

St. Swithin

Swithin was born in about AD 800 in the old Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex, and was educated in the capital, Winchester. He became a priest and later chaplain to Egbert, King of Wessex, and tutor to his son, Ethelwulf, who became king himself in 839.

In 852 Swithin was made Bishop of Winchester, a position he held until his death in 862. This was at a time when the power of the kingdom of Wessex became the dominant kingdom in the British Isles. Little is known about the man and bishop, other than the legend surrounding the removal of his remains on 15 July 971 from the grave outside the cathedral to a new and splendid tomb inside, apparently during a heavy rainstorm.



- ① Sit down with the children and show them the series of pictures overleaf. You may wish to lay the sheets out either on a table or the floor, and then read the story.
- ② Ask the children the following questions and discuss them:-
Which pictures did you like or dislike, and why?
Talk about the miracle that Swithin performed. How would you feel if all your eggs broke?
Talk about why we need rain. What is good about going out in the rain?
- ③ Ask the children to learn the St. Swithin poem, which can be found on iChild.
- ④ Look at pictures of rainbows with the children and learn their colours.

St. Swithin



Saint Swithin was a Saxon bishop who had been born and educated in Winchester, the capital of Wessex. He worked with the King and was rewarded by being made Bishop of the Cathedral in Winchester.



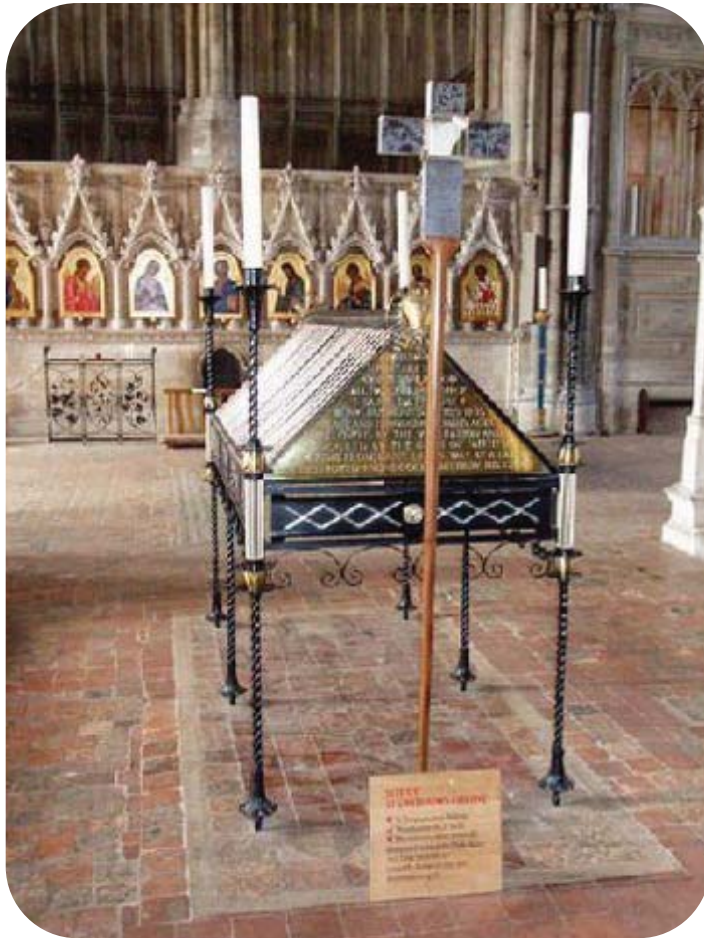
In order to be recognised as a saint, it was said that you had to perform a miracle (a happening that has no real explanation). An old lady's eggs had been smashed by workmen building a church. When Swithin picked the broken eggs up, it is said they miraculously became whole again and this made the old lady very happy.



When St. Swithin died, he asked to be buried outside the Cathedral so that he could still feel the rain and the feet of people going to worship God. So he was buried outside. Later it was decided to move his remains into the Cathedral and placed in a special shrine.



Every time they tried to dig up his remains it rained. It rained for 40 days and everyone agreed that it was St. Swithin's way of showing he did not want to be moved.



However eventually on 15 July 971, St. Swithun's remains were dug up and moved to a shrine in the Cathedral by Bishop Ethelwold. So he is remembered on this day rather than the day he died. His simple tomb is now inside Winchester Cathedral.



One emblem for Saint Swithin is apples, and there is a saying that when it rains on St. Swithin's Day, he is christening the apples.



**Saint Swithin is still
seen as the patron of
Winchester Cathedral.**