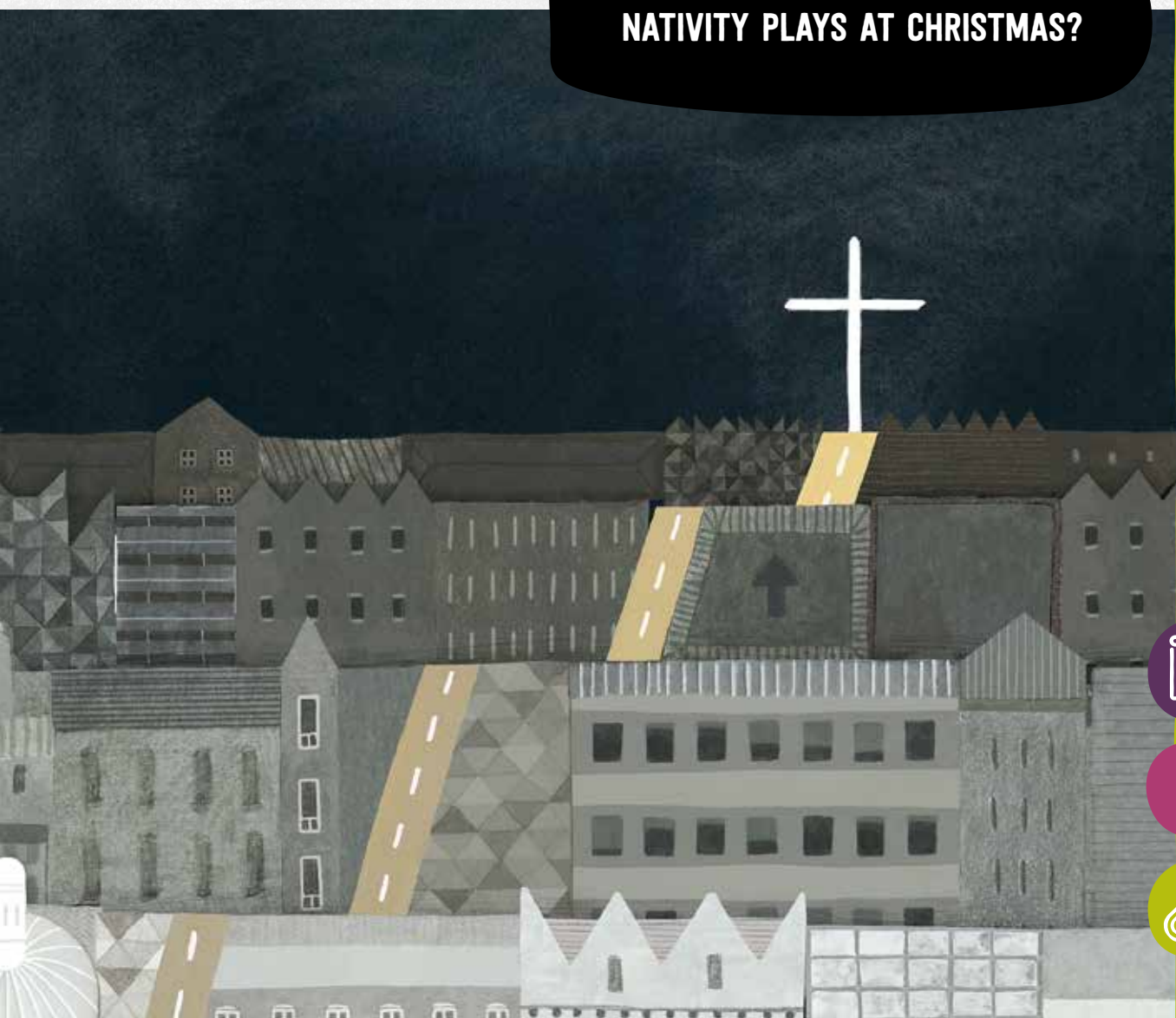


FOUNDATION STAGE 2/UNIT F2

INCARNATION

WHY DO CHRISTIANS PERFORM
NATIVITY PLAYS AT CHRISTMAS?



Note: in EYFS, the **Making connections** element of the approach is woven throughout all activities.



MAKING SENSE OF THE TEXT

KEY INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER

This section looks at what the Bible says about Jesus.

Where possible prepare this work by giving children the chance to act out stories about Jesus as an adult. Pillowcase costumes are great fun; give everyone a pillowcase with arm- and head-holes ready-cut, and paint it with stripes. Let everyone take part in the acting.

This Christmas material starts by connecting the baby Jesus with the adult Jesus – often a huge confusion for children – and explores the idea that for Christians, Jesus is not just a baby, but God. Take every opportunity to stress the belief element, i.e. Christians say Jesus was a special

baby *because* he came from God; Christians believe he was God born as a baby; Christians say he was God come to be with us on earth as the friend and rescuer of human beings, for example.

Hearing that the nativity stories come from the Bible, and actually seeing a Bible, begins to help children to connect with a different perspective from what many will learn at home and in the commercial hype around the Christmas festival.

Teachers should also check the basic stories from an adult Bible or by using www.biblegateway.com or a Bible app. These stories are the source material for the unit.

KEY SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHER-LED ACTIVITIES

Teacher's note: The stories of Jesus' birth take on such huge significance for Christians because for them he is not just a special baby, nor even a 'royal baby', but a completely human baby who is God 'in the flesh', and who they call 'God's Son'. The stories told at Christmas cover a span of about three years, but all get told together.

This unit introduces the ideas using Tom and Tessa, two imaginary Christian children – you might use persona dolls to bring these characters into the classroom as part of the children's learning.

WHAT SPECIAL STORIES DO TOM AND TESSA KNOW FROM THE BIBLE ABOUT JESUS?

Show photos of adults at school. Explain that each adult was once a baby. What do you think they looked like? Each child decides which one to draw/paint as a baby. Stick these baby pictures under the original adult photos. Establish that we were all babies once.

Tom and Tessa have brought their special treasure box. They know lots of stories about Jesus as a grown-up. What stories do you know?

Share some story pictures and say what happened in one or two sentences. For example: Jesus healed a little girl, Jesus stopped a storm at sea, Jesus fed a great crowd, Jesus taught people about God.

Their favourites are about when Jesus was born. They have got something to show you.

Get out three simple nativity figures – Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. Who is this baby? Jesus. Even Jesus was a baby once, and very special. Ask if anyone knows the story and get out more nativity figures to look at. Which figures look most important? You could make a 'value line' – 'most important' to 'least important'.

We can find out who all the figures are from a Bible – the Christian book about God.

Using a children's story Bible, read the key Christmas stories: Jesus' birth is announced to Mary, Jesus is born in Bethlehem, the shepherds are sent to see the baby and the wise men visit, and so on.

Match up the figures in the nativity set to the different parts of the story. Who is the most important person in the story, do you think? What do Christians think?

Tom says, 'Jesus is most important. He is like treasure to Christians because he is God come to earth as a baby. That's why Christmas is so important to Christians.'

Tessa has written a song for Christmas this year; it says that Jesus did not stay a baby – he grew up just like us. She and Tom sing the words to the 'John Brown's Body' tune:

**Je-sus he is not a baby any more (x 3),
he is our best friend.**

Look at nativity set pictures and decide how to display the nativity set that Tom and Tessa have brought in.



MAKING SENSE OF THE TEXT

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Make baby Jesus mince pies. Seriously! The mince pie was originally an oval shape and represented the manger; a pastry Jesus was placed on top.
- Make figures for a nativity set out of different materials, e.g. playdough. Have name labels for the figures.
- Talk about what people might do today if they heard that a very important baby had been born.
- Sing some songs together that tell the Christmas story, or practise nativity play songs that relate to different characters.
- Find Christmas cards that show scenes from the nativity, and talk about who's who.



KEY SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCED CLASSROOM PROVISION

- **Book area** In Tom and Tessa's bag/box to investigate – children's Bibles, Christmas story books and Christmas story cube
- **Writing/mark-making** Names of nativity characters to copy as labels
- **ICT/technology** Creating nativity scenes for Christmas cards
- **Role play** Nativity character costumes for dressing up in a 'stable' area
- **Sand/malleable** Pastry to roll for mince pies/ playdough for figure-making
- **Creative area** Making nativity Christmas cards, by printing with vegetables, for example
- **Listening corner** Nativity story and nativity-type Christmas songs/carols to listen to.



UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

KEY INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER

Christians celebrate Christmas as the birth of Christ on a date chosen by the churches rather than a known date. Western churches celebrate on December 25 but the Christmas season lasts until February 2, the feast of the presentation of the Christ child in the Temple.

The tradition of nativity plays may have started with St Francis of Assisi inviting villagers to a stable to tell the Christmas stories there rather than in church, bringing a new sense of wonder at the great God of heaven choosing to come humbly to live as part of humanity.

Christmas events at churches are numerous, with carol services, crib services, and maybe 'Messy Church' for younger children. Midnight Mass or Communion is a popular service when Christians wait up to 'see Christmas in' at church together, often with lots of candles lit as a reminder of Jesus coming as the 'light of the world'.

Be aware that some children do not, or cannot, celebrate birthdays. You may wish to avoid direct questioning of individuals about personal celebrations.

KEY SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHER-LED ACTIVITIES

Teacher's note: At Tom and Tessa's church, singing carols and performing nativity plays is about telling the good news of God coming to earth. Events at church all centre on this annual reminder of God's love for people, a bit like birthdays remind people of how friends and family love us. There is also an emphasis on sharing God's love with others.



UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

WHAT DO TOM AND TESSA DO AT CHURCH AT CHRISTMAS?

From Tom and Tessa's bag, bring out candles and birthday cards. Even better, get out a cake and light the candles and sing 'Happy Birthday' to Tom and Tessa.

What do birthdays remember? Do you have a birthday? What do people like to do on birthdays?

Tom and Tessa's birthday is very close to Christmas. Their birthday happens every year. Christmas happens every year too. It is a 'birthday' celebration, too. Whose birthday is it? Every year Christians celebrate Jesus' birthday. It would be awful to forget the birthday of someone important to you. Even people who are not Christians join in at Christmas and have fun. At Tom and Tessa's church they are preparing to put on a nativity play for Christmas; it is a play about Jesus being born. Tom and Tessa want to know if we can act out the story too. So we are going to have a go. What characters, costumes and props do we need?

Mary, Joseph (with baby Jesus)
Shepherds (with sheep)
Angels (with halos)

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Set up a 'Bethlehem stable' filled with costumes for children to re-enact the story.
- Ask your 'Open the Book' team or the local vicar about nativity plays and why Jesus is special to them. Sing 'Jesus he is not a baby any more' to them and ask what they think!
- Talk to children in older classes about last year's nativity play, and look at photographs together.
- Learn songs that tell the Christmas story - from 'Nursery Rhyme Nativities', for example.

Kings (with crowns)**Innkeeper, cow and donkey, maybe**

Provide as many dressing-up clothes as possible. Pillowcase costumes are very effective. Animal masks, halos and crowns may be available in a school nativity box.

Use a Bible storybook for the script or 'Jesus' Christmas Party' (Nicholas Allan), and enjoy acting out the story. If possible, go to a local church and act the story out there, like Christians might in a church. Ask why this is an important thing for Christians to do.

Ask children to take photos of themselves in nativity costumes and write who they are and what they do in the story. These will prove to Tom and Tessa that the class can tell the story too!



KEY SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCED CLASSROOM PROVISION

- **Book area** Jesus' Christmas Party; other books telling the nativity story; story sack with nativity figures
- **Writing/mark-making** Posters/invitations for a nativity play - maybe with photos of themselves dressed up
- **ICT/technology** Cameras for photographing themselves as nativity characters
- **Role play** Costumes to dress up as nativity characters
- **Sand/water/malleable** Builder's tray with sand, blocks and figures for acting out the three wise men coming across the desert to see Jesus
- **Construction/outside** Large materials for building a stable or crib for the baby
- **Listening corner** CDs of musical nativities or recordings of themselves singing 'Nursery Rhyme Nativities'; laminated words for songs.



UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

KEY INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER

Presents are an important part of Christmas, a reminder of the gifts of the Wise Men to Jesus, but for Christians, presents are also a reminder of the greatest gift: the gift of Jesus, God's Son.

Many Christians like to do something to help others over Christmas. They may serve Christmas lunch to pensioners, make up parcels for the

needy, or help at night shelters. Carol-singing for charity is one thing local churches often do.

Christmas carols tell of the birth of Jesus and express beliefs about who this baby is. Carols were originally intended to be danced, and often have a repeated chorus.



UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

KEY SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHER-LED ACTIVITIES

What special things do Tom and Tessa do at Christmas to share God's love?

Teacher's note: Be aware that the majority of children will expect to celebrate at Christmas; this is a birthday celebration everyone can join in. However, Christians naturally want to celebrate the faith aspects of the festival.

Most children will not have many memories of Christmases past; they will typically only have memories of the last one, but it is quite possible that by the time you do this work the build-up to the commercial Christmas will have begun.

Tom and Tessa have brought in their treasure box again.

Unpack the box and find things inside which indicate the importance of Christmas: cards with nativity scenes, decorations, parties, Father Christmas, special food.

Tom and Tessa like such a lot about Christmas. They also love telling the Christmas story. We know they go to church and act in the nativity play.

Finally, find a torch and words for a carol, or a carol-sheet in the treasure box.

One of Tom and Tessa's favourite Christmas activities is going carol-singing with their church. Carols are special songs about Jesus being born. Tom and Tessa dress up warmly, take torches, and go to the local supermarket to sing with other families from church.

As they sing, they collect money for a charity, as a present to help others. Tom and Tessa know this is a good thing for Christians to do because Jesus' name means 'helper' or 'rescuer', and his followers must help others too. I wonder what they will sing this year?

Look at carol sheets from a local church – many use copies from EmbraceME (formerly Bible Lands Society); this charity raises money to help children in the place where the real Jesus was born.

Hear/sing some simple carols: 'Away in a Manger', 'The Virgin Mary had a Baby Boy', 'Little Donkey', for example. Talk about the song words and what they say about baby Jesus.

Just before Christmas, Grandad brought round some wrapping paper and asked the twins to help him wrap his presents. Tom and Tessa love wrapping things, but they are not always very good at it. They talked about what the best present ever would be. (What do you think?)

Grandad said, 'The most important present for anyone at Christmas is the baby Jesus.'

'Did Mary wrap Jesus in paper?' said Tom, joking.

'No,' said Grandad, 'but Jesus was so special that when he came to earth it was a bit like the whole of God was wrapped up in a baby. And when people found out he was so special, it was just like opening your best-ever present.'

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:

- Have a parcel-wrapping challenge. Watch an adult wrapping a parcel. Then use Christmas paper and try wrapping up parcels of all sorts of shapes and sizes. Play Christmas carols in the background (see Resources). Talk about what Grandad said about Jesus.
- Go carol-singing to another class.
- Watch carol-singing on YouTube clips. Dress up warmly and try singing a carol outside to see what it sounds like. For example, go round the outside of the school and sing at the outside door of another classroom.
- Learn a carol to sing at the end of school when the parents come – collect money for a charity like Tom and Tessa do.



KEY SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCED CLASSROOM PROVISION

- **Book area** Nativity play books
- **Maths area** Counting money from a collecting tin, and recording amounts
- **ICT/technology** Record themselves singing a carol on a recording button
- **Role play** Dressing up to sing carols/Tom and Tessa's box to unpack
- **Sand/water/malleable** Making the name 'Jesus' in playdough or writing 'Jesus' in the sand
- **Creative area** Wrapping presents
- **Listening corner** Christmas carol sheets and CDs of carols/laminated words to songs, from 'Nursery Rhyme Nativities', for example; recorded by the class.

This section complements the Core Learning section: Why do Christians perform nativity plays at Christmas? This section moves on from learning about Jesus to thinking about how Christians believe his life shows just how important all people are. Christians believe that if God was prepared to send his Son to live as a human, it must be because he loves humans, and because we are worth it. If that is the case, all people are precious and we should all treat each other well.



MAKING SENSE OF THE TEXT

KEY INFORMATION FOR THE TEACHER

This section looks at what the Bible says about Jesus.

For Christians, each individual human is unique, and known and loved unconditionally by God. Each is made in the image of God and of infinite worth. Humans do not need to earn God's love.

There is only one story of Jesus as a child in the Bible, apart from the birth stories. This is found in the story of Jesus being lost by his parents when he was in the Temple.

SUGGESTION FOR TEACHER-LED ACTIVITIES

Teacher's note: Tom and Tessa learn about God from the Bible, at church and home. They are taught that God loves every human being, including them, and that God's love was demonstrated by Jesus when he came to earth.

WHICH BIBLE STORIES TELL TOM AND TESSA THAT THEY ARE PRECIOUS TO GOD?

Gather children in a circle and tell them you have something precious with you. Cup your hands and then mime passing something precious but invisible to a child. You are imagining it as you hold it. What is it? Pass from child to child - what is it? Use their ideas to establish meaning for 'precious'.

Tom and Tessa have brought in their big book of Bible stories again. The Bible is precious to them, but even more precious are the stories inside and what they say. Which stories do you already know from this book?

Tom and Tessa have got to act a story about Jesus at church next week. They need to practise. Can we help? There is something 'precious' in the story.

Read/tell the story together of Jesus welcoming the children (Mark 10:13-16). Lots of mums bring their babies and children to see Jesus. Tired disciples try to send them away, but Jesus says children are welcome and must not be turned away. He welcomes and blesses them.

How can we act this out? Everyone can take part. A whole crowd of children is needed.

Tom and Tessa enjoyed practising their play. Grandad came to see how they were getting on and they acted the play for him again. 'Jesus really thought the children were special, didn't he, Grandad?' said Tom. Grandad smiled. 'I think you're right. Everyone is precious to Jesus. He never turns anyone away.'

Think about when we might send others away, for example when we don't want to play with them. Is everyone precious? Tom and Tessa are twins. They are the same, but different. Everyone in the world is unique, and everyone is precious.

You could finish by listening to one of Tom and Tessa's favourite songs: 'I am Special' (Bernadette Farrell). It can be found on YouTube. Ask if the children think Tom and Tessa like it. <http://bit.ly/1mvTEYP>



MAKING SENSE OF THE TEXT

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Learn a welcoming song, for example, 'God Welcomes All, Strangers and Friends, God's Love is Strong and it Never Ends' (<http://vimeo.com/30474032>) or the 'Circle Song' (Bernadette Farrell - Share the Light CD). For other useful songs, not all Christian, see Resources.
- Tell stories of being lost and being found, for example in the supermarket. Why do people come and look for you? You are precious to someone!
- Find out what happened when Jesus got lost (Luke 2:41-51). Use dressing-up clothes so everyone can join in and tell the story. Use all the children to create crowds of villagers on the road and in Jerusalem.
- Use a picture to focus discussion afterwards: 'The Finding of the Saviour' by William Holman Hunt, for example. What did Jesus' mum and dad do to find him? Where did Jesus go to be safe? Why? He knew God was his true father, and he felt safe in 'God's house'. What was he doing when they found him? Why do you think his mum was a bit cross?



KEY SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCED CLASSROOM PROVISION

- **Book area** Books about being unique or precious: *The Rainbow Fish*, *Giraffes Can't Dance*, *The Smartest Giant in Town*
- **Writing/mark-making** Interactive display of writing about things they are proud of about themselves/things they'd like to be able to do
- **ICT/technology** Looking at fingerprints under visualiser/microscope
- **Role play** Dressing-up clothes for acting story of Jesus being lost or Jesus welcoming children. Picture and word prompts available
- **Sand/water/malleable** Mirror at bottom of water to see themselves and how they change
Creating themselves out of playdough
- **Creative area** Make paper-plate faces with a flap to show a smile, but also a down-turned mouth - use them to talk about 'lost and found' feelings
Self-portraits using mirrors to help
- **Listening corner** Songs to do with being unique/special/precious.



UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

KEY INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

A thanksgiving service is not the same as a christening, neither is it the same as the North American celebration of 'Thanksgiving'! It is a church service arranged by the Church of England for parents who want to say thank you to God for their baby, but do not want to make a formal commitment to the Christian Church or the promises that are part and parcel of baptism. No baptismal water is used, and the child is not made a church member.

Find the complete service at www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/initiation/thanksgiftchild.aspx

This is an easier service to talk about with EYFS children, but will not be so familiar to adults/teachers. Some clergy may not be very familiar with it either! Lots of pupils will hear about baptism in Key Stage 1, so it makes sense to try this instead.



UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHER-LED ACTIVITIES

Teacher's note: At Tom and Tessa's church, the vicar loves to welcome everybody just like Jesus did. Some members of the church stand by the door on Sunday morning as 'welcomers'. Some families like to have their babies christened (baptised) and welcomed into the church family, but sometimes the vicar is asked if he/she will help a family just say 'thank you' for their baby. There is a special service of thanksgiving for this occasion.

How do some people give thanks for the birth of their baby in a church?

This is Tom and Tessa's baby cousin (show photo of a baby girl). She is called Beth. Her mum and dad don't go to church much, but they want to say thank you to God for their beautiful little girl. 'God welcomes us all,' says the vicar. 'We can have a special thanksgiving service for Beth with stories and songs and prayers. Tom and Tessa can help too. They'd like that.'

What does 'thanksgiving' mean? Can you hear the word 'thanks' in it? Christians love to say thank you to God for all the good things in life. They have lots of 'thank you' songs. Maybe you know one. For example, 'Thank you Lord for this new day' (could be adapted to 'Thank you Lord for Baby Beth').

Make a special area to be the church. Bring the children in and act out very simply what happens at a thanksgiving service. Use a doll as the baby. Say some of the special words. Use the outline on the resource sheet.

NB, if local clergy are available they may do this for you, but ensure it is the thanksgiving service not a baptism that they demonstrate for you.

Act out the story of Jesus welcoming the children again as part of the service, and maybe sing a song too.

The baby is given a book of stories about Jesus. Wrap one up beforehand so it can be unwrapped in the service.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Make a 'Welcome' banner with everyone's faces painted on small pieces of material and stuck on. How do we make people welcome in school? Welcoming shows people they are loved and special.
- Meet a baby. How do mummies and daddies look after a baby? Look at things they need. How do we show a baby is precious when we hold it, bath it, and look after it? What happens if a baby is neglected? Is every baby unique? What about twins and triplets?
- Paint ourselves as babies. Order birthday cards from new baby through one-year-old, maybe up to ten-year-old. How have we changed? Are we still precious?
- Here are two songs Tom and Tessa may hear at church or at special Christian camps: 'He Knows my Name' and 'I am Not Forgotten' - both songs performed by 'Israel and New Breed', and available on YouTube. They are for adults and older teenagers but give insight for teachers into the sense of being loved and cared for by God. Could be used with children for dance, or as background, for example.



KEY SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCED CLASSROOM PROVISION

- **Book area** Books about babies; Bible story books
 - **Writing/mark-making** Baby cards/'thanksgiving for a baby' cards
 - **Construction area** Blocks, and so on, for building churches
 - **Role play** Choosing baby names and saying thank-you prayers for baby dolls; new baby role-play area
 - **Sand/water/malleable** Baby dolls to bathe and look after
 - **Creative area** Make 'Welcome' bunting or banner
 - **Investigative area** Match photos with birthday cards with numbers 1 to 10
- Recreating puzzles of their own faces - why do we need every piece?



UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT

KEY INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

The Church of England espouses five Marks of Mission. To tend the needy, just like Jesus did, is one of the Marks, and demonstrates that all are precious to God. Jesus' Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) was that we should do to others as we want them to do to us. Jesus also taught his followers a new commandment, that they should love one another as he did, i.e. sacrificially (John 13:34).

The Church of England's Children's Society began in 1881, working with 'waifs and strays' – homeless children. It is now the Children's Society, a social justice organisation working for, and with, children.

Their mission is: 'We fight for change, supporting disadvantaged children having better lives.' (See www.childrenssociety.org.uk/aboutus) It fund-raises at Christingle services and 'Bake and Brew' events.

Childline recognises neglect as child abuse. At its most basic, being neglected is the opposite of being precious to someone. This may be introduced simply to children, without focusing inappropriately. All teachers who uncover cases of neglect should refer them straightaway to senior school staff in charge of safeguarding.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHER-LED ACTIVITIES

Teacher's note: The Bible says that Jesus taught his followers many things about God; he taught with authority and he taught often by parables, stories with meanings. Once he said, 'I'm giving you a new commandment: love one another as I have loved you.' On another occasion he said, 'Do for others what you want them to do for you.' This is known as the Golden Rule, and has parallels with rules in other religions.

How do Tom and Tessa try to show by their actions that everyone is precious?

Tom and Tessa have brought something really special today. Open a tin of buns/little cakes. The children have got to ice the cakes. They need your help! What rules do you think there are for icing cakes? Decide, and get icing!

I wonder why Tom and Tessa need these cakes. Is it for a birthday? ... or a thanksgiving service? No. It's for the 'Bake and Brew' morning at church to raise money for The Children's Society.

The Children's Society was started by Christians; it helps children. Some children have mummies and daddies who neglect them; they do not look after them properly. Some children get very lost and need

to be found, some are treated badly and nobody makes them welcome. These children need help from outside their family.

Tom and Tessa want to help because they know they would want someone to help them, if they needed it. They know everyone is precious to God and they try to be kind and help people, as Jesus told his followers.

Tom and Tessa have learned the Golden Rule that Jesus taught his followers. Hide words on golden card around the room for children to hunt: 'Do for others what you want them to do for you.'

Rearrange them and read together – it would be helpful to put numbers on the back to help.

Work out what this means in school terms. How would you end these sentences? Then work out what to do to help others:

- When I'm sad, I want ...
- When I can't do my work, I want ...
- When I've lost something, I want ...
- When I want to play, I want ...
- When I do something naughty, I want ...

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Use the cakes for a 'Bake and Brew' and raise money for The Children's Society, or another charity for children. You can find out more about 'Bake and Brew' and 'Icing Parties' on the Children's Society website.
- Hide ten gold chocolate coins. Hide the tenth inside something. When the first nine are found, ask where the tenth is. Direct children to the last coin using 'hot' and 'cold' directions.
- Tell Jesus' story about the Lost Coin from Luke 15:8-10. Why did the woman want the coin so badly?
- It was precious to her. Tom and Tessa's mum says the story reminds her that people are precious to God too, and he cares what happens to them.
- Take photos of children hunting for the coins and cheering when they find the tenth one. Use the photos to retell the story.
- Another commandment of Jesus says: 'Love one another'. Make love-hearts with these words.



KEY SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCED CLASSROOM PROVISION

- **Book area** 'Where's Wally?'-type books which involve hunting for things; Lost Coin story book made by class; Children's Society posters
- **Writing/mark-making** Labels for cake sale/sorting out the Golden Rule
- **ICT/technology** Photographs for 'Lost Coin' hunt
- **Role play** Dressing-up clothes for Lost Coin story
- **Cooking** Making buns/icing buns/serving drinks.

BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

These units for EYFS explore what Christians believe about Jesus, and the idea that Jesus is God in the flesh. This section describes the core ideas behind this unit.

Christians believe that:

- God came to earth as Jesus Christ. He is called the 'Son of God', born of the Virgin Mary and fathered by God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was 'God in the flesh', i.e. 'incarnate', a real human being and a historical person.
- People are God's treasured possessions, each known even before they were born. Christians should work to end neglect and poverty – anything which devalues one of God's creatures.
- Jesus shows what God is like: the Bible says he is the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). People heard and saw and felt God through him. He made God real to those who met him.
- All humans are made in 'God's image', but the image is spoiled by things we do wrong. Jesus embodies what humans should be like, a bit like re-drawing what has been spoiled.
- Every human is precious to God, known and loved by God. We are created to 'know God and enjoy him forever'. He does not want us to be lost; he wants to welcome us into his presence.
- Jesus came as 'Emmanuel' (God with us). He wants his followers to be like him and show (incarnate) God's love to the world. His followers can be God's hands and feet in the world.

CORE LEARNING: KEY TEXTS

- Stories of the adult Jesus. For example, the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:1-13)
- Jesus' birth is announced (Luke 1:26-38/Matthew 1:18-25)
- Jesus is born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-7)
- Shepherds (Luke 2:8-20) and magi (wise men) visit (Matthew 2:1-12)
- No one has ever seen God because God is spirit (see John 4:24), but Jesus makes him known (see John 1:18).

DIGGING DEEPER: KEY TEXTS

- Jesus welcomes the children (Mark 10:13-16)
- Jesus lost in the Temple (Luke 2:41-51)
- The lost coin (Luke 15:8-10)
- He knows every hair on your head (see Matthew 10:30)
- Love one another as I have loved you (see John 13:34-35)
- Golden Rule – Do as you would be done by (see Matthew 7:12)
- You are precious to me and I love you (see Isaiah 43:4)

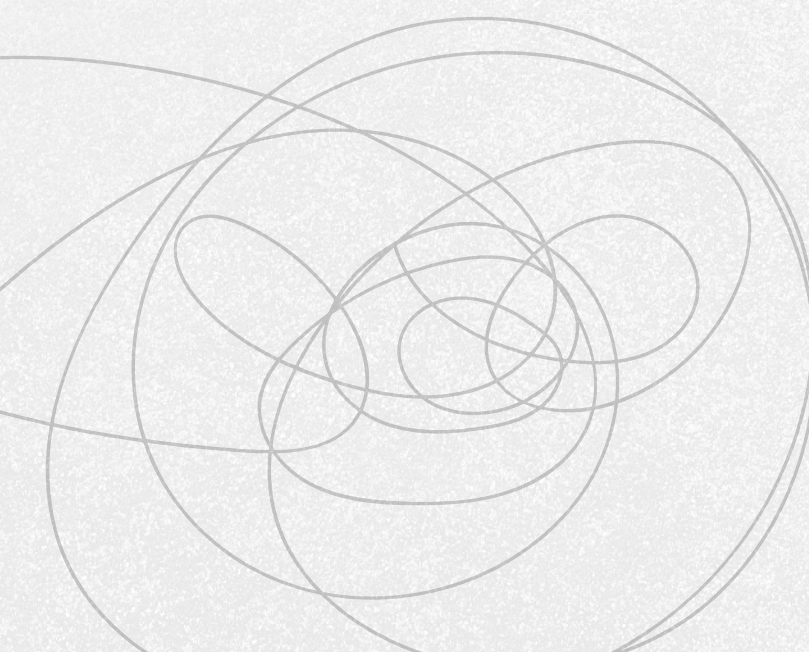
RESOURCES

CORE LEARNING:

- *The Lion First Bible* - www.lionhudson.com
- *The Beginner's Bible* (Zondervan)
- *The Christmas Story cube* - www.familylife.com
- Knitted nativity - maybe knitted by a parent/ grandparent
- Pillow-case costumes - see 'Easy Biblical Costumes' by Mel Ludlow (YouTube)
- For traditional carols (often heard in supermarkets over Christmas) a cathedral choir singing carols is useful, or the CD of traditional carols from www.outoftheark.co.uk
- A good contrast is 'Ishmael's Christmas Carol Celebration' - all the traditional carols at twice the speed with drums and electric guitars - www.ishmael.org.uk
- EmbraceME - This Christian charity works with the poor and needy of any faith in the Middle East - in lands featured in the Bible. Their 'Bethlehem carol sheet' is used widely for carol-singing and carol services. The sheets are free: www.embraceme.org

DIGGING DEEPER:

- *The Big Bible Storybook* - www.scriptureunion.org.uk
- *The Lion First Bible* - www.lionhudson.com
- *My Baby is Wonderful* - Susie Poole (Christian children's book about how children belong to God as well as their parents. The kind of book Tom and Tessa's mum and dad might have read to them when they were very young)
- 'Special to God' - song to download from www.learn2soar.co.uk
- *All About Me* - song collection for EYFS from www.outoftheark.co.uk
- *The Ten Silver Coins* - Butterworth and Inkpen, Collins
- www.barnabasinchurches.org.ukthe-lost-coin
- www.freebibleimages.org/photos/lost-coin
- www.childrenssociety.org.uk





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