

Christmas

ideas for progression through Key Stages 1 and 2

Reception – Nativity story: *what is special about this Bible story?*

- Consider who Jesus is. Using a nativity set Jesus (or image), question the children about the baby: is this a special baby? How? Who is he special to?
- Talk about other people in the nativity story in the same way (shepherd, angel)
- Share the nativity story (Lion Storyteller Bible / suitable retelling/film)
- Connect to my life and talk about feelings when a new baby arrives in the family

Year 1 – Advent: *how do Christian families prepare for Christmas?*

- What signs tell us that Christmas is coming? How do they make us feel?
 - sight (*Advent calendars and candles, tree decorations, wreaths*)
 - sound (*bells, Christmas music*)
 - taste (*different types of food*)
 - touch (*wrapped presents*)
 - smells (*incense and spices, food*)
 - activities (*sending cards, buying presents*)
- How do Christian families prepare for Christmas in their homes and churches?
- Traditional festive celebrations and symbolism – nativity play / Christingle
- Retell the nativity story simply, through drama, puppets, storyboard

Year 2 – Gift-bringers: *why is the Christmas story 'good news' for Christians?*

- Focus on the Shepherds hearing the news from the angels – what is the 'good news' of Christmas for today? Would the shepherds have felt the same?
 - holidays and presents?
 - family times?
 - Santa and shopping?
 - thanking God for his gift and being generous to others?
- The Wise Men (Magi) and their gifts
 - gold for Jesus as king
 - frankincense for Jesus as one who comes as a priest from God to mankind
 - myrrh as a foretelling of Jesus' death
- Discuss what would be a suitable gift for Jesus. Why?
- Act out the story and freeze-frame key moments: what did the shepherds / wise men think/say/do?

Year 3 – Mary: *why is Mary such an important part of the story?*

- Look at artwork of Mary as the mother of Jesus, and Mary with the Angel Gabriel. How did she act and feel in different parts of the story up to the time of Jesus' birth? Study the *Dalit Madonna* painting and associated unit of work ([REinHull](#))
- Act out / freeze-frame Mary's key moments; take photos and add speech bubbles
- Epiphany - Mary shows Jesus as a precious 'gift' to the world. What does this mean? Why a 'gift'?
- Plan a ceremony to celebrate Mary and the true meaning of Christmas (a crib service)

Year 4 – Light: *why is light an important symbol of Christmas?*

- Discuss the way light is used to express feelings ('a beaming smile', 'she lights up the room', 'he's a guiding light', 'then I saw the light')
- Use artwork such as Holman Hunt's *The Light of the World*
 - who is this?
 - what do you see in the picture?
 - why did the artist...?
 - what are the effects used by artists to show the significance of Jesus and the angels (halo, positioning, chosen colours)?
 - look at [John Ch.8](#) – what is meant by Jesus as 'the light of the world'
- Old Testament prophecy ([Isaiah 7:14](#)) that the Messiah would come 'as light'
- How is light used in the celebration of Christmas (Christingles, Advent candles, tree lights)?
- Plan a celebration using light

Year 5 – The Prince of Peace: *what is peace?*

- Arrange a series of images that express peace and ask children to find a word to connect the objects (dove, no war, no arguing, no fighting, forgiveness, harmony)
- Play an extract of Handel's *Messiah* and explore Isaiah's prophecy ([Isaiah 9: 6-7](#)) – Jesus as Prince of Peace. What did the writer mean? Did Jesus bring peace?
- Read and add to a variety of writings / artworks linked to peace - symbols, stories, prayers, poems, songs, carols, music
- Share the story of Brother Roger and the setting up of the Taizé Community for reconciliation
- Make a Christmas peace cross, relating it to the message of the angels: peace on earth, goodwill to all people

Year 6 – Religious Christmas: **Secular Christmas**

Is Christmas only for Christians? What does Christmas mean to me?

- Where does the familiar Christmas story come from? [Luke's account \(2:1-40\)](#) is different from [Matthew's account \(1:18-2:23\)](#). Write part of the Christmas story from differing perspectives
- Look at other stories which have developed from the gospels (Baboushka, Papa Panov, The Fourth Wise Man). What are the shared themes?
- Contrast the mood of secular/religious Christmas images / icons / poems / music
- As a community of enquiry, debate: *Is Christmas only for Christians? What does Christmas mean to us today?*
- Make a Christmas display showing what Christmas means to your school family