

Topic Title: Christianity - Incarnation

Year 1 Autumn 2



Background for Teachers:

Taken from *Understanding Christianity*:

The birth of Jesus is recorded in two of the Gospels – Matthew and Luke. Although this happens near the start of the New Testament, it is quite a way into the ‘big story’ narrative of the Bible if we consider that this starts with Creation.

With ‘the Fall’, sin enters the world and remains in it. God therefore carries out a ‘rescue mission’ for humanity to help save people from their sin. This is partially achieved by cultivating a relationship with the People of God. The attachment between God and the People of God in the Old Testament shows many Christians what it is like to be in a relationship with God. The stories themselves are also pointers for the coming of Jesus and what this will mean. For example, Abraham being called upon to sacrifice his only son can be seen as foreshadowing Jesus, God’s son, being sacrificed on the cross.

The culmination of God’s rescue plan starts with the birth of Jesus. This is crucial to the Christian faith. By coming to Earth as Jesus, God is able to show and tell people how they should be living, and demonstrate what it is like to have a close relationship with the Father. Without the incarnation, Christians believe, God would not have been able to make the ultimate sacrifice, leading to the salvation of his people.

Christians use the birth stories not only to guide them in their celebrations at Christmas, but also to remind them about the place of Jesus in the ‘big story’ of God’s relationship with humans. Jesus is the saviour and rescuer, whose birth was prophesised but came to pass in unexpected ways, amongst poor and marginalised people.

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

‘Looking for Christmas’ – what signs will we soon be able to spot that show Christmas is coming in our local area? Ask the children why they think Christmas matters to Christians and create a whole-class brainstorm.

Enquiry Question:

Why does Christmas matter to Christians?

Disciplinary Focus:

Theology

Big Questions:

Why do Christians believe that Jesus was special?

Why do Christians believe that God came to Earth?

What are the Christmas reasons for Christmas?

What do Christians celebrate on Christmas Day?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE		WHOLE CLASS INTRODUCTION / FOCUS	DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	PLENARY
Lesson 1	<p>LO: to recognise that Jesus is important for Christians and why.</p> <p><i>Making Sense of the Text</i> <i>Understanding the Impact</i> <i>Making Connections</i></p>	<p>Starter: See 'Previously On ...' Look at a picture of baby Jesus. What can we tell about him just by looking at his picture? Although Jesus might not have looked particularly special, Christians believe he was actually very special indeed – they believe he was God on Earth!</p> <p>Input: Explain that Christians believe that God came to Earth to be with people and show them how to live. When God first came, he was not a big man, just a baby with a mother called Mary. Who in the class has younger siblings? Cousins? How do we feel when new babies are on the way and born? What do we do to prepare?</p> <p>Think about getting a bedroom ready for a new baby and discuss what we would put into it. Although all babies are special, imagine the new baby is even more special than most, because this one is also God. How could we make the bedroom extra special?</p>	<p>Task: Children to draw the extra special bedroom that they would get ready for the special new baby, the baby that is also God – and label how they would make it extra special e.g. hundreds of toys, the most beautiful crib, special pictures on the walls ...</p> <p>Further challenge: who would come to visit such a baby? Sentence scaffold: ____ would come to visit because ____.</p>	<p>Plenary: Create a whole-class list of ideas for Jesus' bedroom. Why would these things make it extra special?</p>

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Lesson 2	<p>LO: to give a clear, simple account of Jesus' birth and explain why this is important for Christians.</p> <p>Making Sense of the Text</p> <p>Understanding the Impact</p> <p>Making Connections</p>	<p>Starter: Popcorn Share' of ideas about what would make Jesus' bedroom extra special. What do the children already know about what Jesus actually got – how was this similar? Different?</p> <p>Input: Tell the story from the Gospel of Luke – a Christmas story trail would be a nice way to do this, in the hall or even around the local church, with stations being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nazareth – Gabriel visiting Mary • Journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem • Bethlehem – Jesus being born and placed in a manger • Fields – Angels appearing to the shepherds • Bethlehem – Shepherds visiting the baby. <p>At each stop on the trail, children to hear the relevant part of the story and collect an applicable picture each to take back to the classroom. You might want to play 'Rally Robin' in partners back in the classroom to enable them to rehearse the story orally.</p>	<p>Task: Children to use the pictures they collected on the Christmas story trail to retell and consolidate their knowledge of the story. They could either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make short books with one picture per page in the correct order and write a sentence for each. • Stick the five pictures to five sides of a cube with the word 'God' on the sixth side. <p>Alternatively, for both activities, the children could draw their own pictures for each part of the story.</p> <p>Further challenge: who was it that actually came to visit Jesus? Why?</p>	<p>Plenary:</p> <p>Look back at the ideas for Jesus' bedroom and compare with the living conditions that Jesus actually got. It was not the rich people but the poor shepherds that came to visit Jesus. This shows that God came to earth to bring good news to everyone, even poor people. The good news was about God and how to be close to him.</p>

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Lesson 3	<p>LO: to give a clear, simple account of Jesus' birth and explain why this is important for Christians.</p> <p>Making Sense of the Text Understanding the Impact Making Connections</p>	<p>Starter: 'Looking for Christmas' – if the children were walking through Halstead today, what signs of Christmas would they now see? Which of these show signs of Jesus' story?</p> <p>Input: Look at some Christmas cards – these could either be actual Christmas cards or images of Christmas cards. Ask the children to work in pairs to sort these into groups – but don't give them any pre-defined groups at this stage.</p> <p>Invite pairs to share their groupings – how have they grouped their Christmas cards? Why? Have any children sorted them into groups with signs of Jesus' story and without?</p> <p>What are the Christian reasons for Christmas? In what other ways could there be signs of these on a Christmas card?</p>	<p>Task: Children to design a Christmas card with signs of Jesus' story and Christian reasons for Christmas.</p> <p>Children to explain the signs of Jesus' story and Christian reasons for Christmas that their card shows.</p>	<p>Plenary: 'It is wrong that not all Christmas cards show signs of Jesus' story' – true or false?</p> <p>Explain how cards not explicitly linked to the story are not dismissed as 'wrong'. They are part of secular traditions surrounding Christmas.</p>

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Lesson 4	<p>LO: to understand that Christians celebrate Jesus' birth on Christmas Day.</p> <p><i>Making Sense of the Text</i></p> <p><i>Understanding the Impact</i></p> <p><i>Making Connections</i></p>	<p>Starter: Show some photos of the signs of the Jesus story in the church in the run-up to Christmas. Explain that Christmas Day is the day when Christians celebrate Jesus' birth – what clues are there about Jesus being born in church? And elsewhere?</p> <p>Input: Introduce the word 'advent' as the arrival of something or someone. Explain that the four weeks leading up to Christmas are Advent, when some Christians wait and prepare for celebrating the birth of Jesus. Introduce some Advent traditions and ensure that the children know their meanings. It is likely that this lesson will follow a Collective Worship introducing Advent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make an Advent wreath – a circle to show that God lasts forever; light four candles on Sundays leading up to Christmas, with the fifth candle symbolising the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day. • Make a crib scene as a reminder of the birth story. • Make an Advent calendar to count down to the day Jesus was born. <p>Q- What do Christians remember on Christmas Day?</p>	<p>Task: Children to create a crib scene or a religious decoration for a Christmas tree based on the Gospel of Luke.</p>	<p>Plenary: What answers can the children now give to the key question, <i>'Why does Christmas matter to Christians?'</i></p>

Why does Christmas matter to Christians? (Core Learning)

- 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.
- Give a clear, simple account of the story of Jesus' birth and why Jesus is important for Christians – that Jesus is God and that he was born as a baby in Bethlehem.
 - Recognise that stories of Jesus' life come from the Gospels.
 - Give examples of the ways in which Christians use the story of the nativity to guide their beliefs and actions at Christmas.
 - Explain how Advent for Christians is a time of getting ready for Jesus' coming.
- Recognise that incarnation is part of the 'Big Story' of the Bible.
 - Tell the story of the birth of Jesus and recognise the link with incarnation – Jesus is 'God on Earth'.
 - Give at least two examples of ways in which Christians use the nativity story in churches and at home; for example, using nativity scenes and carols to celebrate Jesus' birth.
 - Ask questions about the Christmas story and the lessons they might learn from it: for example, about being kind and generous.