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| **Strands** | The Bible and Christian Belief; The Story of the Church | | | |
| **Stage of Development** | Lower Secondary (Years 7-9) | **Created** May 2021 | | **Review** 2025 |
| **Aim** | This unit aims to engage students in the story of the nativity. It considers Christmas traditions including the Advent Wreath. It also looks at Mary’s role in the nativity story and the significance of the incarnation to Christians. | | | |
| **Content Descriptions** | **Knowledge and Understanding**   * A basic outline of the history of Christmas celebrations * About Christmas traditions including the Advent Wreath * Mary’s role in the Christmas story * The significance of the incarnation for Christians | | **Religious Studies Skills**   * Critical thinking * Concept cracking | |
| **Resources** | [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) | | This website allows you to look up passages from the Bible in a variety of translations. | | |
|  | [www.bible.com](http://www.bible.com) | | This website has several videos of Bible passages. This includes videos of each of the Gospels. | | |
|  | [www.request.org.uk](http://www.request.org.uk) | | This website is produced by the Anglican Church for use in schools in the UK. It has a number of explanations, videos and worksheets. | | |

| **Lesson** | | **Key Questions** | **Lesson Activity Ideas** | | **Resources** |
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| **1** | Christmas Traditions | What traditions do we celebrate at Christmas?  What are the origins of some of our Christmas traditions? | 20min  10min  5min  10min | Activity: Ask the students to complete a PicCollage (or similar) for Christmas. Ask for volunteers to share their PicCollage with the class.  Activity: Ask the students to select one Christmas symbol and investigate it’s history and meaning online e.g. candy cane, Christmas stocking, Christmas cards, Christmas cake etc. Discuss.  Research: Ask students to find out two facts about the origin of Christmas celebrations to share with the class from the following page. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christmas>. It may surprise some students to learn the connection between Christmas and a pagan celebration in the Roman Empire that celebrated the winter solstice.  Activity: Break the students into small groups and provide each group with print outs of the nativity story. Ask the groups to place the pictures in order and re-tell the nativity story. | Internet, device to make a PicCollage or similar digital poster.  helpful resource: <http://request.org.uk/festivals/christmas/christmas-traditions/>  Webpage: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christmas>  Print out: Pictures of the nativity story for each group. |
| **2** | The Advent Wreath | What is the meaning of the Advent Wreath? | 10min  30min | Research: Break the students into small groups and ask them to research the Advent Wreath and what each of the candles on the wreath symbolises (<http://request.org.uk/festivals/advent/advent/>).  Activity: In their small groups ask the students to construct a model of the Advent Wreath. Make it a requirement that they need to label and provide a brief written explanation of each of significant components. | Model materials e.g. greenery, coloured paper, cellophane, tape, glue etc |
| **3** | The Nativity Story | Where can we find accounts of the nativity story?  What happens in the Nativity story?  How should we interpret the differences in the nativity stories in Luke and Matthew? | 20min  20min  5min | Activity: Take students on a 5 minute walk around the school. When you get back to class ask every student to write a 5 sentence account of the walk. Next ask the students to compare their account with the person next to them and identify any similarities and differences. Following this compare the accounts as a class and discuss why there might be similarities and differences. Explain that the Christian Gospels are different peoples accounts of the same event. They are written by different people, at different times and with slightly different purposes. This means we can expect there to be some differences and similarities in the accounts.  Read (or watch on Bible.com): The nativity stories and compare the accounts in the Gospels (i.e. no mention in Mark, alluded to in John, but really only features in detail in the Gospels of Matthew (Matt 1:1 – 2:12) and Luke (Lk 1:26 - 2:20). Students identify any similarities and differences by completing the worksheet “The Nativity Gospels”.  Watch: The video by Darrel Bock on contradictions in the Bible <https://www.publicchristianity.org/isnt-the-bible-full-of-contradictions/>. Discuss Bock’s response to concerns about differences between the accounts in the various Gospels. | Bible, Bible Gateway, or Bible.com  Worksheet: The Nativity Gospels |
| 4 | Mary | What do we know about Mary?  What was Mary’s role in the nativity story?  What is Mary’s song about? | 5min  5min  20min  10min | Discuss: What did the students first think when they heard about COVID 19 for the first time. Did they believe that a virus that was in China was going to spread to the whole world and we’d have to shuts schools in Australia? Compare to how Mary felt when she was told God’s son, Jesus, was a baby inside her. Do you think people believed her?  Watch: Luke 1:26-38 on Bible.com (<https://www.bible.com/videos/3282-luke-1-26-56-from-lumoproject-dot-com>)  Worksheet: Mary. Ask the students to construct a summary of what we learn about Mary and Jesus in this passage. Ask the students to write a diary entry pretending they are Mary. Share and discuss as a class. You may want to watch this clip afterwards. (<https://request.org.uk/teachers/teaching-resources/festivals-resources/christmas-festival/2013/09/18/mary-film/> 5 min).  Watch: This modern version of Mary’s song (7:49min). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7heVsEo3FWY>. Discuss what is Mary’s Song is about? | Worksheet: Mary  Video: UK Bible Society video of Mary’s Song. |
| **5** | The Incarnation | What is the incarnation?  What does it mean that Christ is born as ‘one of us’? | 5min  5min  10min  15min  10min | Share: Ask students to share what they like most about celebrating birthdays e.g cake, family time, presents etc. Explain that at Christmas we celebrate Christ’s birthday. You could also explain the origin of the word Christ/mass.  Watch: This video on the First Christmas (2min) <http://request.org.uk/festivals/christmas/the-first-christmas/>. Revise what happens in the Christmas story.  Brainstorm: ask the students to imagine that an alien has landed on Earth and has asked them to explain what it’s like to be a human. Get the students to brainstorm a list of all the things they think the alien should know.  Read: Ask students to read the following extract on the significance of the incarnation to Christians <http://request.org.uk/issues/christmas-the-incarnation/>. After they have read the article ask the students to explain the incarnation to their partner.  Worksheet: Reflection. Ask the students to write a reflection on what Christmas means to them. | Video: REQuest video on Christmas <http://request.org.uk/festivals/christmas/the-first-christmas/>  Article on the incarnation  <http://request.org.uk/issues/christmas-the-incarnation/>  Extra Resource: Consideration of the Eucharist/ Communion service in A Prayer Book for Australia.  Worksheet: Reflection |