



George Herbert 1593 -1633

Teachers' Notes

Many of you will already be familiar with the works of George Herbert, but probably don't know it. Some of our most popular hymns are sung to the words of George Herbert. These days he is considered to be one of the finest Christian poets. He wrote over 160 poems and a book on practical advice for rural clergy called 'The Country Parson'. He also gathered together a number of witty sayings called 'Outlandish Proverbs'. We know quite a lot about his life from the biographer Izaak Walton.

The contents of this pack will help learners take an interesting and enjoyable look into life in the 17th Century, meet Herbert and the people of his time, share his skills and develop some of their own. The pack uses a cross-curricular approach and should be considered as a 'springboard' for other exploration.

At first viewing George Herbert's poetry may seem challenging but the pack includes particular examples which, with a little delving, can offer opportunities to extend creative writing skills and develop reflective thinking whilst contributing to religious education and spiritual development. Links to all of George Herbert's poetry and much more information can be found at www.georgeherbert.org.uk

George Herbert is held in special regard as a significant historical figure for Salisbury, where he spent his last few years. It was here he wrote 'The Country Parson' and revised many of his poems. Salisbury has been home to several notable characters, many of whom were writers, throughout its history. There may be people you would like to find out more about in your location. In this way the material offers a 'stepping stone' into local history research skills.

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Contents

1. George Herbert: The Man
2. George Herbert: The Writer
3. George Herbert: The Priest
4. George Herbert: The Musician

Each section contains

- *Information: historical and biographical details*
- *Exploration: finding out more about Herbert and his times, what relevance it may have today.*
- *Activities: opportunities to consolidate learning and experience through creative expression. The final activity on the sheet offers space to provide a pupil record or assessment task.*
- *Reflection: time to relate learning to wider aspects of life, consider the impact of learning and offer collective worship opportunities using Herbert's writings*

In addition, at the top of each page is a line from one of Herbert's well-known poems (set to music as hymns). Each one 'sets the theme' for the content of the section and may be used to open discussion. Every section has an example of 'wise words' from the 'Outlandish Proverbs' collected by George Herbert. They have as much relevance today as they did in Herbert's day and touch on social development themes.

An important element of all Locally Agreed Syllabuses for Religious Education is the study of *pilgrimage*. The concept of travelling to sites of religious significance is one which has been practiced by members of all faiths for hundreds of years and continues today. Many 'pilgrims' still visit the church of Bemerton St Andrew's to see the place where George Herbert was priest and visionary.

For more information and to arrange a visit please go to www.georgeherbert.org.uk



Herbert family crest
Just one of the fascinating details from
Bemerton St. Andrew's Church

Acknowledgements

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Sarum St Michael Educational Charity for their generous grant towards the resource pack.
Bob Paine: the original idea for schools' information came from Bob, a retired postman, who has lived all his life in Bemerton and went to school there. He was never taught about George Herbert, and believed this to be an omission from his education since Herbert is an historical figure and a poet of note. It was his wish that the groups ensure a continuation in such knowledge for the next generation.

For further information

George Herbert: The Complete English Poems Penguin Classics ISBN 9780140424553
(includes The Country Parson and Life of Herbert: Izaak Walton)