Slide 10]

Blessing: May the road rise to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand. [Slide 11]

Suggestions for follow up classroom activity or activity for home

- Make a people paper chain of people holding hands.
- Make 2 two people paper chain of two people holding hands – put your name on one and the name of someone you have reached out to during the week. It may be someone at home, it may be someone in the NHS you have painted a picture for, it may be a school friend you have phoned etc.
- Make your own St Richard award badge and give to someone who you think has made a positive contribution to your family or your school, or your street or your community during this pandemic.

Story of St Richard

- Richard was Bishop a very long time ago – over 750 years ago. He was born in 1197 into a wealthy farming family. As a boy he worked on the farm. However, he also liked to learn and went to Oxford University to study. Later he taught at the university and then became Chancellor of the university (1235). Later he was appointed as Chancellor at Canterbury Cathedral. During this time he decided to become a priest and travelled to Orleans in France to study Theology.
- In 1244 he was elected as Bishop of Chichester. However, Henry III, who was king at the time, wanted someone else to be Bishop, so he took control of the money, the Cathedral and other buildings. Richard was shut out of his own cathedral and churches across the Diocese. Henry also forbade people to provide shelter and food to Richard. Richard was penniless and homeless. However, a kind and good friend let Richard live with him.
- Although Richard could not enter the cathedral or his churches he travelled around the whole of the Diocese, visiting different parishes and preaching. There were no cars, buses, trains to travel on. Richard walked on foot reaching out to the people in his diocese.
- Richard seems to have been a humble man. He refused to eat food off a silver plate, wore an uncomfortable hair shirt and was vegetarian – quite unusual in those days. He also liked to cultivate figs in the garden of his friend. Richard was also a reformer – someone who liked to change things to try to improve them.
- Richard died in Dover in 1253. His body was brought back to Chichester and a very ornate shrine was made in 1276, in silver and encrusted in jewels and placed at the high altar in the Cathedral. Later this shrine was destroyed by Henry VIII.
- It is believed that a miracle once occurred during a mass that Richard was celebrating. During the mass he dropped the chalice onto the floor and although it was filled with wine, nothing was spilled.