

Topic Title: Christianity - Incarnation

Year 6 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 evidence is there that Jesus is the Messiah?

What connections are there between (*biblical text*) and the idea of Jesus as the Messiah?

What evidence is there that Jesus is more than the Messiah – the Son of God?

What evidence might have been most persuasive for people at the time? Why might some people not have been convinced?

What does it mean to be a peacemaker?

How should/do Christians show that they are peacemakers?

LEARNING OBJECTIVE		WHOLE CLASS INTRODUCTION / FOCUS	DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	PLENARY
Lesson 1	<p>LO: to explain the connections between biblical texts and the idea of Jesus as Messiah.</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: Read <i>The Entry into Jerusalem</i> (Matthew 21: 1-9) to the class – or as a paired or partner read. Explain to the children that verse 5 is a direct quote from Zechariah 9:9 in the Old Testament.</p> <p>What would be important if you wanted to put this scene into a film called <i>The Messiah</i>? What would you need the director and actors to understand? For example, that the disciples didn’t know why they were fetching a donkey, that the prophecy is important to keep in the story so readers can see that Christians think this fulfils a prophecy about the Messiah.</p>	<p>Task: Children to work in groups to write the actors’ and director’s notes onto the storyboard (see Resource Sheet 4) for this section of a film called <i>The Messiah</i>. Ensure that the director is clear which of the parts of the text are part of the Gospel and which are prophecy i.e. come from the Old Testament, which will need to be shown as a flashback – this would be a good challenge for the MA children. Challenge them to include all the clues that might suggest Jesus is the Messiah.</p>	<p>Plenary: Show a clip from the film to compare their ideas. GPC – what does the director convey through the film and how?</p>

LEARNING OBJECTIVE		WHOLE CLASS INTRODUCTION / FOCUS	DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	PLENARY
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: Recap what Jewish people hoped for in a messiah or saviour (see Year 5 Core Learning planning) and what Jesus' followers were starting to believe about him. What two things would make the children believe that someone was sent by God to save people? Create a list.</p> <p>Input: Read <i>The Transfiguration</i> (Matthew 17: 1-13 or Luke 9: 28-36) – this could be acted out in groups. As the children watch each other's performances, ask them to comment on what they think is happening and what it might mean. What can they see that seems to offer clues that Jesus is the Messiah? What indications are there that Jesus is more than that – the Son of God?</p> <p>Further challenge: what links are there to the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the passage?</p>	<p>Task: Children to explore two artworks expressing the scene. For example: Raphael: https://www.artbible.info/art/large/613.html and Bellini: https://www.artbible.info/art/large/21.html</p> <p>What can the children see? Shining white, Moses and Elijah, the mountain. What might each of these mean?</p> <p>Children to write the description to be put under the art when it is displayed in a gallery. Challenge them to include the connections to the text, the meaning of this story for Christians and the clues this text gives that Jesus is more than the expected Messiah – that he is actually the Son of God.</p>	<p>Plenary: Which of the clues to the identity of Jesus do the children think would have been most persuasive for people at the time and why? Why were some people not convinced – and even hostile?</p>

LEARNING OBJECTIVE		WHOLE CLASS INTRODUCTION / FOCUS	DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	PLENARY
Lessons 3 & 4	<p>LO: to make a clear connection between Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and what Christians believe about Jesus as Messiah.</p> <p>Core concept focus: <i>Making sense of the text</i> Understanding the impact <i>Making Connections</i></p>	<p>Starter: Children to retell the story of Jesus entering into Jerusalem in five sentences.</p> <p>Input: Recap how the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem is celebrated every year in Christian churches, just a few days before the end of Lent. It is an important way for Christians to mark the start of Holy Week, when they consider who Jesus is, what happened to him, and what that means to Christians (i.e. Jesus as Saviour and Messiah). Although Jesus is treated like a king as he enters Jerusalem, he behaves in a humble and peaceful manner by entering into Jerusalem on a donkey, not like the idea of a regal king of someone who is going to fight off the Romans. Christians learn that their Messiah was humble and a peacemaker.</p> <p>What does it mean to be a peacemaker? What examples are the children able to give? How should Christians demonstrate that they too are peacemakers?</p> <p>Share some information about contemporary Christians – examples include the Amos Trust home-rebuilding programme in Palestine, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the life of Owen Thomas (see Resource Sheet 5) – or your own.</p>	<p>Task: Children to write a one-minute contribution to an imaginary programme called <i>'Followers of Jesus ... how do they show peace'</i> – either about one of the three examples from the whole-class introduction or others.</p>	<p>Plenary: What do the examples of contemporary Christians have in common in the way that they show peace?</p>

Was Jesus the Messiah? (Digging Deeper)

- 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.
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- 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.
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- Recognise that Christians see the Christian Church as part of the ongoing story of the People of God, and try to live in a way that attracts others to God.