

Thomas Becket
murder and the
making of a saint

Create a reliquary casket

Who was Thomas Becket?

Thomas Becket was a leading political and religious figure in 12th-century England. Becket had a bitter dispute with the king and was brutally and publicly murdered. The story of his murder became legendary and he was made a saint. Thomas Becket was one of medieval Europe's most popular saints and his shrine at Canterbury was a major centre of pilgrimage.

Reliquary caskets were special containers for relics. A relic is usually part of the body of a saint or one of their possessions. Becket's body was carefully preserved, but pieces of his clothes and other belongings were treated as relics and were widely distributed to promote his cult.

Materials you will need to create your casket

Empty box (such as a tea bag box), white paper, crayons or felt-tips, black pen, gluestick, pencil, card from a cereal packet and scissors.

Reliquary casket showing the murder of Thomas Becket. Limoges, France, c. 1200 - 1210.



Be inspired

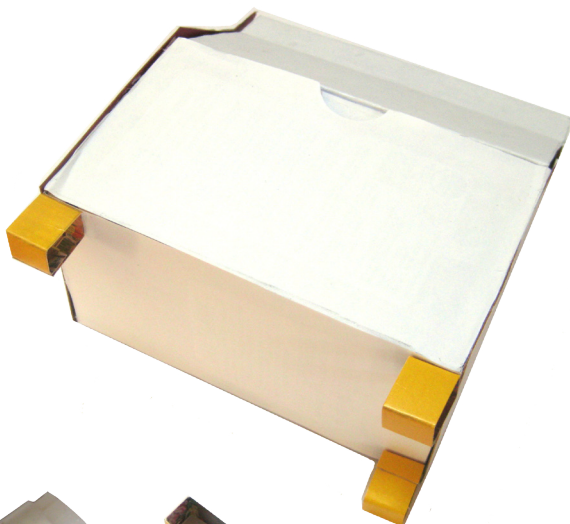
Use the picture of the reliquary casket as a starting point for your design. You can make your casket as simple or decorative as you want.

Get it covered

Start by covering your box with the white paper. Draw around each side of the box, cut out and stick on.



Try adding some legs to your casket using folded bits of card from a cereal packet. If you want to be really clever you could give the top of your casket a pitched roof, just like the one on the first page, using a folded piece of card.



Now the fun begins!

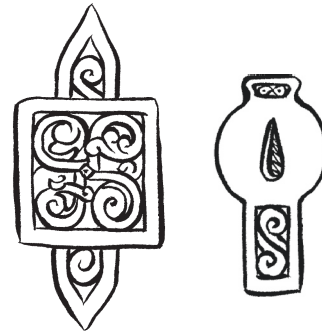
Draw your design in pencil and then go over it with a black felt-tip or crayons.



Now you can start to colour it all in.

Try not to use too many different colours.

Remember to add a lock and clasp on your casket to keep your precious relics safe. Try copying these designs.



And ta-da! It is finished

Your reliquary casket now just needs to have some precious items put inside it for safe-keeping.



Don't forget to ask your adult to share your designs with us on Twitter @britishmuseum #ThomasBecket