

Phase: 5/6	Subject: RE	Focus: The True Meaning of Christmas	Term: Autumn 2
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What I should already know?

The main characters of the Biblical Christmas story i.e. Mary, Joseph, Jesus
 That Christmas is a Christian festival celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ
 That Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God, who sent him as a baby at Christmas to be the saviour of the world
 Some symbols commonly associated with Christmas such as The Star of Bethlehem.

Vocabulary

Festivals	a day or period of celebration, typically for religious reasons
Saviour	a person who saves someone or something from danger or difficulty (in Christianity) God or Jesus Christ as the redeemer of sin and saver of souls
Incarnation	a person who embodies in the flesh a god
Paradox	a seemingly absurd or contradictory statement or proposition which when investigated may prove to be well founded or true
Refugee	a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster
Vulnerable	a person in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.
Secular	not connected with religious or spiritual matters
Nativity	the birth of Jesus Christ
Compassion	concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others
Carol/Hymn	a religious song or poem of praise to God or a god
Commercialism	emphasis on the maximising of profit (making money)

By the end of the unit I should be able to ...

- Explain that Christians believe that God sent his son Jesus as an act of love and that for Christians Christmas is a special time of demonstrating love for others
- That Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God but that by **incarnation** (becoming human) he experienced vulnerability and helplessness, a regular human with qualities like us.

Knowledge

Jesus as **Saviour**—Messiah

Jesus was born in Israel into the Jewish religion. His parents (Mary and Joseph) were Jewish and they brought him up to follow the Jewish faith, laws and customs.
 For many centuries the people of Israel and the Jewish faith had been oppressed (controlled by force) by various rulers from other countries. At the time of Jesus' life Israel was occupied by the Romans.

Throughout the centuries of oppression the people of Israel hoped for a Messiah (**Saviour**) that had been promised to them by God through the prophets (people who gave messages from God). This Messiah would come and release or save them from the rule of invading forces and allow them to practise their religion freely. 700 years before Jesus was born the prophets had prophesied (predicted) the coming of a **Saviour**.

Christians (but not Jews) believe that *Jesus* is this **Saviour** that God sent to free Israel from Roman rule. They also believe that this was an **act of love** by God in order to save humanity. "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life*". John 3:16

In what way was Jesus a **refugee**?

The story of Jesus' life is told in the Gospels in the New Testament of the Bible. There are 4 Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

In Matthew's Gospel he tells us about the visit of the Magi (3 Wise Men) after Jesus is born. At the time of Jesus, even though the Romans were the ruling power, they allowed Israel to have it's own king. This king was called Herod. Herod heard from the Magi that there was a new born 'King of the Jews'. Herod wasn't very happy to hear of a rival king so he planned to seek out the child and kill him.

In the Gospel account Joseph had a dream in which an angel warned him that Jesus was in danger and that he should take his family away from Israel.
 Joseph therefore fled his country and escaped to Egypt where they were safe, making them **refugees**—they were seeking refuge from a dangerous situation.

Secularism and **Commercialism**

Whilst Christmas for many is a Christian **festival**, in the West it has also been adopted as a **secular** celebration. This means that for some it no longer has religious significance but has retained some of the traditions of the festival such as eating special food, enjoying (**secular**) music and songs associated with Christmas and giving gifts.

Because of this emphasis on buying food and presents some people argue that Christmas has become **commercialised** and that this is an opportunity for businesses to make more money at this time of year.

Question 1: Write 5 words associated with the Christian festival of Christmas.

Start of unit

End of Unit

Don't know



Question 5 Can you draw an example of a religious Christmas card? Who/what might you expect to see on it?

Start of the Unit

End of the Unit

Question 2: Can you think of a situation involving refugees that you have heard about or seen on the news in recent years?

Start of unit

End of Unit

Don't know

Question 3: Describe what you think it might be like to be a refugee.

Start of unit

End of Unit

Don't know

What I would like to find out?

Question 4: In what ways can people demonstrate love for others? Give 3 examples.

Start of Unit

End of Unit

Don't know

Answers to my questions...