

Rochester Cathedral

A cathedral is the main church of a diocese. A diocese is a group of churches looked after by a bishop.



Christians believe that Jesus is God's son and follow Jesus' teachings which are written in the Bible. Rochester Cathedral is a holy building where Christians come together to worship God and His Son, Jesus.



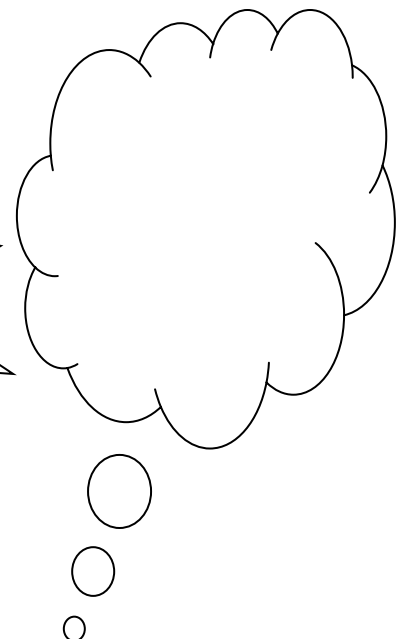
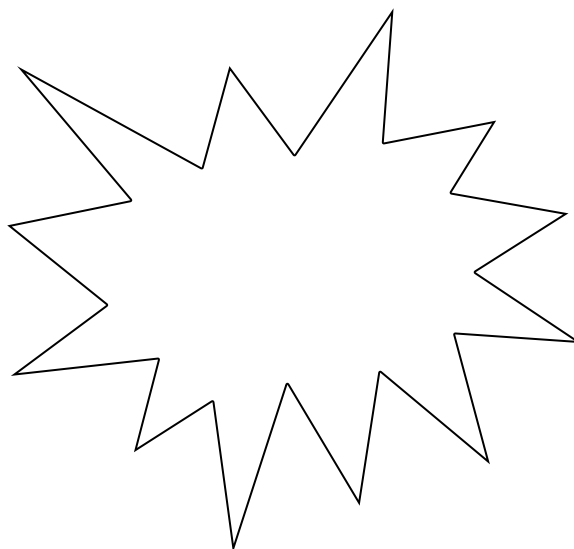
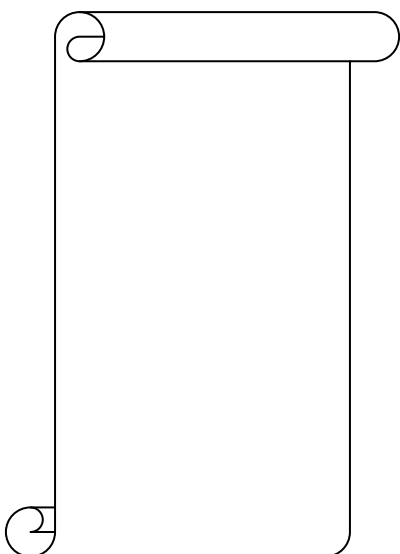
Who's who in Rochester Cathedral

There are many people who work here to ensure the smooth running of all aspects of the cathedral's life and work. As well as the priests, there are people in the office answering phone calls and booking events. There are people in the Education and Visits team, welcoming school groups and adult visitors. There are people working in the shop and the tea-rooms. There are gardeners, vergers and housekeepers.



There are also hundreds of volunteers, some of whom help in the shop or the tea-rooms, arrange flowers, clean the brass and welcome visitors. There are volunteers who ring the bells, repair the robes for the choirs and clergy, or embroider the altar cloths and hassocks used in the Cathedral. There are many different jobs to be done!

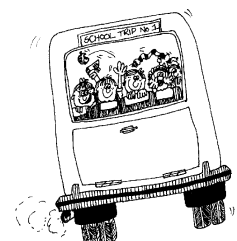
Before you start, spend a few moments sitting quietly. Jot down some words about how this place makes you feel.



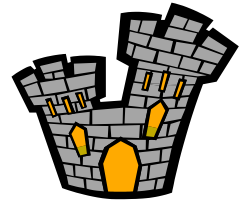
Word List

<p>Angel - Angels are messengers from God.</p>	<p>Crypt - The crypt is the underneath part of the cathedral. Originally it was used for burying bodies.</p>
<p>Baptism - Baptism is the ceremony in which new Christians are welcomed into the church family. Water is poured over their heads to show that they are making a clean start.</p>	<p>Font - A font is the basin which holds the holy water used in baptism.</p>
<p>Bible - The Holy Bible is a book which Christians read to discover more about God and His Son Jesus. The Bible contains rules on how Christians should live their lives.</p>	<p>Masons - Masons were skilled workmen who helped to build the cathedral.</p>
<p>Bishop - A bishop is the person in charge of a large number of churches. He wears a special hat called a mitre and carries a staff called a crozier.</p>	<p>Nave - The nave is the largest room in the cathedral. Its name comes from the Latin word for “ship”. This is where most of the large services take place.</p>
<p>Chapel - A chapel is a small room in the cathedral which has its own altar. It is used for small services.</p>	<p>Normans - The Normans were a group of people from Northern France who conquered Britain in 1066.</p>
<p>Choir - A choir is a group of people who sing together.</p>	<p>Pray - We pray when we talk and listen to God in a two way conversation.</p>
<p>Christian - A Christian is someone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.</p>	<p>Saxons - The Saxons were a group of North German people who conquered most of Britain in the 5th and 6th centuries.</p>

Rochester Cathedral is a place where Christians have gathered together to worship God for over 1400 years. We hope that you enjoy your visit. Please come back to visit us again soon!



Go outside to the West Front (*Take an adult with you*)

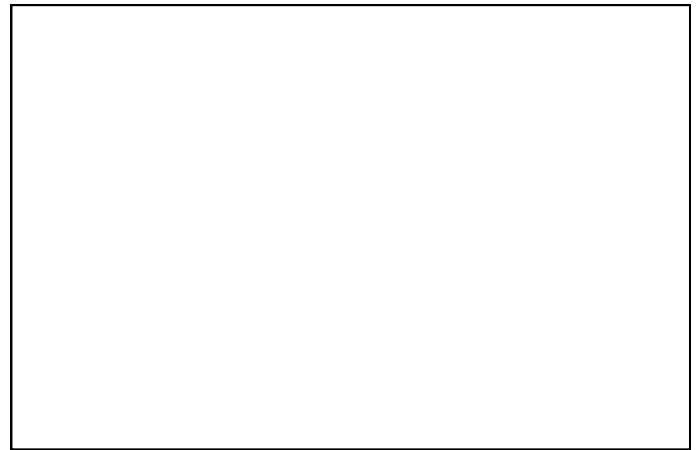


Look across the road at Rochester Castle. It is now a ruin. This is because it isn't used for defence any more.
Now look at the cathedral. It is older than the castle, but it isn't a ruin.
Why do you think this is? Jot down your answer below.

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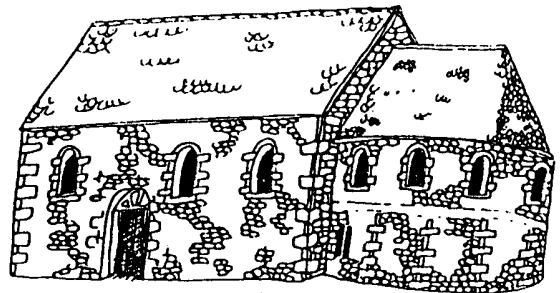
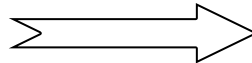
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You are standing at the West Front of Rochester Cathedral. Look above the Great West Door. Look carefully at the carvings over the door. Find the carving of Jesus surrounded by angels. Draw part of it here. →



Come back inside the Cathedral to just inside the small West Door.

The first Rochester Cathedral was built on the orders of the Anglo Saxon king of Kent, Ethelbert. It might have looked a bit like this.



It was about 28 steps long and 18 steps wide. With a friend, stand at the small West Door. One of you can take 28 steps forward and the other 18 steps sideways. You can now see roughly how big the Saxon cathedral was. Was it bigger or smaller than today's Rochester Cathedral?

The first cathedral was built in 604 AD. How long is it since it was built? Jot down your answer here.

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(Clue – take 604 away from this year's number)

The Nave

You are in the **Nave** . This is the biggest room in the cathedral. What sorts of things happen in a cathedral? List your ideas below.

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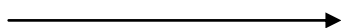
Move to the Font



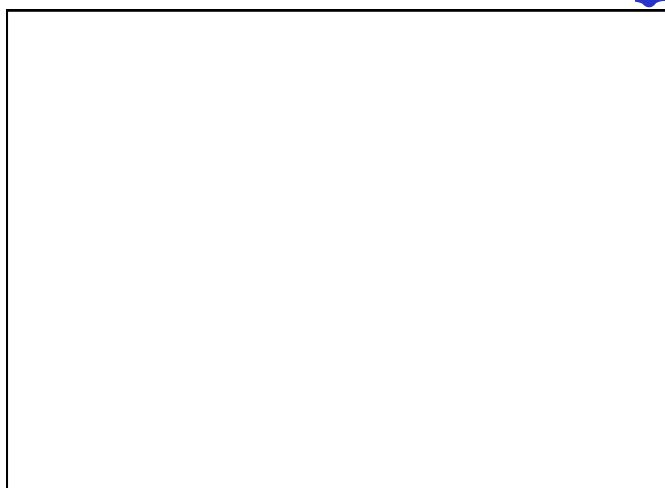
The **Font** is a large basin which holds holy water. The water is poured over the head of the person being welcomed into God's family during a ceremony called **Baptism** or **Christening**.



Look carefully at the carvings on the Font (please do not climb over it) and draw one of them here.

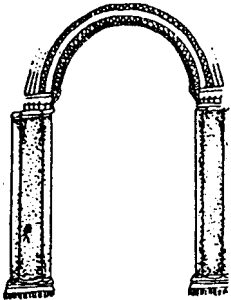


What do you think is happening in the carving you have chosen to draw?

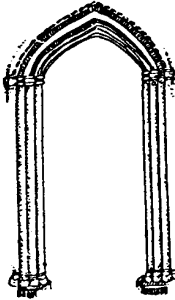


Move back to the centre of the Nave and find somewhere to sit where you can see the arches and pillars.

Look closely at the arches. Can you see these two shapes?



Rounded arches like this were built by the Normans in the 11th century. How many can you see?



Pointed arches like this are Early English (or Gothic) arches, built in the 13th century. How many can you see?

The Normans built very strong buildings - this cathedral has been here almost 1000 years! Look at the thick Norman pillars between the rounded arches. Guess how many people could hold hands around one of the pillars. Then get some friends to help you find out if you were right.

My guess

How many people did it actually take?

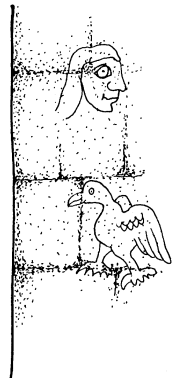


When the cathedral was first built most people weren't able to read, so they learned stories about Jesus and the saints from pictures on the walls and in the stained glass windows. Look carefully at the pillars and you will see the remains of some of these pictures. See if you can find.....

faces

a bird

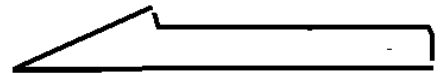
a boat



Look closely at the pillars to see if you can find any of these marks scratched into the stone. Tick the boxes below when you find the image.

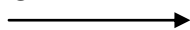






These are **masons' marks**. They were made hundreds of years ago by the stonemasons who built the cathedral. The stonemason carved his own unique mark into every piece of stone he worked on. The chief mason could check the work and then know how much to pay each mason.

Design your own mason's mark here



Now move to the Fresco

The Fresco is a very large wall painting near the North Door. A fresco is a special way of painting on wet plaster. The fresco at Rochester Cathedral is the first to be painted in an English cathedral for 800 years!

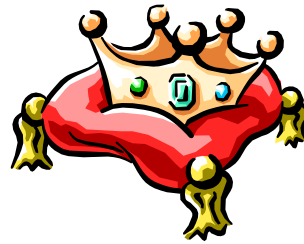


Look at the top part of the fresco. What story is the picture telling?

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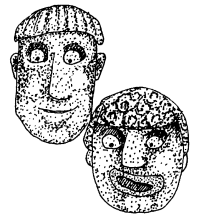
(Clue - remember what happens at the font)

Now look at the lower part of the picture.



This shows the story of King Ethelbert, an Anglo Saxon king of Kent, being baptised in 597 AD, and the people of Kent who were baptised in a river. Can you see King Ethelbert twice in the picture?

Look up at the walls around this area. There are many carved faces.



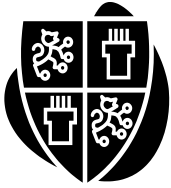
How many can you count?

Draw your favourite face here.

Later you might like to make up a story about the face you've drawn. It might be the face of a cathedral builder, a monk who lived in the monastery here, or maybe one of the townsfolk who lived in Rochester.

Go to the Quire and the Presbytery

The special wooden seats (the 'stalls') that you can see in the quire are where the choirs sit to sing during services.



Around the top of the choir stalls are the coats of arms of most of the Bishops of Rochester since Norman times (there are more on the back of the Bishop's throne).

Can you find the coat of arms for Bishop John Fisher, a famous Tudor Bishop of Rochester?
(Clue - his name sounds like "fish" and "ear" of corn)

If you have time sketch John Fisher's coat of arms here



Find the special throne at the end of the choir stalls This is the **cathedra** or Bishop's Throne. *Cathedra* is Greek for *chair* or *throne*.

What other word sounds a bit like cathedra? (Clue - add one more letter and it is the name of a special building)

C a t h e d r a _ _

Beside the cathedra is the Bishop's **crozier**. It looks like a shepherd's crook, and reminds us that Jesus said "*I am the Good Shepherd*". The Bishop is also like a shepherd looking after his flock (the people in his church).



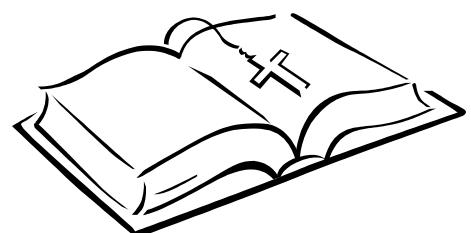
Look ahead of you, towards the **High Altar**. This is the most important altar in the cathedral. It is a special table where the priest blesses the bread and wine used during the service called **Holy Communion** or **Eucharist**.

Can you see the brass **lectern**, shaped like an eagle?
Which special book rests on the lectern?

Write its name here.



The



Now go to the Lady Chapel

This chapel is dedicated to Mary, the mother of Jesus, which is why it is called the Lady Chapel. Look at the stained glass windows - the bottom windows tell the story of the life of Jesus, and Mary is in each picture.

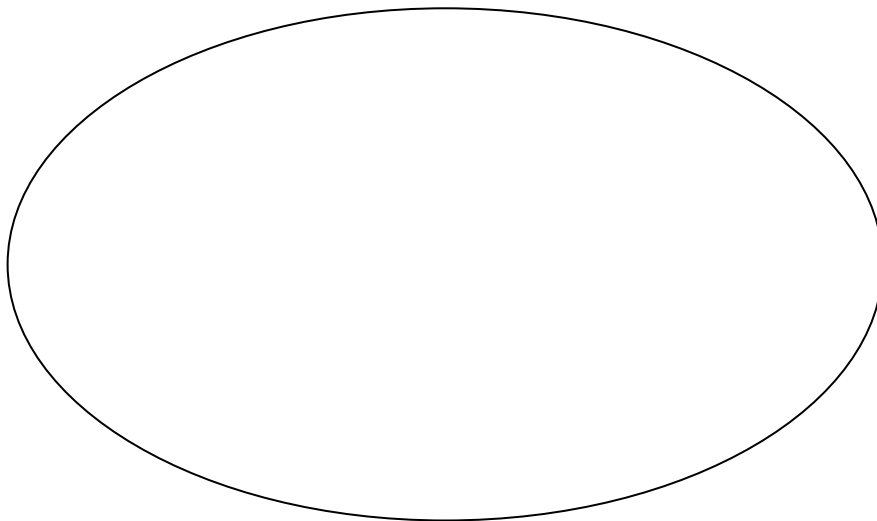
Each window tells a different story. Which window is your favourite? What story does it tell?

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Find a carved picture on the floor (covered by a mat) and look at it carefully. What is happening in the picture? Draw it here.



It is part of the story of the Good Samaritan, told in Luke's gospel, chapter 10, beginning at verse 25. You might like to read it at school.

Before you leave Rochester Cathedral take a few minutes to think about your visit.

What did you like best?

Did anything surprise you?

What word would you use to describe this place?