

INCARNATION

CHRISTIANITY – KS1

The concept of incarnation (God becoming a human being) is an essential element of Christian faith. The Christmas narrative can be used to illustrate this concept, but exploring how the story shows Jesus as both human and divine at the same time. You may want to introduce the word DIVINE with the children, but another alternative would be 'God like'.

The Big Question

Why do Christians celebrate Christmas?



Engage children by asking them what the first thing is they think of when you say the word Christmas!

You could make a list of the different ideas they come up with. You might want to categorise them or talk about different kinds of answers that the children give.



I wonder ...

Show this slide. Explain that Nativity means 'birth' and that this scene reminds Christians about the special birth of Jesus.

Allow the children to interact with a nativity set if you have one.

Talk about the different characters in the set. You might want to get the different elements of the set out of a box or bag in front of the children and ask them where each one should go and why. This can help the children to think about who is important in the scene.

Encourage the children to think about questions such as...

- I wonder... why there is a star above the stable?
- I wonder...why there are kings visiting a baby?
- I wonder... why there is an angel?
- I wonder... if it would matter if we removed XXX from the scene?
- I wonder... if the baby in our scene is just an ordinary baby?
- I wonder... if this was a special baby?

Ask the children to create their own I wonder questions.

The Nativity Story



Tell the nativity story from a children's Bible, such as The Lion Storyteller Bible, or use Luke 2:1-20 and/or Matthew 2.

You could begin the narrative retelling from the angel visiting Mary, or from later in the narrative from the birth of Jesus. You could choose to use one narrative (Luke which refers to shepherds, and/or Matthew which refers to the magi) or both.

During the telling of the story, pause at certain points such as:

- the angel visiting Mary
- reference to the star
- the use of a 'stable'
- the visit of the shepherds
- the visit of the magi/kings

Ask the children if they think this shows that Jesus was an 'ordinary baby' or someone special/extraordinary. They might hold up symbols during the story to show you their ideas. They might move on a continuum line from 'ordinary to extraordinary' to show their thinking as you tell the story.

Ask the children further 'I wonder' questions such as:

- I wonder... which part of the story shows Jesus was just a human being/ordinary?
- I wonder... which part of the story shows Jesus was more than a human being? Is there any part in the story that might suggest he was God? Is Jesus shown as 'God' in this story?

Just an ordinary baby?



Remind the children of the nativity set and ask them to think about which parts of the story or which people in the story show Jesus as human, and which might suggest he is more like 'God'?

Tell the children that they are going to use a painting of the nativity to help understand what the story means for Christians.

Show the picture on this slide and ask for their responses to such questions as:

- How does this painting show Jesus as a human being?
- How does it show him as God?

Ask the children to share ideas, perhaps using two different coloured post it notes. One colour to express ideas about him being human, and one for him being more like God.

You may want to give groups of children a different picture. Copyright free images (including the one above) are available here:

<http://www.reusableart.com/christmas/nativity>



The Big Question

Why do Christians celebrate Christmas?

Show this slide and encourage the children to revise their ideas about Christmas and the 'incarnation'.

Get their responses to such questions as:

- Why have we been thinking about the nativity set, the story and a painting.
- How might this help us to understand why Christians celebrate Christmas?

Help children to make the connection between the nativity story and celebrating Christmas. You might refer to nativity plays done in schools, and Christmas carols that refer to the story.

Ask them:

- Why is this story may particularly special for Christians?
- What have they learned so far about Christians ideas about Jesus?
- Why might this make Christmas a special festival for Christians?

Learning outcomes:

- Recall the key features of the Bible stories of Christmas.
- Recall the key Christian ideas about Jesus found in the gospel stories.

The children may move on to...

- Recall some of the different ways in which Christians celebrate Christmas.