

Year 5 Religious Education: The Significance of Christmas

Learning objective: To understand the theological and historical significance of Christmas within Christianity and how it is celebrated as a religious festival.

Read each flashcard carefully to learn about the key elements of Christmas. Use these to test your knowledge of the nativity narrative and the traditions that follow.

What is the 'Incarnation' in Christian theology?

The belief that God became human in the person of Jesus Christ, which is the central mystery celebrated at Christmas.

What does the word 'Advent' mean and what is its purpose?

It means 'coming' or 'arrival'. It is a period of four weeks of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity.

Which two Gospels contain the accounts of the birth of Jesus?

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Why is Bethlehem a significant location in the Christmas story?

It is prophesied as the birthplace of the Messiah, fulfilling ancient scripture regarding the lineage of King David.

What is the traditional meaning of 'Emmanuel'?

It is a Hebrew name meaning 'God with us', reflecting the belief that Jesus is the presence of God among humanity.

Explain the significance of the gifts brought by the Magi.

Gold represented Jesus' kingship, frankincense represented his divinity as a priest, and myrrh represented his future suffering and humanity.

What is the liturgical colour most commonly associated with Advent?

Purple or violet, representing royalty, repentance, and preparation.

Compare the perspective of the shepherds and the Magi in the Nativity story.

The shepherds represent the humble and poor who were the first to hear the news, while the Magi represent wisdom and the inclusion of all nations in the message of Christmas.

What might happen if the story of the Nativity did not exist in Christian tradition?

The foundation for the belief in the Incarnation would lack its primary narrative, altering how Christians express their faith in God becoming human.

Justify why many Christians view Christmas as a festival of light.

It signifies the transition from darkness to hope, symbolising Jesus as the 'Light of the World' dispelling the darkness of sin and ignorance.

Compare and contrast the celebration of Christmas today with its original religious purpose.

While the original purpose is the commemoration of the birth of Jesus, modern celebrations often include secular traditions like gift-giving and decorating, which focus on family and community goodwill.