

YEAR

6

UNIT D

CHRISTMAS

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit of work the children will explore the story of the birth of Christ from the Gospel of St. Matthew and the Gospel of St. Luke. They will also learn about some images of Christ that are found in the Prologue to the Gospel of St. John.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds on previous work in Key Stage 2 about the story of Christmas. It provides children with an opportunity to bring together their learning about the events of Christ's birth.

PRIOR LEARNING

It would be helpful if the children have:

- some knowledge of the story of Christmas from the different Gospels.

SKILLS

Research skills, recording information, speaking and listening, writing skills.

VOCABULARY

Matthew, Luke, John, Prologue, Word Made Flesh, Christmas.

ASSESSMENT

At the end of this unit:

Most children will know the main features of the story of Christmas and be able to identify which Gospel they are recorded in. They will be able to discuss some of the images of Jesus found in the Gospel of St. John. They will also be able to talk about some reasons why Christmas is an important celebration in the life of the Church.

Less able children will know some parts of the accounts of the birth of Jesus. They will be able to recall an image of Christ from the Prologue of St. John's Gospel.

More able children will know the main features of the story of Christmas and recognise all the similarities and differences in the two accounts. From their study of the Prologue of St. John they will understand that Christ enjoyed a special relationship with God the Father and they will be able to think about how he revealed God's presence in the world.

A.T.1 A.T.2

4a 4b
4c

3a 3c

5c 5a

PROGRAMME OF STUDY

TEACHING STRATEGIES

R3 Hear about and explore the Bible.

R4 Hear, read and explore Gospel accounts of key events in the life of Jesus: The Nativity.

C4 The Church's Celebration of significant events in the life of Jesus: Christmas.

- Reflect with the children on the important details that are needed in telling a story (e.g. time, place, characters and events).
- Recall the names of the four Gospels. Do they all tell exactly the same story of Jesus? Do some Gospels have more stories about his life than others?
- Children to read the story of the birth of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke.
- Using a column grid, ask the children to list details that were only in Matthew and details that were only in Luke and in the third column write details that are included in both accounts.
- Discuss possible reasons for the differences.
- Think about the different characters involved in the Christmas story. What changes did the birth of Jesus bring to their lives?
- Children to imagine that they have been asked to talk about the importance of the birth of Jesus to a group of people who have never heard about him. From the two stories of the birth of Christ what would you tell them and why?
- Children to work in small groups and to reflect on some of the following questions.
- Why did the message of Jesus' birth first come to shepherds rather than King Herod?
- Why did Herod want to get rid of Jesus.
- What words would you use to describe the threat that this baby was to Herod?
- What do you think led men to come from the east by the light of a star to find this child?
- Research the meaning of the three gifts that they brought to him.
- In St. John's Gospel there is no account of the birth of Christ, but there is a poem at the beginning that speaks about him.
- Read the Prologue of St. John's Gospel
- Highlight the words and phrases that speak about Christ.
- What do you think is the most important image of Christ that is presented in this passage?
- Why do you think he is described as the "Word of God?"
- Which words in the passage indicate the birth of Christ.
- In the Prologue we discover that Christ has always been in existence. Reflect with the children on the words from the Creed that we say at Mass, "Begotten not made, of one being with the Father, through him all things were made."
- Explain to the children that as we celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas we remember his relationship with God the Father. Revise with the children the Christian belief in the Holy Trinity.
- Look at the words of the preface for Christmas from the Sacramentary. "In him we see our God made visible and so are caught up in love with the God we cannot see."
- Discuss what these words mean and what they tell us about God the Father and about Jesus.
- Ask the children to think about their favourite images of Jesus. Draw and paint pictures and write a short explanation of the image they have chosen.
- Invite your priest or deacon to visit the class and explain some of the Church's customs for the celebration of Christmas. Children to create a fact-file of information about how the Church celebrates this feast.
- Create a survey sheet asking parents, parishioners and other people in the school community to record their thoughts about the celebration of Christmas and why it is such an important feast.
- Children to record the findings from the survey in the form of graphs and bar charts.
- Ask the children to explain what they have learnt about the feast from this survey. Does it concord with their own thoughts and opinions? In what ways is it different?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

R3 Of how to find their way around the Bible.

R4 That Jesus is the Son of God who showed his love for God the Father.

- Know that the story of the Birth of Christ is found in the Gospel of St. Matthew and the Gospel of St. Luke.
- Understand what the accounts tell us about Jesus.
- Compare and contrast the similarities and differences in the two Gospel accounts.

- Know about the Prologue of St. John's Gospel.
- Understand the meaning of some of the images of Jesus contained in the Prologue.
- Be able to discuss and reflect upon the relationship between Jesus and God the Father.

C4 Of the customs and traditions of major liturgical feast and seasons.

- Know about some images of Jesus found in scripture and in art.
- Be able to discuss their favourite images.
- Know some of the customs associated with the Church's celebration of Christmas.
- Understand some reasons why this feast is important to Christians today.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

You might set the grid up on the computer and let the children fill in the details.

Create a display of questions and answers about the Christmas story. These could be for the class room or the school hall.

Word-process some of the titles for Jesus found in the Prologue of St. John's Gospel. Add these to the focal area for prayer.

Use images of Jesus from religious. You might use the internet as a source of research.

Look at some items and explore the images of Christ that they portray.

Some important opportunities here for home-school-parish links.

RELATED SCRIPTURE

Lk. 2: 1-14 – The Story of the Birth of Jesus

Mt. 1: 18-2:23

Jn. 1: 1-14 – The Prologue of the Gospel of St. John

OTHER LINKS

ICT Links: Use Bible CD-ROM packages to research the passages being studied in this unit of work.

Art: Research the symbols for the different authors of the Gospels and paint them.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- Use parts of the Prologue of St. John's Gospel in Collective Worship.
- Lead the children in an imaginative contemplation of parts of the Christmas story. Ask them to recall their thoughts and feelings about the different scenes associated with the birth of Christ.
- Learn some new carols for Christmas.
- Visit the Church after the holiday and hold a short prayer service around the crib. Pray especially for the whole school community and the parish in this moment of prayer.

EVALUATION

What went well?

Which areas of planning need to be developed/adapted next time?

What needs to be revisited/developed in a later unit?