

# 10. Immanuel



## BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Luke 1:26-38

Matthew 1:18-25

God promises Mary and Joseph they will have a son who is to be called Jesus



## AIMS

To help the children understand that Jesus coming at Christmas was part of God's plan to deal with sin

To reflect on his coming as Immanuel, God with us

We have talked a lot this term about God being with his people - Noah, Abraham, Jacob and Joseph. Jesus was called Immanuel (God with us) and Christians believe Jesus was God come to live on earth as a human being. Just like with Abraham, God made a promise to Mary which seemed impossible, but she had faith and trusted what God said.



## PREP FOR LEADERS

Read the Bible verses for this session and reflect:

- What links are there between the Christmas Story and the stories from Genesis we have been looking at this term?

Take some time to pray for your group.



## GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

### ▶ Christmas Pictionary

*You will need: pens and paper*

Divide the children into teams and get each team to choose one member of the team to begin the game. The representative from each team comes to the leader and is given a Christmas-themed word, which they have to go and draw for their team. When someone guesses the word, a different member of the team comes to the leader to get the

next word. This is repeated until they have reached the end of the leader's list of words. The first team to do this wins.

Some possible words you could use are: holly, reindeer, shepherd, turkey, star, Christmas pudding, Christmas carols, angel, tinsel, cracker.

### ▶ Baby Names

*You will need: baby name book*

Ask the children if any of them know the meanings of their names. You could bring a baby names book to let them look this up or do a search online.

**In the Bible meanings of names are very important and today we are going to**

*(continued overleaf)*

hear about a baby whose name had a very special meaning.

### ▶ Waiting for Christmas

*You will need: Waiting for Christmas cards*

You may want to incorporate this activity as part of the introduction within the Exploring the Bible section below.

Get the children to match up things that need to be prepared for Christmas with the number of weeks before Christmas these things need to happen. You could give them cards to match up (*see additional document: Waiting for Christmas*) or have the numbers of weeks around the room and get them to move to the number they think is correct for each question.

The correct answers are:

Shops order Christmas cards - 48 weeks

Farmers start fattening up their turkeys - 15 weeks

Shops put up their Christmas displays - 8 weeks

Last date to post Christmas cards - 1 week



## EXPLORING THE BIBLE

### ▶ Introduction

**Today we're going to jump ahead in the Bible to events that take place over 1800 years after the story of Joseph which we were thinking about last week. As we get ready for Christmas we're going to take a look at why it's so important to Christians and how it fits into God's plan.**

**Just now we're in the time of advent - the time when we're waiting for Christmas. Lots of people have advent calendars**

**to count down the days to Christmas, and sometimes it can be hard to wait.**

(You could incorporate the Waiting for Christmas introductory activity here)

If you think it's hard to wait for Christmas, the people waiting for the first Christmas had to wait much, much longer. For hundreds of years the Jewish people had been waiting for a rescuer, someone powerful who would save them from their enemies.

We've been thinking about things that happened at the start of the Bible this term and if you remember we heard that God made the world and it was good, but then people disobeyed God and it was messed up. Ever since then the people had been waiting for a solution, and the events that happened at Christmas are an important part of God's plan to sort things out.

It begins with a visit from the angel Gabriel to a young lady called Mary.

### ▶ Gabriel visits Mary

*You will need: script and wings for Gabriel, script and headscarf for Mary, Bible*

Tell the story of Gabriel appearing with a message for Mary.

You could have two children dress up as Gabriel and Mary and act the story out, reading their lines. The costumes can be simple - a headscarf for Mary and a set of wings for Gabriel (available from fancy dress shops or pound shops, especially in the run-up to Christmas).

Possible Script: (*copies for the children to use are included as additional documents: Script for Mary and Script for Gabriel*)

**Gabriel:** Greetings! The Lord is with you.

**Mary:** But...who are you? What does this mean?

**Gabriel:** Don't be afraid, Mary. God is pleased with you. You are going to have a baby. You will give birth to a son and you must call him Jesus. He will be someone very great, the Son of the Most High, and he will be king over Israel forever. His kingdom will never end.

**Mary:** But how can this happen? How could I possibly have a baby?

**Gabriel:** The baby that is born to you will be the Son of God. Nothing is impossible with God.

**Mary:** I am God's servant. Let everything you have said come true.

**Gabriel makes some amazing promises about Mary's baby - he will be very great, he will be the Son of the Most High, his kingdom will never end. It seemed impossible to Mary that this promise could come true. Does that remind you of any other stories we've heard this term?**

Make the link with the story of Abraham.

**God promised Abraham and Sarah a child and that seemed impossible, but it did happen. Abraham showed faith by obeying God and here Mary does the same - she agrees to God's plan even though she doesn't really understand it.**

**It wasn't easy for Mary. She was engaged to a man called Joseph (make sure the children know this is not the same Joseph we talked about in the last session) and when she told him she was expecting a baby he was upset. He knew it wasn't his baby and so he made plans to break off their engagement. But then an angel spoke to him in a dream.**

Get Gabriel to read the words: *(part 2 in additional document: Script for Gabriel)*

**Joseph, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. Her child is from God. You must call him Jesus because he will save his people from their sins. It is happening just as God said - "a virgin will give birth to a son and they will call him Immanuel, which means God with us".**

**So Joseph was reassured and he agreed to go ahead with his marriage to Mary.**

**The angel said two really important things about Jesus - he will save his people from their sins, and he will be called Immanuel which means "God with us".**

**We've talked a lot already this term about God being with his people - he was with Jacob and he was with Joseph.**

**When Jesus was born, Christians believe that he was God born as a person. Although he was God who is mighty and powerful and made everything, he chose to come and live as a person as part of that creation.**



## REFLECT & RESPOND

Read Luke 2:6-7

### ► Reflection

*Encourage the children to take a moment to think: why would God choose to do that? If he is the mighty, powerful God who made everything, why would he come to earth as a tiny baby?*

**The Bible tells us that Jesus came to sort out the problem of sin, to save the people from their sins, just like the angel said.**

### ► Prayer

*You will need: prayer cards, pens*

Give the children a moment to reflect on what they want to say to God as they think about him sending Jesus. It may be a prayer of thanks, a question, or something else. You could give out cards (*see additional document: prayer cards*) and give them a few minutes to write or draw their response on the back.

Lead the children in prayer, asking God to help us understand more this Christmas about what it means that he is Immanuel - God with us - and asking him to help us have faith to trust him like Mary and Joseph did.



## ADDITIONAL IDEAS

### ► Video

*You will need: equipment to play video*

This video from Crossroads Kids Club tells the Christmas Story in around four minutes and also explains how it fits into God's big story: <http://crossroadskidsclub.net/gods-story-jesus-is-born/>

### ► Song - All The Angels Sing by Doug Horley and Mark Read

*You will need: equipment to play music*

This is a lively song celebrating Jesus' birth and the chorus includes the refrain "Immanuel, Immanuel, God is with us," so it would tie in well with this session. You can find it on YouTube here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Klq8oYLUmo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Klq8oYLUmo)