



Prayer Book of Lady Margaret Beaufort, about 1500

11-18 activity – Christianity in 10 Objects



Write down three thoughts you had instantly about these objects. What jumped out at you?

Write down two questions you'd like answered about this object. What would you like to know?

Write down one metaphor or simile about this object. Does it remind you of something you have seen before?

Compare your three thoughts, two questions and one metaphor or simile with others in your group. How similar or different were they?

This private prayer book was owned by Lady Margaret Beaufort, the mother of the first Tudor king, Henry VII. She had a very strong Christian faith, and attended church daily. She devoted her life to God in her private time too.

Christians believe that prayer is an important way to become closer to God. In the medieval period, many people owned prayer books and used them to reflect and connect to God during their private time. The prayers would have been based on the prayers that were said during a service at church. Lady Margaret Beaufort's private prayer book is full of beautiful decorations and images of people from the Bible. When she wasn't attending church, she could use this prayer book to reflect on her faith, and think about those people who are important to her from the Bible.

Talk with others

We live in a world where lots of us share our lives on public platforms such as social media. The line between the public and personal is often blurred. Think about or discuss with others the benefits of personal spaces and private matters? Why do famous people sometimes reject publicity in their everyday lives? How much do you share or keep private? How selective are you about who you share your personal story with? How do you spend time with yourself? How comfortable are you being alone?



Activity: Regular writing challenge

Lady Margaret Beaufort's private prayer book may have been used for private prayer and guidance. Whatever you believe, it can be helpful to make time to reflect on our lives and choices. Set yourself the challenge to make time to engage with your thoughts and inner life every day for a week or a month.

1. You will need a plain notebook.
2. Decorate the notebook, however big or small it is. Personalise the book so it is your own and brings you joy when you pick it up. You may just use writing or drawing but you might include photographs or cuttings.
3. On the first page of the notebook very briefly note some facts about your life: where you live, your age, who you are, what makes you *you* and perhaps some goals.
4. Over the week or month, pick up your notebook each morning and write three pages of unedited free thinking into the notepad. Try to follow these tips:
 - Do not read back what you have written.
 - Do not question what you are writing.
 - You must write three pages even if you have nothing left to say, fill the blank pages.
 - As you are writing, check that you are being honest and not writing for an imagined public audience.
5. At the end of the week or month, very briefly note some facts about your life: where you live, your age, who you are, what makes you *you* and perhaps some goals.

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6. Reflect on any differences that this kind of regular reflection has had on you. You may want to read back what you have written. It may be difficult to read because it is unedited and raw. How does it make you feel? You may want to keep the notebook or destroy it.

Extension

You might like to continue the practice of Morning Pages or find a different form of personal reflection. You could reflect more on your private persona and your public image. How closely do they align and how does that make you feel?

Share your experience on Facebook or Twitter using #WAbbeyFun