



**Theme/Unit:** An extraordinary baby: how Christians perceive the birth of Jesus

**Key concept:** Incarnation

**Enquiry:** *Why is incarnation important to Christians?*



**Unit Summary:**

In this unit, children learn about the word incarnation by thinking about when it has been represented in recent film and books. They focus on how incarnation is told by Christian gospels in their stories about Jesus.

**Prior Knowledge:**

Children should have read stories by the Gospels before. They should know that stories of Jesus are in the New Testament. They may recall how the Holy Trinity thinks of Jesus and God as one.

**Year 5/6 Objectives:**

- Communicate** Children and young people can explain their own responses to the human experience of the concepts explored.
- Apply** They can explain examples of how their responses to the concepts can be applied in their own lives and the lives of others.
- Enquire** Children and young people can explain key concepts that are common to all people (A concepts) as well as those that are common to many religions and they can describe some key concepts that are particular to the specific religions studied.
- Contextualise** They can explain how these concepts are contextualised within the beliefs and/or practices and/or ways of life of people living a religious life in the religion studied.
- Evaluate** They can evaluate the concepts by explaining their value to people living a religious life by drawing on examples. Talking with other children will enable them to discern for themselves and so identify and describe in increasingly complex ways some of the issues raised.

**Key Vocabulary:**

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| <b>Jesus</b>         | A first-century Jewish preacher and religious leader. He is the central figure of Christianity. Most Christians believe he is the incarnation of God the Son and the awaited Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. |
| <b>God Incarnate</b> | Christians believe that Jesus is <b>God Incarnate</b> , which means God in the flesh.   |
| <b>Incarnation</b>   | A person who embodies in the flesh a deity, spirit, or quality.   |
| <b>Gospels</b>       | The four <b>gospels</b> that we find in the New Testament, are of course, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.  |

**Spiritual:** providing an opportunity to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people’s faiths, feelings and values.

**Moral:** developing an ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues.

**Social:** sharing our own experiences and respond to the experiences of others. Working and socialising with others in a range of learning opportunities.

**Cultural:** willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical and cultural opportunities. Giving children an interest in and an opportunity to explore different faiths and beliefs.

**Text drivers/Resources:**

- *Good news* children’s Bibles
- Quote from *Beyond ourselves*, by Catherine Marshall

- Incarnation writing framework.

| 5-Step Enquiry: <i>Why is incarnation important to Christians?</i> |   | Assessment   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Step 1</b>  | <p><b>Enquire: <i>What is the meaning of incarnation?</i></b><br/>           Give out copies of extract from <i>Beyond ourselves</i>, by Catherine Marshall. Discuss the following in pairs.<br/> <i>What was the scientist doing? What was his problem? What was his solution?</i><br/> <i>How would it help the ants? How would it help him?</i><br/>           List suggestions on the board to keep for later. Look up meaning of <i>incarnation</i> (also <i>incarnate</i>) in a dictionary/thesaurus. <i>Have pupils heard of this idea before? Who has read the Harry Potter books, notably the Goblet of Fire?</i> Lord Voldemort, who had been in existence but without a body for a time, took on bodily form, and was, therefore, an incarnation. Discuss this idea.</p>   | <p><b>Basic:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss incarnate/incarnation</li> <li>• Create a word bank</li> <li>• Create a dictionary definition</li> </ul> <p><b>Learned:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video a conversation about incarnation</li> <li>• Discuss questions such as existence – how do we know we exist? Does this look the same for everyone?</li> </ul> <p><b>Deeper:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the opposite (robotic, computerised) how would this affect our wider world?</li> <li>• Make comparisons between the two</li> </ul> |
| <b>Step 2</b>  | <p><b>Contextualise: <i>How is the concept of incarnation expressed within the Christian birth stories?</i></b><br/>           Explain that Christians believe that Jesus was God made into a man (God incarnate) and is also referred to as <i>God the Son</i>. <i>How do the birth narratives of Jesus reflect the concept of incarnation?</i> Give the following Gospel stories to pairs/small groups of children with the question: <i>What aspects of the story reflect the concept of incarnation/show the baby is God made man (God incarnate)?</i><br/>           Luke 1:26–38.<br/>           Matthew 2:1–12 and 13–15.<br/>           Luke 2:8–20 (The shepherds).<br/>           Volunteers with each reading report back to class. Discuss together, teacher questioning carefully to draw out which bits of the stories point to Jesus being God incarnate. Make notes on board. Complete writing framework.</p> |  |
| <b>Step 3</b>  | <p><b>Evaluate: <i>What is the value of the idea of incarnation to Christians?</i></b><br/>           Pose this question for the children to discuss: If an ancient scroll was found which revealed that Jesus was not God made into a man (God incarnate), what difference would that make to Christians? Children discuss in groups. They should write down comments that they think Christians might make. Compare as a class. Children complete the writing frame: The idea of incarnation is important to Christians because ...</p>   |  |
| <b>Step 4</b>  | <p><b>Communicate: <i>What is your own response to the concept of incarnation?</i></b><br/>           Ask children to discuss the following in pairs: If God were to take on a human form now, what do you think he/she would be like? What would he/she do? (Encourage discussion on whether God would take on a male or female body – give reasons.) Pupils draw own picture annotated with the following: name, nationality, male/female, mission in life, personality. Write down one question you would like to ask him/her. Title of piece of work: If God was one of us.<br/>           NB You need to be aware of sensitivities and different beliefs in the class before this step as some children may not want to draw God (eg children from Muslim families). Others may come from religious families with specific beliefs or atheist families. Pictures of mankind or the world could be done instead.</p>      |  |
| <b>Step 5</b>  | <p><b>Apply: <i>How does the concept/idea of incarnation affect us and others?</i></b><br/>           Share points of view from Step 4. Do pupils think that they will always think the same way as they do now? Why? What might make them change their views? Why do people change their views?<br/>           (Encourage open-mindedness and respect of viewpoints of others.)</p>  |  |





