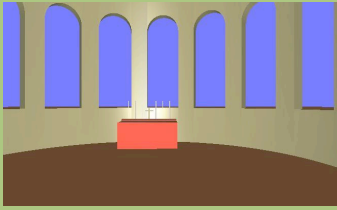


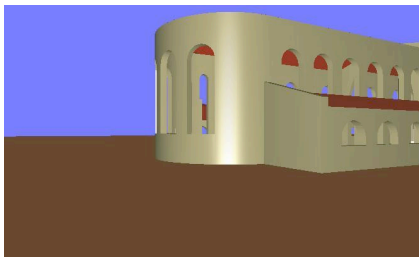
Church Builder A Case Study



St. Theresa's Catholic Primary Sutton Manor

Using Church Builder with a class of Year Six Children

The Children involved in this case study are a group of Year 6 Pupils in a School located in the Sutton Manor area of St Helens. The school has recently been rated "outstanding in all areas" by OfSTED, and has the ICTMark. The pupils enjoy ICT and are keen to explore new software. The school wanted to use the software as part of its RE topic on "Special Places".



We began the day by preparing for the visit to the local parish church by looking at the key features of Christian

Churches. The church we used as our model is unusual in that it has a side-aisle running right around the curve of the apse as well as a flat roof.

We were joined on the visit by the school's learning mentor who is also a parishioner and was a good source of local knowledge.

The visit provided a good deal of information in the form of digital photographs, the bad weather preventing any exterior sketching. The pupils were able to record much of the interior detail and were given access to the drawings and plans for the proposed church which was never completed due to lack of funds.

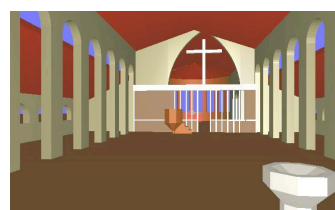
Using the Software

The pupils found the software interface very easy to use and were quickly able to construct basic church structures without a great deal of adult intervention. The main problems stemmed from the

somewhat unique design of the church which at that time very difficult to replicate. However, the pupils were quite happy to get as close to the real thing as possible. Some pupils were inspired to create an imaginary church as well as the "replica".

The response from the pupils was very positive and engagement was maintained for virtually the whole of the day.

"What Else?"



One of the questions raised by the Head-teacher when the day was scoped was "What will we be able to show to demonstrate the learn-

ing processes?" The pupils were already comfortable with the idea of podcasting, having produced some earlier in the year. It was therefore not a giant step for them to export jpegs of their church into PhotoStory 3 and incorporate a simple voice over to accompany the virtual tour identifying key features such as side-aisles, the nave and so forth. One group were able to take the photographs of the real church and also create a tour which identified key features thus demonstrating a good transfer of knowledge.

Why Church Builder?

If one looks at the software purely as a creative tool then on that basis alone it was worth using it in a classroom situation.

The pupils were thoroughly engaged with the software for the best part of three hours. Some pupils worked through break, and some came back early from lunch to “get on”.

The day was in some way false in that it was very intense and a more gradual use spread over time would be the norm in most classrooms.



The fact that the children were enthusiastic about making the video tours of their models, necessitating a return visit the next day to complete the task demonstrates that the software was a clear stimulus to learning.

If one tries to put it in context of the modern Curriculum then it is easy to tick the NC boxes for Technology Art RE etc.

However, when we look at the curriculum in terms of skills practiced and acquired there was a more significant impact. The collaborative skills used in working in groups to garner information matched to the creative skills in translating information are exactly those skills identified as essential for life and more especially work in the 21st Century.

The communication of their ideas and knowledge that they have discovered in a digital story format tie in perfectly with the ideas of Pink (2005) who talks of *story* not *narrative*.

Thornburg’s Research on Skills for Work (2001) shows the following hierarchical order.

Skill	Percent of Jobs Requiring the Skill
Technological fluency	81
Communication	74
Teamwork	36
Leadership	34
Problem solving	23
Creativity	22

To anyone observing both the output from the pupils, *but more importantly the processes occurring within the lesson*, the above skills were evident in abundance.

The pupils showed a level of technical fluency that many adults can only wonder at. They were using language to question and communicate by speaking to others but also within the video tours. Teamwork was evident throughout as was leadership and a desire to achieve the task. Problem solving was key to much of what they were about and the simple beauty of the churches they produced was evidence of how their creativity was unleashed.