

World Religions | Christianity: Incarnation | RE | Years 5 & 6 | 2023-24

Key Question

Was Jesus the Messiah?

Key Concepts

The Messiah Christians believe Jesus was the Messiah (the Saviour sent by God). The idea of the Messiah is important in Jewish culture, and was central to Jewish belief in the years that Jesus lived and taught; they hoped for a saviour who would vanquish their enemies and restore them to their homeland to live in peace under their own laws

Prophecy Written by prophets, prophecies were seen by Jewish people of Jesus's time as evidence that God really did still care about them, that he had promised to come to their aid, and would fulfil his promise.

Incarnation The prophecies in Isaiah tell of a baby who would be called 'God with us'. This foretells the idea (which Christians believe) that Jesus is actually God incarnate (i.e. in human form).

Key People

Jesus Christ The Messiah, The 'anointed one', God incarnate

Matthew Disciple of Jesus and author of one of the Gospels of the New Testament

God's People Jewish people in exile from Egypt in Jesus's time

Isaiah An important prophet of the Old Testament who prophesied about the coming of a Messiah

Micah An important prophet of the Old Testament who prophesied about the coming of a Messiah

King David A descendent of Abraham (ultimately of Adam) who became King of Israel after defeating Goliath (in the Old Testament)

Key Vocabulary

1	Messiah	A saviour sent by God to the aid of His people
2	Prophet	Someone who prophesises. Often an outsider, making pronouncements and judgements about how the Jews were living
3	Prophecy	Foretelling of the future
4	Incarnation	God in human form
5	Immanuel	Means 'God with us'
7	The Gospels	Eye-witness accounts of the people who lived and spoke with Jesus
8	Advent	The period of expectation for the arrival of an important person (Jesus). Celebrated by Christians as the first season of the church year, leading up Christmas and the preceding four Sundays

Key Bible Passages

Isaiah 7: 14	Prophesises about the coming of the Messiah
Isaiah 9: 6-7	Prophesises about the coming of the Messiah
Isaiah 11: 1-5	Prophesises about the coming of the Messiah
Micah 5: 2	Prophesises about the coming of the Messiah
Matthew 1 & 2	Tell of the birth of Jesus and arrival of the Magi (Wise men). Evidence for Jesus being considered to be the Messiah.

Key Learning: Was Jesus the Messiah?

- 1 What kind of saviour?**

Think about people needed to help in different situations. What qualities might a person need? Who might help out or 'save' a situation? Explain situation of Jewish people at end of the Old Testament (being persecuted by Romans who were occupying their land) and their desire for a saviour to rescue them, restore them to their land to live under their own laws. Discuss and list characteristics the saviour would need to have – a saviour who could rescue the People of God in their current situation.
- 2 What does the Bible expect the Messiah to be?**

Read extracts from prophecies of Micah and Isaiah about the coming of the Messiah and list qualities/characteristics identified. These are known as the 'Messianic expectations'. Create a 'Wanted' poster for the Messiah, ensuring there is a link to each of the Messianic expectations, for example: wears a crown; holding a family tree with King David marked on it; Bethlehem birth certificate.
- 3 What clues are there that Jesus is the promised Messiah?**

Jewish followers of Jesus gradually began to believe that Jesus was the Messiah (saviour sent by God) and that he fulfilled the prophecies. However, most Jewish people at the time did not believe Jesus was the Messiah – and Jewish people today still do not think he was. Highlight evidence in Matthew's Gospel (1:18-24 and 2: 1-12) that led Christians to believe that Jesus was the Messiah.
- 4 What is the real meaning of Christmas? (Part 1)**

For Christians, Christmas is a time of celebration of the arrival of the Messiah. Many Christians argue that Christmas has lost its real meaning: Jesus is lost in the tinsel, turkey and TV. The Christian Church use Advent as a time of preparation for the arrival of Jesus. Some Christians have turned to advertising campaigns to get the message across about the 'true meaning' of Christmas. Show examples of church ad campaigns then choose one to analyse.
- 5 What is the real meaning of Christmas ? (Part 2)**

Discuss: why do Christians want to make Christmas about Jesus Christ? What do Christians do at Christmas?' Collate ideas then read about 'Present Aid' and 'Urban Outreach – Christmas dinner on Jesus' (charitable projects). In groups, improvise a dinner table conversation about Christmas plans 1) in role as a non-Christian household, 2) in role as a Christian household.
- 6 Why might people think that the world needs a saviour?**

Not everyone thinks Jesus is the Saviour from God, but why might people think the world needs one? Discuss: 'In your own hopes for the future, what makes you confident? What makes you fearful?' Imagine that there is a God. If this God sent a new messenger to Earth in the twenty-first century, what would the messenger say? Write a paragraph.