

Topic Title: Christianity – Incarnation/God

Year 4 Autumn 2



Background for Teachers:

Taken from *Understanding Christianity*.

Christians believe that God is Trinity: God as three in one. This links to the concept of Incarnation, God coming to Earth in Jesus and the concept of Gospel – the good news of God's rescue plan for humanity. In the context of the 'big story' of the Bible, God is the same throughout, Christians argue, but in broad terms, the role of God the Creator and Father, Jesus the Son and Saviour and the Spirit – Comforter and power of God – come to the fore at different parts of the story (i.e. Old Testament, Gospels, early Church).

Many religions believe in one God: Jews, Muslims, Sikhs also say, with Christians, that God is one. Belief in the Trinity, however, is distinctive to Christianity. The belief is accepted as a mystery of faith, but there is much theological reflection on what it means and why it matters.

For Christians, God in Trinity is not a 'high and mighty' or 'selfish' God, demanding that all humans bow and scrape. In Christian understanding, the invisible God is right here now, by the Spirit, they say, and is also revealed in human form through the life and teaching of Jesus. So the belief in the Trinity is practical: Christians too try to make God's presence real in any situations – to make words into actions, and look for the Holy Spirit in all situations.

Another aspect of this belief in God in Trinity is that God can be seen in what God does. Many children in the 7-9 age range might ask what God looks like. Christians reply that they can see God in Jesus, but that God is invisible, so they know God through what God does. The Holy Spirit – like the wind – has invisible power.

The Bible does not use the word Trinity, but the belief that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit arises from passages like the ones studied here. Christians use the Bible to try to understand what it says about God.

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

Show the following key vocabulary: God, Gospel, Jesus, Son of God, Holy Spirit, Trinity, baptism – children to write a 'Previously On ...' explanation including and linking as many as they are able to.

Enquiry Question:

What is the Trinity?

Disciplinary Focus:

Theology

Big Questions:

Why is Jesus' birth included in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew?

How is Jesus' birth talked about in the Gospel of John? Why?

What do Christians learn from John about Jesus and God?

What do Christians believe about God the Father, as revealed through Jesus?

How do Christians talk about God the Father?

What ideas about God might people from other faiths have? Atheism? Agnosticism? How do these compare with Christian views?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE		WHOLE CLASS INTRODUCTION / FOCUS	DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	PLENARY
Lesson 1	<p>LO: to understand that Christians believe God is Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.</p> <p><i>Making Sense of the Text</i> <i>Understanding the Impact</i> <i>Making Connections</i></p>	<p>Starter: ‘Previously On ...’ – show the following key vocabulary: God, Gospel, Jesus, Son of God, Holy Spirit, Trinity, baptism – children to write a ‘Previously On ...’ explanation including and linking as many as they are able to.</p> <p>Input: Turn to the Gospel of Matthew in the Bible, ask one of the children to come up and have a look at the first two pages. Can they find the birth of Jesus? Why is it almost the first thing Matthew mentions?</p> <p>Ask another child to come up and look at the first two pages of Luke – can they find the birth? Why do both Matthew and Luke include Jesus’ birth? Why do they think it is important?</p> <p>Q- How might Christians interpret Jesus’ birth in Matthew and Luke?</p> <p>What can the children remember about Christmas and the Nativity?</p> <p>Ask another child to come up and look in the first two pages of John – can they find any birth story? No – there isn’t one at all in John. Why does John not mention this? Or does he? Children might point out that John <i>does</i> talk about Jesus’ birth when the Word becomes flesh. What are the connections between the text and the concepts of Incarnation and Trinity?</p>	<p>Task: Show these phrases from John 1 on the board: <i>In the beginning was the Word/The light keeps shining in the dark/The true light was coming into the world/The Word became a human being and lived here with us/We saw his true glory.</i></p> <p>Children to choose one of these phrases and design and make their ‘Christmas according to John’ Christmas card – without sheep or donkeys!</p>	<p>Plenary: Invite children to share their ‘Christmas according to John’ Christmas cards – how have they used John’s words?</p>

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Lesson 2	<p>LO: to understand what John teaches about Jesus and God.</p> <p><i>Making Sense of the Text</i> <i>Understanding the Impact</i> <i>Making Connections</i></p>	<p>Starter: What are the differences between John and the other gospels? How does John talk about Jesus' birth?</p> <p>Input: 'Christmas Card Trail' – children to display their 'Christmas according to John' Christmas cards from last lesson and follow a trail around the classroom looking at each other's – how many of the phrases from John 1 can they remember? What do the words mean?</p> <p>Choose one of the Christmas carols and songs explored last lesson to write a new verse to – as a shared write. Which of John's words have been used in the hymn or song? What do these words mean? How do these songs show Light, Life, Love and Glory? How can we convey this meaning and show this in the verse that we write?</p>	<p>Task: Children to write a new verse to a Christmas carol, which put the ideas of Word, Light Love or Glory into the song.</p> <p>Further challenge: children to annotate the new verse they have written to explain how they have used John's words.</p>	<p>Plenary: What do Christians learn from John about Jesus and God?</p>

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Lesson 3	<p>LO: to understand how Jesus is seen by Christians as revealing what God the Father is like.</p> <p>Making Sense of the Text Understanding the Impact Making Connections</p>	<p>Starter: ‘Christians believe so ...’ – take pairs of sentences on Resource Sheet 4 and ask the children to work in pairs to match the eight sentences in two halves.</p> <p>Input: Show the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does Christmas celebrate? • Do you believe God came to Earth at Christmas? • In which ways was Jesus an ordinary person? • In which ways is he ‘God on Earth’? • How do your beliefs make a difference to your life and to life in your church? • What do you do because of your beliefs? <p>What questions would the children create to ask Reverend Katie about incarnation?</p> <p>Explain that the term ‘incarnation’ is linked to the idea that ‘God is best seen in Jesus’ – what do the children think this idea means?</p> <p>Q- What do Christians believe about God the Father, as revealed through Jesus?</p> <p>Q- How do Christians talk about God the Father?</p>	<p>Task: Children to rank these descriptions from first to fifth – which do they think is best?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is like God’s front man, • Jesus is God’s last word. • Jesus came to show humanity what God is really like. • Jesus is full of love so he’s just like God. • Jesus is the invisible God made visible. <p>Which do the children think is best, linked to the idea that ‘God is best seen in Jesus’?</p>	<p>Plenary: Stick the five descriptions up around the classroom and ask the children to stand by the one they think is best. Invite children to justify their choice – can they convince any others to change their mind?</p>

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Lesson 3	<p>LO: to make links between texts and teachings about God in the Bible and what people believe about God today.</p> <p>Making Sense of the Text Understanding the Impact Making Connections</p>	<p>Starter: Give the children six large print flash cards stating examples of Christian belief about God. Some are provided on Resource Sheet 5. Which do they think is the most important to Christians? The least important? Why?</p> <p>Input: Return to the six large print flash cards. Which do the children think is the easiest to understand? The hardest? Why? What questions do the children have about these ideas of God?</p> <p>Ask the children to think individually about their own ideas about God – ensure that ideas from different faiths and from atheism and agnosticism are welcomed. Invite ideas of further flashcards that would reflect the views of children in the class more broadly about the idea of God.</p>	<p>Task: Children to create six more flashcards, either building on the ideas from the whole-class introduction or generating their own. Challenge to apply their knowledge and understanding of the ideas of God of different faiths as well as their own.</p>	<p>Plenary: Invite children to share their flashcards under the visualiser – which of the six ideas do the most other children agree with? Disagree with?</p>

What is the Trinity? (Digging Deeper)

- Know that Christians believe God is Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 - Explain how Christians believe the Father creates; he sends the Son who saves his people; the Son sends the Holy Spirit to his followers.
 - Offer suggestions about what texts about baptism and Trinity might mean and give examples of what these texts mean to some Christians today.
 - Describe how Christians show their beliefs about God the Trinity in worship (in baptism and prayer, for example) and in the way they live.
- Identify John 1 as part of a 'Gospel', noting some differences between John and the other Gospels.
 - Describe how Christians show their beliefs about God the Trinity in the way they live.
 - Know that Jesus, the Son of God, is seen by Christians as revealing what God the Father is like.
 - Know that Christians believe the Holy Spirit is God's power at work in the world and in their lives today, enabling them to follow Jesus.
- Explain the place of incarnation and Messiah within the 'big story' of the Bible.
 - Identify Gospel and prophecy texts, using technical terms.
 - Show how Christians put their beliefs about Jesus' incarnation into practice in celebrating Christmas.
 - Know that Christians see Jesus as their Saviour.