

Advent Adventures

This workshop is designed to cover the KS1 unit 1.3 from the Cornwall Agreed RE Syllabus (2025). It also covers part of the National Curriculum for Art and Design (KS1).

Unit 1.3 Why does Christmas matter to Christians? [Incarnation]

The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and worldviews, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

Learning outcomes (intended to enable pupils to achieve end of key stage outcomes):	Ways of knowing e.g.	Ideas and some content for learning: Teachers can select content from these examples, and add more of their own to enable pupils to achieve the outcomes.
Teachers will enable pupils to achieve these outcomes, as appropriate to their age and stage, so that they can: Make sense of belief: - Recognise that stories of Jesus' life come from the Gospels - Give a clear, simple account of the story of Jesus' birth and why Jesus is important for Christians Understand the impact: - Give examples of ways in which Christians use the story of the Nativity to guide their beliefs and actions at Christmas Make connections: - Think, talk and ask questions about Christmas for people who are Christians and for people who are not - Decide what they personally have to be thankful for giving a reason for their ideas.	 Introduce this unit by looking for signs that Christmas is coming – signs of winter, decorations, adverts. Ask pupils why they think Christmas is important for Christians.  Tell some familiar stories about a character who appears to be someone he/she is not (e.g. <i>Beauty and the Beast</i>). Look at a picture of baby Jesus from Christian tradition. What can pupils tell about him from the picture? Most Christians believe he was very special – not an ordinary baby but God on Earth! Note that the word 'incarnation' means 'God in the flesh'. Christmas celebrates the Incarnation.  Talk about getting a bedroom ready for a new baby. What would families do to prepare? Imagine the new baby is 'God come to Earth' – what kind of room do the pupils expect would be suitable for this baby? Who might come and visit?  Tell the story of the Nativity from the Gospel of Luke, chapters 1 and 2. You could use a Christmas story trail (e.g. experience Christmas from Jumping Fish). Set up some stations: Gabriel visits Mary; journey to Bethlehem; Jesus born and placed in manger; angels appear to shepherds; shepherds visit Mary. Pupils hear the story at each station then go back to their places and draw pictures/write sentences to retell the story.  Talk about Jesus' birth in the outhouse/stable – what were conditions like, and who visited? Luke's story talks about Jesus' birth being 'good news'. Talk about who it might be good news for and why, and why Christmas is important for Christians.  Look at a selection of Christmas cards: which ones have got a clear link to the story in Luke? Ask pupils to explain the links. Either visit a church to find out what will be happening around Christmas, or get a local Christian leader to bring photos. Find out about the colours the vicar/priest might wear: what other signs will there be about Jesus' birthday and that this is important to Christians?  Introduce the word 'advent', when Christians prepare for Jesus' arrival. Find out about some Advent traditions (e.g. Advent wreath, candle, calendar; making a crib scene, etc.)  Make connections with the kinds of decorations people put up for birthdays with those put up by Christians for Jesus' birthday. What decorations would connect with the story in Luke? Which ones are not connected to the Bible, but to other secular (non-religious) Christmas traditions?  People give gifts and they also say 'thank you' at Christmas. Ask pupils to create their 'thank you' prayers or all the characters in the nativity story in Luke. Think about all the people pupils would like to thank at Christmas time. Ask pupils to create some of their own 'thank you' statements and give them out. <i>[NB: This unit focuses on Luke's Gospel, so that if your school does Christmas in each year group, the other class(es) could use Matthew's account (chapters 1 and 2), including the wise men and gifts, Christmas carols linking to giving and Incarnation, ways in which people help and support others at Christmas.]</i>	

These outcomes and activities are abridged from *Understanding Christianity*, published by RE Today © 2016. Used by permission.

Key Stage 1 (KS1) National Curriculum for Art and Design

Pupils should be taught to:

- Use a range of materials creatively to design and make products.

If there are any other areas of the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus for RE that you would like assistance with, your local church would be happy to help. Please contact your church directly, or email Clare Green (Schools' Creation Care Officer) on clare.green@trurodiocese.org.uk