

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit the children will hear the story of Christmas and will focus upon the birth in the stable and of the shepherd visitors.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

Follows on from RC.

PRIOR LEARNING

Some of the children will have heard the Christmas story before. You may need to refer to NC.

SKILLS

Sequencing, speaking, listening, role-play, empathy.

VOCABULARY

Christmas, shepherds, manger, Bethlehem.

ASSESSMENT

At the end of this unit:

Most children will know that Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem and that his first visitors were shepherds.

Less able children will know that we celebrate Jesus' birthday.

More able children will be able to recall several events from the Christmas story.

A.T.1 **A.T.2**

N/a **N/a**

PROGRAMME OF STUDY

TEACHING STRATEGIES

R6 Hear and become familiar with the main events, characters and places in the life of Jesus.

Teach simple carols, e.g. Away in a Manger to join in with at assembly, Mass or class based collective worship.
Reflect with the children on some of the words of these carols. What do they tell us about the birth of the baby Jesus.
Use some mime and actions for some of the carols.

Hear the story of Christmas about the birth and the shepherds prior to Christmas. Share the story of the birth of Jesus through a variety of forms of media. Use pictures, card cut outs of the different characters and create a “story sack” with props in to tell the story.
Provide the children with an opportunity to use the “story sack” and other resources to retell the story.

Have you ever been somewhere and found that there was no room? What would it have been like for Joseph and Mary? Do you think they might have been afraid? Why?

Children to imagine that they had been around at the time of the first Christmas. Would they have liked to be on the hillside with the shepherds or at the stable? What would you have thought and said when you got to Bethlehem and saw the baby Jesus? Help the children to describe the scene in the stable.
Would it be easy to be a shepherd? What would the shepherds have thought when they saw the angels in the field?

Explain to the children that the story began when Mary said yes to the angel. Children to think about occasions when they have been asked to do something important.
What do we say? Do we always say yes?

Provide pictures for the children so they can sequence the Christmas story. As a class, compose sentences to tell the story. More able children might record some of the feelings of the characters.
Consider making a tape recording or a video of the children’s thoughts about the Christmas story and why it is so special to them.
Children are likely to be involved in Nativity plays of this time. Consider using costumes for role play so that children can experience alternative roles to their own.

C1 Take part in celebrations, which express thanks and praise.

Introduce the children to the crib’s being an important symbol and focus for the season of Christmas.
Hold the different figures and tell the children the story of Christmas as if you were the character.
Some children might want to have a go at this as well.
Create a special prayer liturgy focused around the crib. Hold a ceremony of blessing. It would be wise to tell the story of the Wise Men after the holidays.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

R6 That Jesus is the Son of God; that Mary heard God and said yes; that the cross is the sign of Jesus' love; that Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit; that the Bible is God's book.

Know parts of the story of Jesus' birth Know that he was born in a stable in Bethlehem.

Understand that his birth was very important because he was the Son of God.

Be able to empathise simply with some of the thoughts and feelings of the characters involved.

Be able to sing simple songs, re-enact parts of the story and sequence simple pictures with captions.

C1 That celebrations express thanksgiving, joy, unity and love; of the major feasts and seasons of the liturgical year.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Consider Home Corner becoming a stable.

Music links with carols and songs.

Social skills in role play.

Use lots of old Christmas cards to help the children develop their ideas of the story of the birth of Jesus.

Make the display of the crib something special. Explain to the children that this can be a special place to say a prayer at Christmastime.

RELATED SCRIPTURE

Lk. 2: 1-20

Mt. 1: 18-25 – The Accounts of the Birth of Jesus

Lk. 1: 26-38 – The Birth of Jesus is foretold in the Annunciation

OTHER LINKS

Christmas performances for parents.

Carol singing.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Giving thanks and praise.

Colours of gold and white.

The crib should be an important part of the prayer focal point in the class. Hold a special blessing ceremony just before Christmas.

EVALUATION

What went well?

Which areas of planning need to be developed/adapted next time?

What needs to be revisited/developed in a later unit?