



YEAR

2

UNIT D

CHRISTMAS

ABOUT THE UNIT

This unit is designed to help the children reflect upon the journeys associated with the Christmas story and what these journeys eventually tell us about Jesus' birth and the way people respond to his birth.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit builds on previous learning in Year 1 of the story of the Annunciation.

PRIOR LEARNING

It would be helpful if children have:

- knowledge of the story of the Annunciation
- some knowledge of the characters in the Christmas story.

SKILLS

Group discussion, map work, thinking, imaginative contemplation, writing, role-play, recording information in different ways.

VOCABULARY

Annunciation, Angel Gabriel, Mary, Joseph, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jesus, invitation, wise men, Herod.

ASSESSMENT

At the end of this unit:

Most children will know and be able to sequence the story of Christmas from the annunciation to the flight into Egypt. Be able to trace the journey of Mary and Joseph on a map. Understand some of the difficulties faced by Mary and Joseph and why their journeys to Bethlehem and Egypt were necessary

A.T.1 A.T.2

2b 2b
2c

Less able children will know and be able to sequence parts of the story of Christmas. Reflect on some difficulties which Mary and Joseph faced.

1b 1a
1b

More able children will have a greater knowledge of the characters involved in the Christmas story and the difficulties they faced. They will be able to explain what these stories tell us about the importance of Jesus' birth.

3b 3a
3b
3d

PROGRAMME OF STUDY

TEACHING STRATEGIES

C3 Become familiar with some ways the Church celebrates major seasons of the liturgical year.

- Children to discuss times that they were told to do something. How and who told you? How did you respond? Did you always respond in the right way? What you were being asked to do, was it easy or difficult?
- Revise the story of the Annunciation.
- Children to work in pairs to retell the story to each other.
- Why do you think it was important for Mary to say “yes” to the Angels request?
- For Mary to say “yes” to the Angel was going to be very difficult. Why do you think it was going to be hard?
- Look again at the words of Mary agreeing to be the Mother of Jesus. Children to rewrite them in their own words.
- Children to write a letter from Mary to a friend telling them about the visit of the Angel and why she had agreed to be the Mother of Jesus?
- Read the story of Joseph and Mary leaving Nazareth and journeying to Bethlehem.
- Look at the map of the Holy Land and find Nazareth and Bethlehem. How far away is Nazareth from Bethlehem?
- Which way do you think they went? Use compass directions. How would they have got to Bethlehem? What transport would they have used?
- How does this compare with transport today? Which journey would be easier – the journey Mary and Joseph made or the journey you might make today to Bethlehem? Why?
- Create a list of difficulties Mary and Joseph might have faced on the journey and reasons why?
- Use drama techniques (e.g. freeze frames) to empathise with Mary and Joseph on this difficult journey.
- Children to write the story of the journey to Bethlehem from the perspective of Joseph or the donkey. Emphasise the difficulties and reasons why the journey was so important?
- Revise the story of Mary and Joseph arriving in Bethlehem. What new difficulties did they face? What were their feelings when nobody would give them a place to stay?
- In pairs, children to work on a dialogue between Mary and Joseph about their questions and feelings and where they were going to stay.
- Show the children a video of Bethlehem today and the Church of the Nativity and the place where Jesus was born. Do you think it is very different today from what it would have been like in Jesus’ time? Why do you think so many people would want to visit this Holy place?

- Recall and read the journey of the wise men to Bethlehem.
- The wise men came from the East. Look at a map of the Holy Land and find places in the East they may have journeyed from.
- What transport might they have used?
- Why do you think they wanted to get to see Jesus? Who did they think he was?
- Children to create an invitation to visit the new born King in Bethlehem. Include in the invitation the need to follow the star in the sky and an “RSVP” to respond to the invitation.
- Imagine that Jesus was being born in Bethlehem today. What would make you go? What would make you choose to stay at home instead? What would you take with you as your gift and why?
- The journey of the wise men to Bethlehem was difficult for them. They had to follow a star and face King Herod. Children to discuss these difficulties.
- Children to take part in an imaginative contemplation of the wise men arriving in Bethlehem. What did they see? What did they do? What gifts did they give and why?
- If you had been a wise man, what would you have said to Mary and Joseph when you got to Bethlehem?
- Children to record their thoughts and feelings as if they had been one of the wise men.
- Create a flow chart about the journey of the wise men and the difficulties faced.
- Make a class glossary of terms from the text of the story.
- Write a postcard as a wise man to your family, explaining what you have seen and heard and why it was so special to you?
- Make a collage of “Gifts for Jesus” with statements explaining why you have chosen your gift.
- It was the star that led the wise men to Jesus. In what ways can Christians be like the star leading people to Jesus today?

- Read and dramatise the dream of Joseph telling him to take Mary and baby Jesus to Egypt. Why did he have to go to Egypt?
- Introduce the children to the term “Holy Family”. What does this mean?
- What does the story tell us about Joseph’s special care of Jesus and Mary?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

G3 Know the stories and events that surround the major feasts of the Church year.

- Pupils will be able to retell the story of the Annunciation.
- Will be able to talk about some reasons why it was important for Mary to agree to be the mother of Jesus.

- Will be able to discuss – think about the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem and recognise some of the difficulties faced.
- Describe in words, writing and song the scene at the birth of Jesus.

- Know the story of the visit of the Magi and be able to think of reasons why these important visitors came to see Jesus.
- Understand some of the difficulties faced on their journey.
- Express why visiting Jesus was so important to them and the significance of their gifts.

- Know the story of Jesus Mary and Joseph and their journey into Egypt.
- Understand that Joseph showed great love and care for his family as well as some of the reasons they went to Egypt.
- Discuss and write about this event.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Make a word bank of emotions for the story of the Annunciation. Children to choose the ones that they think best describe the reactions and emotions of Mary at the Annunciation. Children to justify their choice from the text of the story.

Many people today have no place to live. We call these people homeless. Children to find out about ways in which the Church supports homeless people. Find out what Mother Theresa did for the homeless people of Calcutta.

Introduce children to the term “refugee.” Explain that many people today are unable to live in their own homeland because of war or poverty.

RELATED SCRIPTURE

Lk. 1: 26-38 – The Annunciation

Mt. 1: 18-2: 24 – The Birth of Jesus and the Visit of the Wise Men

OTHER LINKS

Geography links: Finding out about the town of Bethlehem

Multicultural links: Find out about the Jewish celebration of Channukah that is celebrated around this time of year.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

- Remember those who are refugees, asylum seekers and are homeless today.
- Pray for those preparing for the birth of a child.

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?