

Early Years Foundation Stage

Unit title: Celebrating Special Times

What happens at Christmas

Context

- Christmas is a Christian festival
- Christmas is celebrated on 25 December by most Christians
- At Christmas Christians remember the stories about the birth of Jesus
- Christians believe that God came into the world in the person of Jesus: this is called 'incarnation'
- At Christmas, Christians go to church, tell the stories about Jesus' birth, light candles and sing carols

Key underlying ideas/concepts

- Birth and growing up:** Jesus is celebrated as a baby but is remembered because of his life as an adult
- Jesus as a special baby:** for Christians, Jesus is God's Son
- Symbols of Christmas:** Light, a symbol of joy but also of God's presence
- Gifts:** a reminder of the gifts given by the Kings, by the children and their families and also a reminder that for Christians, Jesus was God's gift.

Links to Early Learning Goals

- Knowledge and Understanding of the World: Strand F: cultures and beliefs
- Personal, social and emotional development: Strand E: spiritual development

Main elements of the unit

Suggestions for practical activities

Babies and growing

Use photographs of babies, children and adults to explore

- the love of a family for a new baby
- the concept that babies grow and can gradually do more things

The story about the Birth of Jesus

Use the Story Sack

Tell the story about the birth of Jesus using a Big Book/Children's Bible

- Use at Christmas cards to identify different parts of the story
- Use nativity figures/role play/puppets to retell parts of the story
- Discuss with the children the feelings associated with the characters eg Mary wondering where her baby will be born, the excitement of the shepherds/Kings

How Christians celebrate Christmas

Focus on objects and activities of the Christmas festival

- Collect examples of Christmas lights: candles, including Advent candles
- Collect/make Christmas cards representing the story and with Christmas greetings
- Discuss gifts/presents which the children would like to give/receive
- Learn a Christmas song/carol

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What happens at Christmas?

Key questions to ask

- Why are babies special?
- What stories do we tell about Jesus being born?
- Why was Jesus a special baby?
- What happens at Christmas?

Story sack

- Story of the birth of Jesus
- Christmas cards which illustrate parts of the story
- A candle
- A pretend present