



# Christ Church

## UNLOCKING CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL: FAMILY RESOURCES

### A VIRTUAL VISIT ONLINE

#### Saint Frideswide



Statue of Princess Frideswide by sculptor Peter Eugene Ball

#### Introduction:

This modern sculpture stands in the Cathedral's Latin Chapel, near the Shrine of Saint Frideswide. It is a modern work of art, made from a wooden railway sleeper. The sculptor has added delicately moulded hands, open peacefully in a gesture of love and generosity.

The statue has a peaceful, gilded face and has been painted and decorated with leaves and flowers. Pilgrims and visitors still come to visit the saint's shrine and the little red candle is lit each day to help visitors focus on their prayers. Some visitors choose to light their own candle as well, as a symbol of their prayer.

Nearby, they can learn about the saint's story through the beautiful stained-glass window by Edward Burne-Jones.

#### Response:

- Look carefully at the sculpture. Why do you think it might be important or special?
- Which words come to mind? How does it make you feel?

- How does it compare to other sculptures you have seen?

**Background:**

Frideswide was the Anglo-Saxon princess who established a church next to the River Thames during the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Her name meant great or strong Peace.



16<sup>th</sup> century Illuminated letter, showing St Frideswide, courtesy of Christ Church College Library

Frideswide is the patron Saint of the City and the University of Oxford. In this Illuminated letter, (F) you can see the saint's cloak is draped protectively over an ox beside the Thames. This picture comes from a book which was written and illuminated by hand for Cardinal Wolsey in the 1520's. Frideswide is shown here with a Bible and a crozier (like a shepherd's crook). This is to show she was also the abbess or leader of her church.

If you would like to find out more about the story of Oxford's patron saint, which has been captured in an award-winning picture book (published by the Bodleian Library) the Princess who Hid in a Tree, you can hear her story being read aloud, click the author's image.



13<sup>th</sup> century stone carving from the shrine of Saint Frideswide inside the Cathedral.

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### Things to do at home- a few ideas:

- Try to make as many words as you can out of the letters in the Princess' name:  
FRIDESWIDE
- The statue of Saint Frideswide is a deep blue. Using watercolours, or water-based paint, how many different shades of blue can you make on one piece of paper?
- Find out more about the city of Oxford. Locate it on a map of the UK. What does it look like today?
- Make an illuminated letter for each of your initials. Decorate it with your favourite animal and some of your favourite treasures and colours.
- Design a different book cover for the story of the 'Princess who Hid in a Tree'.

