

Christmas Lights

Primary KS2

Looking for a new way to present the Christmas story to your pupils? Why not take some inspiration from these posters shining a light on the Nativity. Use as a starter activity or as the main focus for your lesson.

These posters were created by The Salvation Army to be used as a Christmas display at its International Headquarters in London. The hope is that as people see the images, they will find encouragement and inspiration from the fact that Jesus, the Light of the World, came to Earth at Christmas.



Discussion ideas

Explore one image at a time. Use your interactive white board torch tool to 'shine a light' on the image, revealing only parts of the image. Encourage pupils to look for clues for what the image is.

Follow

Is the journey long or short? Easy or difficult? What are they following? Why? Why is the word 'light' used and not 'star'? What do you follow - and why?

Surround

Where is the light coming from? What is meant by the word 'glory'? Looking at the image, being surrounded by light, is it a positive or negative experience? How might it feel? What other words might work instead of 'surround'? When would you feel surrounded like this? Why?

Hold on

What is the light source in the picture? Why do you think it is the light source? How can you hold on to light? Why is the word 'treasured' used? What would you hold on to and treasure?

Investigate the Bible quotes in the follow and surround images. None of the quotes mentions the word 'light'. Investigate what links them with the word light. What is the 'light' source in each poster?

Jesus has been described as the Light of the World. Why do you think this is? Brainstorm alternative light sources. If Jesus were born today, what alternative description for 'light' could be used? Light can also be a source to guide us. What other objects can help guide us? Use these ideas to complete the phrase: 'The ____ of the World'.

Which image could be the odd one out? Display all three images - you may wish to give printed copies to pupils. Encourage creative thinking by asking pupils to say which image is the odd one out - and a reason why.

What if...? What if there hadn't been a light? What if the star wasn't too bright? What if the angel couldn't be seen? What if no one came to visit Mary? What if she wasn't interested? What if no one told anyone else what had happened?



Literacy ideas

The New Testament was written in Greek and there are many different translations. Display three translations of Luke 2:19. Investigate the similarities and differences of the text, and the additional meanings from the metaphors in the *New International Version*.

‘Mary continued to think about these things, trying to understand them.’
(*Easy-to-Read Version*)

‘Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them.’
(*International Children’s Bible*)

‘But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.’
(*New International Version*)

In small groups, hot-seat a pupil as one of the characters from one of the images. For example, find out what they were doing, what happened, what was their first reaction or their thoughts. Use this information to write a diary entry or a small script based on the event.

Write a poem based on one image or all of the images. For example, an acrostic, with each line starting with a letter from the word ‘LIGHT’. Or free-style, with repetitive lines based on ‘follow the light’, ‘surrounded by light’, ‘hold on to the light’.

Drama ideas

Give each small group or pair five mins to create a freeze-frame exploring one of these words/phrases: follow, surround, hold on. Review the freeze-frames, one third of the class at a time. Ask the rest of the class to identify what is happening. Each freeze-frame will probably show a positive or a negative emotion. Challenge the class to re-show their freeze-frame, and to flip it, so the opposite emotion is shown.

Give each pair or small group a torch, and try and work in a room with less lighting. (Remember to talk to the class about eye safety, not shining lights into people’s eyes.) Explore trying to follow, hold on and be surrounded by light. (Note: with follow, the light shines ahead, but it also shines back on the followers.) Create their own physical interpretation of each image. How does having the light source change the dynamics of their image?

Art ideas

The original posters would have had a light source behind them. Recreate your own light images using tissue paper and glue on to acetate. Using felt-tips, write light words on the paper, then, when dry, add to the collage.

Imagine a modern interpretation of these images. What would you draw to represent the same ideas?



PE ideas

Play some warm-up games on the theme of follow, surround and hold on.

Follow

Split the class in two. Whisper to each person in group A a number from 1 to ... 15 (if you have 30 in your class.) Do the same with group B, but say their numbers loudly and clearly, so group A know their corresponding number. Ask the pupils to move, run, walk, dodge, about the room. Can group A follow their matching person, close enough to touch them? Can group B work out who's following them? Freeze the class after five minutes and find out how well they did!

Challenge time!

Given two minutes, in pairs, how many words can you come up with linked with the word 'light'?

Surround

Play some music to get the pupil moving. Pause the music then shout, 'Surrounded by ... three.' Pupils rush to get into groups of three and hold hands - with one more in the middle (who is now surrounded by three). Play the music and repeat with different numbers. What will happen if you said: 'Surrounded by one or thirty'!

Hold on

Play sticky fingers. Tag - but if you touch someone, hold on tight!

Try and find out how many times the word 'light' is used in the Bible. How would you do this? Depending on the translation, it can be more than 300 times.

