



The Westminster Retable, 1259-69

Under 11 activity – Christianity in 10 Objects

What do you see in this picture?

What do you think the object might be?

What would you like to know about the object?



The Westminster Retable is a beautiful work of art that shows images of important people and stories from the Bible. The retable was placed behind the High Altar, the place where Christians celebrate Holy Communion and remember the life of Jesus.

The retable was in the Abbey for hundreds of years. Imagine all the eyes of those who have looked at this special piece of art work when they visited the church.

Can you see the four stars on the left-hand side of the retable? They show paintings of the miracles of Jesus.

The three paintings still visible show:

- 1) Jesus bringing back to life the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:21–24, 35–43)
- 2) The healing of a man born blind (John 9: 1-12)
- 3) The feeding of the five thousand (Matthew 14:1-21)

Do you know these stories? If not, perhaps you could look them up in the Bible.

Talk with others

Why do you think these stories have been chosen to go in this piece of artwork?

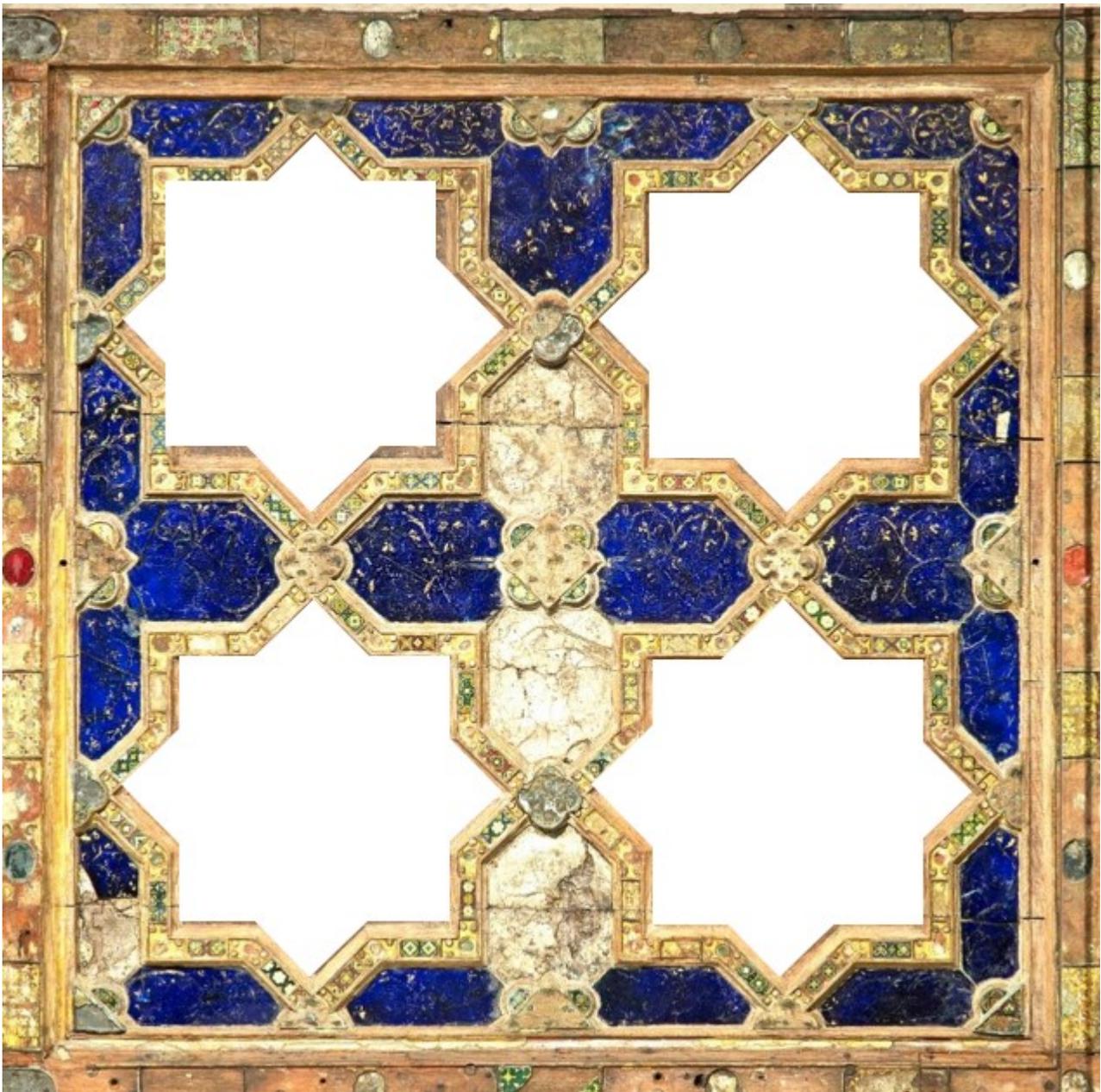
Activity: Fill in the gaps

Sadly the retable is quite badly damaged in some areas, and sections of the paintings are missing.

Imagine that you are an artist that has been chosen to design new paintings to go in the 4 missing sections on the right-hand side of the retable.

- What scenes would you like to show everyone?
- Can you think of any other miracles of Jesus?
- What other stories in the Bible could you include?

Draw them on the template on the page below. You can add some colour if you like.



Extension

Imagine you are designing a new piece of artwork to be displayed above the High Altar of a church. It could be a painting, or a sculpture or a statue. What would you create?

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