

Jesus, Light of the World

Christmas assembly for primary schools

This assembly is for use leading up to Christmas. It focuses on Jesus as the light of the world and how Christians can act in the world. It makes links with a USPG-supported community project in Villa Felicidad, Uruguay, and the work they do to be 'a light' in the community.

Curriculum links

RE: symbolism, faith and action

Science: light and shadows

English: poems, metaphors and symbolism

Geography: comparing localities

PSHEC: thinking of others, community life, making a difference

Have ready:

Several objects associated with the Christmas season. These must be clearly visible to the children and must include a candle that is securely fixed, as it will be lit (remember matches!). You also need a large box with space to hold all the objects and to safely contain a lit candle. If possible, line the box with dark paper, or paint it black inside (with non-flammable paint), as this will give a greater effect when later you place the lit candle inside the box. Some objects you might choose:

- Miniature Christmas tree
- Tinsel and/or baubles
- 1 x small present
- Christmas cracker
- Party hat
- Nativity scene
- Picture of snowman/angel

Place the items in the box so that they cannot be seen by the children.

You will also need a Bible for the recommended reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

If you would like to show where Uruguay is in comparison to Britain and Ireland, then also have a globe to hand.

Safety Warning! This assembly requires you to light a candle and place it inside a box. Please ensure that you use appropriate safety measures and keep the children at a safe distance at all times.

USPG can take no responsibility for any injury, losses or damage caused or sustained as a result of taking part.

Visit the Health and Safety Executive website (www.hse.gov.uk) for key tips and advice on a range of issues. Alternatively, call the HSE Infoline on 0845 345 0055 to order copies of their free information leaflets.

Welcome:

What do these objects symbolise?

In this box I have all sorts of interesting things. They all have something in common. If we take them out one at a time, I wonder how long it will take you to guess what it is that they are all connected with?

Choose a volunteer to come to the front and select an object from the box. When they have chosen their object and said what it is, they can stand at the front, holding the item up.

Continue until all the objects have been selected. By this point, most children will have realised they are all Christmas items.

I told you that all these items had something in common and I can see lots of hands up! *Choose a child to give an answer.*

That's right, all these items are associated with Christmas.

At this point, go through the items, making sure you leave the candle until last. Briefly explain the Christmas link, eg 'We wear party hats at Christmas meals; we have pictures of snowman because sometimes, if we are lucky, it snows over Christmas; we give presents to one another at Christmas time,' etc. Do not put the items back in the box as it needs to be empty later. Simply place them out of the way.

Lastly, take the candle and ask the volunteers to go back to their places.

Here I have the last object, a candle. I'm sure you have seen plenty of candles around at Christmas time. The candle is a very important object at Christmas because it is what we call a symbol. This means that it represents, or reminds us, of something else, usually something important. Can anyone tell me what a candle is often a symbol of?

Take suggestions from the children. Lead the comments towards a candle representing Jesus.

Jesus is often called 'The Light of the World'. It is one of the special names he is given in the Bible. When we have light, we can see things clearly and it makes us feel safe. A very special thing about light is that it spreads out from its source and brightens up everything around it.

Take the box and place it on its side so that the children can see that it is dark inside.

If I light this candle and place it inside this box, it will stop being a dark place and become a bright and lit-up place.

Light the candle and safely and securely place it inside the box. The box needs to be a safe distance from the children! You may want to tape an area on the floor not to be crossed by the children.

A small light can make a big difference in a dark place and that is what Jesus did when he was born – he came as a small baby into a big and sometimes scary world. He brings light to peoples' lives and changes dark places to light places. That is why he is called 'The Light of the World'.

Christians believe that when you have a friendship with Jesus, you can also try and be like him. The Bible tells us that we can also be lights to the world (*Read Matthew 5:12-14*). This means that we can try to act in a way that makes a positive difference to peoples' lives and situations.

One person who is doing this is a man called Alejandro Manzoni. Alejandro believes that God has called him to be like a light to the people who live in Villa Felicidad, a small community in Uruguay. Villa Felicidad is a place where lots of people have been unhappy and feel like nothing they could do could change their situation of being poor and not getting help from people. Alejandro is a church leader and he has been working to make a difference in the community of Villa Felicidad. He has set up projects that teach people how to grow vegetables, how to cook, how to get medical help and how to work together to make their village a better place. Alejandro has been like a light in a dark place, working to bring good things to unhappy people. He has done this because he understands why we call Jesus 'The Light of the World' and because he knows that he can be a light to others too.

Time to think:

Can you think of someone who has been like a light to you, making a bad situation better for you? Can you think of a way you can be like a light to someone else, cheering them up or making something they find difficult seem easier for them?

Short time of silence

Prayer:

Dear Father God,

Thank you for Christmas. Thank you for all the good things about it. Thank you especially for sending us your Son, Jesus, to be a light to the world. We pray that you will help us understand what this means and how we can be a light to others by being kind and thoughtful, even when it might be hard. Amen.

Song:

Light of the World - Tim Hughes

Like a Candle Flame - Graham Kendrick