

## Do Christian celebrations and traditions help Christians understand who Jesus was and why he was born?

## **Christmas Customs**

There are lots of different ways that people celebrate Christmas and Advent:

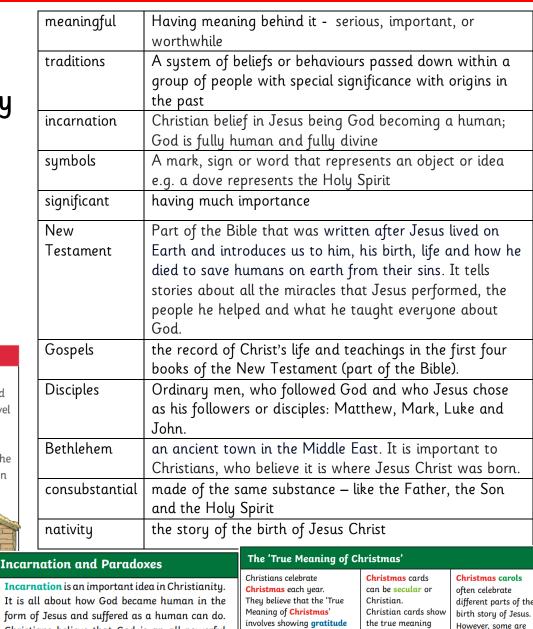
- Christmas trees symbolise the everlasting life of God;
- Mistletoe is a symbol of peace and joy and is used to show friendship and goodwill;
- Advent calendars, wreaths and candles are different ways of counting down to Jesus' birthday;
- · Christingles symbolise the importance of Jesus and the gospel.

## 'The Nativity' Story

The Christmas Story is also called 'The Nativity'. In this story, an angel appeared to Mary and told her that she was going to have a baby and that he would be the Son of God and he would be called Jesus. While Mary was pregnant, a census took place and she and Joseph (her husband) had to travel to Bethlehem - their town of birth.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, there was no room at any inns for them to stay in but they were allowed to stay in a stable. This is where Jesus was born. Angels told shepherds on a hillside that the Son of God had been born so they went to visit him in Bethlehem. Wise men spotted a bright star in

the sky and knew this meant a king had been born so they went to visit with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. King Herod heard that a new king had been born from the wise men and ordered that all the baby boys in the area be killed. An angel appeared in a dream to Joseph and Mary and warned them so they travelled to Egypt with baby Jesus and were safe.



to God for what he did and

Jesus Christ, by worshipping

thinking of the poor and less

remembering the birth of

him, giving gifts and

fortunate.

of Christmas by

images from the

displaying important

Christmas story to

remind Christians

celebrate Christmas

about why they

more focused on

traditions associated

with Christmas and

are sung as general

celebrations of the

Christmas festival.

Incarnation is an important idea in Christianity. It is all about how God became human in the form of Jesus and suffered as a human can do. Christians believe that God is an all-powerful creator and a pain bearer and that through his incarnation as Jesus, he was not a 'big giant in the sky', but a regular human with qualities found in all of us. God being an all-powerful creator and a vulnerable human is a paradox.