

Topic Title: Christianity - Incarnation

Year 5 Autumn 2



Background for Teachers:

Taken from *Understanding Christianity*.

The idea of a 'messiah' or 'saviour' is important in Jewish culture, and was central to Jewish belief in the years that Jesus lived and taught.

The land of Israel had been attacked and invaded since its creation 1,000 years previously. In 586 BCE the Jewish people were taken into exile in Babylon. Fifty years later they were allowed to return, but from then on, their land was continually under occupation by one foreign power or another. From 63 BCE, the Romans were the occupying power. The Jewish people hoped for a saviour, a messiah, who would vanquish their enemies and restore them to their homeland to live in peace under their own laws.

Expectations were high at the time of Jesus. Different groups had different hopes and expectations, but the Messiah was widely expected to be a prophet who would re-establish the line of King David on the throne in Jerusalem, site of the Temple of God, drawing all nations to God. As the extraordinary events of his life unfolded, Jesus' followers started to think he could be the Messiah. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday, there was much excitement at the possible arrival of a king!

The difference between the traditional Jewish idea of a messiah and the new early Christian idea is an important distinction between the faiths, and is one of the major reasons which led the Jewish sect of Christianity to split from Judaism and become a separate religion. The early Christians found their Messiah in Jesus, who was not an earthly king or a warrior but a man of peace; more amazing still. Jesus was someone whose life, words and deeds made people believe that he was God in the flesh, and the culmination of God's plan of salvation.

For Christians the fact that God, as Jesus, walked the earth and lived with humans, offers an incredible vision of Salvation. To Christians it means that there is a chance of a relationship with God, and a chance to overcome human frailty and weakness.

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

Recap the 'big story' of the Bible so far – how far can the children describe and explain the big story (see story outline in the *Understanding Christianity* Introduction and Essential Information). Can they sort the core concepts alongside the Frieze?

Enquiry Question:

Was Jesus the Messiah?

Disciplinary Focus:

Theology

Big Questions:

What characteristics would a hoped-for Saviour have needed to have?

What did the Jewish people expect in a Messiah? Why might they have gradually begun to believe that Jesus was the Messiah?

What evidence was there for Christians that Jesus fulfilled the expectations and is the Messiah?

What do Christians believe the real meaning of Christmas is?

What might Christians mean by the real meaning of Christmas being lost?

Why do Christians want to make Christmas about Jesus Christ?

Why did Christians believe that the world needed a saviour?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE		WHOLE CLASS INTRODUCTION / FOCUS	DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	PLENARY
Lesson 1	<p>LO: to explain the place of Incarnation and the Messiah within the 'big story' of the Bible.</p> <p>Core concept focus: Making sense of the text Understanding the impact Making Connections</p>	<p>Starter: 'Previously On' – recap the 'big story' of the Bible so far – how far can the children describe and explain the big story (see story outline in <i>Understanding Christianity</i> Introduction and Essential Information). Can they sort the core concepts alongside the Frieze?</p> <p>Input: Examine the situation. Explain that the People of God were taken into exile in Babylon in 586BCE. They return after about 50 years, but their Promised Land is still occupied by foreign forces. They begin to have a New Hope – God <i>will</i> rescue them! He <i>will</i> send a rescuer, a saviour – a Chosen One or Messiah. This is the situation when the Old Testament ends. However, the land remains occupied by different forces – at the start of the New Testament, this is by the Romans. The people have been waiting a long time – and some are despairing, but some still hope.</p> <p>Introduce the children to their roles as investigative journalists, employed to answer the question: Was Jesus the hoped-for Saviour? Was Jesus the Messiah? Ask the children to list the characteristics this person will need to have – a Saviour who could rescue the People of God in their current situation.</p>	<p>Task: As investigative journalists, the children have received a list of what the Jewish people are expecting in a messiah (Resource Sheet 1a gives some prophecies and Sheet 1b summarises the key points). Children to create a 'Wanted' poster or a radio advert based on the expectations.</p> <p>Further challenge: ensure there is a link to each of the Messianic expectations: for example, wears a crown, holding a family tree with King David marked on it, birth certificate with place of birth as Bethlehem ...</p>	<p>Plenary: Why might the Jewish followers of Jesus gradually have begun to believe that Jesus was this Messiah? How would he have fulfilled the prophecies?</p>

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Lesson 2	<p>LO: to explore the Christian belief that Jesus is the Messiah.</p> <p>Core concept focus: Making sense of the text Understanding the impact Making Connections</p>	<p>Starter: Read Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 1: 18-24, 2: 1-12 – see Resource Sheet 2) – using either choral, paired or partner reading strategies.</p> <p>Input: Ask the children, in role as investigative journalists, to look for and highlight some of the evidence in Matthew's Gospel that led the Jewish followers of Jesus to gradually begin to believe that Jesus was the Messiah – and that he fulfilled the prophecies. What clues are there that Jesus is the promised Messiah.</p>	<p>Task: Children to link each of the Messianic expectations by highlighting or drawing a line to one or more clues in the text.</p> <p>Explain that there is not evidence for all the prophecies in the text. Most Jewish people at the time did not believe Jesus was the Messiah – and Jewish people today still do not think he was).</p> <p>Further challenge: Joseph and Mary would have been familiar with the prophecies. What would it have been like for them? How might they have felt about the events? What might the events have meant? Did anything scare them? Did they feel privileged? Did they think their son was the Messiah?</p>	<p>Plenary: What is the evidence to suggest that Jesus was the Messiah? What is the evidence to suggest that the Messiah had arrived, and was Jesus? How does this compare to the Jewish expectations expressed in their 'Wanted' poster? This could be developed into a GPC.</p>

LEARNING OBJECTIVE		WHOLE CLASS INTRODUCTION / FOCUS	DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	PLENARY
Lessons 3 & 4	<p>LO: to explore the Christian belief that Jesus is the Messiah.</p> <p>Core concept focus: Making sense of the text Understanding the impact Making Connections</p>	<p>Starter: Children to work in pairs or groups to list all the words that they can do with Christmas.</p> <p>Input: Recap how, for Christians, Christmas is a time of celebration of the arrival of the Messiah. Many Christians argue that Christmas has lost its real meaning. What do Christians believe the real meaning of Christmas is? What might they mean by that being lost?</p> <p>Children to return to their lists of words to do with Christmas – how many are to do with Christianity and Jesus? What explanations do the children have for this?</p> <p>Explain that some Christians have turned to advertising campaigns to get the message across about the ‘true meaning’ of Christmas. Show some examples of church advertising campaigns e.g. <i>Christmas Starts with Christ</i> (see Resources). How does this/do these make links with the idea of the Messiah or Saviour?</p> <p>It is crucial to recognise that Christians do not just believe that Jesus was an Old Testament prophet or a messenger – they are convinced that Jesus was God in the flesh. The belief in God as Trinity, the place of Jesus in the ‘big story’ of the Bible – God’s rescue mission to bring people back to him, healing the effect of sin.</p>	<p>Task: Children to explore the ways in which Christians want to make Christmas about Jesus Christ (‘Christ’ is the Greek word for ‘anointed one’ or ‘Messiah’). Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a mind map showing why Christians want to make Christmas about Jesus Christ. • Create a series of titles for new church advertising campaigns to get the message across about the true meaning of Christmas. • Write a script for a new church advertising campaign to get the message about the true meaning of Christmas across. In this case, this will need to continue into Lesson 4 – ensure that children’s ideas about the links that the church advertising campaigns you have watched make links with the idea of the Messiah or Saviour are recorded in books. 	<p>Plenary: Why do Christians want to make Christmas about Jesus Christ?</p>

LEARNING OBJECTIVE		WHOLE CLASS INTRODUCTION / FOCUS	DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	PLENARY
Lessons 5	<p>LO: to weigh up how far Jesus is the Messiah.</p> <p>Core concept focus: <i>Making sense of the text</i> <i>Understanding the impact</i> <i>Making Connections</i></p>	<p>Starter: Was Jesus the Messiah? Think, pair, share – children to work in pairs to come up with a clear reason why Christians believe that he is.</p> <p>Input: To make wider connections, recall the ‘big story’ of the Bible and why the People of God needed a rescuer. Give the children some key theological terms e.g. Creation, Fall, People of God, Messiah, Incarnation, Gospel, Salvation. Either ask them to come up with definitions and links or match them to given ones.</p> <p>Use the ideas explored in this unit and the revision of the key concepts in the ‘big story’ above to discuss: Q- Why do Christians believe that the world needed a ‘Saviour’? Encourage the children to use some of the key words above.</p> <p>Explain that not everyone thinks that Jesus is the Saviour from God – but why might people think that the Earth needs one?</p>	<p>Task: Imagine that there is a God: if this God sent a new messenger to Earth in the twenty-first century, what would the messenger say? It would need to be a message for all people, not just those who believe in God. Use Resource Sheet 3 as a starting point.</p>	<p>Plenary: How do the children’s ideas compare with Christian and Jewish beliefs?</p>

Was Jesus the Messiah? (Core Learning)

- 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.
- Explain connections between biblical texts and the idea of Jesus as Messiah (using theological terms).
 - Make clear connections between the texts and what Christians believe about Jesus as Messiah; for example, how they celebrate Palm Sunday.
 - Show how Christians express their beliefs about Jesus as Prince of Peace and as one who transforms lives, through bringing peace and transformation to the world.
 - Weigh up how far the world needs a Messiah, expressing their own insights.