

What if Jesus were born today?



These images were created by The Salvation Army to be used as a Christmas window display at its International Headquarters in London. The hope is that people will see the images and reflect on the fact that Christians believe that the Christmas story is all about how God showed love to the world by Jesus coming to be with ordinary people. They portray how Christians believe God is with them in both mundane and extreme situations.

Here are a range of different ideas for how these images could be used as learning aids in your secondary RE or humanities lessons.

(Depending on pupils' previous knowledge you may want to read through the Christmas story before starting the activities - see attached Bible passages.)

Group Discussion Activities

- Give groups an image each and cover the image so that only the Bible quote is showing. Ask pupils to discuss in their groups what that Bible verse might mean to Christians today. Uncover the rest of the image and see how the image compares to the things they were talking about. Is it surprising? Why? Why not?
- Print off the Bible verse cards and ask pupils to decide if any of the verses have links with the pictures. Ask pupils to give feedback on why they think the Bible verses match the images.
- Ask pupils to discuss what they think the different characters in their image are thinking and feeling. Using Post-it Notes ask pupils to write down some of their characters' thoughts, including Joseph and Mary (or only Joseph and Mary in the war zone image), and stick them on the picture. Ask for groups to feed back.
- Give groups one of the images. They have five minutes to discuss and write down on a big sheet of paper how the images made them feel, one thing they tell us about Christmas and one question they have about the image. Groups could then swap and add to the previous group's ideas until they have done the same for all three images. Use the feedback to lead a group discussion.

Possible Discussion Questions

- Why has someone created these images?
- Is there anything surprising about the images?
- Is there anything confusing about the images?
- Do these images portray God as present in people's suffering or absent? Why?
- Do these images portray God as present in our everyday situations? Why?
- What do these images tell us about what Christians believe about the Christmas story?
- Why do you think Christians would say that at Christmas 'love came down'?

Artwork

Ask students to take one of the Bible verse cards from the accompanying sheet and to create a modern-day Mary, Joseph and Jesus scene with a focus on the verse. They could use newspaper and magazine cut-outs or draw/paint their own images. Students can then explain to others in their group how the verse is shown in the picture and reflect on how the verse might impact the life of a Christian.

Drama

Give the groups one of the images. Explain that they are going to perform a drama with the starting point resembling the picture they have. Ask them to put together a piece that shows what the different people in the picture are thinking and feeling. Pupils watching may want to ask the characters in the scene further questions at the end. Ask groups to remember that the piece is still trying to show the Bible verse featured in the image. Pupils could explain how the verse was shown in their performance and what they think the verse means to Christians.

Literacy

After discussion around the images you could ask pupils the following questions:

When you think of Christmas, do you think of love? Why? Why not?
Do you think God is with people today? Why? Why not?

Ask students to write a piece of poetry or spoken prose that shares their thoughts, beliefs and feelings on these questions. Some could be shared with the class.

