



Notes:

For a 45 minute session, miss out either the Shepherds or Wise Men sections

Unit title	Jesus: His Early Life and Teaching
Learning Objectives	Pupils should learn: About Jesus' birth and it's meaning to Christians
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show understanding of who Christians believe Jesus to be and why (Attainment Target 1) <p>Raise questions about aspects of the life of Jesus which they find puzzling, giving their own considered response (AT 2)</p>
Key question	Why do Christians believe it is important that God came to earth in human form and shared in human experience?
Possible teaching activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare Matthew and Luke's account of the Nativity (AT 1) <p>Reflect on the implications of 'God becoming man' and who Jesus was or is (AT 2)</p>
Vocabulary	Christmas, Christians, Jesus, God, Bible, Saviour, King, Worship

Resources

- Shopping bag
- Post It notes
- Bibles
- Pictures of celebrities



Activity and timings

Starter option A - *'Christmas is a special time' (5 minutes)*

Christmas is a special time - I love Christmas do you? Are you starting to get into the Christmas spirit?

Imagine that I want to fill this shopping bag with everything I need for Christmas. Write on your post-it notes your suggestion, and particularly those things that are only needed at Christmas?

- Take answers, read some out and stick them on the bag.
 - Christmas tree; decorations, fairy lights, etc.
 - Decorating houses with Christmas lights.
 - Street lights
 - Christmas food; turkey, sprouts, cranberry sauce, Christmas pudding, brandy butter/sauce, etc.
- Perhaps children can talk about how their own families celebrate Christmas with their own traditions.
- Does anyone know why Christians celebrate Christmas?
Explore answers with the children

Starter option B - *'In the Bible/Not in the Bible Quiz' (5 minutes)*

Explain that we can read the story of the first Christmas in the Bible (the Christian special book). It is hard to know which parts of our Christmas celebration are from the Bible. Explain that for each fact you read out, you want the children to sit down if it **is** in the Bible's Christmas story and stand up if it is **not** in the Bible (or walk to two different walls, or similar)

Resources

Hold a large empty shopping bag.

Hand out a post-it note to every child.



Questions:

- Jesus was born in a town called Bethlehem (*Sit down. In the Bible*)
- There was an angel who spoke to Mary called Gabriel. (*Sit down. In the Bible*)
- There were reindeer in the fields near to where Jesus was born. (*Stand up. Not in the Bible. Actually there were sheep*)
- The wise men followed a star to find where Jesus was born. (*Sit down. In the Bible*)
- Jesus was born in a stable. (*Sit down. In the Bible*)
- Father Christmas visited Jesus in the stable. (*Stand up. Not in the Bible. Actually shepherds visited Jesus*)
- Angels told the shepherds that Jesus is a Saviour (*Sit down. In the Bible*)
- The angels built an enormous snowman to celebrate Jesus' birth. (*Stand up. Not in the Bible. Actually the angels sang a song to celebrate*)
- The Inn Keeper was called Rudolph. (*Stand up. Not in the Bible. There was an inn keeper but we're not told his name*)
- Three Wise men brought gifts to Jesus - chocolate, a cuddly toy and a soft blanket. (*Stand up. Not in the Bible. Actually the gifts were gold, frankincense and myrrh*)

Today we are going to be learning about who Christians believe Jesus to be and why we celebrate this at Christmas.

(Refer to L.O. and Vocabulary)

Guided Work - 'Introducing the Bible' (10 mins)

- Christians believe that the Bible is God's book and that it is true. The Bible tells us about Jesus
- Today we are learning from the Bible about when Jesus was born
- So we are going to have a look at the Bible together.

Handout a Bible for each pair of children.



- The Bible is one book with two parts - does anyone know what the two big parts/sections of the Bible are? *Old and New testament*
- Hand out Bibles; give one to every pair - ask the pairs to look at the contents page of the Bible.
- Does anyone know what the Old Testament is about? *These are the books about **before** Jesus was born.*
- Does anyone know what the New Testament is about? *These are books about **after** Jesus was born.*
- In the Bible there are two descriptions of when Jesus was born one in Matthew and one in Luke.
- In pairs can you find Matthew and Luke and then mark them with a post it note - (Once you've got it can you help anyone else who needs it and then come and sit on the carpet to see a short film)
- All find Luke Chapter 2, verse 8

Pairs - *'The Shepherds'* (10 mins)

- I want you to imagine that you are reporters for Bethlehem Breakfast News (BBN) – you've got the story facts in your Bible, we're going to watch this video clip and I want you to be our reporters, so listen carefully to the action...
- Watch the video **The Christmas Story - The Shepherds** (Luke 2: 8-16)
- Turn to your partner and tell each other the headline and first few lines of your report.
- Summarise: 'Shepherds were looking after their sheep in the field. An angel came and told them good news that Jesus had been born. The angels said that Jesus was the Saviour and would rescue people.'
- Now read Luke 2: 8-15 (read a verse each)
- What do you notice about what the video said and what the Bible said? Were there any words you weren't sure of? What about in verse 11? Saviour?

Video available on Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TaeBx6bPlv4>

Write 'Saviour' on whiteboard.

A Bible or use the Bible text below



- 'Saviour' means that God came to earth in human form as Jesus, to rescue them so they could be God's friend.

DRAMA - 'Interview a shepherd' (10 mins)

- Now you are going to be reporters - You are going to interview a shepherd. You need to ask 3 questions about what they saw, what do they think it means or how are they feeling.
- Write up three types of questions on a board
 1. What happened?
 2. What do you think it all means?
 3. How did you feel when you saw an angel?

Give children 10 minutes to complete - both have a go. Move between groups and encourage/extend their questions.

Come back together.

If there is time watch 2 of the interviews

Conclude: 'Why did the shepherd think Jesus was so special?'

Write questions on the whiteboard

Pairs - 'The Wise Men' (10 mins)

- Now we are going to look at another part of the Christmas story from the Bible in the book of Matthew
- Watch the video - **The Christmas Story - The Wise Men** (Matt 2: 1-2 and 9-12) - Explain: 'Magi means wise men'
- Teacher read Matt 2:1-2
- Turn to your partner and tell each other the headline and first few lines of your report.
- Summary of the video - 'A star showed the wise men where to find Jesus. They knew that Jesus was the true King, King of the Jews which meant God's Son and they wanted to worship him.'
- What does the word 'worship' mean?

Video available on YouTube:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qxqCEqf0NO>

Write 'worship' on whiteboard.

Pictures of some celebrities that the children might 'worship'



- Who do you worship? - show some pictures of some celebrities, footballers, music stars - do you worship any of these?
- To worship means to adore them, to love them so much you would do anything for them.

DRAMA - *'Interview a Wise Man' (10 mins)*

- Now you are going to be reporters again- You are going to interview a wise man. Find out why they followed the star, how they felt when they first saw the baby in the manger and what they thought of the baby Jesus?
- Write up three types of questions on a board
 1. Why did you follow the star?
 2. How did you feel?
 3. What did you think of the baby Jesus?

Give children 10 minutes to complete - both have a go. Move between groups and encourage/extend their questions.

Come back together.

If there is time watch 2 of the interviews
Concluded by asking, 'Why did the wise men think Jesus was so special?'

Write questions on the whiteboard

Plenary - *'Drawing it together' (5 mins)*

(If you used Starter Option A) We started by thinking about what we enjoy at Christmas.

(No matter how you started...) We have learnt what makes Christmas a special time for Christians. The essential part of Christmas for Christians is celebrating the birth of Jesus. (If you used Starter Option A- place a baby doll into the shopping bag!)

Think/Pair/Share

- Think (alone)
 - Who do Christians believe Jesus to be?

Pick up shopping bag covered with post it notes



- Think of one thing you have learned today about why the Bible says Jesus is so important?
- PAIR - Share ideas and answer - why is Christmas important to Christians?
- SHARE - the one thing you have learned today? Why do Christians celebrate Christmas - why is it so important?



Bible Text

Luke 2:8-16

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ^[a] the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

Footnotes:

- a. [Luke 2:11](#) Or *Messiah*. “The Christ” (Greek) and “the Messiah” (Hebrew) both mean “the Anointed One”; also in verse 26.

Matthew 2:1-12

¹ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi^[a] from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east^[b] and have come to worship him.” ...

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east^[c] went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Footnotes:

- a. [Matthew 2:1](#) Traditionally *Wise Men*
b. [Matthew 2:2](#) Or *star when it rose*
c. [Matthew 2:9](#) Or *seen when it rose*

New International Version 1984 (NIV1984)



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.