

Religious Education: The Significance of Christmas

Learning objective: To understand the theological and cultural significance of the Nativity story within Christianity and explore how it influences modern traditions.

Read each question carefully. Provide thoughtful, well-reasoned answers that demonstrate your understanding of Christian beliefs and the history of Christmas customs.

Christmas is a significant festival in the Christian calendar, commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ. For Christians, this event is central to their faith, marking the moment of the Incarnation—the belief that God became human. The narrative of the Nativity is primarily found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Alongside religious observance, Christmas has evolved to include various cultural traditions, such as gift-giving, which reflects the theme of generosity, and the use of evergreen decorations, which symbolise everlasting life.

Word bank: Incarnation · Nativity · Gospel · Advent · Generosity · Bethlehem · Tradition · Symbolism

1. Explain why the concept of the 'Incarnation' is considered the most important aspect of the Christmas story for Christians. (3 marks)

2. Compare and contrast the religious significance of Christmas with the modern secular traditions often seen in the UK today. (4 marks)

3. Max the monkey is looking at a calendar. He says, 'Advent is just a countdown to presents!' How would you correct him using your knowledge of religious history? (3 marks)

4. Justify why many Christians choose to give gifts to others during the Christmas season. Relate your answer to the wider narrative of the Nativity. (3 marks)

5. Nova the owl wants to know about the symbolism of the evergreen tree. Explain why this has become a traditional part of Christmas celebrations. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene that represents the concept of 'peace on earth'. Include at least two symbols that are traditionally associated with the Christmas season.



Extension challenge: What might happen if the story of the Nativity were removed from Christmas celebrations? Write a short reflection on whether the festival would retain its core meaning or if it would transform into something entirely different. Justify your reasoning using examples.