

These materials support the religious education enquiry process advocated in the local agreed syllabi in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. Some useful background to Christian beliefs relating to festivals can be found here: <http://www.reonline.org.uk/knowning/what-re/christianity/practices-and-ways-of-life/>

Engaging and Enquiring		
Focus	Questions to challenge and inspire	Suggested activities to deepen understanding
The word 'Christ'	What does the word Christ mean? Where does it originate from?	Look at the name 'Christ' – anointed one. Talk about where the word comes from. You can find more about this here https://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/what-does-christ-mean . Discuss the importance of names and links to the word 'Messiah' in the Old Testament depending on the age of the children.
A Nativity Set	Who is important in the story? What part does each character play?	Invite young children to play with a nativity set. Ask questions about who is important in the nativity set. Are some characters more important than others? Can anyone in the story be removed? Ask the children who in the nativity set they might identify with most. This is an interactive site to engage pupils with the characters: https://request.org.uk/restart/2017/11/03/whos-who-in-the-christmas-story/ Children could make their own nativity set using the resources here http://madebyjoel.com/2013/12/paper-city-nativity-scene-joyfully-expanded.html
Christmas Traditions	How do people decorate their homes? What traditions do you have as a family at Christmas?	Invite children to share what they like best about Christmas time. Talk about traditions including cultural and secular dimensions, as well as Christian religious ones. Where do these traditions come from? Does it matter if they do not have anything to do with the Christmas story? How have traditions changed over time? With older children the question about whether the Christian meaning behind Christmas has been lost or is relevant in the 21 st Century could be explored.
Exploring Christmas Cards	What images do the cards show? Are there links to the Christmas story on the cards? Are there references to Christian beliefs?	Consider how many Christmas cards show Jesus on them. Why might cards not show Jesus? What other things do they show? Why? Consider whether it is important that cards show Jesus or not.
Exploring a song	What particular things do people do at Christmas that make them busy?	A Busy Time of Year, by John Hardwick, http://www.genr8.org/songs/ . Explore what Christians might learn from this song. Is there also a message for everyone?

Exploring

Focus	Questions to challenge and inspire	Suggested activities to deepen understanding
Comparing Christmas around the world	<p>Is the 'busy' Christmas something that occurs around the world?</p> <p>Is the biblical narrative at the heart of celebrations in other countries? Does it matter if it is or isn't?</p>	<p>Compare two places in the world, or contrast the UK with for example Latin America. Explore the Christmas traditions, how Christians celebrate and any varying practices. Explore whether one of the two countries places the biblical narrative and beliefs about Jesus more at the heart of their celebrations or not.</p> <p>https://www.whychristmas.com/cultures/</p> <p>https://request.org.uk/restart/2014/11/26/christmas-traditions-2/</p>
Christian ideas about Christingle	<p>How does Christingle remind Christians of the nativity narrative?</p> <p>How are Christian beliefs expressed through the Christingle?</p>	<p>https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-you-can-do/fundraising-and-events/christingle/what-christingle</p> <p>This webpage provides background and information about the meaning of Christingle.</p> <p>It is a special year for Christingle- the 50th Anniversary. Talk about how the Christingle reminds Christians of Jesus during Advent.</p> <p>Also see: https://request.org.uk/restart/2017/11/17/christingle/</p>
Comparing the nativity narratives- different messages about Jesus?	<p>Why do Matthew and Luke have different accounts of who visited Jesus?</p> <p>What do the accounts tell Christians about Jesus?</p>	<p>Compare the two nativity narratives and what they tell Christians about Jesus.</p> <p>Luke 2 v1-20 and Matthew 1 v 18-2 v12</p> <p>Discuss why they might be different and what Christians learn about Jesus as the Son of God in each one. This year the GenR8 assembly used aspects both of the accounts.</p> <p>You might also look at other texts which focus on Jesus and link to Christmas such as Isaiah 7 v 14, Isaiah 40 v 1-11 and John chapter 1. Invite the children to do a silent debate using the text.</p> <p>A simple version of the story is available here: https://request.org.uk/restart/2017/11/18/bible-quest-the-nativity/ or https://request.org.uk/restart/2017/11/03/christmas-drag-and-drop-game/</p>
A Christmas Carol	<p>Does the song reflect the biblical narrative accurately? Does it matter?</p> <p>Why might Christians use this song in their worship?</p>	<p>Pick a well-known carol and unpack what it says about Jesus. Choose carefully! Look at the beliefs being portrayed in the carol. The following might work well: Hark the Herald Angels Sing, O Little Town of Bethlehem, Silent Night, Once in Royal David's City</p> <p>https://www.carols.org.uk</p>

Interview a Christian	Directed by the children	<p>Invite the children to ask a local Christian about how they celebrate Christmas. Invite the children to ask some more challenging questions about the busyness of Christmas and its commercialization (KS2) and their reflections on this. This may be alternative if you can't find a guest!</p> <p>https://request.org.uk/restart/2014/12/04/what-do-christians-do-at-christmas/</p> <p>You could also use the RE:ONLINE email a believer facility. http://pof.reonline.org.uk/people-of-faith/christianity/</p>
------------------------------	--------------------------	--

Evaluating and Expressing

Focus	Questions to challenge and inspire	Suggested activities to deepen understanding
Write a carol or poem	What is the meaning of Christmas for Christians?	Invite the children to write their own new carol or poem about Christmas. The focus could be on using the word 'Christ' or 'Messiah', perhaps in an acrostic, and explaining what this means as part of the task.
Design a shop window or webpage	Should shops make room for Jesus at Christmas?	Design a shop window or webpage for a Christian charity shop or other Christian retailer. Consider how the message of Christmas might be displayed in a sensitive way, whilst still allowing the shop to sell its goods. This would work best as a project with older KS2 pupils.
Modern re-write	What if Jesus came as a baby this week?!	Ask the children to rewrite the narrative in dramatic form as if Jesus was born this week. Where would the birth take place? Where would the holy family stay? Who would be the first visitors? Reflect and analyze the question: Would there be room for Jesus in society today? Would it matter?
Retelling the story	How does each character feel?	Younger children could re-tell the Christmas story to each other using role play or a nativity set (see above).