

Year 1: Unit 2

Term: Autumn 2

Year:

Should we celebrate Harvest or Christmas?

Key Concepts: Christianity; Harvest; Christmas; Judaism; Sukkot; Giving thanks

Learning Objective: to explore and compare reasons for celebrating Harvest and Christmas
To learn that not everyone celebrates the same festivals

Brief Background Knowledge for Teachers:

Harvest festival, as celebrated by the church today, was begun in the 19th Century, in Cornwall when parishioners were invited to a service of thanksgiving. Harvest festivals are traditional around the world at different times for different produce; the Old Testament sets out the rules for Jewish harvest festivals, of which Sukkot is the final one of the year, marking the ingathering of the last crops and the end of the agricultural year. During Sukkot, many Jewish families will live in booths or shelters, erecting these in their gardens. It is a dual reminder of the harvest and the need to rely on God, as the booths are reminiscent of the temporary dwellings that the Israelites lived in during the Exodus period, wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. The tradition of giving thanks for the harvest is first seen in the story of Cain and Abel (not the murder) when they bring gifts to offer God and at the end of the story of Noah, where he builds an altar to give thanks for his rescue. Useful passages are: Lev 19:9-10; Lev 23:22, 42-23; Ps 67.6; Ps 107:37; Proverbs 22:9; Exodus 34:22; Lev 23:33 – 43 & Deuteronomy 16:13-17. During Sukkot as well as living in booths 4 spices are waved (*etrog* – the fruit of a citron tree; the *lulav* – a ripe, green, closed frond from a date palm tree; the *hadass* – boughs with leaves from the myrtle tree and the *aravah* – branches with leaves from the willow tree). There are different interpretations of the symbolism of these items but the easiest for KS1 is as follows: the items are viewed as representing parts of the human body. The *Lulav* – the spine; *Hadass* – the eye; *Aravah* – the mouth and the *Etrog* – the heart. By binding them together for a mitzvah or commandment the Jew shows their desire to consecrate their entire being to the service of God. Christmas is the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus, which many scholars believe actually occurred not in December, but at the time of the festival of Sukkot. They then see Jesus as a gift from God, part of the gathering in of the harvest. The story of the birth of Jesus is only told in two of the 4 Gospels (Matthew 1 & Luke 2). Christians believe the Jesus was born of Mary, but that he is the Son of God, both totally human and totally God. Christians give thanks at Christmas for the birth of Jesus and the festival is marked with church services, carols and symbols of light (candles, etc.) to remind Christians the Jesus is called the Light of the world. Christmas begins on 25th December and lasts for 12 days as a feast and until 2nd February as a church season. The period from 1st to 24th December is called Advent and was traditionally a period of fasting (going without certain foods).

Expected Learning

Pupils will learn that the celebration of Harvest is a fairly new Christian festival, focused on thanksgiving for the food that we have and showing concern for the wider world where there is not enough food. They will learn that giving thanks for things is a shared human experience; they will learn the basic stories of Cain and Abel and Noah; they will learn the basic story of the Exodus; They will be able to describe the key features of Sukkot and the key features of Christmas as understood by Christians. They will know that the 4 spices are symbolic, but may not remember all the details. They will know that Christmas is a Christian festival and that Sukkot is a Jewish festival. They will know that Jewish people do not celebrate Christmas.

Developing

Pupils will recognise the 3 festivals and link them to the correct religion. They will be able to talk about the key features and link artefacts to the correct festival. They will show understanding that all people celebrate and they will be able to explain some reasons people give for celebrating.

Excelling

Pupils will make links between the festivals and the biblical material, showing an understanding of the key beliefs that these festivals demonstrate and suggest meaning for the symbols. They will know why people celebrate and they will know why Jewish people do not celebrate Christmas.

RE SCHEME OF WORK
KEY STAGE 1
Mid-term planning

Engage:

- Are you looking forward to Harvest or Christmas more? Get pupils to say why.
- Talk about what they do like to celebrate and how and why they celebrate it.
- Look at different ways of saying thank you – throwing a party, giving a present, etc.

Enquire & Explore: (AT1)

- Explore Harvest – what it is, how it is celebrated and why. Find out about the Jewish festival of Sukkot. Look at the symbols used. Think about why it is important to say thank you for food. Describe how Sukkot is celebrated and compare that to the Christian festival of Harvest.
- Explore the story behind Christmas – perhaps focusing on the giving of gifts. Think about how it might also be about saying thank you. Pupils could look at various pictures and artefacts and link these to the appropriate celebration and talk about the link that they identify in the object/picture.
- Think about whether Jesus is a gift from God to Christians and if so what that means for them

Evaluate: (AT2 Impersonal)

- Discuss whether Harvest or Christmas is more important to Jews and why.
- Discuss whether Harvest or Christmas is more important to Christians and why. What difference does it make? Is it possible that they are both equally important? Are there things that are similar? Are there similarities between the Jewish and Christian Harvests?

Reflect & Communicate: (AT2 Personal)

- Which festival do the children think is more important now? Have they changed their mind?
- They could plan a class Harvest or Christmas celebration; make Sukkahs
- If they have taken part in a school harvest celebration, they could discuss the impact on themselves and/or the community.

Evaluation:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What went well? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even better if: |
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Some suggested resources:

- Jewish way of life CD Rom or online at www.reonline.org.uk
- RE Today Publications: OURE Thankfulness
EAT Exploring Celebrations p 5-7; journey of Life and death
Dev RE – Christmas, Religion all around me
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukkot>

RE SCHEME OF WORK
CLASS RECORD SHEET
Assessment opportunities & activities

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A few pupils may have made significant progress and be able to use an increasing religious vocabulary to:

- Describe three things Christians believe in and say what difference it makes at Christmas or Harvest
- Use the correct words to describe how Jewish people celebrate Sukkot
- Investigate, recognise and describe some similarities between Sukkot, Harvest and Christmas
- Suggest some reasons why Christians celebrate Christmas and Jews celebrate Sukkot
- Answer the question about the relative importance to a believer of the two Christian festivals
- Suggest reasons why Jewish people do not celebrate Christmas

Some pupils may be able to use an increasing religious vocabulary to:

- Retell the Christmas story or a story connected with Harvest
- Describe simply what happens at Sukkot
- Suggest meanings for the two celebrations
- Recognise/talk about how the senses are used in celebrations
- Make links between Sukkot and Christmas
- Gather and select from pieces of information about Sukkot and Christmas

Most pupils will be able to use some religious words and phrases to:

- Recognise and recall stories connected with Harvest and Christmas
- Recognise the lessons in the stories and the religious significance
- Recognise that celebration is a human instinct
- Talk about the significance of the two celebrations
- Identify three artefacts associated with Christmas, Harvest or Sukkot
- Put the Christmas story in the correct order