

INSIDE OUTSIDE

A simple lesson idea for Christmas for Key Stages 2 and 3

This lesson uses a simple poem and a picture to help pupils think about what Christmas means for different people, what the story of the birth of Jesus could reveal about the way we might celebrate Christmas, about homelessness and about the idea of 'insiders' and 'outsiders'.

You will need

- A variety of different 'Christmas' images (Christmas cards, photos, art etc) which might sum up Christmas for different people, including some of homeless people or rough sleepers from this and other countries.
- 'Bus Shelter Nativity' image (download from www.churchads.net)

You may also need

- Visit www.salvationarmy.org.uk/schools for further teachers' resources about homelessness and the work of The Salvation Army, which fit into the PSHE, Citizenship and RE curriculum.

For help and advice about this assembly, or for other teaching resources about The Salvation Army contact the Schools and Colleges Unit, tel: 020 7367 4706, email: schools@salvationarmy.org.uk or visit our website (www.salvationarmy.org.uk/schools).

Curriculum links

PSHE, Religious Education

Suggestion: Play the song 'What Christmas means to me' by Stevie Wonder at the start of the lesson.

What Christmas means to me

Ask pupils to think about what Christmas means to them, and to imagine in their mind (or draw on paper) a picture or a scene which sums up Christmas for them.

Picture activity

Explain that pupils are going to look at a range of images which might sum up Christmas for different people. Either prepare multiple copies of the pictures and organise your class into small groups, or create a slideshow to present to the whole class on a screen. After looking at the pictures, discuss the questions together as a whole class, or ask pupils to discuss the questions in groups.

Discussion questions:

- What do you think these pictures are trying to say?
- How do they make you feel, or what do they make you think about?
- If you could jump into one of the pictures or scenes, which one would you choose?

Inside/outside

Read out, or give out copies of this poem, written by a school pupil in a Primary Seven class at Braelhead Primary School in Stirling, Scotland. (Reproduced with kind permission from the pupil and class teacher.)

Inside/Outside

Inside. Lying in your bed, waiting for Santa to come.

Outside. Huddled up in rags, waiting for a remorseful passer-by.

Inside. Warming by the toasty fire, unwrapping new, shiny presents.

Outside. Holding up a pleading message, undoing knots tied in grimy bin bags.

Inside. Enjoying merry chats with friends and family who love and care.

Outside. Dreading another day of begging and pleading for one penny to shed light on your day.

Inside. One bite of homemade succulent turkey and roast potatoes makes every taste bud tingle.

Outside. The bitter taste and awful stench of last weeks fish supper, salvaged from the foul filthy bin.

Inside. Glancing at the beautifully decorated tree. The baubles glisten and shine against the bright light, sending a warm glow around the room.

Outside. Looking into windows wishing you were somewhere. Anywhere but here in this dark alleyway.

So while you are inside your warm, cosy house,

Opening one present after another.

Could you please give a thought to the adults and children freezing and even dying on our streets each day?

By Lisa Ivatt (Age 11)

Questions

- What do you like about this poem?
- How does it make you feel, or what does it make you think about?

The Christmas story

Read the story of the birth of Jesus in Luke 2:1-18 or in a Bible story book.

Questions:

- Was Jesus born inside or outside?
- What do you think the people inside the inns were doing whilst Jesus was being born?
- Which people did God choose to be the first people to come and visit Jesus? Why do you think he chose them?
- Would you have liked to have been inside the inn, or outside on that night?

Go deeper

Show the 'Bus shelter nativity' picture. This picture was painted by the artist Andrew Gadd for a campaign in the United Kingdom to help people think about what Christmas is all about. It's a picture of the nativity – Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus, but shown in a modern-day bus shelter. The artist was trying to make people think about where Jesus might have been born if he was born today.

- Would you put this picture in the 'inside' or 'outside' category?
- What would you like to say or ask about this picture?
- How do you think Jesus would want people to celebrate Christmas and remember his birth?

Response activity

Ask pupils to write their own poem, or create a piece of art or a poster, which shows the contrast between Christmas inside and Christmas outside, or which challenges people to think about what Christmas is all about.



Reflection

Think of a time when you were left out of something and felt like an 'outsider'. What happened? How did you feel? Think of a time when you were asked to join a group or were part of something and felt like an 'insider'. What happened? How did you feel?

Pupils could consider what they could do to help people who are left out feel included, whether this be other pupils in their class or in the school, or people who may feel 'left out' of Christmas, through homelessness or poverty or other situations.