

Make a votive offering

Votive offerings were small models of the god or goddess the worshipper had come to pray to.

Make a votive offering to take to the Parthenon.

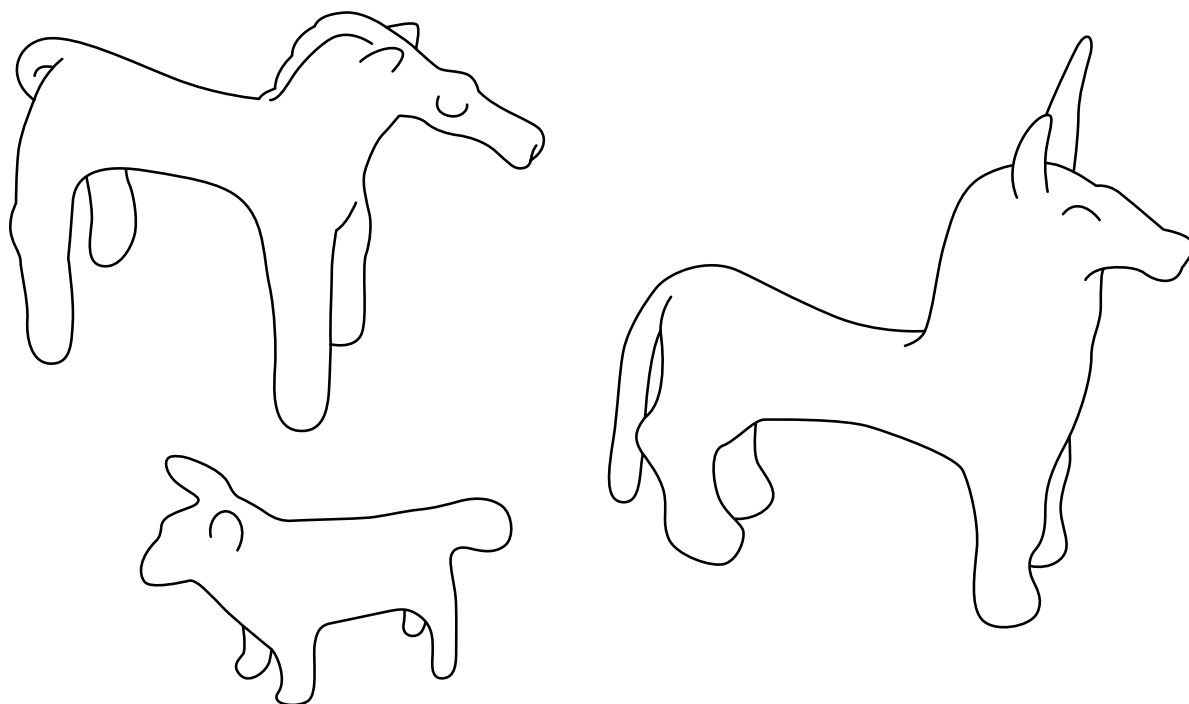
When pilgrims went to the Parthenon in the Acropolis at Athens, they often took with them a small statue they had made representing the goddess Athena, or something they would have liked to have sacrificed to the goddess, for example a goat. They then placed this on the steps of the temple. Countless thousands were made, of which some still survive.

To make a votive offering you simply need some Plasticine.

Shape the Plasticine in the form of the goddess Athena or an animal. Find a painting or sculpture of the goddess (there is one on pages 10–11 of the student book and your teacher can show you one on the whiteboard or computer).

You can paint the offering in red, brown or black.

If the class makes a range of votive offerings they can be placed on a ledge below a large picture of the Parthenon in the classroom, or in the school's display area.



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Background

A votive deposit or votive offering is an object left in a sacred place for ritual purposes.

Such items are a feature of modern and ancient societies and are generally made in order to gain favour with supernatural forces. While you are discussing Greeks, you might point out that the coins thrown into a wishing well are modern votive offerings.

Votive offerings were of many kinds. The ones remaining at the Acropolis in Athens include a man carrying a calf across his shoulders, a horseman, a hunting dog and the head of a youth. Typically, people would make small animals in clay and leave these as symbols of the sacrifice of the real thing.

You might also like to point out that the wooden horse in the story of Troy was a votive offering to Athena (although, of course, it turned out to have other purposes). The Troy story is described at the subscription part of the www.curriculumvisions.com web site in the ancient Greeks introduction.

In fact, you could say that anything, large or small, left within the sanctuary was a votive offering.