



A Journey through Christmas

Teacher Pack

December 2014



Guiding Principles

Evolving out of conversations with children, *Rain in the Desert* promotes a different approach to RE and Collective Worship. Using reflections based on a bible passage, the exhibition gives children of all faiths and none the space and time to consider their own understanding of their place and beliefs.

How to implement this in the classroom:

Approach

- * Speak quietly and slowly, the children will quieten down to listen.
- * Move slowly and deliberately explaining your actions providing a focus for the children

Preparation

- * Make the children comfortable by clearly indicating starting and finishing points
- * Provide a focal point of interesting objects with a coloured cloth to mark the church season
- * Use resources that engage all five senses
- * Give yourself permission to enjoy the experience with the children

Responses

- * Allow children the time and the space to respond in their own way
- * Ask open questions with no expectation of a particular (or even seemingly relevant response)
- * Avoid imposing your own understanding of a story or activity
- * Allow children to explore topics which may stir your own emotions and questions, do not feel you have to be able to provide the answers.
- * Set aside extra time for children to finish responses (perhaps at a break time)
- * Do not expect responses to be 'display worthy' and avoid marking work produced from a spiritual perspective for something else (e.g. spelling).



Response Objects

Response Symbols

During one of the response activities the children will have collected some symbols associated with the story to bring back to school in little bags. The symbols and their meanings as well as the labels the children will have read as they collected them are outlined below.

White/silver/gold flower (colour of Christmas)

The colour of Christmas is white and sparking – the colour of rejoicing.

'40' confetti (season of Christmas)

The season of Christmas lasts for 40 days. It is a time of feasting and celebration.

Sand paper (Joseph the carpenter)

Joseph was a carpenter. He had to leave his work and take his family to his family's home town to be counted.

Pink rose petal (the mother Mary, Heaven's Rose)

The mother Mary is sometimes known as Heaven's Rose. Pink symbolizes love and life.

Animal sticker (with the animals)

There was no room for them to stay in Bethlehem, but finally they found a place to rest with the animals.

White bandage/cloth (swaddling clothes)

They wrapped the baby in swaddling clothes.

Gift bow (God's gift)

Christians believe that Jesus was God's present to the world. Nothing would ever be the same again!

Hessian (rough clothes of shepherds)

The shepherds were seen as the lowest of the low. Their clothing would have been rough and scratchy.

Wool (sheep)

The shepherds were on the hillside watching their sheep – keeping them safe from thieves and wolves.



Response Objects

Feather (angel)

The angel brought good news of great joy.

Bell (angels – heavenly music)

The sky was filled with the heavenly music of angels singing.

Straw (manger)

They found the baby lying in the manger – the animal's feeding trough.

Shimmer stone (light of world)

Simeon said that Jesus would shine out as a light for the whole world.

Wooden heart (God's love)

The Bible says that God loves the world so much that he sent his only son.

Dove (offering)

Mary and Joseph came to the temple with an offering of two doves, to give thanks to God for the birth of their son.

Praying hands (prayerful)

Anna and Simeon came to the temple to be with God. They watched and waited and prayed.

Cross (Jesus' final journey)

Simeon said that Jesus would be rejected by many, but would bring the greatest joy to many others.

Jewel (Herod)

The powerful King Herod lived in a magnificent palace and wore fine silks and jewels.

Star (Magi)

Visitors came from the East. They are called the kings, the wise men, or the magi. They followed the star wherever it would lead them.

Gold washers, Frankincense, Myrrh (gifts)

They brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to give to the baby king.

Leather (donkey's saddle)

Joseph saddled up the donkey and took Mary and Jesus to safety in Egypt, to escape from King Herod's soldiers.



Christmas Journeys

Year Groups: Foundation, 1 and 2

Learning objectives:

- ◆ To think about the part journeys play in the Christmas story
- ◆ To begin to empathise with the characters who appear in the story
- ◆ To begin to explore concepts such as searching, perseverance and seeing Christ in

Questions for reflection:

- ◆ What can we remember about the Christmas story from our experiences in 'A Journey Through Christmas'?
- ◆ What special journeys have I made?
- ◆ I wonder how Babushka felt on her journey?

Activities and Experiences:

- ◆ Set up a crib scene as a focal point in the classroom. Include figures of Mary, Joseph, Jesus, shepherds and Magi, as well as the wooden donkey and the picture of Babushka brought back from the exhibition.
- ◆ Invite the children to recount the Christmas story based on their experiences at the exhibition. Give the children a set of images showing the different journeys that were made in the story, and work out then sequence in which they were made: Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem, the arrival of the shepherds, Mary and Joseph present Jesus at the temple in Jerusalem, the arrival of the Magi, Herod's soldiers in Bethlehem, the flight to Egypt. (N.B. as the narrative appears over several gospels there is not necessarily a clear-cut order). Discuss the emotions of the people on the different journeys. The children could split into small groups to discuss one picture, and then report back in a plenary. You could give younger children a list of emotions to use, e.g. frightened, angry, happy, peaceful.
- ◆ Tell the 'Story of Babushka', using symbols placed on a white cloth. In the story Babushka does not find the King of Kings, but encouraged by others she continues



RE KS1

searching and eventually comes to see the Christ Child in the children she visits. In this way she is able to encounter Jesus and his teaching to be loving and true. Which part of this story did you like best? Which is the most important part? I wonder how easy it is to keep on looking? I wonder if you have ever seen Jesus in the people around you?

- ◆ {Make sure that the children understand that the story is not from the Bible, but is a fable which helps to explain what Christians believe}
- ◆ Provide materials for the children to respond so the stories in any way they choose.
- ◆ End the session by gathering the children together in a circle and passing round the wooden donkey. As each child receives the donkey they could speak a few words or think silently of something they will remember from the stories they have heard.

Resources:

- ◆ Crib scene on a white cloth, plus the wooden donkey from 'A Journey Through Christmas' and the picture of Babushka from the Teachers' pack.
- ◆ Pictures from the Christmas story representing journeys undertaken: Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem, the shepherds, the presentation at the temple, the Magi, Herod's soldiers, and the flight to Egypt. The frescos in the Scrovegni or 'Arena' chapel in Padua provide a good sequence and contain all the images though the picture of Herod's soldiers during the massacre of the innocents may need to be cropped to cut out the pile of dead babies at the bottom, depending on the sensibilities of the children! (We will send a powerpoint of images)
- ◆ Script for the 'Story of Babushka' plus symbols (white cloth, figures of three wise men, a star decoration, a small box decorated as a present, a doll's house bed, a small covered basket, some small stars, a small wooden toy, a battery candle or tea-light). If you can't get hold of the symbols you could show pictures of them in a powerpoint whilst you tell the story.
- ◆ Response materials, which could include: art materials (e.g. white and coloured paper, pens, pastels, chalks, paints, modelling dough, collage materials, glue sticks); musical instruments; nativity costumes; illustrations of the different parts of the



Journeying to Find a King

Year Groups: 3-6

Learning objectives:

- ◆ To think about the different journeys made during the Christmas story
- ◆ To discover how Christians consider Jesus to be a king and what this might mean

Questions for reflection:

- ◆ What special journeys have I made?
- ◆ What does it mean to be a king?
- ◆ I wonder what I would do if I saw people in need?
- ◆ What message does this story give us about Jesus?

Activities and Experiences:

- ◆ Set up a crib scene on a white cloth as a focal point in the classroom. Include figures of Mary, Joseph, Jesus, shepherds and the Magi, as well as the wooden donkey and the picture of the fourth wise man brought back from the exhibition.
- ◆ Ask the children to work out the different journeys that were made during the Christmas narrative based on what they can remember from their experiences at 'A Journey Through Christmas' (e.g. Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem, the arrival of the shepherds, Mary, Joseph and Jesus travel to Jerusalem for the presentation at the temple, the journey of the Magi, Herod's soldiers travel to Bethlehem, the flight to Egypt). They could work in small groups and come back together for a plenary. You could provide Bibles for them to use for reference. Discuss the contrasting emotions of the people undertaking the journeys.
- ◆ Look together at a map of the world/Middle East to see the distances from Nazareth to Bethlehem (about 60 miles), Bethlehem to Jerusalem (about 5.5 miles) and the distance from Bethlehem to Egypt (over 400 miles). You could look at illustrations of the area/journeys. Look further afield to track the journey of the Magi (from modern Iraq, up the river Tigris, down the coast of Syria to Israel). Think about the difficulties



RE KS2

of the journey and how long it would take. Why bother to go? Discuss together what would make you want to go on so long a journey.

- ◆ The wise men were searching for a king. Make a list together of the attributes of a king, and then discuss contrasting attributes of Jesus the King e.g. lives in a palace/ born in a stable; rides in a carriage/rides a donkey; wears a jewelled crown/wears a crown of thorns; leads an army/comes in peace. You could use illustrations to explore the contrasts.
- ◆ Tell the 'Story of the Fourth Wise Man', using symbols placed on a white cloth. In this story the wise man does not find Jesus until the crucifixion, but en-route he gives away the gifts he brought for the baby to help others in need. The story has a strong message about seeing Christ in others, and of caring for the needy as an important way of serving him. What is the most important part of the story? How would I have acted if I were the wise man in the story? How do Christians encounter Christ today? {Make sure that the children understand that this is not a Biblical story, but a fable which helps to explain Christian beliefs and ideas}.
- ◆ Provide materials for the children to respond to the stories in any way they choose.
- ◆ End the session by gathering the children together in a circle and passing round the wooden donkey. As each child receives the donkey they could speak out loud or think silently a word or phrase describing something they hope to do or experience on their journey through life.

Resources:

- ◆ Crib scene on a white cloth, plus the wooden donkey and picture of the fourth wise man from 'A Journey Through Christmas'
- ◆ Map of the world / Middle East (and possibly illustrations of the area/journeys)
- ◆ Script for the 'Story of the Fourth Wise Man' plus symbols (white cloth, four boxes containing gold chocolate coins, frankincense crystals, myrrh crystals, and red and blue gems and a pearl; first aid kit; toy sword; chain; cross). If you can't get hold of the symbols you could show pictures of them in a powerpoint whilst you tell the story.
- ◆ Response materials, which could include: art materials (e.g. white and coloured paper, pens, pastels, chalks, paints, modelling dough, collage materials, glue sticks); musical instruments; illustrations of the



A Journey Through Christmas

Night and the Candlemaker

By Wolfgang Somary and Simon Bartram

All the world was sleeping. Just one person was awake, and he was all alone.

Just one light flickered on the windowsill of his simple workshop. He was the candlemaker.

Night crept through the town towards the candlemaker's workshop. Without a sound, Night slid under the door, then rose up behind the candlemaker as he dipped a long, thin reed into a vat of warm beeswax.

'Your work is useless!' hissed Night. 'My darkness can overpower whatever amount of light you may kindle during your brief lifespan,'

The candlemaker nodded and dipped another reed into the wax.

Night pressed on. 'You may light a candle, but my friend the wind will snuff it out!'

'I shall protect it with a glass lantern,' replied the candlemaker. 'Then the wind will become my friend and diffuse the light.'

After a while, Night whispered, 'I can bring down snow to cover your light!'

The candlemaker replied, 'And the light will melt it and mingle with the water, all the more to be reflected and seen.' The room was warm with the smell of beeswax.

The candlemaker dipped another reed, while Night, fidgeting with irritation, mumbled, 'Even then, you will never find the path that leads to the hills of hope, because my blackness is longer than your lantern beam.'

'I shall see enough to take one step at a time,' replied the candlemaker, 'and surely I shall be on the right path, because I walk with the light and the light walks with me.'

After a long moment of silence, Night mumbled, 'Don't you think it's time to catch some sleep?' 'No' replied the candlemaker. 'Tomorrow people will come to buy candles.'

'Tomorrow?' asked Night softly. 'What tomorrow? Are you sure there will be a tomorrow?' The candlemaker had nothing to say. He just carried on working. The candle in the window had nearly burnt out. He lit another with the dying flame and let it blaze high, and another, and another, so that even in their dreams, the people would know that he was attending to his task.

'What are you doing?' demanded Night angrily? 'Making tomorrow,' replied the candlemaker.



A Journey Through Christmas

The Story of Babushka

Lay down a white cloth as you say:

One winter night long ago snow covered the earth, ice covered the tree branches, and the cold wind blew. An old woman called Babushka was alone in her home. She was happy that she had a fire. She could stay warm. She didn't have to go outside.

Place figures of three wise men on the cloth as you say:

Suddenly, there was a noise at her door. When Babushka opened it, three old wise men entered her home. They were wearing the clothes of kings, and they carried wealthy gifts.

Hold a star over the figures of the wise men as you say:

They said to her: "Babushka, we have travelled far, following the brightest star. It will guide us to the place where the Son of God is to be born this very night. We have stopped to tell you of him - the King of Kings who comes to rule the world. He will teach all men and women to be loving and true. We bring him gifts. Come with us, Babushka!"

Place a small box decorated as a present on the cloth as you say:

Babushka looked around her little cottage. What sort of costly gift did she have to take to a king? She looked out of the window. It was cold outside but inside the fire blazed. Sadly she shook her head. She could not go.

Hold up the star again as you say:

Babushka bade the men farewell and watched from her door as they set off, following the starlight's path. She waved until she could no longer see them.

Place a small doll's house bed on the cloth as you say:

But that night Babushka could not sleep. She kept thinking about what the old men had told her. She kept thinking about the wonderful



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chance they offered – to see the baby king. She decided that it was a chance she could not miss.

Place a small covered basket on the cloth as you say:

She took up her basket and filled it with little things that might be treasured by a child – sweets, nuts, small wooden toys, and tiny candles. Then she wrapped up warm against the freezing night and set off to find the baby king.

Scatter some small stars on the cloth as you say:

Babushka looked up at the sky, searching for the star that would lead her to the Christ Child. “Oh dear” she said, for the as she lay in bed the stars had moved across the sky. Babushka decided to go on. She hurried up and down many roads.

Place a small wooden toy on the cloth as you say:

She asked every person she met, “I want to see the King of Kings. Where is he? I am bringing him things to play with.” But no one could tell her the way. Each person said, “Continue on Babushka, keep going.”

Place a lit battery candle on the cloth as you say:

So Babushka kept travelling. She travelled for years and years. But she never found the child. They say that she is still travelling, looking for the baby king, and every night on the eve of Christmas she comes into the towns and villages, carrying her basket of playthings. She enters each house where the children are sleeping. She holds a light close to the little children’s faces and sees the light of Christ reflected in them. Then she leaves a little gift in honour of each and every child and of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born on Christmas day.



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The Fourth Wiseman

Lay out a white story cloth whilst saying:

This is a story for the season of Christmas.

Present boxes containing gold chocolate coins, frankincense and myrrh crystals, lay them on the cloth and open them to reveal their contents whilst saying:

The best-known presents at the first Christmas are Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh, given by the three wise men.

Present a box containing blue and red gems and a pearl, lay it on the cloth and open it whilst saying:

However legend has it that there was a fourth wise man, whose name was Artaban. He travelled from Persia to meet the others, carrying with him his gifts for the new King - three precious jewels - a sapphire, a ruby and a pearl.

Present a first aid kit and lay it on the cloth whilst saying:

On his way Artaban met an old Jew by the roadside, who was almost dying from fever. He decided to stay with the sick man until he was well and so he missed meeting up with the other three wise men who were on their way southwards. The Jew told Artaban that the prophets said that the King would be born in Bethlehem. Artaban sold his costly sapphire to raise money for the sick man, and only when the man had recovered, did Artaban set out for Bethlehem.

Present a toy sword and lay it on the cloth whilst saying:

When he arrived in Bethlehem and made enquiries, he was told that the other wise men had left 3 days before. A young mother told him that the family he was seeking had fled, and that the people of Bethlehem were anxious because it was rumoured that King Herod was going to punish the town. While Artaban was in the Bethlehem, wondering what to do next, the soldiers arrived with orders to kill all the baby boys they could find. The young mother he had made friends with was very frightened because she had a young son, so when the captain of the soldiers ordered the child to be killed, Artaban came to the rescue and gave his ruby to the soldiers to buy the boy's life.



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Present a chain and place it on the story cloth whilst saying:

Artaban now had only one of his gifts left - the pearl, but he decided to keep searching for the king. Finally, after 30 years searching, he came to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. The city was buzzing with talk about the man named Jesus who claimed to be the Son of God and who was to be crucified. Artaban wondered whether he could use his last jewel to save the life of this man, Jesus. But as he hurried through the streets of the city Artaban came across a young girl who was crying. She told Artaban she was crying because she was going to be sold into slavery to pay her father's debts. Artaban could not pass by and leave the girl crying so he gave her the pearl, the last of his jewels.

At that moment Jesus passed by carrying his cross to the place of execution. He looked at Artaban, and on his face Artaban could see three big drops of blood that looked to him just like a sapphire, a ruby and a pearl. He knew that Jesus was the king he had been looking for all these years, and he also knew that although he was not able to worship his King, his precious gifts had been sold, or given away, to help others, and that was the same as giving them to Jesus.



Collective Worship

A light for the whole world

CW Focus: Making a Difference

Opening:

As we come together, we light this candle.

Light the candle

Christians believe that God sent his son, Jesus, to be a light for the whole world.

Christians believe that Christmas is the moment when everything changes - when God who can seem so far away comes close enough to be born as one of us.

The Bible says that when God created the world, he put the sun, moon and stars in the sky to light the day and the night.

Christians believe that Christmas is the moment when everything changes. Now the light is with us – shining out to lighten even the darkest places.

Stimulus:

Have you ever wondered if something that you did could make a difference and change the world? Have you ever felt too small and insignificant to be able to do something?

There are times when we can feel like there are big problems in the world that we can't do anything about.

I wonder, has there ever been a time when you've felt like that?

Here's a story about someone who kept going even when his task seemed impossible.

Tell the 'Night and the Candlemaker' story, using images from powerpoint.

Resources: candle, Candlemaker story and powerpoint (we will send this), contemplative music, art materials (e.g. white and coloured paper, pens, pastels, chalks, paints, modelling dough, collage materials, glue sticks), candle snuffer.

Response:

I wonder how the candlemaker felt when he first saw the darkness?

I wonder how easy it was for the candlemaker to keep on working and not listen to the darkness and give up?

I wonder where you can find the path that leads to the hills of hope?

I wonder how you can make tomorrow?

Listen to the music.

Is there anything in the world you want to change? What small difference could you make?

Now use the materials on your tables to respond to what we have thought about. You might want to draw a candle and write what you want to change or who you want to help on it.

After a few minutes, invite the children to come and place their responses near the candle – either on display or in the basket.

Help us to make whatever difference in the world that we can.

Closing:

Ask one child to snuff out the candle.

As we blow out the candle, we may think of our thoughts, our ideas, our conversations, perhaps our prayers spreading out, ready to go with us.

Let us go on with hearts filled with love, joy and peace.