

Discussion Notes for talking about Nativities with children in junior classes.

Theme: What is happening?

Who are the people in this Nativity? What do you know about them?

How are they standing?

What might they be saying?

How are they dressed? How is this different / the same as we dress? Why?

Are they carrying anything? What? Why? What do you know about what they are carrying? What gift would you bring to a baby?

Are there any animals? What are they? What do they do in the Nativity?

What do you think happened before this special birth? What do you think will happen later?

If you were there what would you like to ask these people? What do you think they might answer?

This is Jesus Birthday. What would you sing to Jesus?

Activity: Using lego, pop sticks make a simple Nativity

Discussion Notes for talking about Nativities with children in middle classes.

Theme: What is the story?

The story of Jesus birth is found in two Gospels: Luke and Matthew.

Key characters in Matthew: Jesus, Mary, Joseph who is visited by angels in his dreams, Herod, Magi (wise men – no specific number given), gifts of myrrh, frankincense, gold, and a star

Key characters in Luke: Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Mary's family, angels and shepherds

When you look at a nativity you are looking at how an artist is telling the story.

Many artists mix the two Gospel stories together, or concentrate only on the three main characters.

How does this artist tell the story? Which Gospel is being illustrated? What is each character doing? How do you think they are feeling? What do you think each character would like to tell us? What characters has the artist added to the story? How is this story similar/different to what you know about your birth? What do you know about the three gifts brought by the wise men?

Activity: Draw / design a shadow box showing either Matthew's or Luke's story

Discussion Notes for talking about Nativities with children in senior classes.

Theme: Social justice and the Nativity

If Jesus had been born today what would the story be like?

Some nativities are from different countries – how do the artists answer the first question?

For some artists, Nativities become a source of income to bring about a break to the poverty cycle. How does this respond to Jesus message of peace and justice, the good news?

On a map of the world locate where these Nativities come from. Are there any significant gaps? Why would this be so?

The Vatican set up a cottage industry for the Christians of Bethlehem making nativities out of olive wood. Why is olive wood significant to the Jesus story?

The Magi gave gifts to the Christ child. What gifts could you give to the families of your community, town, world that would make a difference to their Christmas?

The final part of Matthew's Nativity has the Family fleeing their country. They are refugees. What do you know about refugees in today's world? What can you do to support them?

Activity: Make a class Christmas cards. Take a photo of the class set up as a traditional nativity; take another photo of the class set up as a nativity of today. Publish these.

Making a Scene at Christmas

Discussion notes for teachers

