



HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

# PRIMARY

# CORONATION: ASSEMBLY

# TEACHER NOTES



**SPACE TO STIR AND BE STIRRED**

TOWER OF LONDON • HAMPTON COURT PALACE • BANQUETING HOUSE  
KENSINGTON PALACE • KEW PALACE • HILLSBOROUGH CASTLE AND GARDENS



This pack has been designed as a resource for schools wishing to learn about the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and the history behind it. It explores the question **What is a coronation?** and is intended to be used as an introduction to the topic.

**The Primary Assembly** is targeted at lower KS2 but the suggested questions can be adapted for older or younger students. These **Teacher Notes** consist of background information and suggested key points. It is envisaged that the assembly will last for around 15 to 20 minutes and could be used with a single class or the whole school.

This assembly forms part of a suite of Coronation resources. It can be taught as a standalone session or followed by our **Coronation Values and Symbols** and **Coronation Symbols: Art & Design** lessons. Please see our website for these and other Coronation resources.

<https://www.hrp.org.uk/schools/the-tower-of-london-schools-coronation-competition/coronation-learning-resources>

## ASSEMBLY OVERVIEW

This assembly explores the question **What is a coronation?** and the significance of the Coronation of HM King Charles III as an important historical and national event. Students will find out what happens at a coronation ceremony and will explore key rituals and symbols, including the Coronation Regalia. The assembly includes a brief history of coronations, focusing on the elements that have stayed the same and those that have been adapted over time. Students will be encouraged to reflect upon continuity and change, the themes of inheritance and values and the transition to a new era.

## TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Primary teachers may wish to prepare students for the assembly by introducing them to some kings and queens from the past, explaining the concept of a hereditary monarchy and introducing some key vocabulary (see below for a list of Useful Links).

You may also wish to talk about religious ceremonies that your students are familiar with, and some of the key rituals and traditions associated with them.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*Students will:*

- Learn what happens at a coronation ceremony, including the symbolism of the Coronation Regalia.
- Explore coronations past in order to develop an understanding of the historical significance of the Coronation of King Charles III.
- Increase their understanding of the importance of the Coronation of King Charles III as an event of national significance and as the transition to a new era.

## CURRICULUM LINKS

### History KS1

- Changes within living memory.
- Events beyond living memory that are significant nationally or globally.

### History KS2

- A study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066 (for example, the changing power of monarchs).

### Citizenship KS1/2

- Preparing to play an active role as citizens.

## SUGGESTED MUSIC

*Zadok the Priest*, the anthem composed by Handel for the Coronation of King George II:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIXgOQ9\\_-RI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIXgOQ9_-RI)



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

### Slide 3: WHAT'S THE SAME?

**Images:** The Coronation Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, c.1600, based on a lost original; Coronation portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, 1953

This is a holding slide for students to look at and discuss before the assembly starts.

- These two portraits (of Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Elizabeth II) are 400 years apart in age.
- How many things did you spot that are similar in the portraits?
- We will be finding out more about the people in the portraits later in the assembly, and the importance of the similar things they are wearing and holding.
- Today's assembly is about coronations, and about how objects and values (what we believe to be important) are passed down from one generation to the next.

- What is this picture of?
- How is it different to a police officer's helmet or a builder's hat?
- A crown is a symbol – like a wedding ring: an object that is real but also represents something else.
- A crown represents the special status of a king or queen.
- Crowns – and what they represent – are passed from one monarch to the next.

**OPTIONAL:** Play the short video (45 seconds) of the Imperial State Crown.

### Slide 5: HIS MAJESTY THE KING AND HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN CONSORT

**Images:** His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty The Queen Consort

Following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 8th September 2022, the Prince of Wales immediately inherited the throne as King Charles III. His coronation will take place on 6th May 2023. In medieval and Tudor times, most coronations took place very quickly after the death of the previous monarch. In more recent centuries, coronations have taken place up to a year or more after the accession, out of respect to the previous monarch and to allow time for the preparations.

During the Coronation of King Charles III, Camilla, formerly the Duchess of Cornwall, will be crowned as Queen Consort, in a similar but simpler ceremony. Queen Consort is the official title of the wife of a king. She does not share the king's powers and, if she outlives him, cannot inherit the throne.

- When the Queen died her eldest son, Charles, inherited the title of King.
- King Charles III's wife, Camilla, became Queen Consort.
- Do kings and queens wear their crowns all the time?
- King Charles and The Queen Consort will both be crowned in a ceremony called a coronation on 6th May 2023.

### Slide 4: THE CROWN

**Images:** The Imperial State Crown, 1937; Coronation portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, 1953

**Optional props:** costume crown and another type of headwear, e.g. firefighter's helmet, builder's hard hat, police officer's helmet

**Embedded video:** link to video of The Imperial State Crown

The Imperial State Crown was worn by Queen Elizabeth II as she left Westminster Abbey after her coronation. Made for the coronation of King George VI in 1937, it is set with hundreds of precious stones. After the death of the Queen, the crown was placed on her coffin while she was lying in state at Westminster Hall and during her state funeral.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

### Slide 6: THE CORONATION

**Images:** The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, 2nd June 1953

**Optional prop:** Scout scarf or similar object representing membership of a group, or an award that children might have been presented with

A coronation is the ceremony in which the new monarch is crowned. The history of coronations in the United Kingdom dates back over 1,000 years and several key elements have remained unchanged over the centuries.

The last coronation to take place in the United Kingdom was that of Queen Elizabeth II, almost 70 years ago. The Queen's coronation ceremony followed ancient traditions but, like coronations throughout history, included adaptations and changes.

- Are any of you a Rainbow, Beaver, Brownie, Cub, Scout or Guide?
- If so, you will have taken part in a ceremony called an Investiture; you made a special promise and were given a scarf and then officially became a member of the organisation.
- A coronation is a ceremony at which a king or queen symbolically receives their crown.
- The last coronation in Britain was that of Queen Elizabeth II, 70 years ago.

### Slide 7: THE ANOINTING

**Images:** The 12th century Coronation Spoon and 1661 Ampulla

During the coronation ceremony the Coronation Spoon is used to anoint the monarch with holy oil from the eagle-shaped Ampulla (oil flask). This is the most sacred part of the coronation ceremony. It is performed out of sight of the congregation under a golden canopy. The anointing of kings is an ancient tradition: English kings and queens have been anointed for more than 1,000 years.

- Have you ever been to a special religious ceremony like a Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim or Sikh wedding? Can you remember any of the details of what took place?
- A coronation is also a religious ceremony.
- The most holy ritual (special action) in the ceremony is called anointing.
- The Archbishop of Canterbury anoints (touches) the monarch with holy oil from a sacred spoon called the Coronation Spoon.

### Slide 8: THE INVESTITURE

**Images:** The Coronation Regalia; King Charles II in coronation robes, 1661

**Embedded video:** link to edited film clip of the investiture and crowning of Queen Elizabeth II

The Coronation Regalia are the sacred objects used during the coronation ceremony, symbolising the temporal (worldly) and spiritual powers and duties of the monarch. After the English Civil War (1642-51) the crowns and other symbols of monarchy were destroyed. Most of the current Coronation Regalia were made for the coronation of King Charles II in 1661. The Coronation Spoon is one of the few items which was not destroyed. It is over 800 years old and is one of the oldest pieces of the Regalia.

The Coronation Regalia, together with the other priceless objects that make up the Crown Jewels, have been stored at the Tower of London for protection since the 1600s.

- The Investiture comes after the Anointing and is another important ritual that has been passed down over the centuries.
- The monarch is given sacred objects that symbolise (represent) their powers and duties.
- These objects are called the Coronation Regalia and are stored at the Tower of London.
- Most of them were made for King Charles II, the king at the time of the Great Fire of London, over 350 years ago.

**OPTIONAL:** Play the edited film clip (90 seconds) of the investiture and crowning of Queen Elizabeth II.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

### Slide 9: THE ORB, SCEPTRE AND CROWN

**Images:** The Sovereign's Orb, 1661; The Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross, 1661; St. Edward's Crown, 1661

**Embedded video:** link to video of the Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross

After the monarch has been anointed with holy oil, they are dressed in special coronation robes (clothes) and then invested with the Coronation Regalia. The Coronation Regalia are the special objects which symbolise the monarch's powers and responsibilities.

**The Sovereign's Orb** traditionally reminds the monarch 'that the whole world is subject to the Power and Empire of Christ the Redeemer.'

The Sceptre with Cross is symbolic of 'kingly power and justice'

**St. Edward's Crown** is the most important and sacred of all the crowns in the Crown Jewels collection. Made for King Charles II, it was based on the design of the earlier medieval crown which was destroyed in 1649. It is named after the Anglo-Saxon King and Saint Edward the Confessor.

- The three most important objects the monarch is invested with are the orb, the sceptre and – finally and most importantly – the crown.
- These objects, and the values they represent, are passed down from one monarch to the next.
- The Sovereign's Orb represents the power of God over the world.
- The Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross represents the power of the monarch and reminds them that they must rule with justice (fairness).
- St. Edward's Crown is the most important and holy of the objects and it is only used for the actual crowning itself.

**OPTIONAL:** Play the short video (25 seconds) of the Sovereign's Orb.

### Slide 10: AN ANCIENT CEREMONY

**Images:** The coronation of King Harold (Bayeux Tapestry); The Coronation Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, c.1600, based on a lost original

The first detailed account of an English coronation is that of the Saxon King Edgar in 973. Edgar was anointed with holy oil, invested with an orb and sceptre, and the anthem *Zadok the Priest and Nathan the Prophet* was sung. Traditionally *Zadok the Priest* is still sung at coronations – the current version was composed by Handel for the coronation of King George II in 1727.

King Harold, crowned in January 1066 (but later defeated by William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings) is depicted here with the symbols of monarchy and seated on a raised chair or throne.

Elizabeth I's coronation took place at Westminster Abbey on 15th January 1559. Her portrait shows her wearing a dress and robe woven from gold and silver thread and decorated with Tudor roses and fleur-de-lis, symbolising the long-standing English claim to the French throne. Her robe is lined with ermine (fur), a traditional symbol of purity and, in Tudor times, restricted to royalty and the nobility.

- Coronations have been taking place in the UK for at least one thousand years; some parts of the ceremony have stayed the same and some have been adapted (changed).
- The most important rituals have stayed the same, and similar symbolic objects have been used.
- The king in the tapestry is King Harold who was killed at the Battle of Hastings in 1066; the queen is Queen Elizabeth I who was crowned more than 450 years ago.
- Can you see that they are both wearing a crown, and holding an orb and sceptre? What is Harold sitting on?



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

### Slide 11: WESTMINSTER ABBEY

**Images:** Westminster Abbey; the Coronation Chair

Every coronation since that of William the Conqueror has been held at Westminster Abbey, and most have been conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Coronation Chair has been the centrepiece of coronations for 700 years, when it is placed in front of the High Altar in the Abbey. It was made on the orders of King Edward I to enclose the Stone of Scone, which he seized from the Scots in 1296. The stone is an ancient symbol of monarchy. In 1996 the stone was officially returned to Scotland, but traditionally returns to Westminster Abbey for the coronations of British monarchs.

- Coronations have been held at Westminster Abbey for every monarch since William the Conqueror in 1066.
- Most have been conducted by a senior Christian churchman called the Archbishop of Canterbury.
- The Queen's funeral was also held at Westminster Abbey. Perhaps some of you watched it on television?
- During the coronation, monarchs sit on a special type of throne called the Coronation Chair. It has been used at every coronation for the last 700 years.

- The decorative designs on Queen Elizabeth II's dress were chosen for their symbolism.
- The embroidered flowers included the rose for England, the thistle for Scotland, the shamrock for Northern Ireland and the leek for Wales.

### Slide 13: PROCESSIONS

**Images:** The Gold State Coach

During the Middle Ages it became a tradition for the monarch to stay at the Tower of London before a grand procession through the streets of London to Westminster.

The last monarch to process from the Tower of London before their coronation was Charles II in 1661. Traditionally a lavish banquet was held at Westminster Hall after the coronation ceremony. The banquets continued until the coronation of King George IV in 1821, one of the most extravagant coronations in history.

In 1953, two million people lined the route for Queen Elizabeth II's coronation procession. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh travelled in the Gold State Coach which has been used for every coronation since 1821. The 7km route, starting at Westminster Abbey and finishing at Buckingham Palace, was designed so that the Queen could be seen by as many people as possible.

### Slide 12: QUEEN ELIZABETH II'S CORONATION DRESS

**Images:** Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation dress

Since the coronation of William IV in 1831, male monarchs have usually chosen to wear military uniforms for their coronations. For the Queen, the designer Norman Hartnell was commissioned to design a unique dress, suitable for a young woman and reflecting the fashions of the time, but also having the timeless dignity appropriate to a royal and religious ceremony. The dress was embroidered with the four national emblems of the United Kingdom and, at the Queen's request, those of the seven other Commonwealth Realms at the time.

- Have you ever visited London – or another city – to watch a big procession? Did you cheer and clap?
- In the past, monarchs stayed at the Royal Palace at the Tower of London before going in a grand procession to the Abbey the day before their coronation.
- They then had a great banquet at Westminster Hall afterwards.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

### Slide 14: WATCHING TOGETHER

**Images:** Family watching television, 1950s

Queen Elizabeth II's coronation ceremony was the first to be televised live, at the Queen's request. This enabled millions of people in the United Kingdom, and millions more around the world, to watch the ceremony live.

The Coronation brought people together. Families that owned a television – many of them bought for the occasion – invited friends and neighbours to join them. Nearly eight million people in the United Kingdom watched in their own homes, while another ten million crowded into other people's houses, huddled around the tiny black-and-white screens. There were a further 1.5 million viewers in cinemas, halls, and pubs.

Streets were decorated with bunting and communities celebrated with street parties. Neighbourhoods collected donations so that children could enjoy treats such as jelly, ice cream and sweets. The recipe for 'Coronation Chicken' was invented for the coronation lunch at Buckingham Palace and published in magazines so that everyone could enjoy it.

- The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II was the first to be shown live on television.
- It was the first live event that many people had ever watched on television.
- It was a shared experience, as people watched together with family and friends.
- People also celebrated with street parties.

### Slide 15: A NEW ERA

**Images:** King Charles III (shown here as the Prince of Wales) and Queen Elizabeth II

Official announcement published 11th October 2022:

“Buckingham Palace is pleased to announce that the Coronation of His Majesty The King will take place on Saturday 6th May, 2023. The Coronation Ceremony will take place at Westminster Abbey, London, and will be conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Ceremony will see His Majesty King Charles III crowned alongside The Queen Consort. The Coronation will reflect the monarch's role today and look towards the future, while being rooted in longstanding traditions and pageantry. Further details will be announced in due course.”

- The Coronation of King Charles III marks the official start of a new era – a new period in history after the long reign of Queen Elizabeth II.
- King Charles III's coronation, like the coronations that have gone before, will be a mix of ancient traditions and changes to reflect society today.
- It will be an important national and historic event and an opportunity for us to celebrate with our families, friends and communities.

### Slide 16: TRANSITION

- We have explored the theme of coronations and talked about the values and traditions which are handed down from one monarch to the next.
- Imagine you are in charge of choosing traditions to pass down to your children and grandchildren. What is important to you? What would you choose to pass down?



## USEFUL LINKS

### The Coronation Regalia, including videos and interactive links:

<https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london/history-and-stories/the-crown-jewels/>

<https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london/crown-jewels/>

### The Royal Family website has many useful resources, including:

- A list of Kings and Queens from 1066, with interactive links:  
<https://www.royal.uk/kings-and-queens-1066>
- Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, with a map of the processional route:  
<https://www.royal.uk/the-queens-accession-and-coronation>
- 50 less well-known facts about Queen Elizabeth II's coronation:  
<https://www.royal.uk/50-facts-about-queens-coronation-0>
- The role of the monarchy today:  
<https://www.royal.uk/role-monarchy>

### Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation dress:

<https://www.rct.uk/collection/themes/exhibitions/platinum-jubilee-the-queens-coronation/windsor-castle/platinum-jubilee-the-queens-coronation/exhibition/the-coronation-dress-of-her-majesty-queen-elizabeth-ii>

### The Gold State Coach:

<https://www.rct.uk/visit/the-royal-mews-buckingham-palace/the-gold-state-coach#/>

### Broadcasting Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation:

<https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/anniversaries/june/coronation-of-queen-elizabeth-ii/>