

RELIGIOUS STUDIES CURRICULUM

Topic: Advent & Christmas – the Nativity

Strands: Bible and Christian Belief; Story of the Church; World Religions

Stage of Development: Middle Childhood (MC)

Rationale: This unit encourages students to explore preparing for an event – Advent; and its proper relationship to the Nativity, commonly known as Christmas. They explore the stories leading to and then relating to Jesus' birth.

Australian Curriculum:

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| 1. General Capabilities | Literacy, Numeracy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Intercultural Understanding |
| 2. Cross-Curricula Priorities | not applicable |

Links to other Learning Areas: English, History, Geography, Creative Arts

Key Questions:

Why does the Christian Church begin its new year with the season of Advent?

What are the links between Advent and Christmas?

Where did the events take place which are connected with the Birth of Jesus?

Who does the Bible record as being connected with the Birth of Jesus and what various roles do we know they played?

What other people and events have become associated with Christian celebrations of the Nativity?

How is Christmas celebrated in our families and in other parts of the world?

Key Concepts:

Seasons of the Church Year

Advent

Preparation

Christmas

Nativity

Incarnation

Celebration

Knowledge & Understanding:

Understand that Advent is a time of preparation

Know that the Christian Church has a yearly calendar which commences with Advent

Understand how Advent is linked to the Church's celebrations of the Birth of Jesus

Know that the Bible records stories about the Birth of Jesus

Know ways differing people and groups celebrate Christmas

Attitudes and Values:

Students are encouraged to develop an appreciation for differing ways the message of Christmas is presented and to begin to discern which ones have a focus on Jesus' birth.

Skills:

Investigate how their family and people in other places celebrate Christmas

Be creative in telling the story of Jesus' birth

Think Critically about how Christmas is portrayed around them

Reflect on what they believe to be the 'true' meanings of Christmas

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS – THE NATIVITY

Lesson		Lesson Structure	Resources	Notes & Assessment
1	The Church's Year and Advent	<p>Students are introduced to the Church's Year, and to Advent as the beginning of this..... a time of waiting and preparing.</p> <p>The teacher displays and explains the Advent Calendar to the class. Students could begin to prepare a weekly version of their own during this and subsequent lessons, adding appropriate 'windows' as they find them.</p>	Advent Calendar	Advent is a time when we can prepare for the coming or 'Advent-ure' of Christmas ... for the birth of Jesus.
2	Advent	<p>Students work in small groups to find out about one of the special 'advent' people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Prophets • John the Baptist, • Joseph and Mary ... people who waited for Jesus <p>They share their knowledge with the class</p>	<p>Bible Jeremiah 33.14-16; Malachi 3.1-2 (prophets) Lk 3 1-18; Mk 1.1-8 (John the Baptist) Lk 1.39-45 (Mary)</p> <p>A Prayer Book for Australia – Prayers of the Day pp464-473</p>	
3-4	The Christmas Narrative – God's Gift	<p>Students read the narratives about the birth of Jesus</p> <p>In groups, students reflect on God's gift to us in Jesus. They research and represent each of the key people and events they discover relating to Jesus birth; e.g. in written, pictorial or dramatic form</p> <p>Students dress in costume representing these key people. Digital images could be taken and downloaded for use on Christmas cards.</p>	<p>Bible Matt 1.18-25; Lk 1.1-14</p> <p>www.topmarks.co.uk/christianity/nativity/index.htm</p> <p>Lk 2.15-20 (shepherds) Matt 2.1-12 (magi)</p> <p>Access to costumes, materials and digital camera</p>	See a later lesson for the text to be written on these cards

5	Other givers and gifts	<p>In this lesson, students focus on the role of the magi / wise men in the Christmas story – i.e. who they were, their journey, their gifts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gold 2. Frankincense 3. Myrrh <p>They investigate why these gifts were given – what was the meaning behind them? How did they foretell or mirror later events in Jesus' life?</p> <p>Students could also examine the magi's conversation with the King ... whether they showed courage or were foolish in choosing not to return to the King</p>	Web links	
6	When Christmas is not very 'joyous'	<p>Students explore that while Christmas for most people is a joyous time for celebration, it can also be a challenging time for some people ... e.g. for those people who might be alone - away from family, living on the streets, lonely ... a time when they need love, hope or just a smile.</p> <p>Is Christmas always a happy time for everyone? What can the class do to help others have a better Christmas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christmas Bowl • Gifts for Anglicare • Giving tree • Food for a community based Christmas lunch <p>The class may decide to contribute to one of these.</p>	<p>The Chaplain or an Anglicare representative could be invited to talk about giving to those in need</p> <p>World Council of Churches brochures on the Christmas Bowl</p>	
7-8	Christmas in other places and other times	<p>Often Anglican schools will have people from other countries or Christian traditions in them. Students are encouraged to share stories from their own families, faiths, homelands ...</p> <p>Students could research celebrations from the northern hemisphere for example, or from Victorian England for comparison.</p>	<p>Websites</p> <p>Personal stories</p>	

9	Those who don't celebrate Christmas as a Christian festival	<p>Students investigate and compare Hanukkah e.g. what is being celebrated, how it is celebrated, the role of presents and prayers and coming together, the time of year it is celebrated,</p> <p>Students identify the similarities and differences between Hanukkah and Christmas.</p>	www.atschool.eduweb.co.uk-carolrb-judaism-judai1.html	<p>If the class consists of people from other faith traditions, ask them about their celebrations too.</p>
10	Christmas celebrations at school..... and at home	<p>Review the learning gained during this unit, especially in relation to the students' understandings of the true meaning of Christmas.</p> <p>Students discuss what they might now do at home in terms of their Christmas celebrations – affirm existing customs, or perhaps suggest some new ones</p>	<p>Card which can be used in a photocopier</p>	<p>Use the digital images from lesson 3, on which students now write their Christmas messages</p>

Assessments: possible tasks

The activities in lessons 7-8 or 10 could form an assessment task, or it may be that such tasks have value in their own right and might not be assessed