

## BIBLE PASSAGES

- The Angel Gabriel visits Mary: Luke 1:26-38
- Joseph finds out about the birth: Matthew 1:18-25
- Jesus is born: Luke 2:1-7
- The shepherds hear the news: Luke 2:8-20
- The Magi visit Jesus: Matthew 2:1-12
- The family flee Israel: Matthew 2:13-23
- Who Jesus was and why he came: John 1:1-18

*Things to think about...*

Where do you find the following in the story: family scandal, fear, homelessness, refugees, violence?

If this story happened today, where would Jesus be born, and under what circumstances?

Why is Jesus' arrival such good news, according to the Bible?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Do a 2 minute word association challenge: Christmas. What does 'Christmas' mean to you and why? What do you think lies at the heart of Christmas?

Look over the Christmas story, as found in the Bible. Try to imagine it is the first time you have heard it. What do you notice? Write a list of questions you have about the first Christmas story. Share them with each other and try to answer them as a group.

Imagine a state visit to your town from the Queen. Where would she stay? Who would she meet? Compare this to the arrival of Jesus, 'the Prince of Peace'. If this is how God chose to come to earth, what impression of God does it give you? What does this suggest to you about who Jesus would be?

What does 'peace on earth and goodwill to all men' mean to you? Where is it found? Where could/should it be found?

## exploRE TV: *Spotlight Series*

## QUOTATIONS

- "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighbourhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes..." *John, one of Jesus' first disciples*
- "This is the message of Christmas: We are never alone." *Taylor Caldwell, English novelist*
- "How many observe Christ's birthday! How few, His teaching!" *Benjamin Franklin, 18<sup>th</sup> Century American politician*
- "What kind of Christmas present would Jesus ask Santa for?" *Salman Rushdie, Author*



Watch '*Why Christmas?*' on [www.explore-tv.co.uk](http://www.explore-tv.co.uk).

*Use these ideas to explore the topic further.*

## CREATIVE REFLECTION

Think about the words of John, reflecting on the coming of Christ: **'The light keeps shining in the dark, and darkness has never put it out.'**

Dim the lights. Spend a moment thinking about the things that make our world and our lives 'dark'. Then light a candle (or project a picture of one). What is the light that will destroy these dark places? What can we do this Christmas to make the world a little lighter?

**Resources:** *Candle, dimmed environment*

## ACTIVITY IDEAS

Watch some Christmas-themed adverts via YouTube – e.g. for popular supermarkets or department stores. What impression of Christmas do these give? Is it accurate? How does it connect to the Christian celebration?

Take the Christmas quiz (on the explore TV website). How much do you know about what really happened that first Christmas?

Create your own mini-nativity in groups, using the Bible passages, where each group takes one or two episodes to cover the whole story. What surprises you about this story?

Write a 'Christmas' acrostic poem to communicate the message of Christmas.

**For more resources visit [www.exploreforschools.co.uk](http://www.exploreforschools.co.uk)**