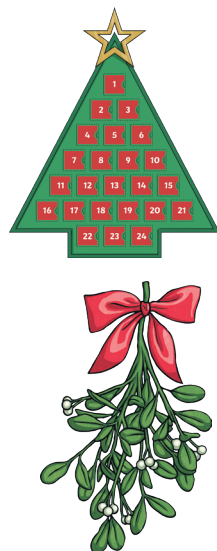


Key Vocabulary

Nativity	The story of the birth of Jesus Christ.
significant	Something that is important enough to be noticed and spoken about or has a special meaning.
interpret	To decide on the meaning of something based on the evidence that you have. Different people may interpret things in different ways.
recount	To retell the events of something that has happened.
compare	To find the similarities and differences between things.
gospel	The record of Christ's life and teachings in the first four books of the New Testament (part of the Bible).

Christians all believe that the Christmas Story is **significant**. However, some Christians view the story in a **metaphorical** way while other Christians believe the story is literally true.



Christmas Customs

There are lots of different ways that people celebrate Christmas and Advent:

- Christmas trees **symbolise** the everlasting life of God;
- Mistletoe is a **symbol** of peace and joy and is used to show friendship and goodwill;
- **Advent** calendars, wreaths and candles are different ways of counting down to Jesus' birthday;
- Christingles symbolise the importance of Jesus and the **gospel**.



'The Nativity' Story

The Christmas Story is also called 'The **Nativity**'. In this story, an angel appeared to Mary and told her that she was going to have a baby and that he would be the Son of God and he would be called Jesus. While Mary was pregnant, a census took place and she and Joseph (her husband) had to travel to Bethlehem - their town of birth.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, there was no room at any inns for them to stay in but they were allowed to stay in a stable. This is where Jesus was born. Angels told shepherds on a hillside that the Son of God had been born so they went to visit him in Bethlehem. Wise men spotted a bright star in the sky and knew this meant a king had been born so they went to visit with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. King Herod heard that a new king had been born from the wise men and ordered that all the baby boys in the area be killed. An angel appeared in a dream to Joseph and Mary and warned them so they travelled to Egypt with baby Jesus and were safe.



Key Vocabulary

literal	Words are exactly true in the way that they are written.
metaphorical	Words are used to build imagery in the mind and things may be symbolic of something else.
Advent	Advent is the time of waiting for Christmas, which marks the arrival of Jesus to earth just over 2000 years ago. Advent begins on the Sunday nearest to the 30th November and lasts until Christmas Eve.
symbolism	When pictures, colours or objects are used to represent more complicated ideas.
St Matthew	One of the twelve apostles of Jesus. St Matthew wrote the first book in the New Testament of the Bible.
St Luke	One of the twelve apostles of Jesus. St Luke wrote the third book in the New Testament of the Bible.

Different Advent Celebrations Around the World

Christmas is celebrated in different ways around the world. In Sweden, it is celebrated on 13th December as Saint Lucia's Day. It is to honour a girl who was put to death for her Christian beliefs in Roman times (when people were expected to worship Roman Gods). Saint Lucia was caught feeding Christians, who were hiding in caves.



Advent

Churches prepare to celebrate the arrival of Jesus during **Advent**. They wear purple and decorate the church in purple as it **symbolises** royalty and reminds Christians that **Advent** is a time for prayer, reflection and preparation.

St Matthew's Account of the Nativity

Interpretations of the Nativity are different in the Bible. **St Matthew's** account of The Christmas Story focuses on power. He focuses on:

- the importance of the sign of the star after Jesus' birth;
- the visitors to Jesus being very clever people – the wise men;
- the expensive gifts given to Jesus by the Wise Men;
- Herod, the king, being jealous of the birth of a new king and feeling angry.

St Luke's Account of the Nativity

Interpretations of the **Nativity** are different in the Bible. **St Luke's** account of The Christmas Story focuses on the poor and vulnerable. He focuses on:

- the angel appearing to Mary to say a baby would be born;
- Mary and Joseph having to go to Bethlehem because of the census;
- Mary and Joseph having to stay in a stable and Jesus being born there;
- the visitors to Jesus (the shepherds) seeing an angel and being poor;
- Jesus being laid in a manger (a food trough).

