



Christianity:

What is the most significant part of the nativity story for Christians today?

Topic Overview

- In the Christmas story, there are lots of important symbols which show the birth of Jesus was a special event:
The **angels** symbolise that Jesus wasn't an ordinary man. Angels aren't everyday occurrences and were there to show people that Jesus was a special gift from God.
The **star** guided the Wise Men just as Jesus is the light that guides people to God.
The **Wise Men** and the **Shepherds** show the difference between rich and poor, symbolising that Jesus is a gift to everyone.
The **gifts** from the Wise Men: **gold** is a precious metal symbolising how precious Jesus is and represents his Kingship. **Frankincense** is used in perfume and incense and represents Jesus' priestly role, **Myrrh** is also used in perfumes and incense and in Jesus' day was an embalming oil which symbolises his death.
The **manger** and the **stable** were humble beginnings for a 'King.'
- These symbols are used in artwork to show the Christmas story.
- There are lots of pieces of art which show the Christmas story, however, they are all slightly different because each artist has interpreted the Bible story differently.
- If you listen carefully to Christmas Carols, you can also hear these symbols mentioned in the lyrics. Christmas Carols describe the events around Jesus' birth.
- A Christingle is another important symbol for Christians.
- It is a symbol of the Christian faith and reminds Christians of 'Christ's light.'
The **orange** represents the world.
The **candle** reminds us of Jesus as Christians believe Jesus is the light of the world
The **red ribbon** goes all around the 'world' and reminds Christians that Jesus died - it symbolises His blood.
The **four cocktail sticks** have two meanings; the four seasons or the four corners of the world.
The **sweets or dried fruit** symbolise God's gifts to the world, including kindness and love.

Links with other religions

- Many religions use symbols to represent their beliefs.
- **The Seder Plate** (Judaism). The Seder plate traditionally holds five or six items, each of which symbolises a part of the Passover story.
- **The 5Ks** (Sikhism). The 5 Ks symbolise that the Sikh who wears them has dedicated themselves to a life of devotion and submission to the Guru. Each K has an important significance, and symbolises something a Sikh should remember.
- **Easter** (Christianity). There are lots of symbols associated with Easter, for example Easter Eggs and Hot Cross Buns.

Key Vocabulary	Definition
Incarnation	The Christian belief that Jesus is God in a human body. The word 'incarnate' is Latin for "in the flesh."
Christingle	A symbolic object that means 'Christ's light'.
Symbol	A sign, shape or object with a special meaning that is used to represent something else.
Frankincense	A scented resin used in incense and perfume.
Myrrh	Natural resin used as perfume, incense, and medicine.
Jesus	Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God.
Wise Men	Men of great learning. Today we would call them astrologers (studying the position and movements of the sun, moon and stars).
Manger	A long trough from which horses or cattle feed.
Embalming oil	Oil used on a person who has died.

