

# Wulfrum an Anglo-Saxon Christian

“Hello. I am Wulfrum. I am an Anglo-Saxon Christian. I live in Kent and Aethelberht is my king. We were all pagans once. Then a group of about forty monks visited the king. They had come from Rome and had been sent by the leader of the Christian Church called Pope Gregory.”

“In the pagan religion there is magic and people can cast spells. Magic works best inside a house or a hall but does not work in the open air. King Aethelberht thought the Christians might use magic and cast spells so he told them to meet him in the open air. You could hear the monks singing a long way off as they came towards us. As they got closer, you could see a monk at the front carrying a cross. Behind him was a monk carrying a painting of Jesus Christ. Next came the leader of the monks. He was called Augustine. Behind him were the rest of the monks. They were singing. All the monks wore fine clothes called vestments. Later, when we got to know them better, we found they wore plainer clothes for most of the time.”

“We all stood around as Aethelberht and Augustine had their meeting. The King learnt that the Christians did not use magic and spells and that they did not sacrifice animals in worship as pagans do. He learnt that Christians worship a god called God and his Son called Jesus Christ. The king decided to stay a pagan but let Augustine and his monks set up a church in Canterbury.”

“Some of us wanted to learn more about Christianity so we went to the church in Canterbury. After we saw the Christians worship we decided that we wanted to become Christians too. Augustine made us into Christians by sprinkling water on our heads. This is called baptism. From then on we learnt more about Christianity and went regularly to the church services. Eventually King Aethelberht became a Christian too.”

“Later, Augustine and his monks made their way through England. They carried small crosses with them and set them up on stones when they wanted to worship. When people changed from being pagans to being Christians, the monks took the figures of their pagan gods, called idols, from their temples. They changed the temples into churches.”



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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 information given here has been gathered from a number of sources and simplified to give an impression of what it might have been like when a pagan king met a Christian monk. You may like to use the text in a role play activity and invite a boy to read it out. The class could then answer the questions from the board. You may like to use this activity after activity **5A** where a pagan girl tells of her beliefs.

## Younger students

The students should work on their own or in pairs. Here are the questions to write on the board.

## Questions (and answers)

1. Who was the leader of the Christian church? (Pope Gregory).
2. Where did the leader live? (In Rome).
3. Who was the leader of the monks who met the king? (Augustine)
4. Why did the king want to meet the monks in the open air? (He thought they might be able to perform magic and cast spells on him. Pagans believed that magic does not work in the open air).
5. Why do you think the monks made a procession in fine clothes? (They wanted to impress the King and his followers).
6. Did all the pagans change to Christianity straight away? Explain your answer. (No. Wulfrum tells us that only some of the people went to Canterbury, so others must have remained pagans. The King remained a pagan for a while after the meeting).

## Outcomes

The students:

- Know about how Christianity was brought to the Anglo-Saxons.
- Can answer questions about a source.

## Older students

The students can work through the sheet on their own. The questions above should be written on the board.

## Outcomes

The students:

- Know about how Christianity was brought to the Anglo-Saxons.
- Can answer questions about a source.