

St Albans Diocese Church Tourism CHILDREN' GUIDE and /or CHILDREN'S TRAIL

Hello, it has come to our attention that whilst the majority of Churches in the Diocese actively encourage children to visit, a large number do not have a guide designed specifically for children to make the visit more enjoyable. Some places with schools often have visits to the Church but we have found that teachers often struggle to answer questions about the building and the symbols of the Christian faith.

Our Churches, whether ancient or modern all have things that are of interest to children.

The objective of this Outline Children's Guide is to give you the information you will need in order to produce a guide for visitors and schools to use, if you do not already have one or give you the opportunity to revise the one you already have to ensure that it is up to date and relevant.

In order to produce this guide we looked at a number of guides already in use. The findings were that the majority were excellent but we found that no one guide would suit all. Therefore, because of the diversity around the Diocese we recommend that you create your own guide based on the principles in this guide but adapted for your own use—either using photos, drawings or other mediums as you see fit.

We hope that you find this outline guide and notes useful and look forward to receiving copies in due course.

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Diocesan Church Tourism Officers
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CHILDRENS CHURCH GUIDE CHECKLIST

1. PREPARATION

It is very possible for one person to create a Children's Guide but its more fun with a small group of two or three. Ideally you will need to include someone with an interest or experience in one or more of the following:

- Photography.
- The Christian Faith and Bible stories.
- Knowledge of churches, especially your building,
- Illustration.
- Computer skills.

Aim your guide at children aged between 8 - 12 years. At the same time you could consider a Church Trail for children following a route around your Church if you think that would work well too or instead. The main objective is to make the building welcoming to our younger visitors, to teach them something about the Christian faith and hopefully make their visit memorable. You may be able to offer Church visits to your local schools if you have a guide or trail.

Plan and agree how much you can spend on printing and design. This should be agreed with the PCC in advance as the church will almost always bear the initial and on-going cost of reproducing the guide. You may be able to find a local printer who would print it for you in return to an acknowledgement on the guide.

If you use Children to compile the Guide/ Trail you might need to get parental consent. A form similar to that used by NADFAS is attached.

TOP TIP!

The simple format of an A4, black and white double-sided sheet for the Guide and the Answer sheets keeps costs down. Your church may be willing to pay for a colour Guide which will look more inviting.

TOP TIP!

Suggested quantities: 100 guides to start and/ or 100 Trails sheets and 20 Answer sheets (including 2 laminated Answer sheets) for a church with an associated school, so that you can offer trail visits to the school as well as general visitors.

TOP TIP!

If you don't have a photographer you could ask some children to draw pictures of the font etc.

2. RESEARCH

Collecting information about the church and obtaining a plan are important early activities.

2.1 Locate sources of information:

- Local church history pamphlets and guides.
- Identify person/s who have detailed knowledge of the church.
- Local History section in the local Library.

2.2 Find a plan of the church:

- Ask the church if they have any plans.
- Try www.churchplansonline.org.uk. They have 415 churches recorded for the Historic St Albans Diocese, which used to include Essex too.
- Your appointed church architect might hold plans in digital format.

2.3 Check with NADFAS Volunteering Dept whether the church has been recorded. (VOLUNTEERING DEPT, NADFAS HOUSE, 8 GUILFORD STREET, LONDON WC1N 1DA T: 020 7430 0730 enquiries@nadfasc.org.uk www.nadfasc.org.uk)

2.4 Photograph items of interest but seek permission first if in doubt. Ideally use a digital camera.

2.5 Identify the route the trail might take and check items to be included, referring to photographs. Supplement with original illustrations for added interest or clarification.

2.6 Consider putting removable explanatory notices alongside items of interest too.

TOP TIP!

Churches have many things in common. Try to include such things as,

IHS or ihc (the Sacred Monogram) i.e. a way of writing JESUS in a shortened form. There are always lots in a church ready to be counted. Don't forget INRI, Chi Rho, Alpha, Omega etc. The signs of the 4 Evangelists who wrote the Gospels. The Winged Lion (St Mark) and Winged Ox (St Luke) are nearly always rather charming and indeed funny. One can bring in the

meaning of the Gospel (Good News) and Evangelist (Messenger) into the answers.

Very simple introduction to the language of Heraldry, if you can find a suitable coat of arms.

Royal Coats of Arms. Always fun with the Lion and the Unicorn. Georgian Royal Arms have a small

white horse too. The Tudors have dragons, greyhounds etc.

Memorials: Knights and their dames usually have their feet resting on dogs, lions or other creatures. Worth looking at the armour or dress too.

Green men. A face with leaves coming out of its mouth (eyes, ears etc) is known as a GREEN MAN, No-one really knows what these foliate heads represent: there are lots of theories and many books written about them. You will find them all over Northern Europe, mostly in churches.

Saints' symbols (attributes): e.g. St Peter's keys, St James' scallop shell, St Andrew's saltire (X) cross, St John with his chalice with a snake in it (hence "poisoned chalice"). Ask the children to draw what attribute they would choose for themselves.

War Memorials can be interesting with regimental badges, battle honours etc.

Stained glass windows depicting scenes from the Bible. Nativity? Noah's Ark? Easter? Judgment or doom windows.

The organ: If the console is visible, the stop names are interesting. For school visits, if you can find a friendly church organist to help, the children love making funny noises on the machine!

Individual churches have individual items of interest e.g. Model ships, ship's ensign, regimental colours, whalebones and other strange things which have been given to the church.

3. GUIDE

Use the suggested layout attached and put into an A4 or A5 booklet adding photos or drawings as you feel applicable.

4. TRAIL – DRAFT

If you are using the trail idea you may wish to design a questionnaire about your building:

4.1 Design the questionnaire:

- Prepare the plan and illustrations to be inserted into questionnaire.
- Ensure photographs to be inserted are converted into grayscale.
- Use between 12 - 16 question boxes.

TOP TIP!

Use portrait format in preference to landscape as it's easier when using clip-boards.

4.2 Design the ANSWER SHEET.

4.3 Number the relevant points around the church with relevantly sized sheets of laminated numbers.

5. TRAIL - FINAL

5.1 Edit First Draft:

5.2 Set up trail/guide points:

- Organise small group of children (aged 8-12).
- Obtain parental consent using form in CT Appendix- refer to your Child Protection Officer.

For specific guidance.

- Obtain feedback from trial.

5.3 Edit questionnaire and answer sheets after trial:

- Produce Final Draft.

5.4 Prepare further trial if wanted.

5.5 Final edit.

6. PUBLICITY

ADVICE NOTE:

You could consider arranging local publicity to maximize interest if you go down the route of a church trail. Contact local press, radio local magazines, your local Tourist Information Office- update your church websites etc.

6.1 Organise publication of questionnaire and answer sheets:

- Print final draft copies and check before printing.
- Print final copies and check quality.
- Send a copy to the St Albans Church Tourism Officer for your Archdeaconry (contact details in the Diocesan Directory)
- Deliver copies of questionnaires and answer sheets to the church including 2 laminated copies of the answers.
- Prepare and give to the church a CD containing the questionnaire and answer sheets in a non-editable format, such as Adobe PDF so that other copies can be made in the future..

6.2 Advertise- if appropriate:

- Prepare A4 or A3 poster and exhibit in church; ensure Guides/trails are readily available.

6.3 Feedback:

- Three to six months after publication review feedback and possible refinement of the guide/questionnaire.

Some details and ideas for this have been taken from the NADFAS guides