

Comprehension Workbook 6

Pilgrims

(and pilgrimages)



SAINT JACQUES
de
COMPOSTELLE

Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

CurriculumVisions

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Comprehension Workbook 6

Pilgrims

(and pilgrimages)



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

understand • key words • summarise • sequencing • AF2-3 • AF4-5 • AF6-7 • discuss • create

Christian faith

Matches the requirements of the Literacy Strategy and designed to integrate with the study of world religions. (This material is independent of any specific text book and can be used alongside any publisher's books including our Christian Faith, Church, Christian art and writing and Christian holy days books.)

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Unit 6: Pilgrims and pilgrimages

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Pilgrims and pilgrimages

Since the early days of Christianity, Christian pilgrims have journeyed to places they felt were important. One of the most popular pilgrimages is the Camino de Santiago, or Way of St James. This is a route leading from France to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain, where tradition has it that the remains of the apostle St James are buried. Pilgrims have walked this route since the 8th century, as a way to make up for sins they have committed, or simply to learn more about themselves and God.

Here are reasons given by some people today for going on the pilgrimage.

'In school I had always prided myself on how high my marks were, and after school I had simply replaced the race for high marks with the race for more money as the symbol of success and achievement. Now I found myself troubled by the values of my business. I turned to the remedy that has always saved me in difficult times — I went for a walk.'

I am a modern traveller, not even a true pilgrim. I am drawn by a desire to do it because it's there; but also by a need to slow life down, if only for a short time. Nothing puts the brakes on the pace of life as walking does. Last year, I walked on the Camino for four amazing weeks. Four weeks without mobiles ringing, without television, without newspapers, and without background radio noise. I did not miss any of it, although after a long day in the heat and dusty plains a bath would have been nice.

I'm a historian of early modern Spain and I've taught several history courses on the Middle Ages and the Age of the Crusades. As a historian, I'm fascinated by pilgrims and medieval religious practices. This year, I decided that I would go on the Camino de Santiago and find out for myself what it was like.

What to take with you? An open heart. And Vaseline for your feet. It is about self-discovery rather than religion. The Camino can be as difficult or as easy as you need it to be. People can take weeks, staying in hostels along the way, carrying heavy packs and enjoying the sense of achievement that such hard travelling brings. We go alone but we connect with the world.

The sense of following in ancient footsteps is moving in itself. I met one woman who was walking as a fundraiser for girls' education. I met another woman who was walking because it was a task left uncrossed off on her deceased husband's to-do list. I met people who were doing it because they were devout Catholics taking part in a ritual of religious devotion. On this path, we all came together, we formed friendships, shared stories, paid for each others' coffees and slept in the same dormitories.



Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write a sentence in which you found the word 'pilgrimage'.

b From that sentence, write what you think 'pilgrimage' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'pilgrimage'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'pilgrimage'.

e Draw a picture illustrating the idea of 'pilgrimage'.



Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: journeyed	travelled

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Summarising

(the gist of the story)

To summarise means to rewrite the story in a shorter version using as many of our key words from Task 2 as needed.

1 Write a heading for your summary.

2 Now write the main idea in one sentence.
e.g. "This story tells us..."

3 Now add some detail to the main idea by writing more sentences after it.

**Finally,
can you rewrite your
summary to make it better?**

- 1. Look out for errors such as using the same word too often – use alternatives.**
- 2. Make sure you have summarised the author's purpose in your OWN words.**
- 3. Make sure your summary is in a logical order.**
- 4. Is your summary informative AND interesting to others?**

**There is
nothing wrong
with rewriting; even
the best authors
rewrite their
work.**

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Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

At last I came to the square in front of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.

I had not realised what a long journey it was going to be and why so many people use bikes.

I knew that pilgrims had walked this route since the 8th century and I decided I wanted to follow in their footsteps.

As I went into the cathedral, I felt a sense of achievement – and joy.

This year, I decided that I would go on the Way of St James, the Camino de Santiago, and find out for myself what it was like.

I was told the Camino can be as difficult or as easy as you need it to be.



Get to the facts

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the facts of the story.



Write a sentence to answer each of these questions:

- (a) Where is the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela?
- (b) Where is the Camino de Santiago?
- (c) How long have people been making pilgrimages to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela?
- (d) According to tradition, who is buried in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela?
- (e) How long did the second writer spend walking on the Camino?



Whys and wherefores

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the meanings in the story and how it was written.

1 Why did the first writer decide to go on the pilgrimage?

2 Do all the writers go on the pilgrimage for religious reasons?

3 What did the second writer miss during the pilgrimage?

4 Is friendship and camaraderie important for people on the pilgrimage?





Opinions matter

Answer these questions to give your views and to develop the story.

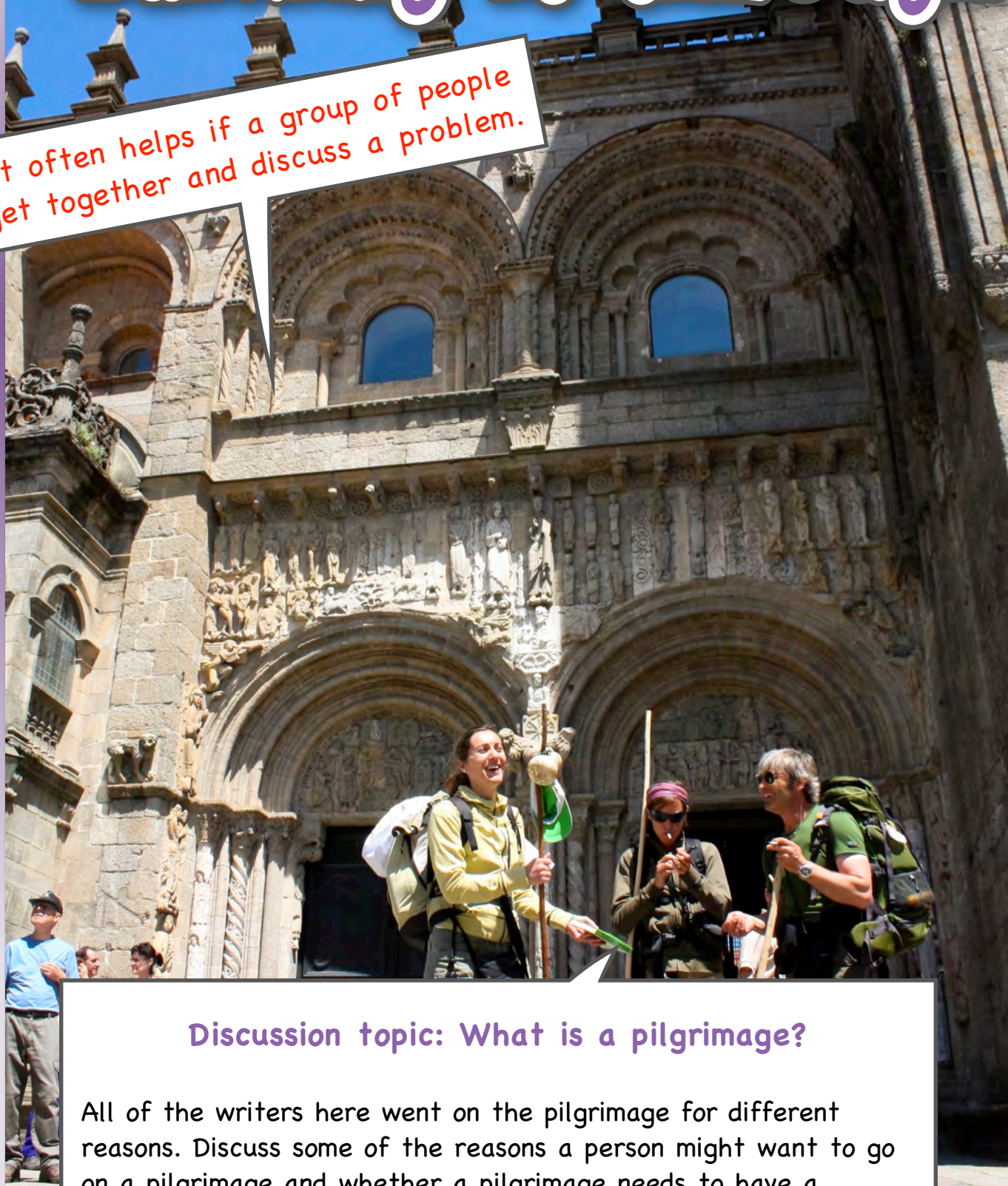
- 1 Do you think a person must be Christian in order to go on this pilgrimage?
- 2 What are the different things that the writer learns while on pilgrimage?
- 3 What does the fourth writer mean when he says that he connects with the world on pilgrimage?
- 4 Do you think all the writers learned something while on pilgrimage?
- 5 What are some religious reasons for going on pilgrimage?





Talking it through

It often helps if a group of people get together and discuss a problem.



Discussion topic: What is a pilgrimage?

All of the writers here went on the pilgrimage for different reasons. Discuss some of the reasons a person might want to go on a pilgrimage and whether a pilgrimage needs to have a religious reason or a religious goal. For example, do you think a person can learn about themselves by going on a pilgrimage to the stadium of their favourite football team?



Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.



Pilgrimage

You are standing at one end of a dusty road, wearing a backpack. Ahead of you are several weeks of hard walking – you are going on a pilgrimage to a place that is important to you. You take your first steps on your trip.

(Now you describe where you are going, why you are going there, what you would bring with you for the journey and who you meet along the way...)

Christian Practices: Pilgrimage

Since the early days of Christianity, Christian pilgrims have journeyed to places they felt were important. One of the most popular pilgrimages is the Camino de Santiago, or Way of St James. This is a route leading from France to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain, where tradition has it that the remains of the apostle St James are buried. Pilgrims have walked this route since the 8th century, as a way to make up for sins they have committed, or simply to learn more about themselves and God.

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