

YEAR

1

UNIT E



CHRISTMAS

ABOUT THE UNIT

This unit is designed to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of Christmas as a celebration of the birth of Jesus. The unit also develops the children's understanding of the importance of the birth of Jesus through the events that happened before and after, and the impact it had on the people involved.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

The unit builds on previous learning about Christmas in Reception. It also build on the previous unit in Year 1 about Advent as a time of preparation.

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if the children have:

- prior knowledge of the Christmas story.

SKILLS

Interpreting pictures and symbols, recall of knowledge, imagining, role-play, technology, prayer writing, sequencing, recording information, research, art, guided meditation, letter writing, brainstorming.

VOCABULARY

Christmas, Annunciation, Mary, Angel Gabriel, Joseph, Nazareth, Bethlehem, inn, stable, Wise Men, gift.

ASSESSMENT

At the end of this unit:

Most children will know and be able to describe the story of the Annunciation, Joseph's dream, the journey to Bethlehem, Jesus' birth in the stable and the visit of the wise Men. They will know that the birth of Jesus was a very important event in the lives of the characters in the story and continues to be important today for Christians.

Less able children will know the story of the Annunciation, Joseph's dream, the journey to Bethlehem, Jesus' birth in the stable and the visit of the Wise Men.

More able children will be able to explain why the birth of Jesus was, and is, such an important event.

A.T.1 A.T.2

1a 1a
1b 1b
1c 1c

1a 1b

2a 2a
2c 2b

PROGRAMME OF STUDY

TEACHING STRATEGIES

C4 Become familiar with some ways the Church celebrates major seasons of the liturgical year.

R2 Hear, read and explore and reflect upon a variety of Scripture imagery which speaks of God in the New Testament.

R3 Hear, read and become familiar with the main events, characters and places in the life of Jesus: The Nativity.

- Show the children different pictures and symbols that represent different parts of the Christmas story.
 - What event are we remembering and celebrating? From the pictures and symbols ask the children to recall as much as they can remember of the Christmas story.
 - Identify the names, characters and places in the story.
 - Read the story of the Annunciation together. Discuss the feelings of Mary and Gabriel.
 - What does this story tell us about Jesus?
 - Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine that they are in Mary's house when the angel first came. Ask the children to imagine what the house looks like and what Mary is doing at the time. What expressions come on her face when the Angel Gabriel arrives? What does the angel look like? Imagine the angel speaking to her. What does the angel say and how does Mary respond?
 - Get the children to role-play Mary and Gabriel in pairs.
 - Make stick puppets and use them to enact the story of the Annunciation.
 - Give the children a picture of Mary and Gabriel with speech bubbles for both and a thought bubble for Mary. Provide a writing frame to support this.
 - Imagine you were Mary. What would you have done after the angel left? Who would you have told about your special visitor and what would you have told them?
 - Children to write a short prayer to Mary expressing why they are glad that she said "yes" to the angel.
 - Get the children to write captions underneath old Christmas cards depicting the Annunciation. Ask them to describe what they see in the picture and why they like it.
 - Focus upon the words Gabriel uses to greet Mary. Where do we use those words today? Get the children to write Gabriel's greeting in their own words on angel shaped paper to be placed on the prayer table.
 - Share with the children the dream of Joseph. Role-play the dream.
 - What was Joseph asked to do by the angel? What would he have had to do to look after Mary?
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- Teacher and children to retell the story of the birth of Jesus. Begin with the journey from Nazareth to the birth of Jesus in the stable at Bethlehem.
 - Revise with the children the preparations that Mary and Joseph would have made for the baby.
 - Give the children a variety of pictures from which they can select the things they think Mary and Joseph would have taken with them.
 - Write a list of the things Mary and Joseph would need for a journey (e.g. food, bedding, clothes, etc.)
 - Discuss how the journey was made. What alternative transport could they have used? What would they use today?
 - Discuss the arrival in Bethlehem and why there was nowhere to stay.
 - Imagine you were the Inn-keeper. Write your story about Mary and Joseph looking for somewhere to stay. Provide the children with a writing frame to complete this.
 - Using old Christmas cards or pictures get the children to sequence the story and to write captions for each picture.
 - Explore with the children some of the thoughts and reactions of the different characters that turn up in the story of the Nativity.
 - Children to imagine that they are in the stable with Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus. Describe the scene, what does the stable look like? What do Mary and Joseph say to you? What does it feel like to be standing in the middle of this very important scene? Share your reflections together.
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- Get the children to find out the events surrounding their own birth by sending home a fact file for the parents to fill out. Include details such as where, when, what time, who was there, what did people say, who chose the name, etc. The children can then share their own birth stories.
 - Using the same fact file get the children to complete it in pairs in the role of Mary and Joseph.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

C4 Know the basic meaning of Christmas.

- Know the name of the Liturgical season Christmas.
- Know the story of the Annunciation.

R2 That scripture stories reveal and hand on Good News about God and contain messages about life; that Jesus reveals the Good News of God his Father.

- Know the story of the dream of Joseph.
- Be able to think of some of the ways Joseph cared for Mary.

R3 That Jesus is the Son of God.

- Know, retell and be able to write about the story of Jesus' birth at Bethlehem.
- Compare and contrast the birth of Jesus with the birth of a baby today.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Begin to display in the classroom different signs and symbols associated with the Feast of Christmas.

Create a class display of pictures of the Annunciation. Pray the Hail Mary as part of class prayers and remind the children that part of this prayer is found in the story of the Annunciation.

Use a map to highlight Nazareth and Bethlehem. Why do the children think we call the land of Jesus' birth the Holy Land?

Find some images of the birth of Jesus from other cultures. Learn a Christmas hymn from another culture.

Invite a midwife or an expectant mother to talk with the children about the birth of a baby today and the care that it needs.

Make a class display of the similarities and differences between the birth of Jesus and the birth of a baby today.

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PROGRAMME OF STUDY

TEACHING STRATEGIES

C1 Take part in celebrations which express thanks and praise.

- Share the words of the 1st verse of Away in a Manger together. Let the children illustrate this on one side of a page opposite an illustration of their own birthplace.
- Find and explore other carols which tell of Jesus' birth and let the children illustrate them.
- Read Jesus' Birthday Party (Nicholas Allen) to explore how different people responded to his birth.
- Use guided meditation to allow the children to explore their own response to Jesus' birth.
- Brainstorm ideas and words that express the children's feelings about the birth of Jesus.
- Children to write prayers to Jesus about what they have learnt about his birth and why they think it is so special.
- Make an illustration of the stable scene, surround it with words and captions to describe the children's feelings about the birth of Jesus.
- Complete a chart categorising the presents received (e.g. toys, board games, computer games, etc.) Children can talk about their most favourite gift received and why it is important to them.
- Explore with the children the idea of gifts being given and received at Christmas as a reminder of the gifts that were brought to Jesus.
- Hear and reflect upon the story of the Wise Men.
- Why do you think they wanted to give Jesus special gifts?
- Children to write thank you letters for presents they received.
- Revise what we have just celebrated. What have we to say thank you for? To whom should we say thank you?
- Write prayers giving thanks for Jesus. What do you really appreciate about Jesus? Why do you think he is so important?
- Use a selection of the prayers, stories, pictures, carols from this unit to celebrate the end of Christmas with a big thank you liturgy.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Write their own prayers expressing their own thoughts about the birth of Jesus.

C1 Develop an understanding of the reasons to thank and praise God.

RELATED SCRIPTURE

Lk. 1: 26-38 – The Story of the Annunciation

Mt. 2: 13-15 – The Dream of Joseph

Lk. 2: 1-20 – The Birth of Jesus

Mt. 1: 18-25

OTHER LINKS

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- Use the “Hail Mary” during Collective Worship.
- Learn some songs about Mary and the Angel Gabriel.
- Pray for mothers who are expecting a baby.

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?