



Westminster
Abbey



What is a coronation?

This activity pack is inspired by the [first Coronation Club episode](#).
You can use it alongside the video to take part in the activities as you go
or as a stand-alone resource to explore coronations.

Either way, there are plenty activities for children to enjoy while supporting their learning.

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Westminster Abbey is the place where coronations happen.
But ...

Do you
know what a
coronation is?



What does it make you
think about?
Discuss with someone.



Coronation

is not a word we use a lot, so let's take a closer look at it.

Coro - Nation

“Nation” means a country, like the UK.

A coronation is a national event, something for the whole country.

Corona - Tion

CORONA means crown.

And TION means the doing of something.
Like celebration means a time for celebrating,
and competition is a time for competing.
So ... a coronation is a time for crowning!

And there's so much more to a coronation than just a crown.



An Abbey Tale



There's always an air of excitement and expectation when preparing for a coronation. The Abbey and everyone who lives and works here are suddenly on show. And the new monarch too. A coronation is supposed to be seen by as many people as possible. And there couldn't be a better place for it to happen. Edward the Confessor would have been proud. He's the king responsible for the Abbey getting built. It was finished in 1065.

Edward the Confessor died on 5th January 1066, and was buried in his newly-built Abbey. If you were to visit us today, you would see where he was buried – marked by a pink spot in front of the High Altar. Now Edward, who had no children, hadn't been particularly clear about who was to take over and there were plenty of prospective kings vying for the top job. As you can imagine, there was going to be a fight.

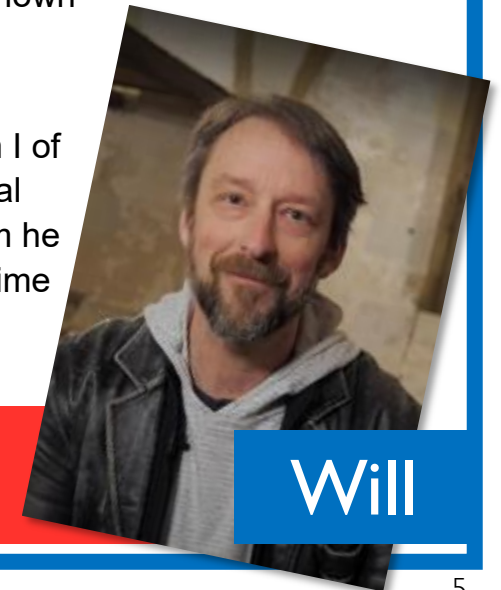
That fight took place in 1066. The two contenders – in the red corner, Harold Godwinson – a powerful Anglo-Saxon noble who, by the way, had already made himself king. And in the blue corner, William, Duke of Normandy who insisted he had been promised the throne.

They fought it out at the Battle of Hastings and when the dust settled, it was William who came out the conqueror. In fact, he was so proud of his achievement he later became known as William the Conqueror.

But it's all very well thrashing your opponent in battle. You still have to be crowned. And so, on Christmas Day, 1066, the conqueror became William I of England, by coming to Westminster Abbey and being crowned on the burial site of King Edward the Confessor. Now whatever you may think of William he did at least establish the Abbey as the place of coronation and, from that time on, for nearly 1,000 years, all our monarchs have been crowned here.



This story is also told on the Bayeux Tapestry, an ancient woven comic strip. You can explore it [online](#) with our friends at the Bayeux Museum.



Will



Coronations have happened at Westminster Abbey for nearly 1,000 years. If you measure each year as a step, how far would you get?

Why not make your own coronation timeline?

You could:

- Take 1,000 steps in a field or the playground
- Draw a timeline
- Use a piece of string, where 1 cm = 1 year (or 10 years, depending on space!)

You'll have to decide where the kings and queens appear on your timeline:

- Some might appear close together. Harold & William the Conqueror were both crowned in 1066.
- If you're making your coronation timeline outside with a group, choose people to stand in the right places to represent the monarchs, and their consorts, in the order they reigned.



Our list of coronation dates might help

1066	William I	1445	Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI
1068	Matilda, wife of William I	1461	Edward IV
1087	William II	1465	Elizabeth Woodville, wife of Edward IV
1100	Henry I	1483	Richard III, with Anne Neville
	Matilda, 1st wife of Henry I	1485	Henry VII
1121	Adeliza, 2 nd wife of Henry I	1487	Elizabeth of York, wife of Henry VII
1135	Stephen	1509	Henry VIII with Catherine of Aragon
1136	Matilda, wife of Stephen	1533	Anne Boleyn, 2 nd wife of Henry VIII
1154	Henry II, with Eleanor of Aquitaine	1547	Edward VI
1189	Richard I	1553	Mary I
1199]	John	1559	Elizabeth I
1200	Isabella of Angouleme, 2 nd wife of John	1603	James I, with Anne of Denmark
1220	Henry III	1626	Charles I
1236	Eleanor of Provence, wife of Henry III	1661	Charles II
1274	Edward I, with Eleanor of Castile	1685	James II, with Mary of Modena
1308	Edward II, with Isabella	1689	William III and Mary II
1327	Edward III	1702	Anne
1330	Philippa of Hainault, wife of Edward III	1714	George I
1377	Richard II	1727	George II, with Caroline
1382	Anne of Bohemia, wife of Richard II	1761	George III, with Charlotte
1397	Isabelle de Valois, 2 nd wife of Richard II	1821	George IV
1399	Henry IV	1831	William IV, with Adelaide
1403	Joan of Navarre, wife of Henry IV	1838	Victoria
1413	Henry V	1902	Edward VII, with Alexandra
1420	Katherine de Valois, wife of Henry V	1911	George V, with Mary
1429	Henry VI	1937	George VI, with Elizabeth
		1953	Elizabeth II



Purple dates are for queens consort only



A Closer Look: The Cosmati Pavement

This pink spot is very important. It marks the spot where St Edward the Confessor was originally buried, and where coronations happen. So much history in such a small spot.

It's right in the middle of a beautiful pavement, the Cosmati Pavement, that's covered in mosaics and patterns, with nearly 30,000 individually cut stones.

A special chair for queens and kings to sit on at coronations has been put on this floor where they can make promises to God and have a crown put on their head.

[Why not make your own mosaic, inspired by this pavement?](#)

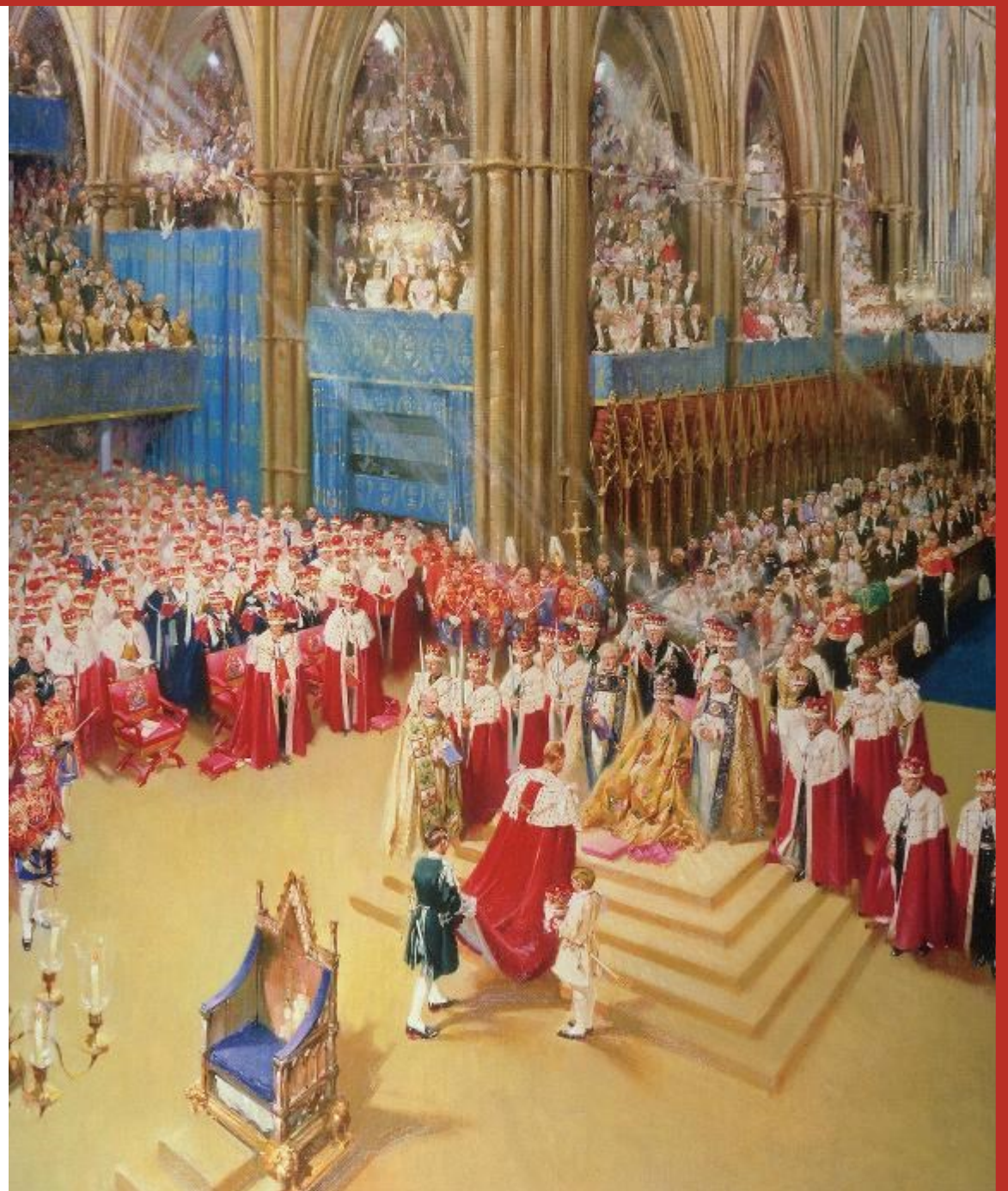


A Closer Look: Coronation Theatre

The Abbey also has a wide, open space called the Coronation Theatre. In the middle of this space sits a throne.

This space is here so as many people as possible can see the monarch during a coronation.

The throne and chair are the focus for much of the action on coronation day.



Gemma

A Priest's Perspective

Why do coronations happen in a church? Do crowns and churches go together?

A coronation is such a very special event and so it takes place in a very special place. You could say in a peculiar place, and this, Westminster Abbey is just such a space. It is a Royal Peculiar, a special church which is uniquely the monarch's church.

A coronation is a religious occasion during which the new king or queen comes before their people and before God. During a coronation the monarch makes very solemn promises to the people and to God, to uphold the law and the church. They promise to serve.

Such service is important to people of all faiths and is valued by people who don't follow a faith too. For Christians such service is modelled on Jesus Christ whom we know as the King who came to serve.

The monarch offers themselves to care for and to serve the people, and, to serve and obey God. These are hard things to do. No-one can do them alone and so during the service we join in by praying for the new king or queen, asking that God will guide them, strengthen them and help them to keep their promises as they share for caring for their people and God's world.



Canon Tricia

A moment for reflection

Why not take a moment, together or separately, to think, or pray, about how you can serve or help others. You might want to think about people or places you know that need some kindness. What are the things that you can do to help your friends, your family, leaders in your life? How do you ask for help when you need it?



Coronation Bingo!

Now we've found out a bit more, this game can help you decide what a coronation is – and what it isn't!

It's time to play Coronation Bingo!

Use the [“Bingo Card”](#) on the next page to play along.

You might want to circle the ones you think are right and put a cross through the ones you think are wrong.

Be careful not to peek at [the answers](#) on the page after by mistake.

You could talk to a partner or in teams to discuss what you think about each.

Top tip: There is more than one right answer

**Become the
monarch**

**Wear a crown for
the first time**

**An ancient
ceremony**

**A Christian
service**

**Get new
responsibilities**

**A public
declaration**

A performance

**A sharing of
promises**

A celebration

Coronation Bingo answers:

A coronation is not when someone becomes monarch. That happens as soon as the previous monarch dies. It's a sad time for the country.

It is usually the first time a monarch wears the crown. If they need a crown before the coronation it comes with them on a pillow!

A coronation is an ancient ceremony. They have happened in Westminster Abbey for nearly 1,000 years. The Bible mentions coronations from 3,000 years ago.

A coronation is a Christian service. That's why it happens in a church.

The coronation does not give the monarch any new responsibilities or powers. The king is already the king.

The coronation is a public moment for people to witness the king as king. When something special happens it's good to draw attention to it.

A coronation is not a performance, even with all the people watching. A coronation is a real event with witnesses. It's more like a wedding than a play.

The monarch has to make promises, or oaths, to the United Kingdom, some countries around the Commonwealth and to God, before they wear the crown.

The coronation ceremony is a reason to celebrate for many but the service might be sombre. A time for thinking, for wonder and watching.

Our Roving Reporter Investigates... **Westminster Hall**

In the past, newly crowned kings and queens would leave Westminster Abbey for their coronation banquet and head to Westminster Hall inside the Palace of Westminster. A party in the palace, that sounds like fun!

Westminster Hall, the scene of coronation banquets for 700 years. The Hall would have been filled with tables and seating. A top table for the king and queen and then hundreds of invited guests sitting lower down enjoying the fine food and drink. Strangely, hundreds more guests were also invited to watch the festivities from the edges of the Hall!

Someone had to keep order amongst all these hungry guests and that role fell to the Earl Marshal who literally rode around on horseback inside the Hall checking everyone was behaving themselves.

So coronation banquet food had to be really special. At Henry VI's coronation every course ended with a surprise. So he had Boar's Heads encased in Castles of Gold and a 'Custard Royal' with a golden leopard sitting on the top!

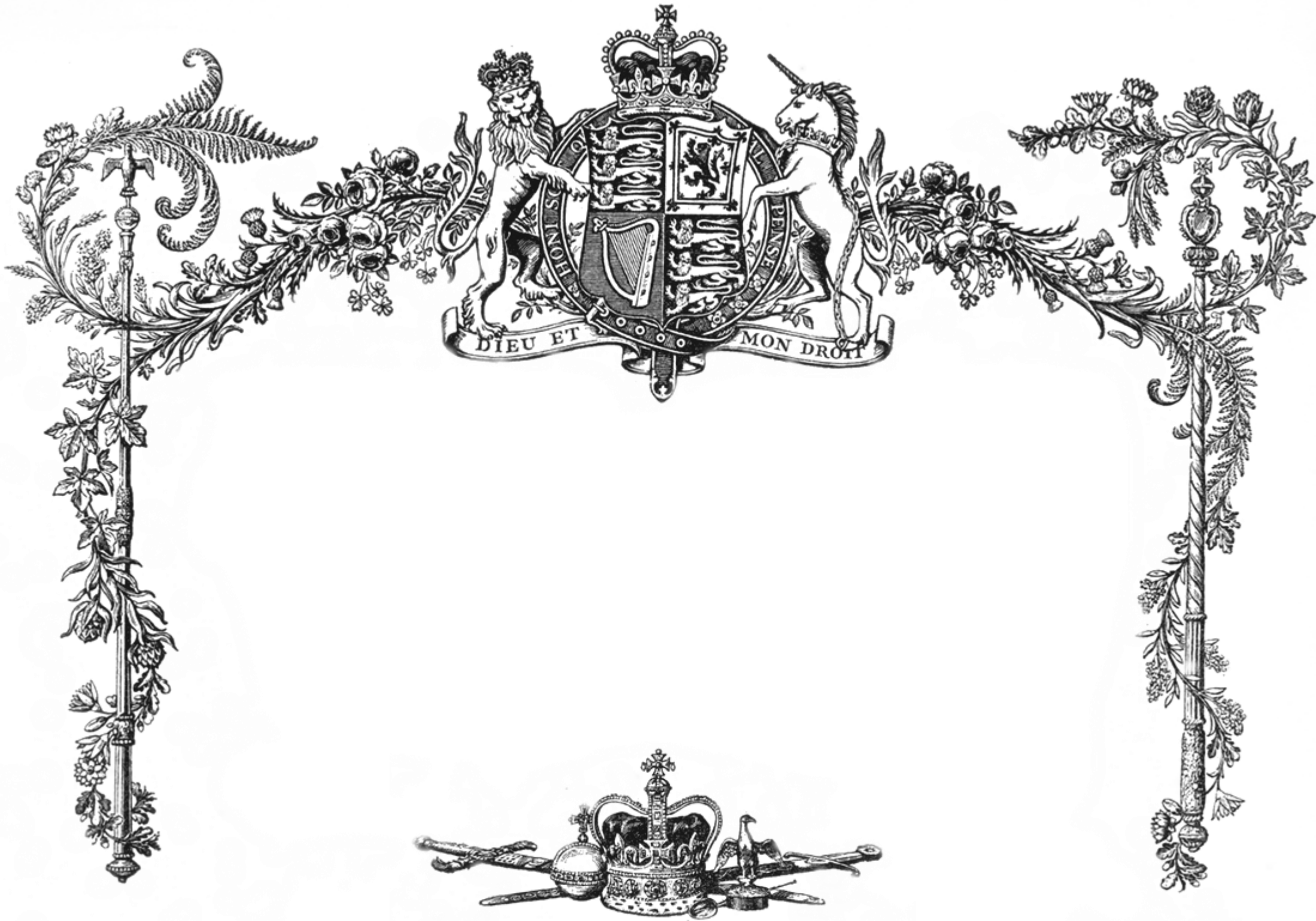
What amazing food would you have at your special banquet?



Lou

Design a Dish: Draw your own coronation banquet centerpiece here or write a menu on the next page.





Create a Banquet Soundscape

Imagine Westminster Hall filled with hundreds of guests enjoying sumptuous food and drink, with hundreds more watching the festivities! And the Earl Marshall keeping order riding around on his horse ...

Can you build up sounds to create a soundscape of the banquet? You might want to record it!

A soundscape is made up of all of the different sounds that make a sense of place.

For a banquet you might include some of the following:

- Music
- People talking and enjoying themselves
- Guests eating and drinking
- Glasses being refilled
- Plates and glasses clinking
- The Earl Marshall keeping order on his horse!

Think about how you might create these sounds using your bodies and things around you, such as props, materials and different surfaces. Consider which sounds are loudest and when.

Take turns to conduct all the sound makers and create a Banquet Orchestra!





A Queen's Quiz

Who was the first monarch to be crowned in Westminster Abbey?

- a) Wilhelmina the Conker
- b) William the Conqueror
- c) William of Concrete

What does the word 'coronation' mean?

For how long have coronations happened at Westminster Abbey?

- a) Nearly 100 years
- b) Nearly 500 years
- c) Nearly 1,000 years



A Queen's Quiz

Who was the first monarch to be crowned in Westminster Abbey?

b) William the Conqueror

What does the word 'coronation' mean?

'A time for crowning'

For how long have coronations happened at Westminster Abbey?

c) Nearly 1,000 years

Create a Craft: Make a mosaic

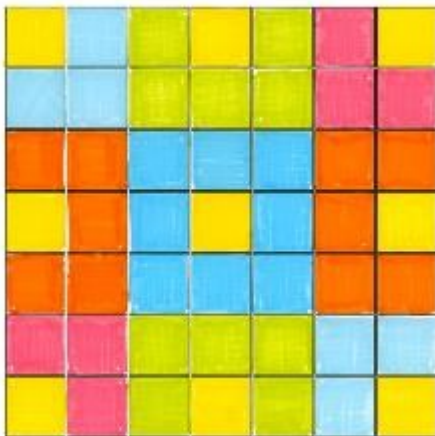
Inspired by the Cosmati Pavement and the High Altar of Westminster Abbey where kings and queens are crowned, let's get creative and make a mosaic.

You will need:

- Scissors
- Glue
- Colouring pencils or pens
- Squared paper
- Coloured paper
- Magazines or food packaging

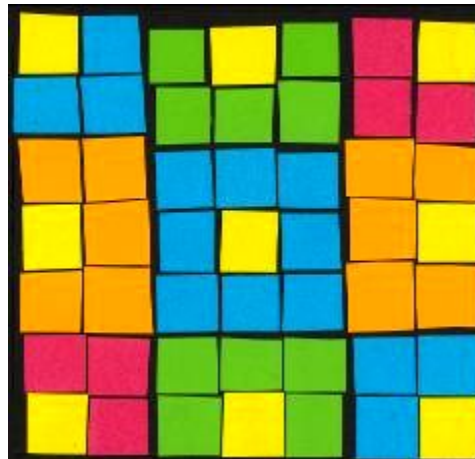
Step one:

Start by sketching out your design on squared paper. It can be easiest to start with a geometric design:



Step two:

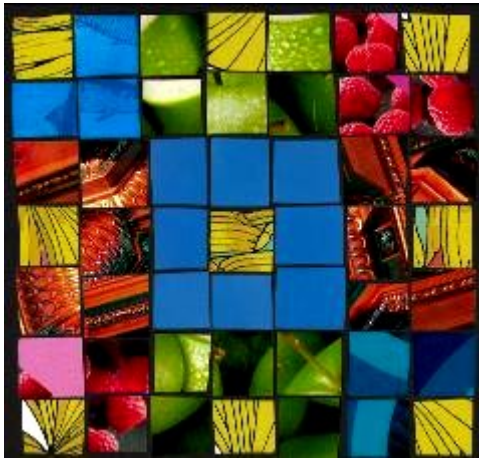
Recreate the colours and pattern on your design with cut out bits of coloured paper. Think about the background too:



Make a Mosaic

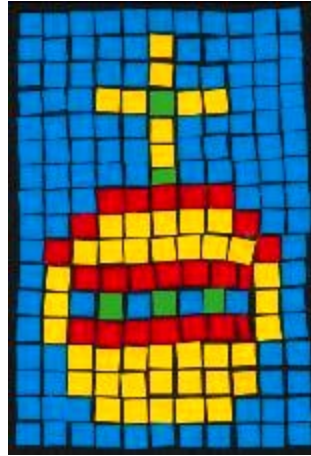
Step three:

You could use magazines or food packaging to add an extra dimension to your design:



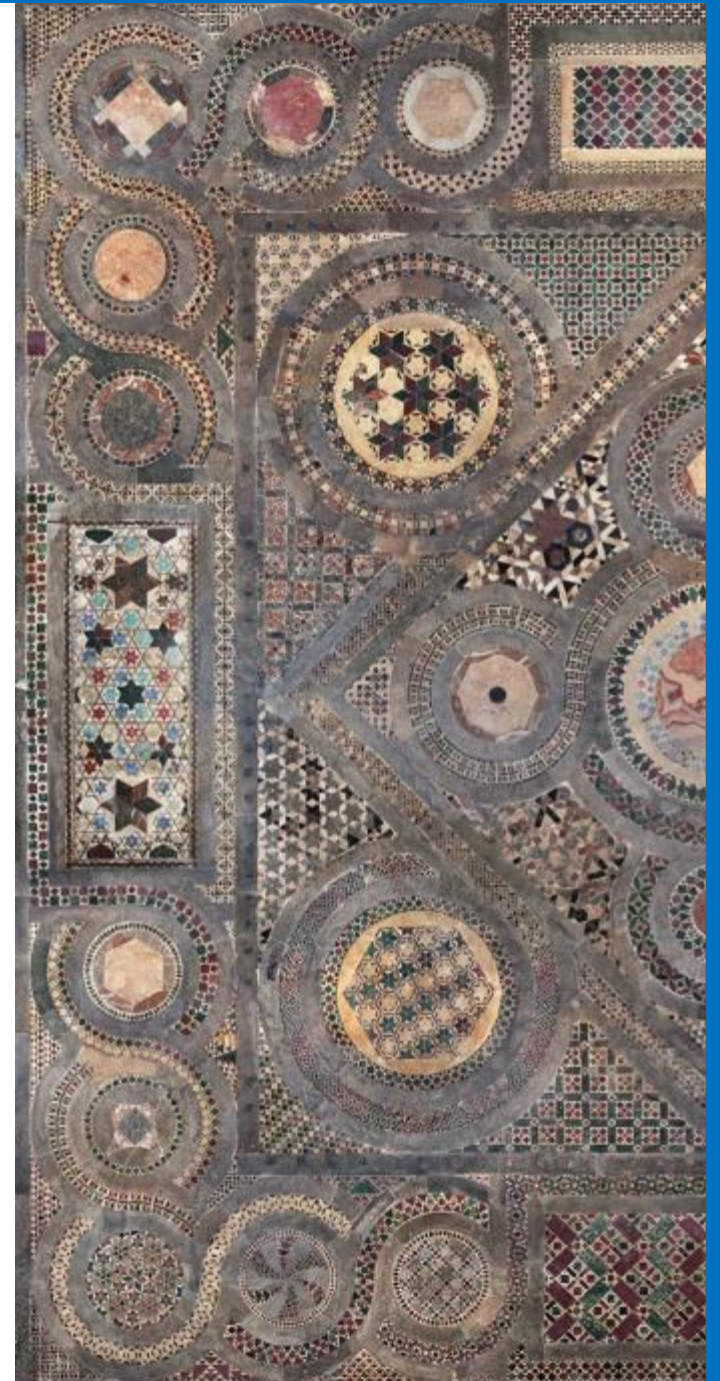
Step four:

Use the same process to design a picture. It could be a person, an animal or even an object:



Step five:

Mosaics, like the Cosmati Pavement, don't have to be made from just squares. You can use geometric shapes, or unusual ones, to make images and patterns:





Westminster
Abbey



Thank you for joining in with Coronation Club.

Share your makes and experience with Westminster Abbey on social media using [#CoronationClub](#).

You can find out when the next episodes are available on our [Coronation Club page](#).

Our website also has lots more about coronations that is targeted at [children and young people](#), as well as [plenty for adults too](#).

Useful Links

Links to find out more from the Abbey:

[A guide to coronations | Westminster Abbey \(westminster-abbey.org\)](https://www.westminster-abbey.org)

[Spotlight on coronations | Westminster Abbey \(westminster-abbey.org\)](https://www.westminster-abbey.org)

[Cosmati Pavement | Westminster Abbey \(westminster-abbey.org\)](https://www.westminster-abbey.org)

[Coronation Theatre | Westminster Abbey \(westminster-abbey.org\)](https://www.westminster-abbey.org)

Resources for adults and educators to use at home or in the classroom:

[Coronations image bank | Westminster Abbey \(westminster-abbey.org\)](https://www.westminster-abbey.org) (KS1/2/3)

[From Accession to the Abbey | Westminster Abbey \(westminster-abbey.org\)](https://www.westminster-abbey.org) (KS2)

[St Edward the Confessor factsheet | Westminster Abbey \(westminster-abbey.org\)](https://www.westminster-abbey.org) (KS2/3/4)

Explore more about the story of Kings Harold and William on the Bayeux Tapestry:

[Explore the Bayeux Tapestry online - Bayeux Museum](https://www.bayeuxmuseum.com)

Explore more about Westminster Hall and Coronation Banquets from the Parliamentary Archives:

[Spectacle & Ceremony: Westminster Hall and Coronation Banquets \(shorthandstories.com\)](https://www.shorthandstories.com)