

Vikings Week 4 - Beliefs and Gods

Read the following text and watch the video clip: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zyy9wxs> before completing the tasks on the next page.

Norse Beliefs

Timeline

Vikings first raid England
AD 600

Vikings raid Lindisfarne
AD 800

Final Viking attack on England
AD 1000

AD 1200 Today

Norse religion provides a clue to why Vikings valued bravery and a 'good death' in battle.

Can you think of any reasons why having a 'good death' in battle might have been important to the Vikings?

How brave you had been in death decided where you went in the afterlife.

In a different world

The Norsemen believed that the world was actually a set of nine worlds. These were called:

- Midgard, the only place where humans lived,
- Asgard, the home of the Aesir gods and goddesses,
- Vanaheim, the home of the Vanir gods and goddesses,
- Jotunheim, the home of the giants,
- Niflheim, a world of ice,
- Muspelheim, a world of fire,
- Alfheim, the home of the elves,
- Svartalfheim, the home of the dwarves,
- Helheim, the home of the goddess Hel and the kingdom of the dead.

Can you think of how rainbows might be tied in with Norse beliefs about the nine worlds?

The Norsemen believed that a rainbow bridge called Bifrost joined Midgard with Asgard.

Lots of gods to choose from

There were many Norse gods. Here are a few:

1. The father of the gods was called Odin.
2. Odin's wife was called Frigg. She was the goddess of love.
3. Thor was the god of thunder, and protected humans.
4. Tyr was the god of war and justice.

The Norsemen told many stories about their gods. These stories often involved mythical creatures like giants and elves. We still tell stories about Norse gods today.

Have you heard of any stories involving Norse gods?
Why do you think stories are still told about these gods?

The afterlife – time to party?

Vikings believed that if they died fighting bravely, they would be taken from the battlefield to Valhalla, a hall in Asgard, where Odin ruled. These Vikings would become heroes in the afterlife. Each day they feasted and drank in Valhalla — where the mead never ran out.

Norsemen that didn't die bravely in battle went to Helheim when they died. In one part of Helheim, evil and dishonest people were punished. However, there were also areas of Helheim for good people who weren't warriors.

Judgement by the gods...

With the choice of either Valhalla or Helheim before them, it is easy to see why Viking warriors appeared to have no fear of death in battle — it was preferable to die honourably, rather than of old age or sickness, as the afterlife was so much better!

Task 1 Complete the questions below

Task 2 Create a fact file on a Norse god of your choice (use the fact file cards on the website and your own internet research to help you)

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Norse Beliefs

Viking religion involved several worlds and several gods. They also believed in an afterlife — but which afterlife you went to depended on how you had behaved in life.

Use pages 6 and 7 of the Study Book to find out if these sentences about Viking beliefs are true or false. Tick the correct box for each statement.

The Vikings believed there was more than one world. True False

The Vikings believed that humans lived in a world called Asgard. True False

The Vikings believed that humans could live in different worlds. True False

The father of the Viking gods was Thor. True False

The Vikings believed a bridge called Bifrost linked Asgard and Midgard. True False

Use page 7 of the Study Book to help you complete the sentences below.

Thor was the god of

Odin's wife was called

Tyr was the god of

Odin ruled

Vikings believed that if they died bravely in battle, they would be taken to Valhalla in the afterlife.

Imagine you are a Viking. Write down why you want to go to Valhalla.

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Draw what you imagine Valhalla might look like. Add some labels to explain what is happening in your picture.

