



Our Story about St. Edmund

Drama

Key Stage 1 & 2

Prior to acting out the drama use the supporting slides to put the story into context.

Characters:

King Edmund, a Bishop, a group of villagers, a group of Saxon soldiers, a group of Vikings (Danes), the Viking leader Hinguar (Ivar the Boneless) and a wolf.

Props:

Swords, sticks, arrows (or use arms and pretend to aim), crown, Bishop's mitre or gown, money bag for Edmund, wolf mask, boxes to illustrate the monastery (optional) pictures of Edmund or the Cathedral at Bury St, Edmunds.

Character	Drama	Stage directions
Narrator	<p><i>Scene 1 – King Edmund, The Bishop and a group of Saxon villagers.</i></p> <p>Before Edmund was born, a King Sigebert had a monastery, a religious group of buildings built in the year 630 in a place called Bedricsworth which we now know as Bury St, Edmunds. (<i>Worth was a Saxon word for enclosure such as a farm or hamlet surrounded by a stockade</i>). The monastery grew larger and so a town was built around it and this was controlled by the Abbot who was the leader of the Monastery.</p> <p>The people who lived in this area were called Saxons and there were always disputes and fighting so the Kings had to be brave and strong to maintain order.</p> <p>King Edmund was only 14 years old when he was crowned King of the Angles in 855 on Christmas Day (25th December) at a place called Bures St Mary near Colchester.</p> <p><i>Opportunity for discussion (optional). Have you got brothers or sisters aged 14? Do you think they would be able to rule over the whole of East Anglia?</i></p>	<p>Assemble the villagers</p> <p>Bring on King Edmund.</p> <p>The crowd wave and bow to their King as he is led towards the Bishop who stands ready to crown him.</p>



<p>Narrator</p>	<p>Apparently, King Edmund was a kind and good King and his faith in God was very important to him.</p> <p>After several years, things got very worrying for across the North Sea from a country called Denmark, sailors came to steal, kill and take over the land. These people were called Vikings and they were cruel and attacked the towns and villages in Edmund's area of East Anglia. (<i>The Vikings' travelled in longships to reach England. – see supporting slide</i>)</p> <p><i>Scene 2 – Saxon army, Vikings, Edmund</i></p> <p>Edmund took an army and went to fight the Danes or Vikings but his army was defeated and Edmund was captured. Standing in front of Edmund, the Vikings demand ...</p>	
<p>Vikings</p>	<p>“Give us your food, give us your money, give us your land and give up your Christianity”. (Repeat)</p>	<p>Vikings enter wearing helmets and carrying swords and bow and arrows. They could come into the room pretending row the longship. Others not playing</p>
<p>Edmund</p>	<p>“I shall give you food , money and my land but I won't give up my Christianity”</p>	<p>characters could provide sound effects of the sea and bad weather. The Vikings land and fight with the Saxons.</p>
<p>Narrator</p>	<p>This last request was something Edmund would not do and so he was beaten and then taken outside and tied to a tree.</p> <p>The Vikings thought it fun to use him as a target practice and aimed their arrows at him. The more Edmund cried out to his God, the more they shot their arrows until he looked like a hedgehog.</p> <p>To ensure that he was dead, the leader of the Vikings, Hinguar or Ivar the Boneless, ordered that Edmund's head be cut off.</p> <p>The Vikings left Edmund's body where he fell and threw his head into the bushes and then they departed.</p> <p><i>Scene 3 – Saxon villagers, Edmund's body, wolf</i></p>	<p>Encourage the actors to display different emotions, anger, aggression, fear and pain. Let the characters act out the drama as the story is read</p> <p>Enter the villagers and the wolf. Props may include a wolf mask.</p>



Narrator	<p>The villagers came looking for Edmund and soon found his body but where was the head? Suddenly, they heard a voice call</p>	<p>Lots of chat from the villagers as they search for the head and discussion as to who will be brave enough to approach the wolf to retrieve it from her paws.)</p> <p>Take Edmund's body away (perhaps lay him on a mat so that the villagers can drag it to one side).</p>
Wolf	<p>“Hic, hic, hic” – “here, here, here”</p>	
Narrator	<p>To their astonishment, they found a wolf with Edmund's head between her paws and she hadn't harmed it. The wolf was protecting it.</p> <p>Amazingly, the wolf allowed the villagers to take the head away with them and for a while the wolf walked tamely beside them before vanishing into the forest.</p> <p>Edmund's body was buried in a wooden chapel near where he was killed but much later in 903 his remains were transferred to Bedericsworth (later to be called Bury St Edmunds).</p> <p>During the next 100 years, the Danes did further attacks and so in approximately 1003, Edmund's body was taken to London for safe keeping. It was brought back to Bury St. Edmunds in 1014 and put in a magnificent shrine of gold and jewels.</p> <p>His shrine became an important centre of pilgrimage with people coming from afar to visit it. Payment for looking at sacred objects such as Edmund's cup, buying souvenirs such as badges, scallop shells or even nail clippings continued to make the Abbey grow rich and wealthy. There were lots of stories of miracles believed to have been made by visiting Edmund's shrine. It was said that his wounds made by the arrows had all healed and that his head was now fused back to his body leaving only a red mark around his neck.</p> <p>The Abbey and the town of St. Edmundsbury continued to grow but sadly when Henry 8th decided to close all the Abbeys and Monasteries in 1539, this all changed. The whereabouts of St. Edmund's body is a still a mystery, probably hastily hidden all those years ago.</p> <p>However there are various statues and art work in different places, particularly in the Cathedral at Bury St Edmunds for us to remember this young and courageous King who later became the Patron Saint of East Anglia.</p>	