

Anna the pagan Anglo-Saxon

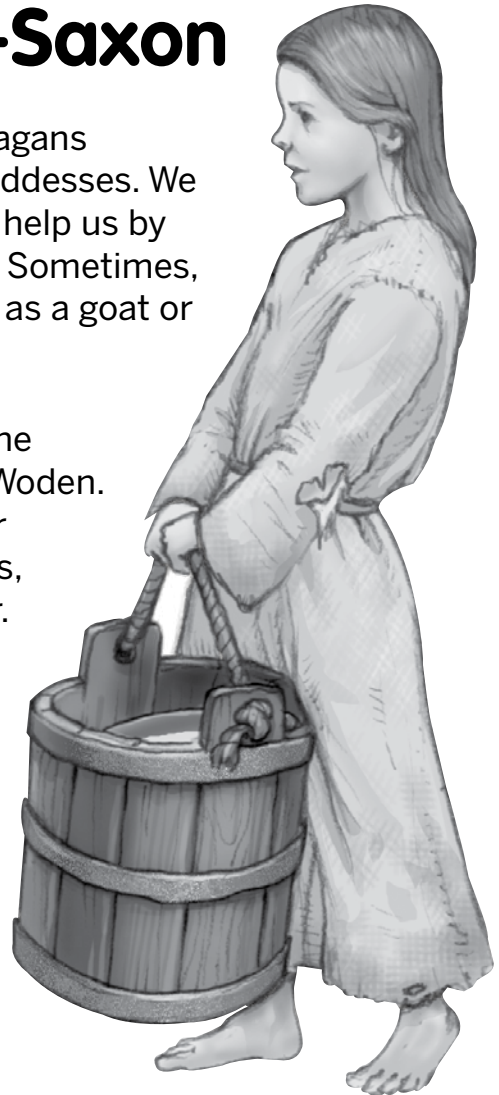
“Hello. I am Anna. I am a pagan Anglo-Saxon. We pagans believe that our lives are controlled by gods and goddesses. We believe that we can get the gods and goddesses to help us by worshipping them. We worship in wooden temples. Sometimes, as part of our worship, we sacrifice an animal such as a goat or an ox.”

“There is one god who is more important than all the other gods and the father of them all. He is called Woden. Wednesday is named after him. We believe that our world was made by Woden. He and his two brothers, Vili and Ve, had a fight with a frost giant called Ymir. The giant was killed and his body was cut up to make the sky, the clouds and the mountains. The giant’s blood was used to make the oceans. Woden is the god of wisdom, magic and poetry. He lives in the world of the gods called Asgard where he rides an eight legged horse called Sleipnir. Woden can visit our world. When he does, he looks like an old, one eyed man with a beard. He wears a wide brimmed hat and a coat with long flowing sleeves.”

“Tiw is a god of battles. He has other names such as Tyr, Tiv and Tiwaz. His name is also used for a rune letter that looks like a spear. My father has written this letter on his sword to help him fight in battle. Tuesday is named after Tiw.”

“Thunor is the god of thunder. He is a very powerful fighter and uses a hammer to defend the other gods from their enemies such as frost giants. When he uses his hammer in battle it makes thunder and lightning. Thursday is named after him.”

“Frigg is a goddess. She helps women when they have babies. My mother worshipped Frigg when she was having me and she had an easy and safe birth. Friday is named after her.”



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Age range

- Years 3/4 (SP4/5).
- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

Resources

Copies of the worksheet.

Using the worksheet

The text gives a brief outline of paganism in Anglo-Saxon times. A character is used to give the text an 'everyday' approach to show that paganism seemed quite natural to Anglo-Saxons. Paganism also involved human sacrifice and magic and the casting of spells, which you may or may not wish to mention. If you are carrying out some role play work you may like to ask a girl to read out from the worksheet and let the class answer the questions from the board. You could follow this activity with activity **5B** in which an Anglo-Saxon Christian tells about his experiences.

Younger students

The students should work on their own or in pairs. Write the questions below on the board.

Questions (and answers)

1. Who did the Anglo-Saxons believe controlled their lives? (Gods and goddesses).
2. What animals were sacrificed in pagan worship? (Goats and oxen).
3. Some places are named after gods. Which god do you think Wednesfield is named after? (Woden).
4. Who would a pagan woman worship if she was about to have a baby? (Frigg).
5. If you were a pagan, who would you believe had made the sky and mountains? Explain how it was done. (Woden. An ice giant was cut up and parts of his body made the sky and mountains).
6. If you were a pagan warrior, why would you want a letter like a spear on your sword? (It stands for Tiw who is the god of battles. He will protect you if the letter is on your sword).

Outcomes

The students:

- Know that pagans worshipped a number of gods and goddesses.
- Know that pagans made animal sacrifices in their worship.
- Can use a source to find information.

Older students

The students can work through the sheet on their own. Write the questions above on the board.

Outcomes

The students:

- Know that pagans worshipped a number of gods and goddesses.
- Know that pagans made animal sacrifices in their worship.
- Can use a source to find information.