

## A HISTORY OF IRELAND IN 100 OBJECTS, A SELECTION 5TH & 6TH CLASS LESSON PLAN

### Viking slave chain late-ninth or early-tenth century



Some objects have wonderful stories to tell. Some were made with great love and care. Some were crafted with incredible skill and the finest materials available.

But not this object. If you were to spot this object on the ground, you probably wouldn't even give it a second look. And if you were to think about it for a split second, as you raced to school or to the shop or off to meet your friend, you might just think it was a bit of rusty metal, that must have been forgotten about when someone cleared out ... a room ... or car ... or shed ... or, sorry can't be bothered to think any more, far too busy ... gotta go ...

It's a chain. A very old, iron chain. And it does have a story to tell. It's a story all about slavery.

Imagine, if you will, that it's around the time of the Vikings, more than 1,200 years ago. A woman is looking after some animals and chatting to her neighbours. Suddenly, a cry goes out. A cry that strikes fear into her heart.

'RAID!'

And she drops everything. Absolutely everything.

What to do? Run? Hide?

But before she can even think straight, she is attacked from behind, lifted off her feet and thrown into the back of a cart. Around her is chaos. People are screaming. Other men and women are thrown into the cart beside her. Blood is streaming from her forehead and she feels dazed and confused. She wants to know what has happened to her family but she is pushed and shoved and told to shut up.

A chain is put around her ankles, just like the chain here. And in that instant, to all intents and purposes, she has ceased being a person. She is now a thing. A piece of property that can be moved from place to place and sold for money. A slave.

