

Introduction

Memory Trails are designed to provide enjoyable activity for people living with Dementia. The Trail, most likely centred on a local church, is intended to evoke memories and prompt discussion and thereby engage people living with Dementia and their carers.

The wording of each section of the trail has been determined and endorsed by healthcare professionals in the field of mental health and Dementia and designed to encourage tactile and sensory activity.

As such, the specific wording used for each aspect of the trail should be followed as closely as the physical aspects of the particular church allow.

The reason for choosing churches as the preferred location of the trails is that many people living with Dementia are of an age that would have been involved with churches from an early childhood and on through later years and their memories of this are likely to be more easily recalled.

In preparing your trail, the wording should be copied directly from the text on page 2 below. Depending on the physical aspects of the particular church it may be necessary to modify certain aspects but without losing the underlying theme.

For example, the first question suggests touching of the door into the church that in many instances will be old and rough but in one trail the old doors had been replaced with a modern glass door. In this example, we changed the question to make a medieval chest with a similarly rough surface the subject of discussion without losing the value of the tactile experience.

As with a Childrens' Trail, the Memory Trail should follow a logical progression around the building although there is no need to necessarily complete all the aspects as time, health and attention may dictate a shorter visit than might be required to complete the trail.

Pictures used to illustrate the trail should be in colour to make the trail as attractive as possible.

Please remember a Trails Area Representative will be able to provide guidance and assistance as necessary to enable you to develop and present the trail.

In addition to providing copies of the trail, a copy of the Creative Commons Licence, and the trail file on a memory stick to the church at hand over, it is recommended that three or four laminated copies be provided to activity managers in care homes in the vicinity.

Question wording

The following has been formatted in Tahoma 11 font for direct copying and pasting into the Memory Trail template.

1 DOOR

Take a moment to look at the door. What do you notice about it? Run your hands over it and describe what it feels like. Put your hand on the latch and open it. Is it warm or cold?

Give the door a push and open it. Would you say it opens smoothly, is it heavy or light to push?

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2 FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Stand here for a moment and take a deep breath through your nose. Hold it for a couple of seconds and then breathe out. What do you notice?

Are there any smells or sensations that come to mind, for example is it cold, damp, musty, can you smell flowers?

3 FONT

Spend a few minutes here and share what you notice. For example, what is it made of, does it have carvings, is it very worn and old?

Talk about what would happen here and any thoughts on who would do what.

Do you have memories of family Christenings?

4 TOWER

What do you notice here? For example, the big West Door, bell ropes. Look up — do you have any stories to share about what happens when these ropes are pulled?

Consider what it would be like in here when the bells are ringing. Are there events in your life when you had bells rung for you?

Take a look around the walls and talk about the things you can see.

5 NAVE

Let's walk down the Aisle and stop half way to have a look around.

First of all, look up, what do you see in the roof? For example, rafters, angels, carved bosses. Then take a look to your right and then your left and tell us what you see.

6 PULPIT

Share your thoughts on who would use this and what they would do from here.

Touch the Pulpit — what is it made of and what does it feel like? Can you see carvings and what are they of?

Do you remember sitting and listening to very long talks from the person standing in a Pulpit?

7 ALTAR

Looking around what catches your eye, for example the cloth on the Altar, Cross, candles?

What happens here, for example the Communion? Who would lead this service?

What would they be wearing and what would they be using, for example a chalice?

8 EAST WINDOW

Look up at the window behind the Altar. What thoughts come to mind?

What colours can you see? Do the figures remind you of a story?

What sort of glass is this?

Which is your favourite part of this window?

9 ORGAN

Have you ever played an organ or any other musical instrument?

Do you have any favourite pieces of music that you remember being played on an organ?

Were you ever in a church choir and do you remember any of the hymns that you sang?

10 DRAWING

Draw a picture of the best thing you have seen on your visit today.