

## ***Mr. Stricken's Nativity Nightmare***

### **A Christmas Unit of Work for Upper Key Stage 2**

**By Giles Freathy**

With Rob Freathy, Karen Walshe, Jonathan Doney & Geoff Teece



**Ask-it-all Ava**  
Interviewer /  
Empathiser



**Debate-it-all Derek**  
Philosopher / Critic



**Have-a-go Hugo**  
Participator /  
Experiencer



**See-the-story Suzie**  
Narrator / Interpreter

Based on *The RE-searchers: A New Approach to RE in Primary Schools*

## ***Mr. Stricken's Nativity Nightmare***

### **An example of how to teach Christmas to Upper Key Stage 2 using the RE-searchers approach.**

This unit of work demonstrates how the RE-searchers approach can be used to explore two questions:

- What happened at the birth of Jesus?
- What is the 'true' meaning of Christmas?

The unit uses a fictional context to demonstrate how and why these two questions might present a pressing problem to an individual in a context with which pupils will be familiar. The fictional Headteacher, Mr. Stricken, has got into trouble with his school's Governors. They didn't approve of the Christmas show he wrote for his school last year: *Mary and Joseph go to Mars*. The Governors complained that it should have treated the Christmas story with more respect. Mr Stricken needs the pupils' help to research the aforementioned questions.

After doing some wider reading, pupils engage in research to answer these questions on Mr. Stricken's behalf. They do this with the assistance of the four RE-searcher characters:



**Ask-it-all Ava**  
Interviewer /  
Empathiser



**Debate-it-all Derek**  
Philosopher / Critic



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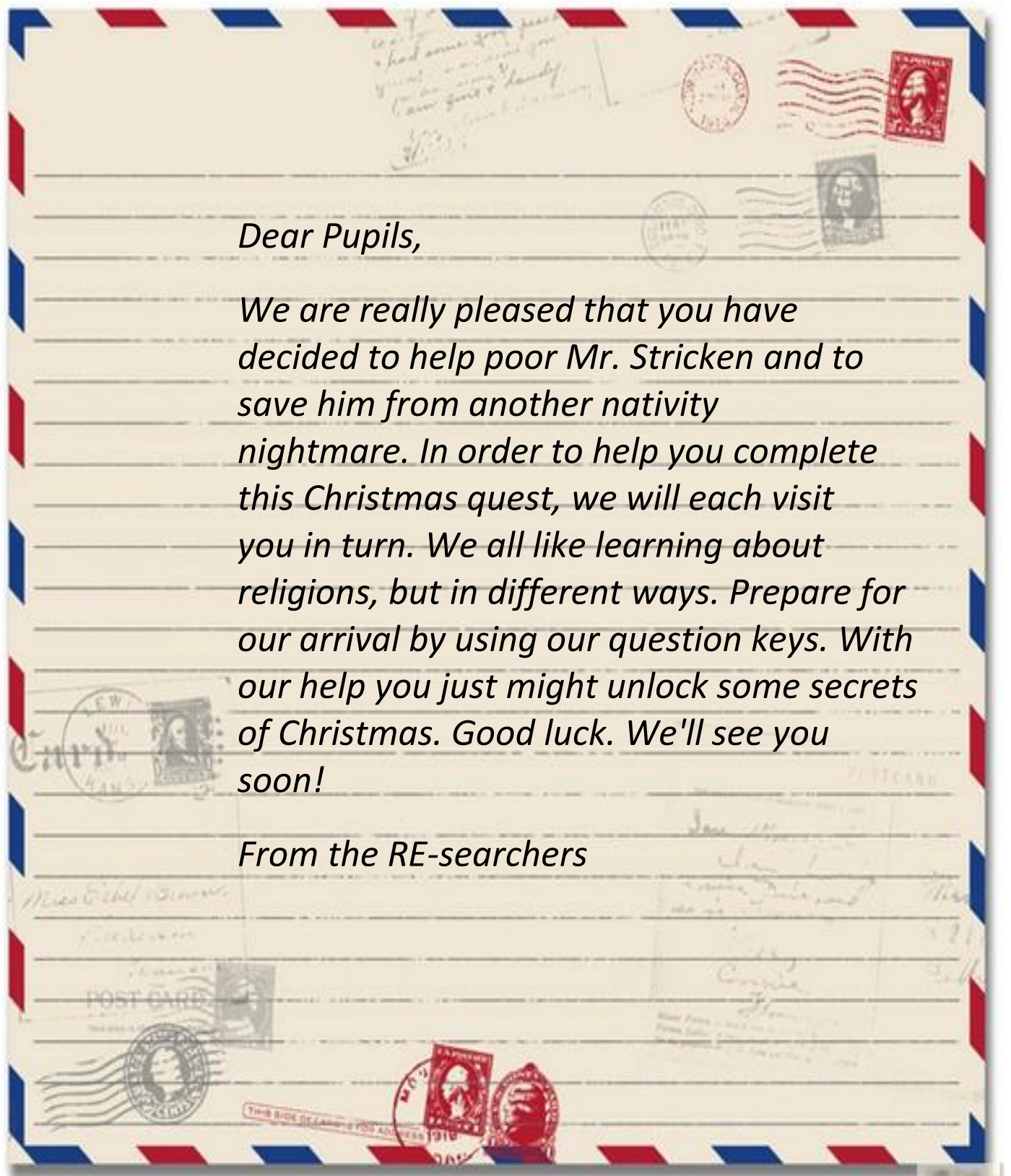
For full character descriptors and profiles, please see our free e-book:  
*The RE-searchers: A New Approach to Religious Education in Primary Schools.*

## Will four Christmas visitors enable us to help Mr. Stricken?

| Lesson 1 Enquiry Question: What do we know, and need to know, to help Mr. Stricken?   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| Learning Question: Can I generate questions about 'Christmas'?  | Research Activities   | Challenge   | Support  |
| <b>Additional resources required:</b><br>Images of events from traditional nativity stories. Large pieces of paper (one per group). | <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Explain to the class that they have received an urgent message – an SOS – a cry for help. Show them a video SOS message from a distraught Headteacher, Mr. Stricken, who has got into trouble with his school's Governors (Resource 1.1) (<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4966dbjfh2E">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4966dbjfh2E</a>). The Governors didn't appreciate the Christmas show he wrote for his school last year: <i>Mary and Joseph go to Mars</i>. They complained that it should have treated the Christmas story with more respect. It should have been based on what really happened at the first 'Christmas', and it should have reflected the 'true' message of Christmas. The problem is that they didn't tell Mr Stricken what really happened or what is the 'true' message of Christmas. The class are asked to provide assistance to Mr. Stricken.</p> <p><b>Input</b></p> <p>Ask the pupils how they think they could help Mr. Stricken. Ask them what they know already about the Christmas story. Then repeat the questions whilst prompting them with images of events from traditional nativity stories. These images can be effectively sourced from the world-wide web, books, magazines, and so forth. Ask them what they don't know and might need to find out. Challenge them to generate questions about an image of a nativity account using the following openers: <i>What?</i>, <i>Why?</i>, <i>Who?</i>, <i>When?</i>, and <i>How?</i> Explain that on each table there is a large sheet of paper. Pupils should use 'Post-it Notes' around the edge of the table to recall everything they know about the topic, and the questions to which they don't know the answers. One of David Hyerle's 'Thinking Maps' (e.g. the circle map) could be adapted for this purpose (<a href="https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/circle-maps-nea">https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/circle-maps-nea</a>) with the pupils' prior 'knowledge' written within the circle and questions arranged within the frame.</p> <p><b>Main Activity</b></p> <p>In mixed ability groups, pupils continue and complete the activity begun as a whole class during the 'input'.</p> <p><b>Mini-plenary</b></p> <p>Explain that the class have been sent a Christmas present. Reveal the present to the class. A wrapped shoebox would be suitable (alternatively Resources 1.2 and 1.3 could be used as a substitute). Explain that the present is from a team of investigators who research religions. They are called the RE-searchers: DD, AA, SS and HH. Inside the present are four 'keys', each with a tag on (Resource 1.3). Each key pertains to a character, and on each label are two question openers. Also in the box is a letter (Resource 1.2). Read this letter to the class.</p> <p><b>Main Activity Continued</b></p> <p>Each pair of pupils are challenged to generate further questions using the openers shared on the question keys.</p> <p>AA: What do you do to celebrate...? What does ..... mean to you?<br/>           HH: How does it feel to .... at Christmas? How does a believer feel to celebrate... at Christmas?<br/>           DD: Is it true that....? Is ..... the right thing to do?<br/>           SS: What happened in the story of....? How do people understand the story of... differently?</p> <p><b>Plenary</b></p> <p>Pupils submit a range of questions to the teacher (including examples made with the RE-searcher questions keys). Pupils sort the generated questions into open and closed questions. Ask which questions most interest them, and ask them to suggest what kinds of investigation would lead to the answers.</p> | <p>Which questions interest you most? Why?</p> <p>How could you find out the answers you do not know?</p> | <p>What do you know about Christmas?</p> <p>What can you see in the images?</p> <p>What questions could we ask about these images?</p> |

*Help... please help! My name is Mr. Stricken. I am the Headteacher of a small primary school. Last year I wrote my school's Christmas play. I thought it was good. The children enjoyed it and they loved the songs. However, last week the Governors of my school held an emergency meeting. They said that they hated last year's play. They said 'Mary and Joseph go to Mars' was not an appropriate title and the song 'Clip, clop donkey astronaut' was "historically inaccurate"! The Governors said that the Christmas play should be based on what actually happened at the birth of Jesus, and should reflect the true meaning of Christmas. The problem is... I just haven't got a clue about either. Please... I beg you. Can you and your class help me find out what really happened at the birth of Jesus, what is the true meaning of Christmas, and help me to decide what I should call the next Christmas play?*







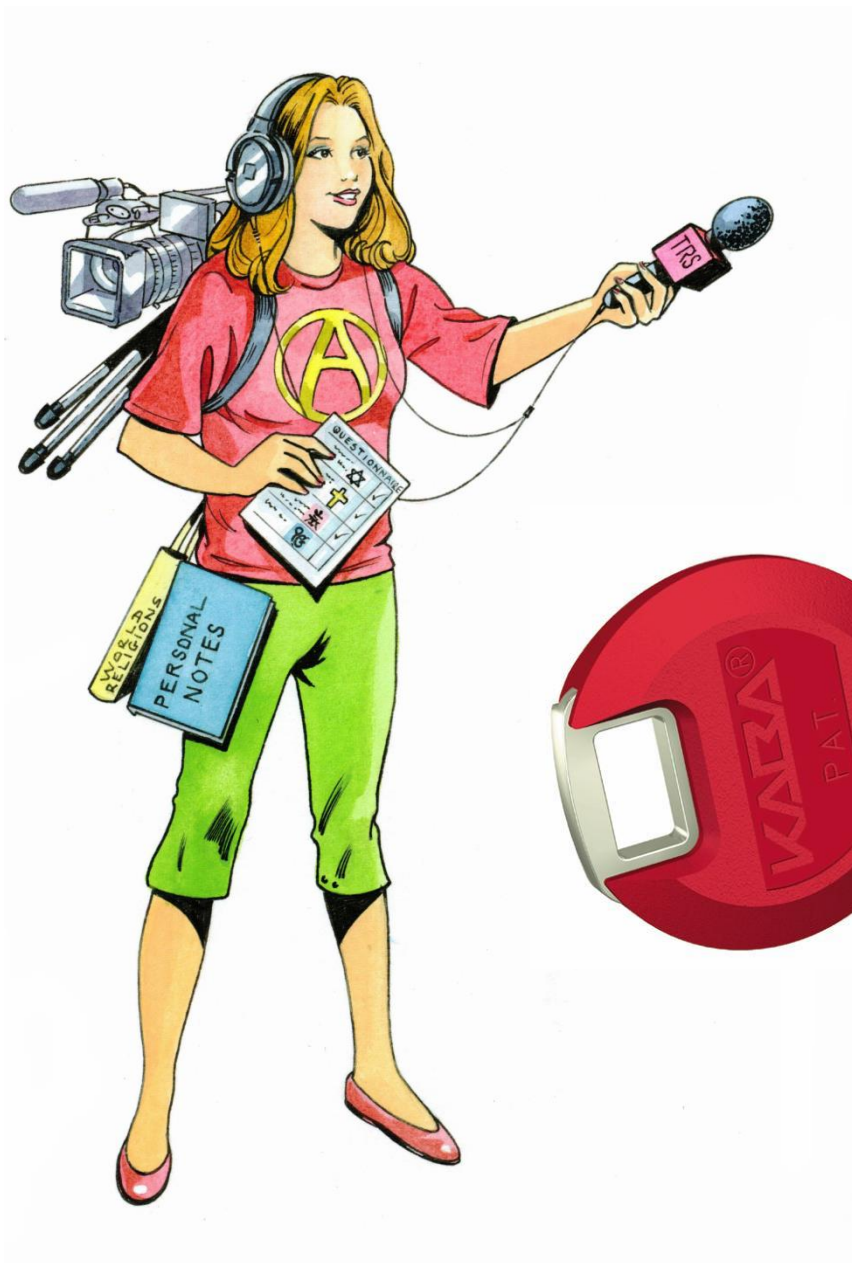
# See-the-story Suzie

## Key Questions

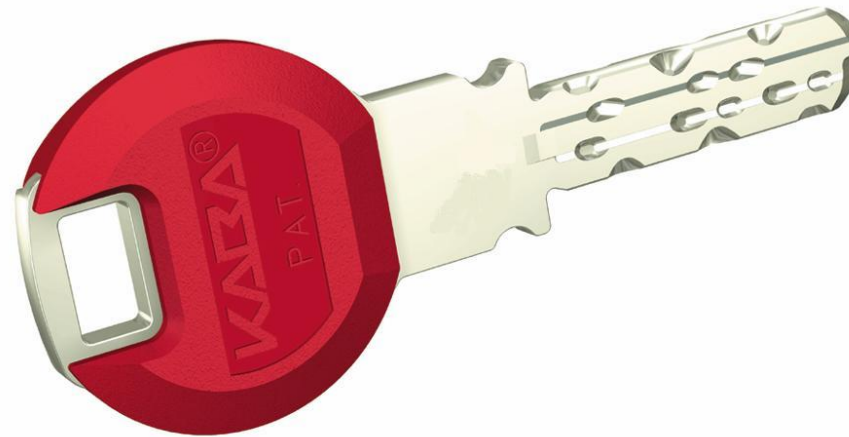


What happened in the story of ... ?

How do people understand the story of ... differently?



# Ask-it-all Ava Key Questions



What do you do to celebrate ... ?  
What does ... mean to you?



# Have-a-go Hugo

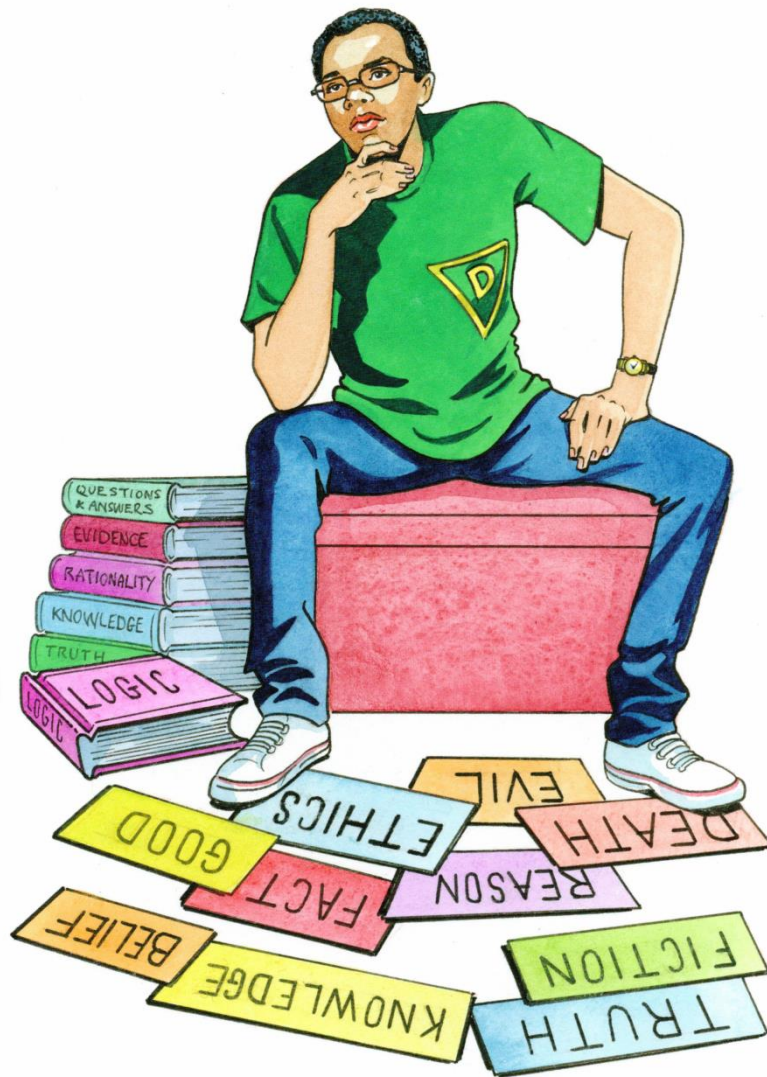
## Key Questions

How does it feel to ... at Christmas?

How does a believer feel to celebrate ...  
at Christmas?







# Debate-it-all Derek

## Key Questions



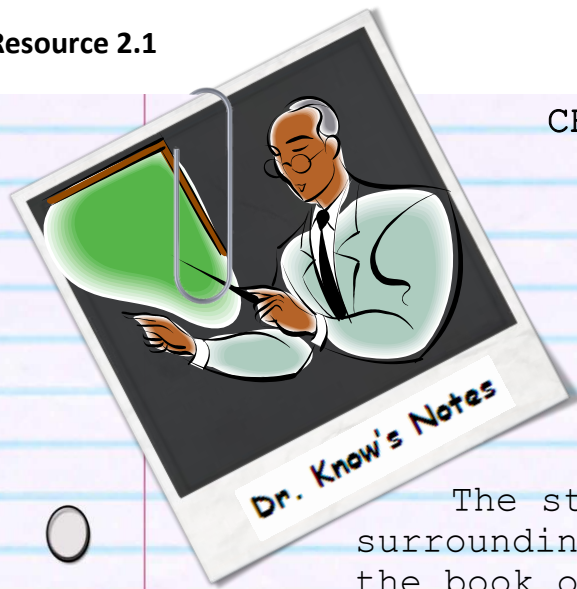
Is it true that ... ?

Is ... the right thing to do?

# Mr. Stricken's Nativity Nightmare: Lesson 2



| Lesson 2: Enquiry Question: What does Dr. Know know?  |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| Learning Question: Can I retrieve information and show understanding of a non-fiction text? | Research Activities   | Challenge  | Support  |
|   | <p><b>Introduction</b><br/>Elicit Mr. Stricken's dilemma from the pupils (e.g. Can you remember why Mr. Stricken wrote to us? Can you recall what he needs to find out?). Ensure all pupils are aware that Mr. Stricken needs their help in finding out the answers to the following questions in order to write a new play for Christmas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What really happened at the birth of Jesus?</li> <li>2. What is the 'true' meaning of Christmas?</li> <li>3. What should he call his play?</li> </ol> <p><b>Input</b><br/>Remind them that last time some pupils suggested we could find out the answers to Mr. Stricken's questions from reading relevant books, articles, websites, etc. (If this suggestion wasn't made, this might be something you recommend as 'the first thing to do when investigating something new'.) Explain that you know someone who thinks he is a bit of a religious expert and who has sent us something to read. Ask the pupils the following questions, until they have a clear idea about the purpose of reading, expectations of them as readers, and strategies that they are permitted/encouraged to use to whilst reading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why are we reading this?</li> <li>• How should we use this source of information to get what we need?</li> <li>• How will we read these texts?</li> <li>• What could we do to help us understand this better?</li> <li>• What could we do if we do not understand something?</li> <li>• What information should we note from this?</li> </ul> <p>A suggested strategy might be to highlight text which gives information about what may have happened at the birth of Jesus in one colour, whilst highlighting text about the message/meaning of Christmas in a different colour. Pupils could be taught how to take notes under these two headings.</p> <p><b>Main Activity 1</b><br/>Pupils read '<b>Dr. Know's Notes</b>' (Resource 2.1: Text adapted from <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/christianity/christmas.shtml">http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/christianity/christmas.shtml</a>)<br/>Pupils make notes in the manner/s discussed above. Some pupils may require additional support upon a second reading.</p> <p><b>Mini-plenary</b><br/>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does this text answer any of our questions about Christmas?</li> <li>• Does this text answer Mr. Stricken's questions?</li> <li>• To what extent?</li> <li>• Should the information be believed? Why / why not?</li> </ul> <p>Explain to the pupils that to test the effectiveness of their reading strategies they are going to see how many questions in '<b>Dr. Know's Nativity Quiz</b>' they can get right (also see Resource 2.1).</p> <p><b>Main Activity 2</b><br/>Pupils complete '<b>Dr. Know's Nativity Quiz</b>' in pairs (Resource 2.2)</p> <p><b>Plenary</b><br/>Share the answers to '<b>Dr. Know's Nativity Quiz</b>' (Resource 2.3). Pupils consider how well they did. Ask pupils whether the text answered any of their own, the class' or Mr. Stricken's questions about Christmas? Discuss what we could do next to find out more, and to test the information Dr. Stricken has provided.</p> | <p>To what extent has Dr. Know's text answered any of our questions, or Mr. Stricken's questions?</p> <p>What could we do to find out more?</p> <p>How can we check what Dr. Know has told us?</p> | <p>What have you learnt from Dr. Know's text?</p> <p>What do you still want to know?</p> |



## CHRISTMAS

Christmas is normally celebrated on the 25 December (7 January for Orthodox Christians). Christmas is a Christian holy day and festival that marks the birth of Jesus who Christians believe to be the Son of God.

The story of Jesus' birth and the events surrounding it can be found in the Bible in the book of Matthew, Chapters 1 and 2, with a different version of the story in Luke, Chapters 1 and 2.

These two gospels tell the story differently. Many believe that this is because they each wrote for a different audience. It is thought that Matthew wrote for Jews, while Luke wrote for non-Jews (Gentiles).

'Nativity' is the word often used for the story of Jesus' birth. Both gospel accounts are often used to piece together one nativity story. This is a summary of the nativity story:

- Jesus was born to a woman called Mary who was engaged to Joseph, a carpenter, in the town of Bethlehem.
- Before Jesus was born, Mary was visited by an angel who told her that she would give birth to a baby and that the baby would be called Jesus, also sometimes known as Emmanuel, which means 'God with us'
- Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary had gone there to take part in a census. It was Joseph's home town.

According to tradition when Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem the local inn was already full with people returning for the census. The innkeeper let them stay in the rock cave below his house which was used as a stable for his animals. It was here, with the animals, that Mary gave birth to her son and laid him in a manger (a feeding trough).



Luke and Matthew both say that visitors came to the baby Jesus. In Matthew's account, wise men visit Jesus. They had followed a star that led them to Jesus and they presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. These were signs of kingship and holiness. Luke tells how humble and poor shepherds were led to Jesus by an angel. For Christians this is often used to show that Jesus came for all people of all races and backgrounds.

Matthew's story includes more. It says Joseph was warned in a dream to escape to Egypt with Jesus and Mary. This was because King Herod was going to kill Jesus. So during the night, they started out on the journey to Egypt where they remained until after Herod's death.





**'Dr. Know's Nativity Quiz'**

**Question 1:** Christmas day marks:

- a) The arrival of the Magi (wealthy wise men who believed the stars could teach them things)
- b) The crucifixion of Jesus
- c) The birth of Jesus

**Question 2:** Who do Christians believe to be the Son of God?

**Question 3:** Which two books of the Bible contain the main stories about the birth of Jesus?

- a) Matthew
- b) Mark
- c) Luke
- d) John

**Question 4:** In the text, what reason is suggested to explain why Matthew and Luke tell different stories?

- a) Matthew and Luke only included their favourite parts of the story.
- b) They were both inventing the story and came up with different events.
- c) They were writing for different audiences who would be impressed by different events and ideas about Jesus.

**Question 5:** Which Gospel writer is meant to have been writing primarily for a Jewish audience?

- a) Matthew
- b) Luke

**Question 6:** As well as reading the gospels, in what other way is the story of Jesus' birth remembered?

- 1) Photographs from the time
- 2) Videos from the time
- 3) An annual festival

**Question 7:** According to the text, what does Luke think Christmas is all about?

**Question 8:** Luke tells a story of shepherds visiting Jesus instead of Magi. According to the text, why is this?

**Question 9:** According to the text, what does Matthew think Christmas is all about?

**Question 10:** Matthew tells a story of Magi visiting Jesus instead of shepherds. Can you think why?

## Resource 2.3

### Dr. Know's Nativity Quiz Answers

- Q1.** C
- Q2.** Jesus
- Q3.** A & C
- Q4.** C
- Q5.** Matthew
- Q6.** 3
- Q7.** Jesus came for all people regardless of their background.
- Q8.** Answers will vary. Look for answers which recognise that being a shepherd must not have been a very impressive job for someone to do and it is therefore surprising that they are the first visitors to God's son. Look for children who make a link between this and the answer to Q7.
- Q9.** The birth of a holy king
- Q10.** Answers will vary. Look for answers which suggest Jesus was important, predicted, like a King, important to people all around the world or holy.

# Mr. Stricken's Nativity Nightmare: Lesson 3



| Lesson 3 Enquiry Question: Can seeing the links between stories help us understand the Christian meaning of Christmas? |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| Learning Question:   | Research Activities   | Challenge  | Support   |
| Can I use non-religious stories to improve my understanding of a religious story like See-the-story Suzie?             | <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Show the pupils an image from <i>Kung-fu Panda</i>, <i>The Lego Movie</i>, and the Christian story of Jesus (see Resource 3.1). Ask them what the three stories are, and what happens in each. Ask them what all three stories have in common. Depending on who has seen the films the answers may or may not be enlightening! Explain that in all three stories a prediction is made (prophecy) that someone is going to arrive to save them, but the person who turns up is not what they expected. For instance:</p> <p>(1) In <i>Kung Fu Panda</i> a legend promises a Dragon Warrior; a master of great skill who will be granted the secrets of the universe by reading the Dragon Scroll. Grand Master Oogway (the elderly tortoise) surprisingly identifies an over-weight panda, Po to be the Dragon Warrior even though he doesn't know any kung fu moves. As the Dragon Warrior, it falls to him to save the local village from the evil enemy Tai Lung.</p> <p>(2) In <i>The Lego Movie</i>, the wizard Vitruvius warns the evil Lord Business of a prophecy where a person called the "Special" will find the Piece of Resistance capable of stopping the Kragle and saving everyone from Lord Business. Surprisingly, the special turns out to be Emmet an ordinary construction worker with no special qualities or creativity.</p> <p>(3) Explain that something similar can be said about Jesus. The Jewish people at the time were expecting their Messiah and saviour. They thought he would be a King. Ask: What do you expect a king to be like? Ask them why a baby born in a manger (food trough), to a carpenter and his young wife, might not have seemed like a new born king. Tell them that the Jewish people at the time thought their Messiah would be a saviour who would defeat their enemies, and give them back the land God had promised them. Display pictures of Jesus healing a soldier's ear from his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane and of his crucifixion. Ask them what is happening in these two pictures. Ask them why Jewish people might have struggled to accept this was the Messiah they were waiting for.</p> <p><b>Input</b></p> <p>Explain that this is the kind of activity that See-the-story Suzie enjoys (display image of Suzie) – she make links between different stories and the different ways people understand them. Explain a little more about Suzie using the See-the-story Suzie profile from the RE-searchers e-book. Tell them that today we are going to try to help Mr. Stricken by following Suzie's example. She has sent us this text message: <i>Try to use non-religious stories, such as The Lego Movie and Kung Fu Panda, to see why is it surprising that people began to think of Jesus as their Messiah and saviour?</i></p> <p>Tell the pupils that they must go to their tables in pairs to open their See-the-story Suzie envelope. Inside the envelope are images from all three stories (Resource 3.1). Pupils must arrange the images to complete the answer grid (Resource 3.2) with one column designated for the answers for each story.</p> <p><b>Main Activity</b></p> <p>Pupils complete the grid in mixed ability pairs. Where possible group pupils who haven't seen either of the films with pupils who have.</p> <p>Extension: Pupils consider why is it surprising that people began to think of Jesus as their Messiah and saviour? Using the information they now know, what title might Mr. Stricken use for his Christmas play?</p> <p><b>Plenary</b></p> <p>Go over the answers (Resource 3.3). Ask: Why is it surprising that people began to think of Jesus as their Messiah and saviour? How could we find out more? If you were a Gospel writer like Matthew, and Jewish people were struggling to believe that Jesus was the Messiah and saviour, what would you tell them? How has being like Suzie helped you in your learning today? Were you good at making links between two stories? Were you good at using one story to help you understand another?</p> | <p>Why is it surprising that people began to think Jesus was their Messiah and saviour?</p> <p>Using the information you now know, what should Mr. Stricken call his Christmas play?</p> | <p>Why was it surprising that Po was chosen to be the Dragon Warrior?</p> <p>Why was it surprising that Emmet was chosen to be the 'Special one'?</p> <p>What do we know about Joseph and Mary?</p> |

Resource 3.1

(Movie stills from *Kung Fu Panda*, Dreamworks, 2008, and *The Lego Movie*, Warner Bros., 2014.)






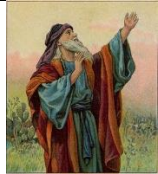












|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|  <p>A prophecy</p>   |  <p>The legend of the Dragon Warrior</p>              |  <p>The Jewish Scriptures</p>  |
|  <p>Lord Vitruvius</p>                                       |  <p>Grand Master Oogway</p>                           |  <p>The Prophets</p>   |
|  <p>Build anything, at speed with no instructions</p>        |  <p>Receive the Dragon Scroll and defeat Tai Lung</p> |  <p>Like past Jewish heroes, be a great king like King David, and law giver like Moses</p> |
|  <p>Emmet</p>  |  <p>Po</p>   |  <p>Jesus</p>  |
|  <p>Wyldstyle and Vitruvius</p>                            |  <p>Master Shifu and the Furious Five</p>            |  <p>Many in the Jewish community</p>   |
|  <p>Vitruvius ghost believes Emmet can save the world.</p> |  <p>Master Shifu</p>                                |  <p>According to Matthew's gospel it is the Magi</p>                                     |



### Resource 3.2

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <b>1. Where did the prediction come from?</b>                      |  |  |  |
| <b>2. Who kept the prophecy alive?</b>                             |  |  |  |
| <b>3. What is the predicted saviour supposed to be able to do?</b> |  |  |  |
| <b>4. Who is the surprise saviour?</b>                             |  |  |  |
| <b>5. Who is disappointed?</b>                                     |  |  |  |
| <b>6. Who is the first to recognise this saviour is special?</b>   |  |  |  |

### Resource 3.3

|   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| 1. Where did the prediction come from?                      | <br>A prophecy   | <br>The legend of the Dragon Warrior              | <br>The Jewish Scriptures  |
| 2. Who kept the prophecy alive?                             | <br>Lord Vitruvius                                       | <br>Grand Master Oogway                           | <br>The Prophets   |
| 3. What is the predicted saviour supposed to be able to do? | <br>Build anything, at speed with no instructions        | <br>Receive the Dragon Scroll and defeat Tai Lung | <br>Like past Jewish heroes, be a great king like King David, and law giver like Moses |
| 4. Who is the surprise saviour?                             | <br>Emmet  | <br>Po  | <br>Jesus  |
| 5. Who is disappointed?                                     | <br>Wyldstyle and Vitruvius                            | <br>Master Shifu and the Furious Five           | <br>Many in the Jewish community   |
| 6. Who is the first to recognise this saviour is special?   | <br>Vitruvius ghost believes Emmet can save the world. | <br>Master Shifu                                | <br>According to Matthew's gospel it is the Magi                                     |

# Mr. Stricken's Nativity Nightmare: Lesson 4



| Lesson 4 Enquiry Question: Was the Gospel of Matthew written for a Jewish audience?                              |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| Learning Question:   | Research Activities  | Challenge  | Support   |
| Can I check whether Matthew's birth story was written for a Jewish audience using See-the-story Suzie's methods? | <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Display the See-the-story profile from the RE-searchers e-book. Remind them of her approach and priorities. Explain that Suzie was delighted last time by your ability to make links between Mary and Jesus' story and two well-known films. She was so impressed by your efforts that she would like you to use your story-linking skills once more to test some information that Dr. Know provided. Explain that Dr. Know told us that many people think that Matthew wrote his Gospel for Jewish readers who were waiting for their Messiah. Remind the pupils that the Jewish people expected their Messiah (king and saviour) to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Just like the one promised in the scriptures by the prophets.</li> <li>- Linked to their heroes from the past, like Moses who was saved by God as a baby when Pharaoh ordered all the Hebrew baby boys to be killed; who saved his people and led the Jews out of Egypt.</li> <li>- A great king like King David.</li> <li>- A trusted law giver like Moses, who had given them the 10 Commandments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Input</b></p> <p>Model reading a version of Matthew's birth narrative, highlighting events which Matthew may have included to persuade a Jewish audience that Jesus was the Messiah (Resource 4.1).</p> <p><b>Main Activity</b></p> <p>Pupils read Resource 4.1 (a version of Matthew's birth narrative) highlighting events which may have persuaded a Jewish audience that Jesus was their Messiah and saviour using the 'key' provided in Resource 4.2.</p> <p><b>Bronze Award:</b> Highlight pink any lines which suggest Jesus was a King who would save them</p> <p><b>Silver Award:</b> As for bronze, but also highlight yellow any lines which suggest Jesus was predicted by the prophets</p> <p><b>Gold Award:</b> As for Silver, but also highlight blue any lines which suggest Jesus was linked to Jewish heroes like Abraham; red any lines that suggest Jesus would be like Moses; and green any lines which suggest it was part of the plan that Jesus would be recognised as important by non-Jews first.</p> <p><b>Plenary</b></p> <p>How far do you think a Jewish reader of the time would have been persuaded by Matthew's gospel?</p> <p>Has being like See-the-story Suzie helped us find out information for Mr. Stricken? Do we know what really happened? Do we know what the 'true' meaning of Christmas is? What should he call his play?</p> <p>How successful have you been at using Suzie's methods? Have you been able to spot clues in the text that suggest Matthew was writing for a Jewish audience?</p> | <p>Would a Jewish reader be persuaded by Matthew's gospel?</p> <p>Has being like See-the-story Suzie helped us find out information for Mr. Stricken?</p> <p>How successful have you been using Suzie's methods?</p> <p>Have you been able to spot clues in the text that suggest Matthew was writing for a Jewish audience?</p> | <p>Which lines of Matthew's version of Jesus' birth story suggest Jesus was a King who would save them?</p> <p>What other parts of the story make Jesus seem like a special baby?</p> |

## Resource 4.1

### Matthew 1:18 - 2:16 International Children's Bible (ICB) *Abridged*

So there were 14 generations from Abraham to David. And there were 14 generations from David until Jesus Christ was born.

#### The Birth of Jesus Christ

<sup>18</sup> Mary was engaged to marry Joseph. But before they married, she learned that she was going to have a baby. She was pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Mary's husband, Joseph, was a good man. He did not want to disgrace her in public, so he planned to divorce her secretly.

<sup>20</sup> While Joseph thought about this, an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, descendant of King David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The baby in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son. You will name the son Jesus. <sup>[a]</sup> Give him that name because he will save his people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> All this happened to make clear the full meaning of what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "The virgin will be pregnant. She will have a son, and they will name him Immanuel." <sup>[b]</sup> This name means "God is with us."

<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did what the Lord's angel had told him to do. Joseph married Mary. <sup>25</sup> And Joseph named the son Jesus.

#### Wise Men Come to Visit Jesus

2 Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> They asked, "Where is the baby who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east. We came to worship him."



<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard about this new king of the Jews, he was troubled. And all the people in Jerusalem were worried too. <sup>4</sup> Herod called a meeting of all the leading priests and teachers of the law. He asked them where the Christ would be born. <sup>5</sup> They answered, "In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet wrote about this in the Scriptures:

<sup>6</sup> 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
you are important among the rulers of Judah.  
A ruler will come from you.

He will be like a shepherd for my people, the Israelites.'" [A promise made in [Micah 5:2](#)]



<sup>7</sup> Then Herod had a secret meeting with the wise men from the east. He learned from them the exact time they first saw the star. <sup>8</sup> Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. He said to them, “Go and look carefully to find the child. When you find him, come tell me. Then I can go worship him too.”

<sup>9</sup> The wise men heard the king and then left. They saw the same star they had seen in the east. It went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. <sup>11</sup> They went to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshiped the child. They opened the gifts they brought for him. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> But God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they went home to their own country by a different way.

### **Jesus’ Parents Take Him to Egypt**

<sup>13</sup> After they left, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, “Get up! Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Herod will start looking for the child to kill him. Stay in Egypt until I tell you to return.”

<sup>14</sup> So Joseph got up and left for Egypt during the night with the child and his mother. <sup>15</sup> Joseph stayed in Egypt until Herod died. This was to make clear the full meaning of what the Lord had said through the prophet. The Lord said, “I called my son out of Egypt.”<sup>[c]</sup>



### **Herod Kills the Baby Boys**

<sup>16</sup> When Herod saw that the wise men had tricked him, he was very angry. So he gave an order to kill all the baby boys in Bethlehem and in all the area around Bethlehem who were two years old or younger.

**PREDICTED BY THE  
PROPHETS**



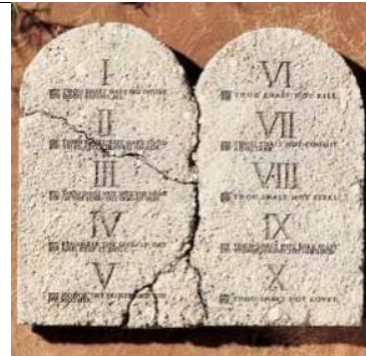
**LINKED TO JEWISH  
HEROES LIKE ABRAHAM**



**THE NEW KING WHO WAS  
GOING TO SAVE THEM**



**LIKE MOSES – SOMEONE  
THEY COULD TRUST TO  
HELP THEM UNDERSTAND  
GOD'S RULES**



**RECOGNISED BY OTHERS  
FIRST**



# Mr. Stricken's Nativity Nightmare: Lesson 5



| Lesson 5 Enquiry Question: What does Christmas mean to Christians today? |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Learning Question:   | Research Activities   | Challenge   | Support  |
| Can I conduct an interview about Christmas like Ask-it-all Ava?          | <p><b>Introduction</b><br/>Introduce the class to Ask-it-all Ava using the profile from the RE-searchers e-book. Explain that Ava thinks the best way to learn about Christmas is to ask real religious people alive today our questions and to try to understand what Christmas means to them now.</p> <p><b>Input</b><br/>Explain to the class that we have a visitor who is going to tell us what they believe about Christmas. Pupils must listen intently as they will be challenged to remember as much as they can and write it down afterwards.</p> <p><b>Main Activity 1</b><br/>Pupils complete the activity identified above. Pupils in groups of mixed ability threes list everything they were told.</p> <p><b>Mini-plenary</b><br/>Explain that the pupils must now generate as many Ask-it-all Ava questions as they can using Ask-it-all Ava question openers:<br/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why is .... important to you?</li> <li>- How does it feel to....?</li> <li>- How does believing ... impact on your lives?</li> <li>- When did you first....?</li> </ul> </p> <p><b>Main Activity 2</b><br/>Pupils begin to interview the visitor using the prepared questions. This time with the additional challenge of being able to develop new questions on the spot which build on the answer just given.</p> <p><b>Plenary</b><br/>Ask: Which of the questions helped us to get the best understanding of our visitor?<br/> How successful have you been using Ask-it-all Ava's methods?<br/> How helpful was Ask-it-all Ava?<br/> Have we answered any of Mr. Stricken's questions?<br/> Do we know what really happened at the 'first' Christmas?<br/> Do we know what is the 'true' meaning of Christmas?<br/> What should he call his play?</p> | <p>Which of the questions helped us to get the best understanding of our visitor?</p> <p>How successful have you been using Ava's methods?</p> <p>Why do you think that might be?</p> <p>How helpful was Ask-it-all Ava?</p> <p>Have we answered any of Mr. Stricken's questions?</p> | <p>What did our visitor tell us about Christmas?</p> <p>Have you been able to ask Ava questions?</p> |

# Mr. Stricken's Nativity Nightmare: Lesson 6



| Lesson 6 Enquiry Question: What is it like to be charitable at Christmas time?  |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| Learning Question:<br>Can I explain why Christians give up their time at Christmas to help others?  | Research Activities  | Challenge   | Support  |
| <b>Resources:</b><br>Recipe<br>Ingredients<br><br><b>OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:</b><br><br>Are any pupils allergic to any of the ingredients?<br><br>Are there any existing events at which this charity sale might be held?<br><br>This lesson could be situated at any stage in the teaching sequence after Lesson 2.<br><br>Do pupils and parents need to be prepared for / involved in this event? | <b>Introduction</b><br>Introduce the class to Have-a-go Hugo using the profile from the RE-searchers e-book. Explain Hugo thinks that the best way to learn about Christmas is to have-a-go at the kinds of things Christians do at Christmas, to experience the festival as much as like a believer experiences it as possible.   | How might Christians feel to be undertaking work, knowing they are doing it for God?  | Why are we making the food?<br><br>What has this got to do with Christmas? |
|   | <b>Input</b><br>Explain that Christians consider baby Jesus to be a gift from God to humans; the greatest gift of all. Christians believe that God gave up his only son to bring love, hope, wisdom and forgiveness to the world, even though he knew that humans would make Jesus suffer and die. Show pupils a range of pictures from nativity images (Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, Inn Keeper and Magi). Ask: Who else gives gifts in the nativity story?<br><br>Explain that at Christmas time many Christians give up their time, money, food, etc. to help people who are less fortunate than themselves. Watch:<br><br><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9ol18xph0o&amp;list=PL7L42bBINTlMYcYBOAZ9GBsRYiBO9lybm">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9ol18xph0o&amp;list=PL7L42bBINTlMYcYBOAZ9GBsRYiBO9lybm</a><br><br>Explain that the class are going to have a chance to make something to sell for charity. Ask the pupils for whom they think they should raise money at Christmas time and why? Pupils decide which charity to support. Challenge pupils to use the ingredients and recipes on their table to make some 'nobake cheesecake' (see <a href="http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/3430/nobake-orange-cheesecake">http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/3430/nobake-orange-cheesecake</a> ) or equivalent. Before beginning the pupils must wash their hands thoroughly. Pupils must be aware that they must not taste any of the ingredients and the cheesecake will be sold for charity at break time / lunchtime / after school. Pupils may buy some at this time. Dedicated Have-a-go Hugos can staff the stall.<br><br><b>Main Activity</b><br>Pupils make the cheesecakes (or equivalent) at their tables in small groups.<br><br><b>Mini-plenary</b><br>Pause. Ask pupils to reflect on how they are feeling making something for someone else. Is it hard or easy not to taste some of the ingredients? How might Christians feel when undertaking work, knowing they are doing it for God?<br><br><b>Main Activity 2</b><br>Pupils continue to make their dishes and present them as best as they can.<br><br><b>Plenary</b><br>Ask: How do you feel having made something for someone else. Is it hard or easy not to taste some of the ingredients? How might Christians feel undertaking work, knowing they are doing it for God?<br>How successful have you been using Have-a-go Hugo's methods?<br>How helpful was it being Have-a-go Hugo? Have we answered any of Mr. Stricken's questions?<br>Do we know what really happened? Do we know what is the 'true' meaning of Christmas? What should he call his play? | How successful have you been using Have-a-go Hugo's methods?<br><br>Why do you think that might be?<br><br>How helpful was Have-a-go Hugo?<br><br>Have we answered any of Mr. Stricken's questions? | How does it feel to do something for other people?                         |



# Mr. Stricken's Nativity Nightmare: Lesson 7



| Lesson 7 Enquiry Question: What should Mr. Stricken tell the Governors?   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| Learning Question:<br>Can I evaluate different points of view and justify my own view like Debate-it-all Derek? | Research Activities   | Challenge   | Support  |
|   | <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Introduce the class to Debate-it-all Derek using the profile from the RE-searchers e-book. Explain Derek thinks that the best way to learn about Christmas is to decide whether beliefs about Christmas are true through thinking and discussion.</p> <p><b>Input</b></p> <p>Explain to the pupils that they are going to hear three different pieces of advice for Mr. Stricken. The pupils must decide with whom they agree the most, and what advice they would offer Mr. Stricken. It should be made clear that these are just three points of view, and that they need not agree totally with any of these viewpoints.</p> <p>Voice 1: "Mr. Stricken should tell the Governors that the Christmas play is going to include parts of both the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of Matthew because I believe they are both true. The writers just chose to include different elements of the same story because they wanted their readers to know different things about Jesus. I believe this because the stories are in the Bible and I believe this is God's word. The play should be called 'A King for All' because Jesus is presented both to shepherds and wise men from a different country."</p> <p>Voice 2: "Mr. Stricken should tell the Governors that no one knows what really happened at the Birth of Jesus. Matthew and Luke give the only two accounts of what happened and even they don't agree. One has shepherds and one has wise men. It seems like Matthew added things into the story to persuade Jewish people that Jesus was the Messiah. Mr. Stricken should tell the Governors that the Christmas play should be about the meaning of the Christmas story and should not worry too much about historical accuracy as we don't know what really happened."</p> <p>Voice 3: "Mr. Stricken should tell the Governors that we neither know what happened at the birth of Jesus nor can say what is the 'true' meaning of Christmas. Amongst Christians, some think Christmas is all about the gift of love. Others believe it is about the arrival of a King to save everybody. Others about God coming to earth to be at one with us. Non-Christians may think the meaning of Christmas is no longer about Jesus, but about being together as a family, showing love and care to everybody. Some people, both religious and non-religious, don't celebrate Christmas at all. The Christmas play should have a mixture of religious and non-religious songs and scenes."</p> <p><b>Main Activity</b></p> <p>Pupils sit in a circle, holding a debate, following these steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pupils talk to one another about their initial thoughts.</li> <li>2. Pupils demonstrate they are ready to speak by holding their hands out, palm facing the centre of the circle, to signify that they have something to offer to the group. Pupils say what advice they would give to Mr. Stricken. The last speaker invites the next speaker to contribute by name.</li> <li>3. The teacher mediates the discussion: summarising what has been said by different parties and asking pupils to clarify, exemplify and respond to counter examples. The teacher invites pupils to agree and disagree with the contributions to the group with reference to reasons and evidence. Ensure that all of Mr. Stricken's questions are addressed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do we know what really happened?</li> <li>- Do we know what is the 'true' meaning of Christmas?</li> <li>- What should he call his play?</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Pupils reflect on their final answers to these questions in their pairs. Pupils are invited to offer their final answers to the whole group.</li> </ol> <p><b>Plenary:</b></p> <p>Ask: How successful have you been using Debate-it-all Derek's methods? How helpful was it being Debate-it-all Derek? Which of the researchers has been most helpful this term to us as we have tried to answer Mr. Stricken's questions?</p> | <p>Have you any evidence to support your beliefs?</p> <p>How successful have you been using Debate-it-all Derek's methods? Why do you think that might be?</p> <p>How helpful was Debate-it-all Derek?</p> <p>Have we answered any of Mr. Stricken's questions?</p> | <p>What do you think is true about Jesus' birth?</p> <p>Who disagrees with you? Why?</p> |