

## Lesson 5 - Robert Raikes.

Buildings can be significant because of the people associated with them. The people who live in a building can have an impact upon the surrounding area. Over the years there have been numerous historical characters who have had a significant influence on the City. It is important that the children gain an understanding of how these people have helped to shape Gloucester. One character of huge significance with a strong connection to Southgate Street is Robert Raikes. This lesson concentrates on him.

### Lesson Resources Provided:

- Background information on Robert Raikes
- A fictional Story about Robert Raikes using key factual information
- Information on why the Sunday School started
- Robert Raikes worksheet



### Classroom Based Activity.

#### Activity 1:

To write a fact file about Robert Raikes. The children to each have a copy of the background information on Robert Raikes. They should decide which facts are important and what should go into the fact file. Maybe brainstorm as a class. Children to then create their own fact file.

#### Activity 2:

Use the background information and the internet to find out about Robert Raikes. Then complete the worksheets. Thinking specifically about what is fact and what is opinion.

#### Activity 3:

To write a story about Robert Raikes using the fictional story provided as a stimulus.

#### Activity 4:

To use all the information provided to write a biography on Robert Raikes.



**Additional Activity: Trip to Gloucester Life Museum**

Visit to the Gloucester Life Museum for a Robert Raikes & Sunday Schoolroom session

To arrange this please contact  
Sarah Orton  
Lifelong Learning Officer  
Gloucester Museums  
T: 01452 396139  
[www.gloucestermuseums.co.uk](http://www.gloucestermuseums.co.uk)

**Robert Raikes Sunday Schoolroom Session**

Key Ideas:

Why did Robert Raikes set up a Sunday School movement?

Who were the first children that attended and what was their working life like in the Westgate Street pin factory?

What was taught in the very early Sunday Schools?

This gallery and role play session is split up into two parts. The first part in the Folk Museum pin making gallery explores what life was like for children working in the Westgate pin factory and why their plight inspired Raikes to found the Sunday School movement. Evidence of the pin making factory can still be found in the Folk Museum building and these features will also be examined. The second part of the session will be a role play with the pupils dressing in costume and discovering what a typical Sunday School lesson would involve.

For those teachers used to the Victorian Classroom it is worth noting that the Sunday School movement, once properly established, took a much more enlightened view towards pupils education. Praise and encouragement (and the odd bit of bribery!) were employed as the main teaching tools, although no one could escape the rote learning. Although the Sunday School movement did focus on Bible studies and Christian values it wasn't the only focus of the lessons. However, there will be overt Christian content within the session.

After the taught gallery and role play groups are encouraged to go and explore the pin gallery and other areas of the Museum. Typically the taught element of the session lasts for an hour. The Sunday School element of the session could be brought out to the classroom as outreach and the pin factory elements of the session can also be discussed, although we do recommend that they are actually visited at the Museum for more impact.



# Lesson Five Resources



## Robert Raikes



LOTTERY FUNDED

Gloucester  
City Council  
*Transforming Your City*



Kingsholm  
Church of England  
Primary School



Gloucestershire Archives



## Background Information on Robert Raikes

Robert Raikes was born in Gloucester on 14th September, 1736 and was baptised in St Mary deCrypt Church.

The Raikes family home was an impressive building just around the corner of Longsmith street on Southgate street.

Robert's father was the owner of the *Gloucester Journal* and on his death in 1757, Robert took over the running of the newspaper. The Newspaper is now known as the citizen and is the 2<sup>nd</sup> longest continuously published newspaper in the country. The journal was printed for some time at the Robert Raikes house in Southgate street.

When Robert Raikes got married in 1768 he moved back into Ladybellagte house and his widowed mother Mary moved into no 36-36 (now divided into two separate units), the larger of which still houses the printing office.

Raikes held liberal views and used his newspaper to campaign for prison reform and working class education.

In July 1780 Raikes and a local curate, Thomas Stock, decided to start a Sunday School at St. Mary le Crypt Church in Gloucester. It is claimed that Raikes got the idea when a group of rowdy children were making so much noise outside his office he could not concentrate on his work. Every Sunday the two men gave lessons in reading and writing. Raikes was not the first person to organize a school in a church but by giving it maximum publicity in the *Gloucester Journal*, he was able to spread his ideas to others.

Robert Raikes wife used to make plum cake and invite the children into the garden of their house to feed them.

The bishops of Chester and Salisbury gave support to Raikes and in 1875 a London Society for the Establishment of Sunday Schools was established. In July 1784 John Wesley recorded in his journal that Sunday Schools were "springing up everywhere". Two years later it was claimed by Samuel Glasse that there were over 200,000 children in England attending Sunday schools.

Robert Raikes retired from the *Gloucester Journal* in 1802.

He died on 5th April 1811 and was buried in the church of St. Mary le Crypt. At his funeral every child was given one shilling (5p) and some plum cake.

There is a statue of Robert Raikes in Gloucester Park.

## Why did Robert Raikes start a Sunday school?

In the late 1700s England had a large underclass of poor people who had moved from the countryside to the city to work in "factories." There was at least one factory in Gloucester that manufactured pins. Children as young as eight years old worked six days a week in gruesome surroundings for very little money. Sometimes their small hands would get caught in machinery and fingers cut off. When this happened they were simply dumped on the streets and new workers were hired. At this time there was no free schooling, only people who could pay for it sent their children to be educated. If you had no money your children could not go to school and did not learn to even read or write.

Sunday was the one these children got off. The street urchins of the day survived miserable conditions at work and learned how to be pickpockets and thieves at a young age. There was no way out of the poverty cycle for these children.

These children sparked a vision and burden in Robert Raikes. He decided that as a Christian it was his duty to do something to help these children. His idea was simple - why not start a school on a Sunday for the poor children, where good Christian people would teach them to read and write, teach them the 10 commandments and teach them how to behave well. He hoped that with this basic education they would be able to escape their dreadful lives.

So Raikes started a Sunday School for these poor children. As the parents could not pay to send their children to school Raikes used his own money to pay for the school. He recruited other people to help. In 1780 (or maybe 1781) he started this first Sunday school and paid the teacher himself. She quit soon after but he hired others. Since he was a printer, Raikes published large sheets with the Ten Commandments and other Scripture verses on them so the children could use them to learn moral principles to live by. These printed sheets were in a sense the first 'Sunday school curriculum.'

*There is also lots of information on the internet about Robert Raikes and some great pictures too!*

# Robert Raikes

This story uses basic facts but then adds fictional ideas to tell a story.

## The Gloucester Journal

Robert knelt beside his father's grave after the funeral. Where would he go now? What would he do with his life? He'd always worked beside his father in the printing shop, but now those days were gone forever.

He mopped his teary face with a handkerchief and stood to his feet. Leaving the graveyard, Robert walked toward the printing shop that now belonged to him. He and his father had spent the last several years there, working on Gloucester's newspaper, the *Gloucester Journal*.

Robert opened the creaky front door of the shop and slowly walked inside. The familiar smell of ink and machinery greeted him. Robert picked up the last copy of the *Gloucester Journal* published by his father that year, in 1757. "I'll make you proud, Father," he said aloud. "With God's help, I'll keep your *Gloucester Journal* alive."

The days passed and Robert worked hard. He made the newspaper larger, improved its layout, and hired new writers. Soon even more people wanted to read the *Gloucester Journal*!

On his days off, Robert often visited prisoners in Gloucester. There he found the castoffs of society living in the most appalling circumstances. Most of them were sick or even dying from overwork. They lived in crowded, filthy spaces with almost no food. Even children were sometimes imprisoned along with the worst criminals. Robert felt sad to see these sick and starving prisoners. But what could one person do to ease the pain of so many? He decided to write about the terrible prisons in his newspaper.

## The White Slaves of England

One evening he walked down St. Catherine's Street to look for his gardener. Suddenly, he saw a group of ragged children. They looked just as poor and overworked as the prisoners he visited. A little boy in a tattered blue shirt swore as he tackled another boy half his size. "Git your hands offa me!" the little boy yelled as the two of them wrestled on the cobblestones. Soon a crowd of children gathered around, noisily cheering. "Hey, stop fighting!" Robert shouted at them as he pulled the two boys apart. "Go home, all of you."

As the children walked away, Robert asked the gardener's wife, "Who are these children?"

"Ah, pay no mind to them," she answered. "Everyone calls them the white slaves of England."

"Slaves?" asked Robert. "They work 12 hours a day or longer in the mills and sweatshops," the woman answered. "Most of their parents are in prison or dead."

Robert cringed. He knew that if his father had died when he was little, he could have been one of these poor children. "When do they go to school?" he asked. "School? They don't go to school. They have to work to live." she answered. And Sundays are the worst. It's their only day off and they run around like wild animals!"

### Sunday Schools Started

Robert knew that the future was grim for these children who had to work all the time with no hope of an education. Worse yet, with no one to teach them the good news of the Gospel or how to live God's way, they were likely to end up cold, sick and starving in the dreadful prisons. An idea began to form in Robert's mind which he shared with his friend, Reverend Thomas Stock.

"Let's start a Sunday school!" said Robert. "School on Sunday?" asked Thomas. "Yes, school on Sunday!" answered Robert. "We'll teach them to read and write part of the day and teach them the Bible for the rest of the day." "It's a great idea!" said Thomas.

Robert waited expectantly the first Sunday for the children to come to the new school, but only a few came.

"Marcy, why don't more of the children come to Sunday school?" he asked the little red-haired girl with freckles.

Marcy looked down. "Cuz our clothes ain't no good," she answered.

"Now I understand," answered Robert. "Well, you tell your friends that all they need is a clean face and combed hair, okay, Marcy?"

Marcy smiled. "You're nice."

Robert squatted down beside her. "I'll tell you what, Marcy, I think you're nice, too. Here's a penny for coming to class today. If you work very hard and learn your lessons, you'll get a special reward."

"Really?" asked Marcy, her sparkling eyes fixed on the candy Robert held in his hand.

"I'll do my very best!"

### Sunday Schools Stop Crime

It didn't take long until Robert Raikes and Reverend Thomas Stock had 100 children ages 6 to 14 attending their Sunday schools. Even though the children were taught only one day a week, their behaviour began to improve. Now they had something to look forward to after working so hard every day. The policemen of the city told Robert that the children weren't stealing and fighting like before.

Robert waited three years to see if his Sunday schools were a success. Then he printed a story about the new Sunday schools. Soon, about 4,000 new Sunday schools were started in towns all over England. Robert even used his printing press to publish reading books, spelling books, Bible study books, and copies of the Scriptures for the Sunday schools.

### The World Marches On

One Sunday, Thomas and Robert walked up the street to the Sunday school building. Thomas said, "Robert, your father would be proud of what you've done with his newspaper. He'd be proud of your Sunday schools, too, although you know--everyone is calling you 'Bobby Wild Goose and his ragged regiment.'"

Robert laughed. "I've been called worse names than 'Wild Goose,' I think," he answered.

Robert looked around at the hundreds of children now attending his Sunday school and his face grew quite serious. "Thomas, my father died and his father before him died. One day we will grow old and die, too. But the world won't die with us. The world marches forth on the feet of little children."

Thomas patted his friend on the back. "So it does, Robert. So it does."

Make It Real. Questions to help you dig a little deeper and think a little harder!

1. Can you imagine working 6 days a week, up to 12 hours each day? Why would these overworked, poverty-stricken children spend their one free day going to school?
2. Why were the children hesitant to come to Sunday school at first? What are some things that keep children from coming to Sunday school today?
3. The new Sunday schools taught two kinds of lessons. They taught reading and writing part of the day and Bible lessons the rest of the day. Which do you think was more important for helping the children and why?
4. What difference has attending Sunday school made in your life? Have you ever invited a friend to Sunday school?
5. Many other adults were aware of the white slaves of England, but did nothing to help. Why do you think Robert Raikes chose to do something to help the children? What resources did Robert have that he could use to further this cause?

Source: <http://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/church-history-for-kids/robert-raikes-and-how-we-got-sunday-school-11635043.html>



# Robert Raikes



What period of British history was he alive in? When was Robert Raikes born and when did he die?

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Where did he live?

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What do we know about his family?

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How do we know about Robert Raikes, what evidence do we have that he lived?

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What is his connection to Southgate Street, in Gloucester?

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What is his connection to the Citizen journal? What is important about the Citizen journal?

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What is he best known for in history?

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Use the table below to write a summary of your ideas about Robert Raikes. On the left write facts only. On the right what your own ideas about Robert Raikes, e.g. his family, home, job, the Sunday School movement. Remember that the things you write on the right are your own personal opinion not facts!

What <b>FACTS</b> do you know for sure?	What can you guess about Robert Raikes?

In your opinion what is the most important thing you think you have learnt about Robert Raikes?

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