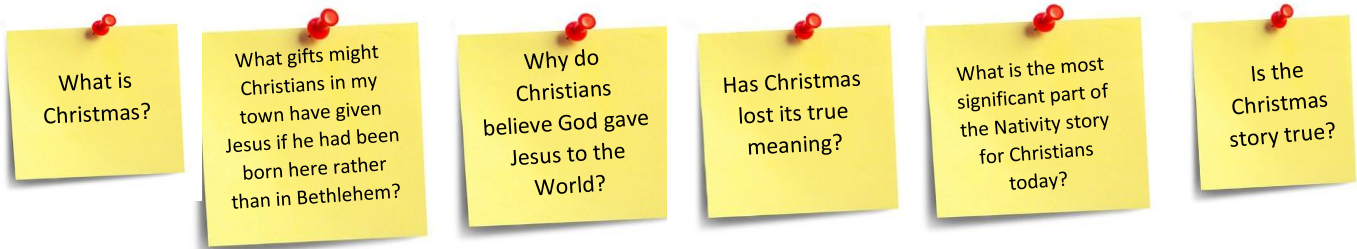


Religious Education – World Religion – Christianity

Our Key Question: Do Christmas celebrations and traditions help Christians understand who Jesus was and why he was born?

Our previous learning about Christianity and Christmas included these key questions:



Share your answers here...

Key Vocabulary for Christianity and Christmas (Can you fill the missing words in?)	
	A Christian festival that celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ.
	The story of the birth of Jesus Christ.
<i>gospel</i>	The record of Christ's life and teachings in the first four books of the New Testament (part of the Bible).
<i>tradition</i>	The passing on of ways of thinking, acting and/or believing. There are lots of different traditions, ranging from those which impact a society (for example, the King's speech in the UK on Christmas Day) to traditions within a family or group of friends (for example, going out for a meal on Christmas Eve).
	Advent is the time of waiting for Christmas, which marks the arrival of Jesus to earth just over 2000 years ago. Advent begins on the Sunday nearest to the 30 th November and lasts until Christmas Eve.
<i>incarnation</i>	To become flesh – an important idea in Christianity. It is all about how God became human in the form of Jesus and suffered as a human can do.
<i>commercialism</i>	A focus on making money.
<i>charity</i>	Giving help to those who need it (often by raising or donating money or by volunteering).
<i>secular</i>	Not connected with religion.
<i>significant</i>	Something that is important enough to be noticed and spoken about or has a special meaning.
<i>carol</i>	A type of religious song particularly associated with Christmas.

'The Nativity' story

The Christmas Story is also called 'The Nativity'. In this story, an angel appeared to Mary and told her that she was going to have a baby and that he would be the Son of God and he would be called Jesus. While Mary was pregnant, a census took place and she and Joseph (her husband) had to travel to Bethlehem – their town of birth.



When they arrived in Bethlehem, there was no room at any inns for them to stay in but they were allowed to stay in a stable. This is where Jesus was born.

Angels told shepherds on a hillside that the Son of God had been born so they went to visit him in Bethlehem. Wise men spotted a bright star in the sky and knew this meant a king had been born so they went to visit with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. King Herod heard that a new king had been born from the wise men and ordered that all the baby boys in the area be killed. An angel appeared in a dream to Joseph and Mary warned them so they travelled to Egypt with baby Jesus and were safe.



Christmas Customs

There are lots of different ways that people celebrate Christmas and Advent:

- Christmas trees symbolise the everlasting life of God;
- Mistletoe is a symbol of peace and joy and is used to show friendship and goodwill;
- Advent calendars, wreaths and candles are different ways of counting down to Jesus' birthday.
- Christingles symbolise the importance of Jesus and the gospel.



Some people argue that the 'true meaning of Christmas' is now lost and that Christmas has instead become victim to commercialism. Other people disagree with this and say that the important messages of Christmas are still remembered. What do you think?



Two different accounts of the Nativity

Interpretations of the Nativity are different in the Bible. St Matthew's account of The Christmas Story focuses on power whereas St Luke's account focuses on the poor and vulnerable. *Can you find evidence in each gospel of the different things they focus on?*