

RE SCHEME OF WORK
KEY STAGE 2
Mid-term planning

Year 6: Unit 2

Term: Autumn 2

Year:

Is “God made man” a good way to understand the Christmas story?

Key Concepts: Christ; Incarnation; Emmanuel

Learning Objective: to explore the concept of incarnation in the Christmas story; to compare the Biblical narrative with a traditional Christmas story

Brief Background information for teachers

Christmas is an important Christian festival, not celebrated by other faiths, but often heavily secularised as a time for “Peace and Goodwill”. For Christians it is the time to celebrate the birth of Jesus, born to a Virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit; Jesus is understood to be God made Man and the name Emmanuel or Immanuel mean “God with us”. This is the mystery of the incarnation – God taking flesh and living as man among humankind. This is a theology that has evolved over time as believers considered the implications of Jesus’ birth, life, teaching, death and resurrection. The so called traditional Christmas narrative is only present in 2 of the 4 gospels and even then some of the elements most familiar in the western world are only present in one of the two. Mark and John, pay little attention to Jesus’ early years, but the opening chapter of John is important for understanding the concept of Incarnation. The prophecies of Isaiah 6 and Micah 2, which are part of a traditional carol service, and which pupils should have looked at in Y5 also add to the understanding of Jesus as Son of God. The name Jesus (Joshua or Yeshua) means “he saves” and Christ and Messiah both mean “anointed one”; the people of Israel had long understood that God would send his anointed one to rescue and redeem them; the initial reaction of many to Jesus was that he would save them from the Roman occupation. The celebration of Christmas as known in the west, is relatively new and there are some Christian denominations that give it little emphasis. In the Northern Hemisphere the coincidence with the darkest time of the year has led to much of the imagery associated with Christmas. Many scholars believe that the actual date of Jesus’ birth is more likely to be around the time of the last harvest in Israel, around the time of Sukkot, when the people of Israel remember their escape from Egypt and celebrate the ingathering of the crops. God sending Jesus to earth as his son only makes sense to Christians in the context of what he went on to do on the cross. This is also a good place to think about the Trinity; from the start of the Bible in Genesis God is both singular and plural and the opening of the Gospel of John makes it clear that Jesus was believed to have existed with God before he was made man.

Expected Learning

Pupils will be able to explain simply what is meant by Incarnation and why it is important to a Christian understanding of Christmas; they will know that the celebration of Christmas needs to be understood in the light of what Jesus went on to do as an adult; they will be able to link Christian beliefs about Christmas and Jesus to bible texts; they will be able to evaluate Christmas celebrations in the light of what they have learned. Pupils will know that there are differences between the Christian view of incarnation and Hindu avatars.

Developing

Pupils will know that the biblical version of the Christmas story is not quite the same as the Christmas card versions suggest; they will know the word incarnation and be able to say what Christians understand by it.

Excelling

Pupils will know that there are differences between the Biblical accounts of the Christmas story and know some reasons for this. They will know that it can be read literally or symbolically and discuss the impact of this. They will put incarnation into a theological context. They will link beliefs to the celebration of Christmas.

Engage:

- Children should make a list of all the characters, features, facts and events of the Christmas story. Give out lots of Christmas cards and ask pupils to sort them into pictures that tell the Christmas story and those that don’t. Do the ones that tell the story have anything in common? If they didn’t know the Christmas story what would the Christmas cards tell them? Who appears to be the most important character?

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Enquire & Explore: (AT1)

- Read the Christmas story in the four gospels (actually the story is only really in Matthew and Luke; Mark and John both express it very differently). Are any of the Christmas cards really telling the story as found in the Bible? What are the Bible stories actually telling us? Focus particularly on the opening of the Gospel of John and what that tells about Christian beliefs. Find out what Christians are actually celebrating at Christmas – try to link the celebrations with beliefs. Are there any links? Listen to some carols – what story is told there? Find out the meaning of the name “Emmanuel” or “Immanuel”.
- Are there other ways of understanding the story? Use the Aritzi painting “Incarnation” and explore what that picture is telling us. Find other nativity/incarnation pictures to explore and compare. Find out what Christians understand by the word “Incarnation.”

Evaluate: (AT2 Impersonal)

- What do Christians really believe about the Christmas story? Does it make a difference to the way that Christians live? Does it make a difference that Christians believe Jesus is God incarnate? What does incarnation mean? Does it change the way Christians celebrate Christmas? Is Christian belief in Jesus similar to Hindu belief in avatars? Does Christmas make sense if Jesus is not God Incarnate? Does it make sense for people who do not believe to celebrate Christmas?

Reflect & Communicate: (AT2 Personal)

- How would they draw/paint the meaning of Christmas? What does “God made man” or “incarnation” mean to the children? What do they believe about Christmas? How do they think Christmas should be celebrated? Discuss whether the children think Christmas is too commercialised. Is God made man just for Christmas? Address the main question and debate the answer, allowing the children time to reflect on whether what they have learned or thought about changed how they feel about Christmas?

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:

- RE Today Publication: Developing RE – Christmas including Aritzi’s “Incarnation” painting and Johann the sculptor
- Christmas cards – some with nativity/traditional pictures
- Bibles – especially the opening chapter of each of the Gospels
- The life of Jesus through the eyes of an artist – CD resource available from the Diocese
- Christmas Carols – especially O come, O come, Emmanuel, O little town of Bethlehem, Once in Royal David’s City

RE SCHEME OF WORK
CLASS RECORD SHEET
Assessment opportunities & activities

Year 6: Unit 2

Term: Autumn 2

Year:

Is “God made man” a good way to understand the Christmas story?

Some pupils will have made more progress and be able to use a developing religious vocabulary to:

- Annotate a small selection of Christmas cards or Christmas carols to show that they understand many of the differences between the traditional story and the biblical accounts of Christmas
- Explain the impact for a Christian of the idea that God became man
- Explain what it means for a Christian to take the nativity story literally or read it as a symbolic text
- Relate the belief in God as man in Jesus to their own ideas about God and man
- Explain why the Christian concept of incarnation differs from the Hindu concept of avatars
- Express their own views about Christmas and the incarnation, using religious language and comparing with the beliefs of one or more faiths
- Give an informed response to questions about the commercialisation of Christmas as compared to the Christian understanding

Most pupils will be able to use an increasing religious vocabulary to:

- Annotate a small selection of Christmas cards or Christmas carols to show that they understand two of the differences between the traditional story and the Biblical accounts of Christmas
- Describe how the Christmas story informs on Christian views about God and Jesus using the correct terms
- Suggest ways in which the celebration of Christmas links to the biblical narrative
- Refer to Christian teaching to show that they understand how some paintings of the nativity/incarnation express some Christian ideas
- Apply the idea that God became Man to their own lives, giving their reaction to the concept of Incarnation
- Ask questions and suggest answers about the commercialisation and the true meaning of Christmas

Some pupils will not have made as much progress and be able to use religious words and phrases to:

- Describe three things Christian believe about the birth of Jesus and the difference that makes at Christmas



- Begin to identify the importance of the Incarnation for Christians, perhaps by drawing a picture
- Ask questions and investigate answers about why people choose to celebrate the birth of Jesus
- Suggest the reasons for their own beliefs about Incarnation
- Answer the key question referring to Christian teaching and comparing that to their own opinions