

Topic Title: Christianity – Incarnation

Early Years Foundation Stage Autumn 2



Background for Teachers:

Core beliefs behind this unit, taken from *Understanding Christianity*:

Christians believe that:

- God came to earth as Jesus Christ. He is called the 'Son of God', born of the Virgin Mary and fathered by God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was 'God in the flesh', i.e. 'incarnate', a real human being and a historical person.
- People are God's treasured possessions, each known even before they were born. Christians should work to end neglect and poverty – anything which devalues one of God's creatures.
- Jesus shows what God is like: the Bible says he is the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1: 15). People heard and saw and felt God through him. He made God real to those who met him.
- All humans are made in 'God's image', but the image is spoilt by things we do wrong. Jesus embodied what humans should be like, a bit like re-drawing what has been spoilt.
- Every human is precious to God, known and loved by God. We are created to 'know God and enjoy him forever'. He does not want us to be lost; he wants to welcome us into his presence.
- Jesus came as 'Emmanuel' (God with us). He wants his followers to be like him and show (incarnate) God's love to the world. His followers can be God's hands and feet in the world.

Previously On ... (Links to Prior Learning):

Tom and Tess have brought their special treasure box. They know lots of stories about Jesus as a grown-up. What stories do the children already know about Jesus?

Enquiry Question:

Why do Christians perform nativity plays at Christmas?
How does a celebration bring a community together?

Disciplinary Focus:

Theology & Human/Social

Big Questions:

What does the word God mean?
What stories do you know about Jesus?

Who do Christians think is the most important person in the nativity story?
Why is it important for Christians to act out the nativity story in church?
Why are presents an important part of Christmas?

What do Christians believe the greatest gift is?

Why do Christians sing Christmas carols?

Why is the Bible important?
What do Christians do to celebrate Christmas? Why do they do these things together?

What is a community?
Why do Christians come together as a community at Christmas?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE		WHOLE CLASS INTRODUCTION / FOCUS	DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	PLENARY
Lesson 1	<p>LO: to explore what the Bible tells us about Jesus.</p> <p>Making Sense of the Text Understanding the Impact Making Connections</p>	<p>Previously On: Tom and Tessa have brought their special treasure box. They know lots of stories about Jesus as a grown-up. What stories do the children already know about Jesus?</p> <p>Starter: Reintroduce the children to the Bible and explain what it is. Share some story pictures and say what happened in one or two sentences. For example: Jesus healed a little girl, Jesus stopped a storm at sea, Jesus fed a great crowd, Jesus taught people about God.</p> <p>Input: Explain that Tom and Tessa's favourite stories are about when Jesus was born – and that they have something to show the children! Get out three simple nativity figures – Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. You could invite the children to get them out of the treasure box. Who is the baby?</p> <p>Explain that the baby is Jesus – and that even Jesus was a baby once – and very special! Invite children to get more nativity figures to look at. Which figures look most important? You could make a 'value line' – 'most important' to 'least important'. Explain that we can find out who all the figures are from a Bible – the Christian book about God.</p> <p>Q- What does the word 'God' mean? Link to prior learning.</p> <p>Read the key Christmas stories: Jesus' birth is announced to Mary, Jesus is born in Bethlehem, the shepherds are sent to see the baby, the wise men visit and so on. This could be done as Godly play: https://www.cpg.church/uploads/3/0/7/1/30716689/advent_script_godly_play_4_weeks.pdf</p> <p>Match up the figures in the nativity set to the different parts of the story. Who do the children think is the most important person in the story? What do Christians think?</p> <p>Tom says, <i>'Jesus is most important. He is like treasure to Christians because he is God come to earth as a baby. That is why Christmas is so important to Christians.'</i></p>	<p>Task: Key suggestions for enhanced class-room provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide how to display the nativity set that Tom and Tessa have brought in. • Draw a present that they would give Jesus and a present that Jesus might give the world. • Role play the nativity story or retell it using the Godly play equipment. • Make nativity scenes for a Christmas card. • Look at different nativity pictures from around the world and draw their own version. • Investigate children's Bibles, Christmas story books ... • Make baby Jesus mince pies! The mince pie was originally an oval shape and represented the manger; a pastry Jesus was placed on top. • Make figures for a nativity set out of different materials e.g. playdough and make name labels. • Sing some songs together that tell the Christmas story. 	<p>Plenary: What might people do today if they heard that a very important baby had been born?</p>

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Lesson 2	<p>LO: to understand what Christians do at church at Christmas and how this brings a community together.</p> <p>Making Sense of the Text Understanding the Impact Making Connections</p>	<p>Starter: From Tom and Tessa's bag, bring out candles and birthday cards. Even better, get out a cake and light the candles and sing 'Happy Birthday' to Tom and Tessa! What do birthdays remember? What do people like to do on birthdays?</p> <p>Input: Explain that Tom and Tessa's birthday is very close to Christmas. Their birthday happens every year – and Christmas happens every year, too. Whose birthday is it? Explain that every year, Christians celebrate Jesus' birthday. It would be awful to forget the birthday of someone important to you. Even people who are not Christians join in at Christmas and have fun!</p> <p>At Tom and Tessa's church, they are preparing to put on a nativity play for Christmas: it is a play about Jesus being born. Explain that Tom and Tessa want to know if we can act out the story, too, so we are going to have a go! What characters, costumes and props do we need? Link to prior learning.</p> <p>Use a Bible storybook for the script or <i>Jesus' Christmas Party</i> by Nicholas Allan and enjoy acting out the story together, like Christians might in a church. Ask children to take photographs of themselves in nativity costumes and write who they are and what they do in the story.</p> <p>Q- Why do you think Christians come together to celebrate Christmas as a community?</p> <p>Explore the meaning of the word 'community' – a group of people having a characteristic in common, in this case, a group of Christians:</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGC0zxgRNJQ</p>	<p>Task: Key suggestions for enhanced class-room provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a 'Bethlehem stable' filled with costumes for children to re-enact the story. • Talk to children in older classes about last year's nativity play and look at photos together. • Learn songs that tell the Christmas story – from 'Nursery Rhyme Nativities', for example. • Book Area: Jesus' Christmas Party, books telling the nativity story, a story sack with nativity figures. • Sand/water/malleable: tuff tray with sand, blocks and figures for acting out the three wise men coming across the desert to see Jesus. • Construction: large materials for building a stable or a crib for the baby. 	<p>Plenary:</p> <p>Q- Why is it important for Christians to act out this story in a church?</p> <p>Q- Why is it important for Christians to act this story out with each other?</p>

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Lesson 3	<p>LO: to understand what Christians do at Christmas and how these traditions bring a community together.</p> <p><i>Making Sense of the Text</i> <i>Understanding the Impact</i> <i>Making Connections</i></p>	<p>Starter: Explain that Tom and Tessa have brought in their treasure box again – and that inside, there are things that indicate the importance of Christmas. What do the children think they might find inside?</p> <p>Input: Unpack the treasure chest and find things inside which indicate the importance of Christmas: cards with nativity scenes, decorations, Christmas tree, parties, Father Christmas, special food. <i>Tom and Tessa like such a lot about Christmas. They also love telling the Christmas story. We know they go to church and act in the nativity play.</i></p> <p>Q- Would these Christians do these things on their own or with other people? With whom might they do these things?</p> <p>Finally, find a torch and words for a carol, or a carol-sheet, in the treasure box <i>One of Tom and Tessa's favourite Christmas activities is going carol-singing with their church. Carols are special songs about Jesus being born. Tom and Tessa dress up warmly, take torches, and go to the local supermarket to sing with other families from church. As they sing, they collect money for a charity, as a present to help others. Tom and Tessa know this is a good thing for Christians to do because Jesus' name means 'helper' or 'rescuer', and his followers must help others too.</i></p> <p>Look at some carol sheets – many churches use copies from EmbraceME, a charity that raises money to help children in the place where the real Jesus was born. Listen to or sing some simple carols: 'Away in a Manger', 'The Virgin Mary had a Baby Boy', 'Little Donkey'. Q- What do the song words say about baby Jesus?</p> <p><i>Just before Christmas, Grandad brought round some wrapping paper and asked the twins to help him wrap his presents. Tom and Tessa love wrapping things, but they are not always very good. They talked about what the best present ever would be.</i></p> <p>What do the children think the best present ever would be?</p> <p><i>Grandad said, 'The most important present for anyone at Christmas is the baby Jesus.' Tom asked if Mary wrapped Jesus in paper, joking. 'No,' Grandad said, 'but Jesus was so special that when he came to earth it was a bit like the whole of God was wrapped up in a baby. And when people found out he was so special, it was just like opening your best ever present.'</i></p>	<p>Task: Key suggestions for enhanced class-room provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a parcel-wrapping challenge. Watch an adult wrapping a parcel, then use Christmas paper and try wrapping up parcels of all sorts of shapes and sizes. Play Christmas carols in the background. Talk about what Grandad said about Jesus. • Watch carol-singing clips on YouTube. Dress up warmly and try singing a carol outside to see what it sounds like. • Book area: Nativity play books • Maths area: counting money from a collecting tin and recording amounts • Role-play: dressing up to sing carols • Sand/water/malleable: making the name 'Jesus' in playdough or writing 'Jesus' in sand • Creative area: wrapping presents 	<p>Plenary:</p> <p>Q- What do Christians do at Christmas? Why?</p> <p>Q- Why do they do these things together?</p> <p>Recap how presents are a reminder of the gifts of the wise men to Jesus, and a reminder of the greatest gift: the gift of Jesus, God's son.</p> <p>Christmas carols tell of the birth of Jesus and express beliefs about who this baby is.</p>

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Lesson 4	<p>LO: to understand what God loves every human being.</p> <p>Making Sense of the Text Understanding the Impact Making Connections</p>	<p>Starter: Gather the children in a circle and tell them that you have something precious with you. Cup your hands and mime passing something precious but invisible to a child. You are imagining it as you hold it. What is it? Pass it from child to child – what is it? Use their ideas to establish the meaning for ‘precious’.</p> <p>Input: <i>Tom and Tessa have brought in their big book of Bible stories again. The Bible is precious to them, but even more precious are the stories inside and what they say.</i> Which stories do the children already know from this book? <i>Tom and Tessa have got to act a story about Jesus at church next week. They need to practise. Can we help? There is something ‘precious’ in the story.</i> Q- Why is the Bible important?</p> <p>Read the story of Jesus welcoming the children (Mark 10: 13-16). Lots of mothers bring their babies and children to see Jesus. Tired disciples try to send them away but Jesus says children are welcome and must not be turned away. He welcomes and blesses them. How do the children think you could act this out? Everyone can take part – a whole crowd of children is needed. Q- What is this story about? Why might people tell this story?</p> <p><i>Tom and Tessa enjoyed practising their play. Grandad came to see how they were getting on and they acted the play for him again. ‘Jesus really thought the children were very special, didn’t he, Grandad?’ said Tom. Grandad smiled. ‘I think you’re right. Everyone is precious to Jesus. He never turns anyone away.’</i></p> <p>When might we send others away? For example, when we don’t want to play with them. Is everyone precious? Tom and Tessa are twins – they are the same but different. Everyone in the world is unique and everyone is precious.</p>	<p>Task: Key suggestions for enhanced classroom provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn a welcoming song, for example <i>God welcomes All, Strangers and Friends, God’s Love is Strong and It Never Ends.</i> • Tell stories of being lost and found, for example in the supermarket. Why do people come and look for you? You are precious to someone! • Find out what happened when Jesus got lost (Luke 2: 41-51). Use dressing-up clothes so everyone can join in and tell the story. Use all the children to create crowds of villagers on the road and in Jerusalem. • Book Area: books about being unique or precious e.g. <i>The Rainbow Fish, Giraffes Can’t Dance, The Smartest Giant in Town.</i> • Writing/Mark-Making: interactive display of writing about things they are proud of about themselves/things they’d like to be able to do. • Sand/Water/Malleable: mirror at bottom of water to see themselves and how they change, creating themselves out of playdough. • Creative Area: make paper plate faces with a flap to show a smile but also a down-turned mouth and talk about ‘lost and found’ feelings. 	<p>Plenary: Show the picture of <i>‘The Finding of the Saviour’</i> by William Holman Hunt. Why did Jesus go to the temple to be safe? Explain that he felt safe in God’s house.</p>

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Why do Christians perform nativity plays at Christmas?

Some children will ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retell stories about Jesus as an adult.• Recognise that nativity stories come from the Bible.• Recognise that Jesus is a very special baby.
Most children will ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain how for Christians, Jesus is not just a baby but God.• Explain how Christians say that Jesus was a special baby because he came from God.• Explain how Christians sing carols and perform nativity plays to tell the good news of God coming to Earth.• Show an awareness of why presents are an important part of Christmas.
Some children will ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain how Christians believe that Jesus was God born as a baby.• Show an awareness of how Christians say that Jesus was God come to be with us on earth as the friend and rescuer of human beings.• Give an example of a Christmas event at church that are a reminder of God's love for people.• Explain why many Christians like to do something to help others over Christmas.