

# ADVENT – The Nativity

## What is Advent?

During Advent we are counting down to arrival of God through the birth of Jesus. Everyone thinks they know the special story of Jesus' birth, they've probably performed it or watched it in a school nativity play. However, how much of what we think we know actually happened?

First of all, there were not three kings who came to visit Jesus as we might all think. We can guess that some wise men (possibly astrologers) travelled to visit Jesus, but we don't know how many of them there were. It is just a tradition to say that there were three because there were three gifts – gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Secondly, there probably wasn't a star shining over Jesus as he was born. The wise men would not have been able to visit Mary as soon as she had given birth, as in Judaism, it's a tradition that the woman would need to 'purify' after the birth. So it would have been much later, when the wise men would have 'followed' the star.

What we can know about Jesus' birth story is the way it shows us how he was special. He had visitors from far away, the King at the time was so worried he ordered baby boys to be killed!

<http://formtimeideas.com/>



## Relates to us

Find out what is going on in the [world](#) or watch [BBC newsround](#)

*Lord, we place these people and situations before you and ask you to help. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

### What does advent mean for us?

After Jesus' birth, his family had to flee from the tyranny of King Herod. Herod was so worried about the baby that was 'to be a King' he had ordered all baby boys under the age of two to be killed. Jesus, Mary and Joseph left and fled to Egypt to stay until Herod had died. So Jesus, in fact, was a refugee.

This Christmas think of how many refugees there are around the world who have been forced to flee their homes and country for their own safety.

The UN quite recently announced that the number of people living as refugees has exceeded 50 million for the first time since WW2.

Imagine having to live in a country where you don't speak the language, have never tried the food and are unsure of many customs and traditions. Think about how you feel to spend Christmas away from home, from family and friends. What can we do to help?

# Biblical link

Matthew 2

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'

This shows us how Jesus became a refugee.

## Key Questions and activities....

- What does refugee mean?
- Design a Christmas card that can show us what Christmas is really all about.
- What does the nativity story show us about Jesus?

Thought for the day

Daily bible reading



This week, Sacred Time reminds us of the British values of **mutual respect and tolerance for those of other faiths or of no faith, rule of law and individual liberty.**

**Mary and Joseph were following the rules at the time by travelling to take part in the census, Mary made the choice to follow what the angel had said and have the baby. Finally, the fact that shepherds and rich wise men visited Jesus, shows us that he came for everyone, regardless of their status in society. Throughout his life he showed us that love and respect for others is what matters most – can we try to follow his example this year and help those we see in need, regardless of their status in society?**

## Prayer

Let us welcome God's bright and shining morning star,  
A child  
born in a manger,  
A son  
sent to redeem the world,  
A saviour  
come to renew all things.  
May his light shine on you,  
May his light shine in you,  
May his light shine through you,  
The light of God's Christmas star be with you,  
in this season of new birth.

