



HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

# SECONDARY

# CORONATION: ASSEMBLY

# TEACHER NOTES



**SPACE TO STIR AND BE STIRRED**

TOWER OF LONDON • HAMPTON COURT PALACE • BANQUETING HOUSE  
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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 **Secondary Assembly** is targeted at KS3 but can be adapted for older students. These **Teacher Notes** consist of background information and suggested key points. It is envisaged that the assembly will last for approximately 20 minutes and could be used with a whole year group. It could be also used with a class by subject teachers in lesson time or by form tutors in form time.

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

**Secondary history teachers** may wish students to have some chronological knowledge of the monarchy since 1066, particularly in relation to key historical events (see below for a list of Useful Links).

**Secondary form tutors** may wish to facilitate class or group discussion on the topics:

- Symbols – What is a symbol? Are you wearing – or do you own – an object that has personal symbolic significance for you?
- Values – What do you consider to be ‘British values’? Which of these values do you think the monarchy represents? What values are important to you personally?

## 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 KS3

- The study of an aspect or theme in British history that consolidates and extends pupils’ chronological knowledge from before 1066.

### Citizenship KS3

- 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: SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

**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, but did you spot any similarities between them?
- We will be exploring both of these portraits later in the assembly.
- Today's assembly is about coronations, and about inheritance: how objects and values are passed down from one generation to the next.

- Can you remember where you were and what you were doing when you heard the news that the Queen had died?
- Following her death, the former Prince of Wales immediately inherited the title of King.
- The coronation of King Charles III will take place on 6th May 2023.
- So what is a coronation? And if Charles is already King, why do we need to have one?

## PART ONE: GOD SAVE THE KING

### Slide 5: HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III

**Images:** King Charles III as Prince of Wales; Text of the official announcement of the death of Her Majesty the Queen and the accession of King Charles III from The Royal Family's Twitter account, 8th September 2022

King Charles was born in 1948 and became heir apparent in 1952, when his mother, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, became Queen. Charles was invested as Prince of Wales at a ceremony which took place at Caernarfon Castle, in north Wales, in 1969.

Following the death of 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.

## PART TWO: THE CORONATION CEREMONY

### Slide 7: THE CORONATION OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II

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

A coronation is the ceremony culminating in the physical crowning of a new monarch. 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.

The key parts of the coronation ceremony are:

**THE RECOGNITION** – The people are asked if they recognise and accept their new monarch and they answer they do.

**THE OATH** – The monarch promises to rule according to the law and with mercy.

**THE ANOINTING** – The monarch is anointed with holy oil on the hands, chest and head.

**THE INVESTITURE** – The monarch is presented with ceremonial objects symbolising their powers and duties before finally being crowned.

**THE INTHRONING** – The monarch sits upon their throne.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

- A coronation is a ceremony at which a king or queen symbolically receives their crown.
- It marks the official investiture of a monarch with regal powers and responsibilities.
- The last coronation in the UK was that of Queen Elizabeth II on 2nd June 1953.
- The history of coronations in the United Kingdom dates back at least one thousand years.
- Many of the key rituals and symbols of the ceremony have remained the same over the centuries.

### Slide 8: THE QUEEN CONSORT

**Images:** King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in their coronation robes, 1937; King Charles III and Camilla, the Queen Consort

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. This ceremony will take place for the first time since 1937, when Queen Elizabeth II's mother, also called Elizabeth, was crowned Queen Consort during the coronation of King George VI.

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.

- King Charles' wife, Camilla, the former Duchess of Cornwall, will also be crowned at the coronation ceremony as The Queen Consort.
- Queen Consort is the official title of the wife of a king.
- The last Queen Consort was the wife of King George VI, crowned in 1937.

## PART THREE: RITUALS AND SYMBOLS

### Slide 10: 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, and the anointing represents the special status of the monarch. 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.

Since the 1500s, English monarchs have used the title 'Defender of the Faith', referring to the Christian faith. Since the Reformation, this has referred specially to the Church of England.

- The coronation is a royal and a religious ceremony.
- The most sacred part of the ceremony is the Anointing ritual.
- The Archbishop of Canterbury anoints (touches) the monarch with holy oil from a sacred spoon called the Coronation Spoon.

### Slide 11: CORONATION REGALIA

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

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.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

- The Coronation Regalia are sacred objects representing the powers and duties of the monarch.
- They are part of the Crown Jewels, stored and displayed at the Tower of London.
- Most of the current objects were created for the coronation of King Charles II in 1661 as the previous set were melted down on the orders of Oliver Cromwell.
- The Coronation Spoon was the only one of the medieval objects to survive and is almost 900 years old.

- After the Anointing the monarch is invested with the Coronation Regalia. These are highly symbolic objects which, alongside the values they represent, are passed down from one monarch to the next.
- The Sovereign's Ring represents the symbolic marriage between monarch and people.
- The Sovereign's Orb symbolises the Christian world and traditionally reminds the monarch of the power of Christ.
- The Sceptres symbolise the monarch's powers and that it is their duty to rule with justice and mercy.

### Slide 12: THE INVESTITURE

**Images:** The Sovereign's Ring, 1831; The Sovereign's Orb, 1661; The Sovereign's Sceptre with Cross, 1661; The Sovereign's Sceptre with Dove, 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 and then invested with the Coronation Regalia. The Coronation Regalia are the special objects which symbolise the monarch's powers and responsibilities. Queen Elizabeth II was invested with Spurs (symbolising knighthood), Armills (bracelets, representing sincerity and wisdom), the Jewelled Sword of Offering (symbolising the monarch's duty to protect their people) and the Sovereign's Ring. These were followed by the Sovereign's Orb and two sceptres. The Sovereign's Orb traditionally reminds the monarch 'that the whole world is subject to the Power and Empire of Christ the Redeemer.'

Sceptres are thought to have evolved from the ancient tradition of carrying a staff to represent power. The Sceptre with Dove reminds the monarch to be merciful, while the Sceptre with Cross is symbolic of 'kingly power and justice'.

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

### Slide 13: THE CROWNS

**Images:** St. Edward's Crown, 1661; The Imperial State Crown, 1937

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

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 Imperial State Crown was worn by Queen Elizabeth II as she left Westminster Abbey. Made for the coronation of King George VI in 1937, it was also used on other State occasions, including the annual State Opening of Parliament. It is set with precious stones including the Cullinan II diamond and a sapphire said to have been worn in a ring by Edward the Confessor. 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

- The final, and most important, part of the investiture is the crowning of the monarch.
- The crown is the symbol of royal majesty.
- St. Edward's Crown is the most important and sacred of all the crowns, only used for the actual crowning itself.
- The Imperial State Crown was worn by Queen Elizabeth II at her coronation as she left Westminster Abbey.
- You may remember seeing the Imperial State Crown on the Queen's coffin if you watched her funeral on television, together with the Sovereign's Orb and the Sceptre with Cross. These objects will symbolically pass to King Charles III at his coronation.

- Many of the key rituals and symbols of modern coronation ceremonies descend directly from that of King Edgar in 973.
- These include singing the anthem *Zadok the Priest*.
- Medieval kings were anointed with holy oil, invested with an orb and sceptre, and crowned.
- Contemporary images (primary sources) depict medieval kings with the symbols of monarchy – the crown, orb and sceptre – and seated on a throne.

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

### PART FOUR: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

#### Slide 15: AN ANCIENT CEREMONY

**Images:** The coronations of King Harold (Bayeux Tapestry) and King Henry III (13th Century manuscript)

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.

King Henry III inherited the throne in 1216, aged 9, and was quickly anointed and crowned at Gloucester Cathedral. The royal regalia had either been sold or lost by his father, King John, so Henry was crowned with a simple gold coronet belonging to his mother. He was crowned a second time in a full ceremony at Westminster Abbey in 1220.

#### Slide 16: ABBEY, THRONE AND STONE

**Images:** Westminster Abbey; the Coronation Chair; the Stone of Scone

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.
- The Coronation Chair has been used for every coronation since the early 1300s.
- The Chair was originally made to enclose the Stone of Scone, an ancient symbol of monarchy, seized from the Scots by King Edward I in 1296.
- The stone was officially returned to Scotland in 1996 but traditionally returns to Westminster Abbey for coronations.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

### Slide 17: TUDOR TO 20TH CENTURY

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

Queen 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.

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.

- Although the coronations of Elizabeth I and Elizabeth II took place 400 years apart, there are several similarities between their portraits, illustrating the continuation of ancient traditions.
- Both are shown with the symbols of monarchy – the crown, orb and sceptre.
- The decorative designs on both their dresses are symbolic.
- Both wear robes lined with ermine, a symbol of their royal status and a traditional symbol of purity.

### Slide 18: PROCESSIONS AND PAGEANTRY

**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, several thousand of whom camped overnight in the rain. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh travelled in the Gold State Coach, 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.

- Processions, pageantry and public participation have been an important part of coronations since the Middle Ages.
- For hundreds of years monarchs stayed at the Tower of London before processing to Westminster Abbey the day before their coronation in a display of pomp and pageantry.
- Traditionally coronations were followed by a grand banquet in Westminster Hall, last held in 1821.
- Monarchs have used the Gold State Coach in coronation processions for the last 200 years.

### Slide 19: A SHARED EXPERIENCE

**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.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SUGGESTED KEY POINTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATION

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 televised live.
- For many people it was the first time they had watched a live event on television.
- It was a shared experience, as people watched with family and friends.
- The coronation was also an opportunity for public celebration, with communities coming together for street parties.

### Slide 21: 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 and values to pass down to your children and grandchildren. What values are important to you? What would you choose to pass down?

### Slide 20: 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 transition from the reign of Queen Elizabeth II to that of King Charles III – a new period in history.
- Like previous coronations, it will be a combination of ancient traditions, rituals and pageantry, and adaptations reflecting the society we live in today.
- It will be an important national and historic event and an opportunity for people in the United Kingdom to celebrate with their families, friends and communities.





## 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/>