



Giving and receiving at Christmas

- Why do people give gifts at Christmas?

Introductory lesson: *The Wise Men*: linking symbolism to giving:

Recap: on the symbolism of the cross for Christians.

Show: a picture of a child in need, eg a street child in Brazil.

Ask: Does this child feel loved? What does this child need? What does this child want?

Discuss: the need for all humans to feel wanted, loved and cared for.

Read: the story of 'Guess how much I love you?'. Refer back to the picture of outstretched arms and link to what Christians believe about the cross. Christians believe that God sent Jesus into the world because he wanted to show everyone how much he loved them. See the Bible verse, John 3:16.

Fold and tear a paper cross shape. (e-mail us for a copy of the instructions.) Repeat, tearing a Celtic cross shape and explain the symbolism of the circle, that God's love never ends.

Activity: fold and tear paper crosses out of coloured paper. Stick the crosses into RE books or onto A4 paper. Using a ruler to measure the spacing, copy the letters of 'Christians believe' across the shape and 'Jesus loves everyone' vertically down the shape, intersecting at the second 's' of Jesus and the final 's' in 'Christians'. Decorate the page, perhaps with faces.

Further lesson ideas:

- Talk about giving presents as Christmas? What are the children hoping to receive? What are they intending to give? Why do we give presents at this time of year?
- Think about the difference between what we want and what we need. Show a picture of a deprived child. What are his needs and wants? Compare this to our own list. Look at the work of the [Samaritans Purse](#) Shoebox appeal and fill a class shoe box to give to a child in need at Christmas.
- Does something have to be expensive to be worth giving? Read the story of the Widow's Mite, to be found in Mark 12:41-44 (or contact us for a children's version of the story). Click [here](#) for a picture by James Christensen to accompany the story.
- Look at the story of St Nicholas, the first Father Christmas, (the Trust has a video of this) or find it on the [Why Christmas](#) website.
- Read the Christmas story and look at a painting of the Wise Men, such as 'The Adoration of the Kings' by Foppa. Explain that although three gifts are mentioned in the Bible, there were probably more than three wise men - this picture shows several people. Mary is wearing a blue cloak; blue is the colour of heaven. The King in the painting is depicted without a crown and bowing down before the baby. Why has the artist done this?
- If appropriate, explain the symbolism of the three gifts in a simple way.
 - **Gold** - a very valuable metal, considered to be the 'king' of all metals. A gift to show how important Jesus was.

- **Frankincense** - a sweet smelling gum, which comes from a tree. It was used as a perfume and was very expensive. It was often burned in the Temple as a sign of worship to God. By giving it to Jesus, the wise men were saying that he was to be worshipped.
 - **Myrrh** - also a type of gum from a plant. It was used as a medicine and as a preservative and would be used when Jesus was buried. This gift foretold the suffering that Jesus would face.
-
- What gifts would we give to a baby today?
 - Look at Christy Kenneally's poem 'Give Yourself' (from Cracking RE, copies available from us). The little girl in the poem gives her time to an elderly lady.
 - What could Christians give as a gift to Jesus today?

Activity

- Create a class nativity scene from craft materials and place it inside a large box. Decorate the box to look like a present and write a label.

Our complimentary lesson plan 'Jack's letter to Father Christmas' was sent to all Year 2 teachers in the Watford area. Copies are still available - e-mail us at the address on the Home page. The accompanying worksheet, which could be used as a stand alone activity can be downloaded [here](#).