

Gather

Sing Away in a Manger

Do you think the baby Jesus really didn't cry? Talk about what it must have been like for Mary and Joseph and Jesus on that incredible night.

Respond

What do the words

Incarnation,

Emmanuel

and Messiah mean?

Why do Christians believe this baby was all these things?

Look at [pictures of the nativity scene from around the world](#). (See also Picturing Christianity – RE Today)

What are the similarities and the differences?

What do they tell us about why this story is so important to millions of people around the world?



Engage: *Luke 2:1-7*

We expect babies to be born in a hospital or a nice quiet room at home, not in a local hotel come campsite.

The Bible says the Roman Emperor wanted a list of all the people who lived in the different countries so that he could work out how much tax he would get from them. Everyone had to go back to their town where their family came from and so Joseph left the village of Nazareth and travelled to Bethlehem, ancestral home of David the king. It was there that the baby was born.

Not surprisingly the town was full of visitors and most of the accommodation was fully booked but the travellers were able to stay in one of the animal shelters. There the baby was born, and because they were travelling there was no cot prepared for the tiny mite, but instead he slept in an empty animal's feeding trough. It all seems pretty rough and ready to us some two thousand years later, but the historians Luke, and Matthew are pretty matter of fact about it, with no grumpy innkeepers and not a donkey in sight. I imagine local people helped where they could, but they had no idea just who this new baby was.

Send

Father God,

As we end this term full of excitement about Christmas, may we enjoy the preparations and time at home with our families, and also remember children for whom this is a sad and lonely time.

As we think about giving cards and presents to our friends, may we remember the whole meaning of Christmas and the best gift of all – Jesus born in a stable.

Amen (*Prayers for Life in a Church primary school*)

See the [resources about the Innkeeper from the ABYYT](#)

Engage – the Lion Storyteller Bible

The First Christmas