



The Litlyngton Missal, 1383-84

11-18 activity – Christianity in 10 Objects

Find a particular aspect of this image that captures your eye. In a word or phrase, say what it is.

Look carefully at the image. Select a part of the image which jumps out to you. Spend time drawing that part in detail.

What questions do you have about this image? Why do you think it might have been drawn?



The Litlyngton Missal is a manuscript dating from 1384. MANU means 'by hand' and SCRIPT means 'writing' in Latin. In this case we know that Thomas Preston, a monk of Westminster Abbey, completed the writing by himself. Three artists worked on the illustrations. Monasteries were centres of learning throughout the medieval period. The first duty of a monk was to pray and take part in acts of worship (at least seven times every day) but spare time was used for work, reflecting the monastic practice 'Ora et Labora' – pray and work. Monks were taught to read and write so that they could read the Bible and other types of books but also so that they could copy the words out and create new books. Ideas about Religion, History, Literature and Science could then be circulated and knowledge shared.



Talk to others

Where do you go to get access to knowledge? How do you determine if it is a reliable source?

Activity: Create a special card

Monasteries tried to be self-sufficient. As well as being grown for cooking and medicine, monks grew herbs to make the inks required for book production.

Special books (such as Bibles) were often illuminated with colourful pictures. Sometimes gold ink was used to show something was extra special.

Find a book and look at it carefully. Can you work out how the book has been made? What is the cover made from? How many pages? How many words on an average page? Does it contain illustrations? Is there any colour involved?

Look again at the Litlyngton Missal.

- How many coloured inks can you see?
- How many words on the page?
- Guess how long do you think it took to create by hand?



Write and illustrate a card for someone special. You will need the following:

- Something to write on, for example paper, card, fabric
- A pen to write with
- A paintbrush
- One or two coloured spices, for example turmeric makes a good golden colour
- One or two fruits such as a blackberry or raspberry

1. First you will need to make some ink. Mix a few drops of water with a teaspoon of spice or you can mash some soft fruit with a few drops of water. You could use boiling water from a kettle and then let the mixture cool. If you have a sieve you can strain the fruit so that you just get the coloured water.
2. Write your words. You could leave a space around the edge of the text. You might like to copy something out such as a favourite poem or write a message of your own.
3. Illustrate the text. You could draw pictures or patterns.
4. Use the home-made ink and your paintbrush to colour in the design. Let the design dry before you give it to anyone.

Think about how you felt as you created your hand made card. Were you thinking of the person you would send it to? How did you choose the illustrations you created?

The process of making something beautiful and time consuming might be called 'a labour of love'. Monks did this work in order to glorify God. The Litlyngton Missal contains 682 pages and took four people a year to complete.



Extension

Like the Litlyngton Missal, all manuscripts at the time in England would have been written in Latin. Latin is now considered a dead language, because it doesn't have any native speakers. However, you'll often find Latin phrases being used in English speaking countries today, such as:

- ad hoc
- bona fide
- quid pro quo
- versus
- vice versa

Can you think of anymore? People in which jobs might be more likely to use Latin language in their everyday work? Why do you think the English language still uses Latin phrases?

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