

Session 1 (Before Break)

Aim

- To interrogate the nativity story, viewing it from a range of different perspectives.

1. **Host a circle time to explore with pupils what Christmas means for them.**

Q: What do you appreciate about Christmas, apart from receiving presents?

Q: Do you find anything hard about Christmas?

2. **Remaining in the circle, would anyone like to retell the story?**

Give the rest of the class permission to 'buzz in' if at any point they can remember a detail that has been left out.

3. **'Story Squiggles' Part 1 (a story-telling technique introduced by Barnabas in Schools).**

Pupils to work in groups of 3-5. Provide each group with a sheet of A3 paper with a circle in the middle. Pupils then to 'take their pencils for a walk from the circle, around the page, and back to the circle'. As they cross over each other's lines they will form lots of spaces on the page which can then be drawn in later (see picture below).

4. **Retell the Christmas story, broken into chunks (there is an example of this at the end of this document).**

During each chunk of your narration, pupils to each choose a space to draw an illustration/colour/ place a word to bring meaning and represent that part of the story—their doodling will facilitate their listening. They can choose a small or a large space, as they wish.

5. **Now allow time to reach deeper learning by asking the pupils to discuss the following questions in their groups (If you have time, feedback to the whole class):**

Q: Which chunk of the story is, in their opinion, the most exciting and why?

Q: Who do they think was the most 'troubled'/fearful participant in the story (it can be at any stage in the story), and why?

Q: Which participants in the story do they think experienced the greatest range of emotions? Why?

6. **'Story Squiggles' Part 2. Each group to now write the following question in the middle:**

Who was the most pleased to see baby Jesus?

Pupils should discuss answers (with reasons) as a group and, once a consensus has been reached, record this however they want to (draw/write) in the circle in the middle before feeding back to the whole class.

7. **Finally, note that it has been interesting to see how the nativity characters reacted to the birth of Jesus and ask the pupils:**

Q: But what about you? If you had been there at the time, how might you have felt about meeting Jesus?

Pupils may be happy to offer their responses to the class, but do not push this because for some their responses might be deeply personal and a profound moment for them. For some, it might raise big questions, for others they might see fear or doubt in themselves which might be a surprise to encounter. Some might have misunderstandings about who Jesus was.