



Notes:

This lesson is based on the story, “Jesus’ Christmas Party” by Nicholas Allan published by Doubleday

Unit title	Christmas
Learning Objectives	Pupils should learn: Christmas is a Christian festival remembering the birth of the Baby Jesus and the events surrounding his birth
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and respond to stories about the birth of Jesus (Attainment Target 1) Talk about their own experiences of Christmas (AT 2)
Key question	What happened on that first Christmas when Jesus was born?

Resources:

Set out the outfits in order of appearance to help remember what comes next

For Option 1: Drama

- Innkeeper - Apron, sleeping outfit/hat, camping lantern, blanket for his bed.
- Joseph - Any distinctive hat (e.g. baseball cap, silly fancy dress hat)
- Mary - T-Towel for a hat and cushion (under your top to be the baby!)
- Shepherd - Flat Cap with a crook/walking stick/cuddly toy sheep as you have available
- 3 Kings - Crown. Cut out a crown from card and staple it onto another hat to make it easy to put on and take off.
- Angel - Halo, wings, torch or anything that will pass for an angel.
- Props: A hardback notebook (inn register), a small baby’s blanket, baby doll

For Option 2: Book reading

- A copy of “Jesus’ Christmas Party” by Nicholas Allan published by Doubleday



Activity and timings

Starter - 'Christmas is a special time' (10 minutes)

- Christmas is a special time - I love Christmas! Do you? Are you starting to get excited?
- In this box is everything I need for Christmas. Can you guess what I have in here?
- Take out objects associated with Christmas celebrations as children guess them, such as
 - Baubles, tinsel and other decorations. *Can you think of other decorations people put on their tree?*
 - Fairy lights. *Does anyone in your road decorate the outside of their house?*
 - Brussel sprouts. *Do you know what these are called? Do you like them when they're cooked?*
 - Christmas pudding. *Do you eat yours with cream, custard or something else?*
 - Santa hat or white beard or costume. *Do you know who wears this? What do they do at Christmas?*
 - Nativity crib scene. *Do you know who some of these people are? (Shepherds, wise men, Mary & Joseph)*
- Create an atmosphere of excited conversation with the children during this time. Ask simple questions to individuals, and allow willing children to speak. Make these questions about personal experience rather than right/wrong so everyone can join in.
- **There are many fun ways that we celebrate Christmas. Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birthday. Today we are going to learn about that first Christmas. (Refer to L.O.)**

Resources

A box of Christmas objects. Also, have some pictures of objects that you can't put in the box (eg Roast turkey)

Option 1 (for the confident): Drama – 'Introducing the Bible and the Christmas story' (15 minutes)

For these little children, make much of the action of the story- walking up stairs, climbing into bed, repeatedly opening the door...



I should warn you I am not (<i>insert name here, or 'Father/Mother of X'</i>) any longer, I am the innkeeper....	
Wow! What a night! Have I got a story to tell you?! This is my inn, The Shepherd's Arms,... anyway where was I? Yes. What happened tonight? Right...	As you put on Innkeeper's costume
It all started last night. I was sleeping happily when there was a loud knock at the door. It was a young couple wanting a room for the night. 'No room,' I said. I wanted to get back to sleep!	Lie down under blanket
Mary: 'But we're tired and have travelled through night and day.'	Put Mary tea towel on head.
There's only the stable round the back. Here's two blankets. Sign the register. So they signed it - Do you know what their names are? [<i>Reading</i>]'Mary and Joseph	Innkeeper's costume. Hold out register.
I was tired and wanted to go back to sleep so I shut the door, climbed back up the stairs, got back into bed, and went to sleep.	Lie down under blanket
But then, later, when I was very deeply and very soundly asleep, there was another knock at the door. I'd better say, I was not too happy to be woken again, but I got out of bed, climbed down the stairs and opened the door. It was Joseph again!	Knock on a table. Get up and stomp downstairs
Joseph: 'Excuse me' 'I wonder if you could lend us another, smaller blanket?'	Put on Joseph hat.
So begrudgingly I said 'There. One smaller blanket,' and gave him the blanket.	Give small blanket
Then I shut the door, climbed the stairs, got into bed and went to sleep.	Innkeeper hat on & lie down under blanket
But then, would you believe it, a bright light woke me up - it was a huge star shining right in my eyes! "That's all I need!" I thought to myself. I climbed out of bed, looked out of the window, then drew the curtains firmly. Then I went back to sleep.	Shine torch Lie down under blanket
It seemed like it was just a minute later when there was yet another knock at the door. So I counted to ten, climbed out of bed, stomped	Knocking



<p>down the stairs and opened the door. This time it was three shepherds!! Do you know what a shepherd is? <i>[explain if needed]</i></p>	
<p>Shepherds: 'We are three shepherds' 'Well, what's the matter? Lost your sheep?' I asked. Shepherds: 'Actually we've come to see Mary and Joseph'.</p>	<p>Put shepherd's hat on Put Innkeeper hat on Put shepherd's hat on</p>
<p>I sighed. I wanted to get back to sleep, so I yelled "ROUND THE BACK". Then I shut the door, climbed the stairs, got into bed and went to sleep.</p>	<p>Put Innkeeper hat on and go back to bed</p>
<p>But then there was yet another knock at the door. I could not believe it! I stomped down the stairs and opened the door. This time it was three kings carrying presents.</p>	<p>Knocking Get up and stomp downstairs</p>
<p>Kings: 'We are kings. We've come to see the ...' but then I interrupted them, I was very annoyed now. So I yelled "ROUND THE BACK" and slammed the door and went back to bed.</p>	<p>Put crown on Put shepherd's hat on</p>
<p>But then a chorus of singing woke me up, 'RIGHT THAT DOES IT!' I decided to go and have a word with my noisy guests. So I got out of bed, stomped down the stairs, threw open the door, went round the back, stormed into the stable, and was just about to speak when ... Everyone whispered "Shhhh! You'll wake the baby". Baby? I asked.</p>	<p>Put Inkeeper hat on</p>
<p>King: Yes, a special baby has been born tonight.</p>	<p>Put crown on. Pick up Baby doll wrapped in the small blanket.</p>
<p>Oh...? I said. Then I saw him in the light of the star which shone really bright right above my window and said. "Isn't he lovely? What is his name?"</p>	<p>Put Innkeeper hat on</p>
<p>Mary 'His name is Jesus'.</p>	<p>Don blue tea-towel hat</p>
<p>I was so thrilled and somehow felt that this was a very special baby. I wanted to tell everyone about him so I dashed back to the inn threw open the door, ran up the stairs and woke up all the guests yelling 'Round the back' 'Round the back' And they all came to look at the new baby. No one got much sleep that night because we were all far too busy celebrating the birth of baby Jesus.</p>	<p>Put Innkeeper hat on</p>



So you see it is his Birthday we celebrate on Christmas day. Each Christmas we have a Birthday Party for Jesus. Christians believe that Jesus is God's very own son, born to be our king. What a special Baby!

Remove all outfits

Option 2 (for the less confident): Book reading – ‘Introducing the Bible and the Christmas story’ (15 minutes)

Sit the children down on the floor in front of you. Use the children's storybook, ‘Jesus' Christmas party’ by Nicholas Allan. Read the story, with feeling and energy, as you flick through the pictures. Take it slowly.

- For each couple of pictures, ask a simple question or add an extra detail to just break it up a little. Sample questions might be:
 - Do you know what animal shepherds look after? Can you see them in the picture?
 - You can see the angels! You know that the Bible says that angels are real. They are God's postman, bringing important messages to people. I don't know if they really have wings, but they must have looked amazing!
 - Do you know what presents the Wise men are holding? Presents fit for a King!

At the end finish with a concluding sentence, “No one got much sleep that night because they were all far too busy celebrating the birth of baby Jesus, It is his Birthday we celebrate on Christmas day. Each Christmas we have a Birthday Party for Jesus. Jesus is God's very own son, born to be our king. What a special Baby.

Game – ‘The angels and shepherd visited Mary and Joseph’ (5 minutes)

- Have the children sit in a circle.
- Have a boy and a girl sit in the middle of the circle, as Mary and Joseph, with the baby doll wrapped in a blanket
- Make half the children in the circle shepherds and the other half angels. If you think the children are old enough to cope, you can make some of the children wise men.
- Tell the children that when you call out their ‘names’, they must stand up and walk around the circle, all in the same direction, until you tell them to change direction or to sit down again.
- One character at a time, tell a group of characters to stand up and walk around the circle, include some details from the story



about that character, tell them occasionally to change direction as they arrive at the Innkeeper's house, then tell them to sit down. Include Mary and Joseph as characters to walk around the circle.

Summary: 'When Jesus was born, angels and shepherds visited him.'

Optional Craft 1 - 'Edible Jesus in a manger'

Warnings:

1. *Some schools may not allow this craft as it may not meet their healthy eating standards*
 2. *Understand if any children in the class have allergies. Never use nuts.*
- **Before** the session make a chocolate crispy in a cupcake case for each child. If you use shredded wheat, it even looks like straw!
 - Give each child a chocolate crispy, a jelly baby and a square of ready-to-roll white icing, to assemble their own 'Jesus in the manger'



Optional Craft 2 - 'peg in a manger'

- Snip the bottom off a paper bag as your manger (a brown paper lunch bag works best)
- Fill with some straw or yellow tissue paper
- Draw a face on a dolly peg as your baby and wrap in tissue



- Place in the manger

If you can't find dolly pegs- stick a face on a lolly pop stick and wrap it up.



Top Tips

Preparation

- Check with the schools if they have RE syllabus units/objectives or year groups they would like to focus on
- Find objectives in the Agreed RE Syllabus that the school request falls under
- Check for schemes of work on your areas Diocese website.
- Schedule lessons 15 minutes apart to enable time to get to the next lesson and to focus more on relationships with teachers
- Consider getting a list of questions that the children want answered in advance from teacher, to assist in preparation
- Use drama and interaction
- Use a range of group, paired and whole class activities
- Give all children a chance to discuss what they think – do not spend too much time as a whole class asking directed questions, rather discuss things in pairs/table groups
- 'think, pair, share' is good - give children a minute to think on their own (think), ask them to discuss with someone near them (pair) and then take feedback on what pairs have come up with (share).
- Teachers assess KS1 RE using photos/pictures/anecdotal evidence of what children have said on post it notes. So rather than use worksheets could get KS1 children to draw key things (think and recall)
- Worksheets can be good to aid looking at verses in the Bible with KS2
- Make it an interesting lesson, stick with the facts
- Be very careful to phrase the teaching in a neutral way
- Be sensitive with Reception age to not include detail that could offend e.g. nailed to a cross
- Pray that God will spur the children's hearts as a result of what they are hearing

Delivery

- Our motive is to teach facts about Christianity accurately. It is not an opportunity to convert
- Introduce yourself as... I'm a Christian, I go to X Church. I have been asked in to tell you what Christians believe about...
- Pace is key
- Don't say anything contentious
- Give the children an opportunity to respond
- Include lots of 'Christians believe...' and 'In the Bible it says...'

Future

- Use lessons as training opportunities for others in the church, with a view to making school lessons a sustainable ministry.