Teachers' Information Pack

Romans

Key Stage 2

LONDON MITHRAEUM

Welcome to the London Mithraeum

London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE has returned the Roman Temple of Mithras to the location of its discovery in the heart of the City. Situated on the site of Bloomberg's European headquarters, this unique cultural space showcases the ancient temple, a selection of the remarkable Roman artefacts found during excavations, and a series of contemporary art commissions responding to one of the UK's most significant archaeological sites.

The Temple of Mithras, originally constructed around AD 240, was discovered in 1954 during the excavation of a World War II bomb site. It captured the imagination of the public, with an estimated 400,000 people visiting the uncovered remains. Today, seven metres below modern street level, the London Mithraeum offers visitors an immersive experience and brings the bustling world of Roman Londinium to life by unlocking the stories behind the city's first Londoners.

The London Mithraeum offers a free schools programme developed by professional educators to support the National Curriculum. The school experience and this resource have been specially designed for Key Stage 2 pupils to provide an exciting and memorable cross-curricular visit.

This resource contains all the information you need to plan a successful trip to the London Mithraeum, including its context within Roman London, links to the curriculum, pre- and post-visit activities and how to book a session.

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London Mithraeum schools programme

About your session

During your visit, pupils will get to discover what life in Londinium was like almost 2,000 years ago and experience the mysterious Temple of Mithras.

In the two-hour workshop, facilitated by an experienced educator, your pupils will handle and investigate real Roman objects to reveal the stories of the first Londoners. Pupils will be encouraged to make connections between the past and present by discussing Roman objects that are still used today. They will also be encouraged to explore contemporary artwork inspired by the site.

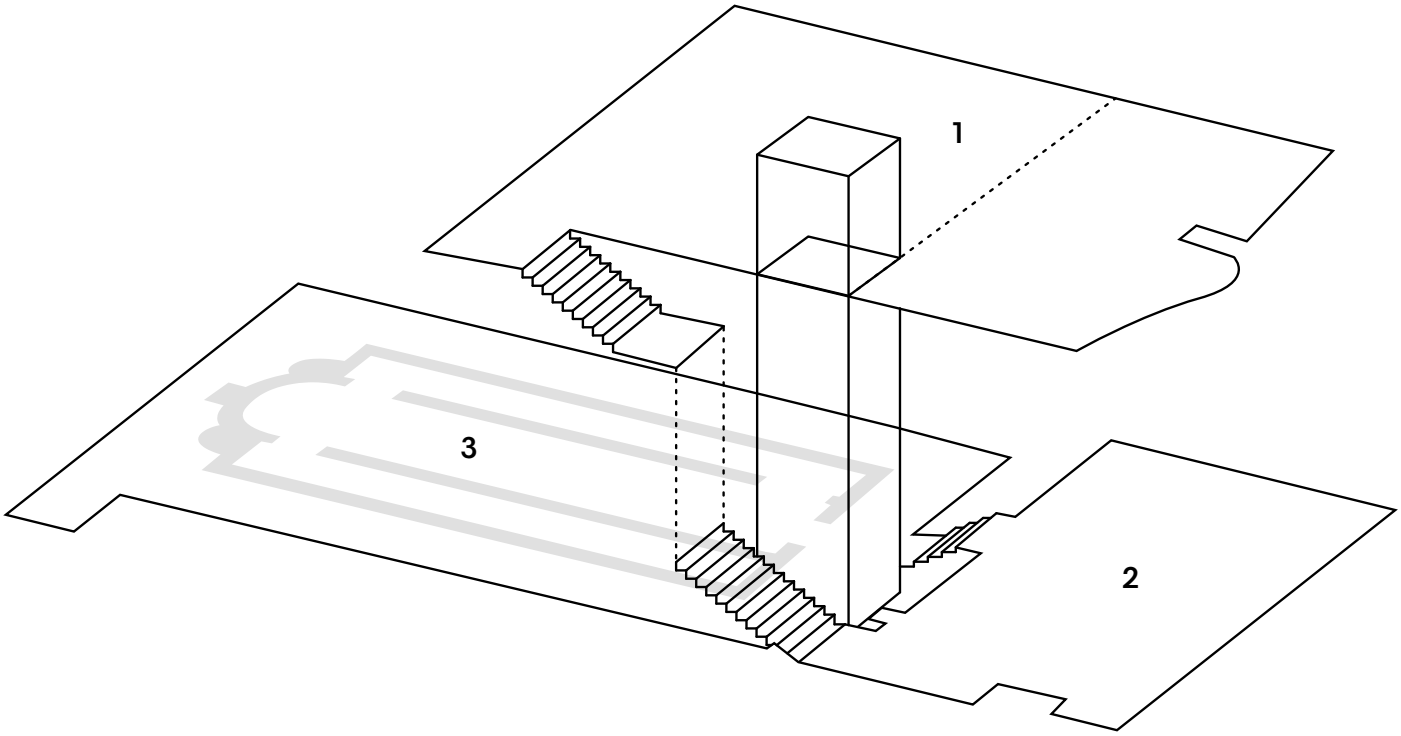
The pupils will then explore Roman religion and learn about the Temple of Mithras before being taken down, seven metres below ground level, to experience the original temple through an innovative light and sound experience.

The session aims to extend pupils' knowledge about Roman London and encourage development of observation, questioning and prediction skills; the experience allows for use of most of the senses.

Please note that the temple viewing experience has general low lighting levels and also includes lighting effects, mist and sound.

Map

1. **Ground floor:** Explore contemporary artwork inspired by the history of the site and a display showcasing artefacts found during the Bloomberg excavations.
2. **Mezzanine:** Find out about the mystery cult of Mithras and the discovery of the Temple of Mithras.
3. **The Temple of Mithras:** Explore the reconstructed temple, which offers a multisensory experience of sound and light.



Overview of your visit

Class arrives at the London Mithraeum, use the cloakroom and toilet facilities	**10:00am**
Introduction	**10:30am**
Handling-object sessions led by London Mithraeum facilitators	**10:35am**
Pupils experience the Temple of Mithras	**11:15am**
Plenary session	**11:45am**
Class departs	**12:00pm**

Note:
Please arrive on time as we are not able to extend your visit past 12pm

National Curriculum links

Art
Focus on pupils' recording and observation skill development

History
Focus on the Roman Empire and its impact on Britain

English
Focus on retrieving and recording information from nonfiction sources; learning and appropriately using specific terminology; identifying themes and making inferences

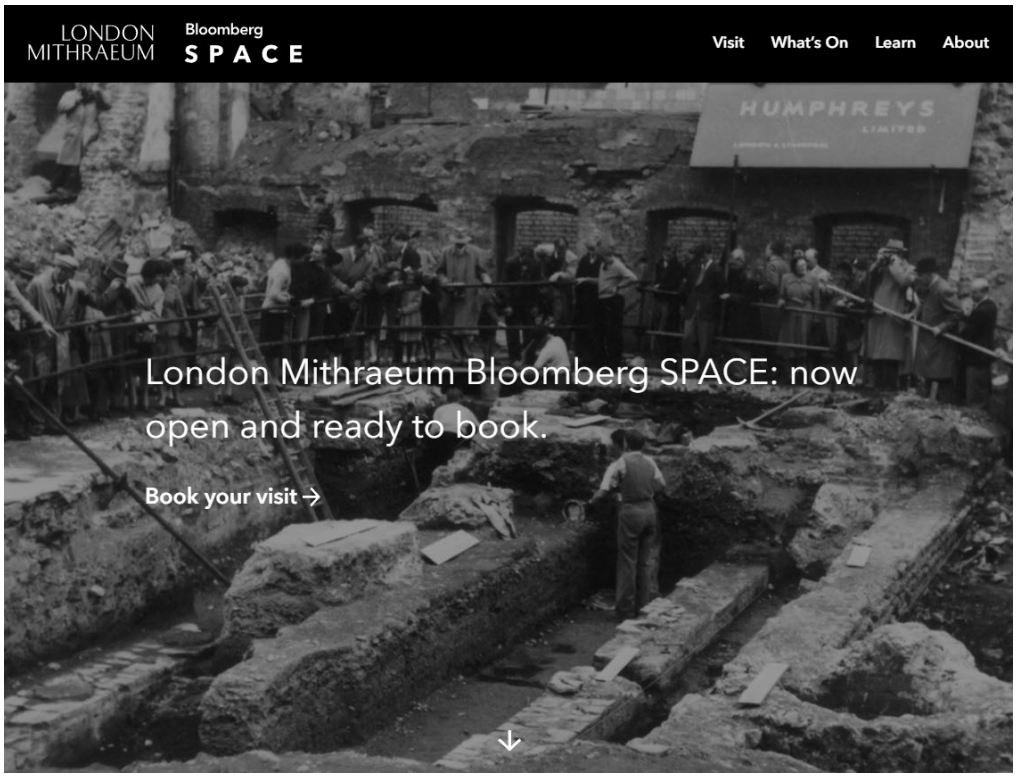
Religious Education
Focus on places of worship and polytheism (belief in many gods)

Science
Focus on materials and their properties and changes to materials over time, e.g. what survives.

How to book a visit

All sessions are FREE and available to book during term time.

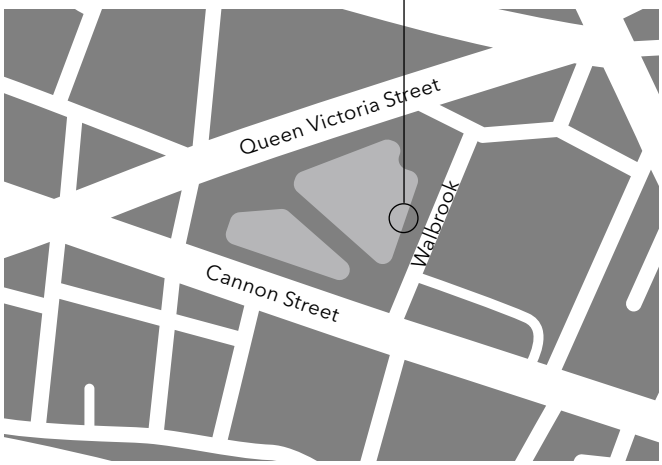
Please complete the booking form available at **londonmithraeum.com**



LONDON MITHRAEUM Bloomberg SPACE

Practical information

Address:
12 Walbrook
London EC4N 8AA



Getting here
London Mithraeum is located in the heart of the City of London between St. Paul's Cathedral and the Bank of England.

Public transport
The space is located next door to the new Walbrook entrance to Bank station on the Waterloo and City lines. The station has step-free access.

Tube

Bank station	2 minutes New step-free Walbrook entrance will be opening next door in 2018.
St Paul's	6-minute walk
Mansion House	6-minute walk

Train

Cannon Street	1-minute walk
Liverpool Street	14-minute walk
Blackfriars	12-minute walk
London Bridge	18-minute walk

Parking
We are in the congestion charge zone with limited car parking options. We encourage visitors to travel by public transport.

Free travel
All schools within Greater London can take advantage of Transport for London's School Party Travel Scheme.

See **www.tfl.gov.uk/schoolparty** or call London Underground Customer Services on 0845 330 9881 for details.

Preparing for your visit

Teacher planning visits
We recommend that teachers make a planning visit to the London Mithraeum to become familiar with the location, layout and available facilities. To arrange a planning visit, please contact us at **info@londonmithraeum.com**

Risk assessments
The group leader or teacher is responsible for doing a risk assessment; they are encouraged to make a planning visit to do such assessment. The London Mithraeum regularly reviews its public spaces and resources for its own use; this document is available on request. However, this is only for teachers' information and does not constitute an official risk assessment.

Access for schools

Accessibility	Wheelchair-accessible throughout, offering a range of services for visitors with disabilities.
General access	Step-free access is available to all floors of the building via lifts. Assistance animals are welcome. Folding seats are available to borrow.
Visual access	Large print materials. Magnifying glasses and digital guides with 'Vision Accessibility' settings. Torches for low-light areas.
Hearing access	Transcripts of exhibition audio.

For further information or to discuss how we might best cater to your specific needs, please contact us on **info@londonmithraeum.com** or +44 207 330 7500.

Preparing for your visit

Organising your group
Teachers and accompanying adults are responsible for the behaviour and welfare of their pupils at all times during the visit. Please split your group into four before arriving at the London Mithraeum. Please ensure that you have at least one adult for every six pupils and that the adults accompany them at all times.

Lunch
Lunch facilities are available upon request.

On arrival
When you arrive at the London Mithraeum, you will be met by one of our team. You will be led to the toilets and cloakroom before the session begins.

Resources
We provide all the resources needed for your visit (e.g. pencils, paper and clipboards).

Photography
Photography during school workshops is welcomed. You are also welcome to take photographs — no flash or tripods — within the Temple of Mithras.

London/ Londinium

When was London founded?
London was founded sometime around AD 48, a few years after the Roman Conquest in AD 43. It was built quickly as a frontier trading town, with both Romans and Britons swiftly taking advantage of new trade opportunities that came with the Roman Army. This town was called Londinium.

What was the Thames valley like before Londinium was founded?
Before the Roman Conquest, the Thames valley area had Iron Age farmsteads, but no Iron Age town. The area that would become London was centred around the Walbrook stream, which flowed south into the Thames, creating a valley between two hills to the west and east. The Thames itself was much wider, with more islands and marsh ground created by the tides.

What did early Londinium look like?
The first buildings in Londinium were built of wood. A bridge connected the north and south sides of the river; this bridge would come to be known as London Bridge. The town grew out from the area around London Bridge to the Walbrook stream. The first defences around the city were ditches.

© Peter Froste / Museum of London

London/ Londinium

Who would the first Londoners have been?
The first residents of the town were a mixture of soldiers, travelling merchants and craftspeople, Britons from surrounding tribes and people looking for new opportunities.

What has been found from the early Roman period?
The recent excavations revealed part of the Walbrook stream and the area to the immediate east. The waterlogged conditions left by the Walbrook created the perfect conditions for the survival of archaeological material. These include Roman timber buildings, fences and yards, tools, money, clothes and even documents — all of which are helping transform our understanding of early Roman Londinium. The astonishing quantity, range and preservation of the objects recovered from the site make this the most significant archaeological project undertaken in London in recent decades.

© MOLA

London/ Londinium

What were the 'star' artefacts?
The most exciting artefacts were made of organic materials, like wood and leather (which rarely stand the test of time). These include 405 wooden writing tablets, 87 of which had writing that could be transcribed and translated. They introduce us to some of the first inhabitants of this new city, a Roman provincial capital and, therefore, a "European" city — a diverse mix of businessmen, slaves and freedman. They reveal the names of more than 100 early Londoners, including Taurus the hauler and Tertius the brewer. One tablet was dated to 8 January of AD 57, the earliest known handwritten document recorded from Britain. Another carries the earliest known reference by name to Londinium. The tablets not only reflect life in Roman Britain and beyond, but carry the voices of Roman Londoners in its first half century.

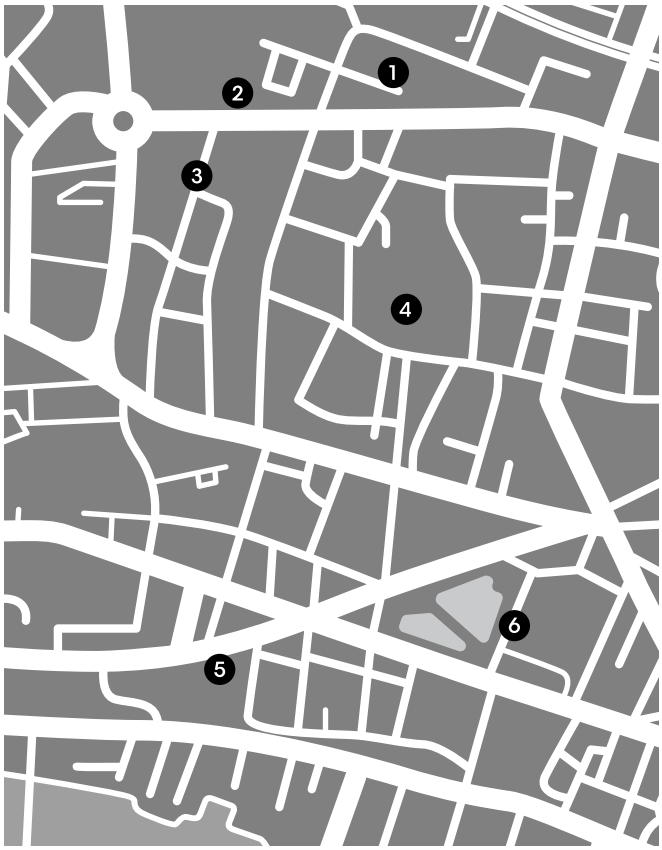
What does the Bloomberg site reveal about early Londinium?
The artefacts reveal a wide range of daily activities, industries and occupations, giving an extraordinary glimpse into life in bustling Roman Londinium. Through the writing tablets in particular, we get a snapshot of the workings of Roman Londinium as it grew as an administrative and financial centre, just as it is today.

© MOLA

Roman religion and belief in Londinium

Did Roman Londoners believe in Roman gods?
The population of Roman London held an enormous number of different religious beliefs, including in the classical Roman gods like Jupiter and Mars. However, immigrants and soldiers from different parts of the Empire bought with them their own deities and beliefs, adding to those of the native Britons.

What evidence is there for religion and belief from Londinium?
We have many fragments of evidence for public and private religious beliefs and practices — from figurines of gods and goddesses that may have stood in people's homes to remnants of public temples. Worshippers had different ways of honouring their deities and the shrines, amulets and miniatures unearthed on this site are important clues to understanding religious rituals.



1 St. Alphage Garden
2 West Gate and City Wall
3 Noble Street
4 The Roman Amphitheatre
5 Cleary Garden
6 The London Mithraeum

The Temple of Mithras

What is a Mithraeum?
A Mithraeum is a Roman temple or sacred space and the meeting place of the worshippers of the god Mithras. The Temple of Mithras in the City of London is one of only a handful of such buildings from Roman Britain that have been discovered.

What did the Temple of Mithras look like?
The Temple of Mithras was built of clay bricks and stone on the banks of the Walbrook. Like other mithraea, it was made to resemble the mythic cave where Mithras killed the bull and so was windowless, dark and probably damp and smelly. The Temple of Mithras was a sunken rectangular temple with one rounded "apse" end. It was shaped like an aisled church is today, with two aisles and an altar. The main doorway would have been on the wall opposite the apse, creating a central path through the temple.

When was it built?
It was originally built in c. AD 240-250, but was modified several times — raising the floor levels, possibly because of the damp. In about AD 310-320, it may have been taken over by the followers of Bacchus and was abandoned in the 5th century as Londinium itself began to be abandoned.

Reconstruction of the Temple's interior.
© MOLA

The Temple of Mithras

When was the Temple of Mithras discovered?
The Temple of Mithras was discovered in 1954 during excavations by Professor W. F. Grimes and Audrey Williams. Professor Grimes and his team undertook "rescue" excavations on areas of the City that had been destroyed in the Blitz. No one was aware of a temple on the site before the excavation — it was found by accident.

How did archaeologists connect the Temple to Mithras?
They almost didn't — rescue excavations were very hastily completed before the sites were redeveloped. The original excavation of the Temple of Mithras lasted a few weeks, but it was only on the last day that the famous head of Mithras was discovered, revealing who the temple was dedicated to.

What was the general public's reaction to the discovery?
The archaeologists at first didn't anticipate much of a public response. However, the discovery of the Mithras sculpture was published in the Sunday Times, and the following day lots of people came to see the excavated temple. This public interest led to an extension to the excavation and, over the following three weeks, thousands of people queued every day to see it.

Site in 1950s.
© *Museum of London*

The Temple of Mithras

Was the Temple of Mithras the only temple in Londinium?
No, a few more have been identified through archaeological findings; one near where the Old Bailey stands today and the Tabard temple near modern Borough tube in Southwark.
A Roman temple may have been located on the site of St Paul's Cathedral. But we don't know which gods or goddesses these temples were dedicated to. The Temple of Mithras is the only temple where the building and the iconography of the god it was dedicated to have been found together.

Did people believe in Mithraism and other Roman gods at the same time?
Yes. In Roman culture, it was common for people to practice and follow the public religion but also have personal, private beliefs. Mithraism was a private belief and it emerged at a similar time with two others: Isis (an Egyptian goddess) and the earliest Roman Christianity. All three of these religions or cults had links to religious beliefs originating in the eastern Roman Empire; from there, they gradually travelled to Britain.

© Bloomberg

The Temple of Mithras

Was the Mithraeum preserved?
The original excavation's purpose was to record the site before it was demolished to make way for the foundations for a new office building. The potential destruction of the temple caused public outrage and led to a national debate about what should happen to the ruin. Questions about preserving the temple were asked in government, including in cabinet meetings with Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The site owners offered to dismantle the temple and reconstruct it at the end of the building programme, thus preserving it in some form. However, it was not preserved in its original location. Instead it was reconstructed in 1962 at ground level in a different location and orientation so that it was outside the new building.

© Museum of London

What happened to the 1960s reconstruction?
The first reconstruction did not engage the public with its important discovery and lacked archaeological accuracy and authenticity. Although it remained until early 2011, it was by then in poor condition; the new Bloomberg building provided an opportunity to reconsider how the reconstruction should be presented.

The Temple of Mithras

How did Bloomberg become the steward of the Temple of Mithras?
Bloomberg bought the land on which the reconstruction stood, and on which the original discovery had been made, to construct its new European headquarters. The building was designed from the start to include a complete reinterpretation of the Temple of Mithras. Its construction also led to the huge archaeological project that uncovered thousands of early London artefacts, including fragments of rare Roman waxed writing tablets.

From the project's conception, the priority was to make a reconstruction of the temple that better reflected its original location, appearance and importance. As parts of the temple still survived in the original location, it was not possible to reconstruct it exactly where it had been found. However, Bloomberg worked closely with the Museum of London Archaeology to create the new London Mithraeum, set at the original depth of the 1954 discovery and only metres away from the original location.

The excavation at the site of Bloomberg's new building.
© MOLA

Mithraism

Who was Mithras?
Mithras was a deity whose origins are unclear, but it's possible the Romans used the earlier Persian god Mitra as their inspiration. Mithras is usually depicted as a young man in a "Phrygian cap" (a conical hat with folds so the top tips forward). The most commonly found scene from Mithraism is Mithras sacrificing a bull. This scene is called the "tauroctony." It was believed that from the death of the bull, an animal often seen as a symbol of strength and fertility, sprung new life.

Who worshipped Mithras?
Mithraism was a religious belief practiced by a small, closed group rather than being a mainstream part of Roman religion. It is thought that it was open only to men, including soldiers, traders, merchants and freedmen.

What were Mithraic rituals?
Mithraism is usually called a "mystery cult" as the rituals and activities of the religion were kept secret. From archaeological evidence, we learn of initiation ceremonies involving light, sound, incense and smoke. Taking part in these rituals would mean that you could feel part of a special community.

Representation of the god Mithras on a bull.
© Museum of London

Bloomberg SPACE: Daniel Silver

Human Activity by Daniel Silver. Photo by Andy Keate.

Human Activity
25 July 2019 – 11 January 2020

Located on the ground floor of the London Mithraeum, Bloomberg SPACE aims to showcase the best in contemporary art whilst bringing fresh perspectives to the history of this unique site.

Human Activity by Daniel Silver is a set of monumental, figurative works that speak to Silver's fascination with the psychology and history of sculpture-making as well as his profound interest in ancient cultures and archaeology.

Daniel Silver's practice is deeply influenced by the art of the classical world, Modernist sculpture, and psychoanalytic theory. Using natural materials such as bronze, marble, wood and clay, Silver's works often appear as monuments or totems, as if belonging to an archaeological excavation.

Silver's installation for London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE will create a surprisingly intimate encounter between the viewer and the artwork. Here, one will meet these huge, uncanny forms which speak of the past but are very much of the present. Adding to this sense of temporal blur, Silver has also applied the same colour used in the gallery's artefact display case to the surrounding walls – creating an apparent archaeological context for the works.

About Bloomberg

Bloomberg connects influential decision makers to a dynamic network of information, people and ideas. Our strength — quickly and accurately delivering data, news and analytics through innovative technology — is at the core of everything we do. With nearly 19,000 employees in 192 locations, we deliver business and financial information, news and insight around the world.

For more information, visit **bloomberg.com/company**

About Bloomberg Philanthropies

Bloomberg Philanthropies works in over 120 countries around the world to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organization focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: Arts, Education, Environment, Government Innovation, and Public Health.

Bloomberg Philanthropies encompasses all of Michael R. Bloomberg's charitable activities, including his foundation and his personal giving.

For more information, please visit **bloomberg.org** or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter.

Pre-visit activities

Activity 1: Where am I?
(Activity: 30 minutes)

Archaeologists use objects they find to try to find out about people and places in the past. In this game get your pupils to connect familiar objects to rooms or spaces at school. Ask each table team to make object clues to enable their classmates to guess their room.

You'll need
- 30 x blank pieces of paper or cards
- Coloured pencils
- 6 x schoolroom names on folded paper (e.g., library, classroom)

Instructions
1. Split your class into 5 teams.
2. Give each team 1 room-name slip and 5 blank pieces of paper.
3. Ask pupils to draw an object they would find in that room on each sheet of paper. Each sheet should only have one object, and each should be different. Give pupils 5-10 minutes to draw their "clues".
4. In carousel, get each team to guess the teams' rooms. When they have made each guess, ask them to remove the least useful object clue.
5. When they have guessed all the rooms, feedback as a whole class on which room was which and reflect on the assumptions made.
6. Discuss with the class that sometimes clues can be misleading and that we have less evidence as time goes on.

Pre-visit activities

Activity 2: Roman deities and their symbols
(30 minutes)

Make symbol-based flash cards with your class to play a "name that deity" game. Roman Londoners would have known which god/goddess was which based on the symbols that represented them. For example, a conical hat for Mithras, a bow and arrow for Diana. This will help them connect the gods/goddesses and their symbols and to recognize Mithras when they visit.

You'll need
- 30 x blank pieces of paper
- Coloured pencils
- 6 x Roman gods and goddesses symbols

Instructions
1. Give each table in your class one symbols chart and enough cards so that each pupil has one.
2. Ask pupils to select a god/goddess and to draw one of the symbols that represents them.
3. Mix up the 30 cards and give each table a random selection so that each pupil has a different card. Ask them to work out which god or goddess is represented on the cards.
4. Repeat if you wish to help develop pupils' understanding of the connections between the deities and the symbols.

Alternatives
Make 15 symbol cards and 15 god/goddess name cards.
Ask you pupils to find their partner cards.

Back-at-school activities

During your visit, your pupils will collect ideas and information on what the Temple of Mithras, and Londinium itself, were like almost 2,000 years ago. The discovery of the Temple of Mithras has caught the imagination of thousands of people over the last 60 years. As part of your visit, pupils will view and reflect on contemporary artwork inspired by those amazing archaeological discoveries.

Activity 1
Using the contemporary artwork and objects at the London Mithraeum as inspiration, ask your pupils to choose their favourite object or design to create their own 2D or 3D artworks back in class.

Activity 2
Ask your pupils to imagine that they are going to make an offering to the gods to ask them for help. Then ask them to draw their object and write down words to describe it and what they will say to the gods.