

FOUNDATION STAGE INTRODUCTION

*Editor: Stephen Pett
Writer: Helen Matter
Illustrator: Emma Yarlett*

UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY

TEXT IMPACT CONNECTIONS

FOUNDATION STAGE



INTRODUCTION

This resource offers support in helping practitioners to teach about Christianity in EYFS settings, so as to begin to lay the foundations for children's understanding in RE as they move through school.

THE UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY APPROACH COMPRISES:

- three elements which run through all of the units, from EYFS to KS3:
 - making sense of the text
 - understanding the impact
 - making connections.
- core Christian concepts, which tell the 'salvation narrative' or 'big story' of the Bible
- knowledge 'building blocks' which set out core learning.

These are all outlined below, and more details are given in the *Teacher's Handbook* that came with this pack.

RE should contribute clearly to Early Learning Goals, especially to

- communication and language development
- personal, social and emotional development
- literacy
- understanding of the world
- expressive arts and design.

As practitioners use the units in this resource, it is recommended that they look for ELG links and see what else children might achieve as they explore this RE Learning Theme.

This resource looks to encourage excellent and creative teaching by giving practitioners confidence about the subject knowledge required, and a range of tried and tested activities for the classroom.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The EYFS resources have been written and extensively trialled by Helen Matter and Early Years practitioners in the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocese.



EYFS UNITS

The units for EYFS look slightly different in construction from the units for KS1 upwards. They offer a series of suggestions for engaging children in learning, using stories, drama, art and music, using teacher-led activities and ideas for continuous provision.

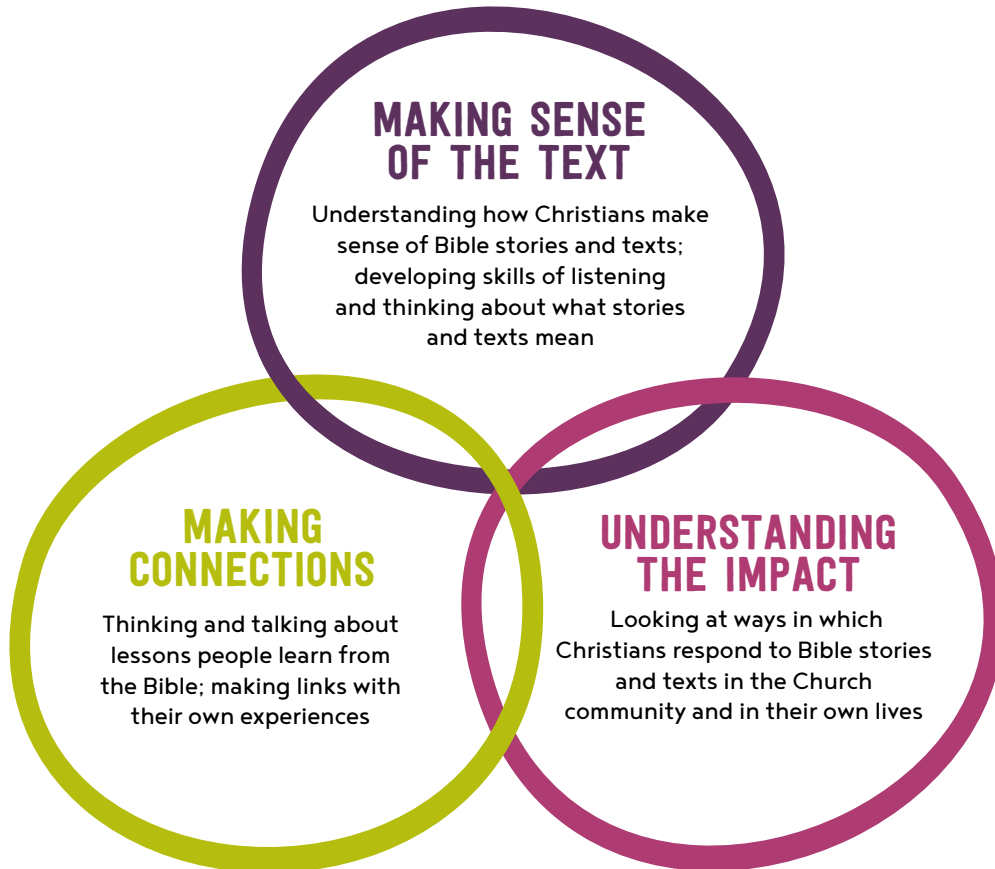
Children are introduced to Tessa and Tom, two imaginary Christian characters who enable you to talk about things Christian children learn or do. They provide a context for pupils' learning which is easier to handle than talking abstractly about people of faith and belief.

You can create your own Tom and Tessa, or your own similar characters using persona dolls or suitable photos of children. The names 'Tom' and 'Tessa' are immaterial; feel free to change them.



THE APPROACH

Understanding Christianity explores core Christian concepts. It starts with exploring what the Bible says, placing these ideas within the wider Bible story. Each unit addresses a concept, such as Creation or Salvation, through some key questions. It looks at some important teachings found in key Bible texts, and then explores their impact for Christians. Children have opportunities to learn from the ideas explored. Each unit incorporates the three elements below:











In the EYFS units, you will notice the ‘**Making sense**’ and ‘**Understanding the impact**’ sections. The ‘**Making connections**’ element is woven throughout the units, rather than in separate sections.



CORE CONCEPTS AND THE 'BIG STORY' OF THE BIBLE

In order to give EYFS teachers the background to the resources, this is a summary of the core concepts that are explored as part of the 'big story' of salvation, as understood within Christianity. The EYFS units introduce the concepts of Creation, Incarnation and Salvation from this list:

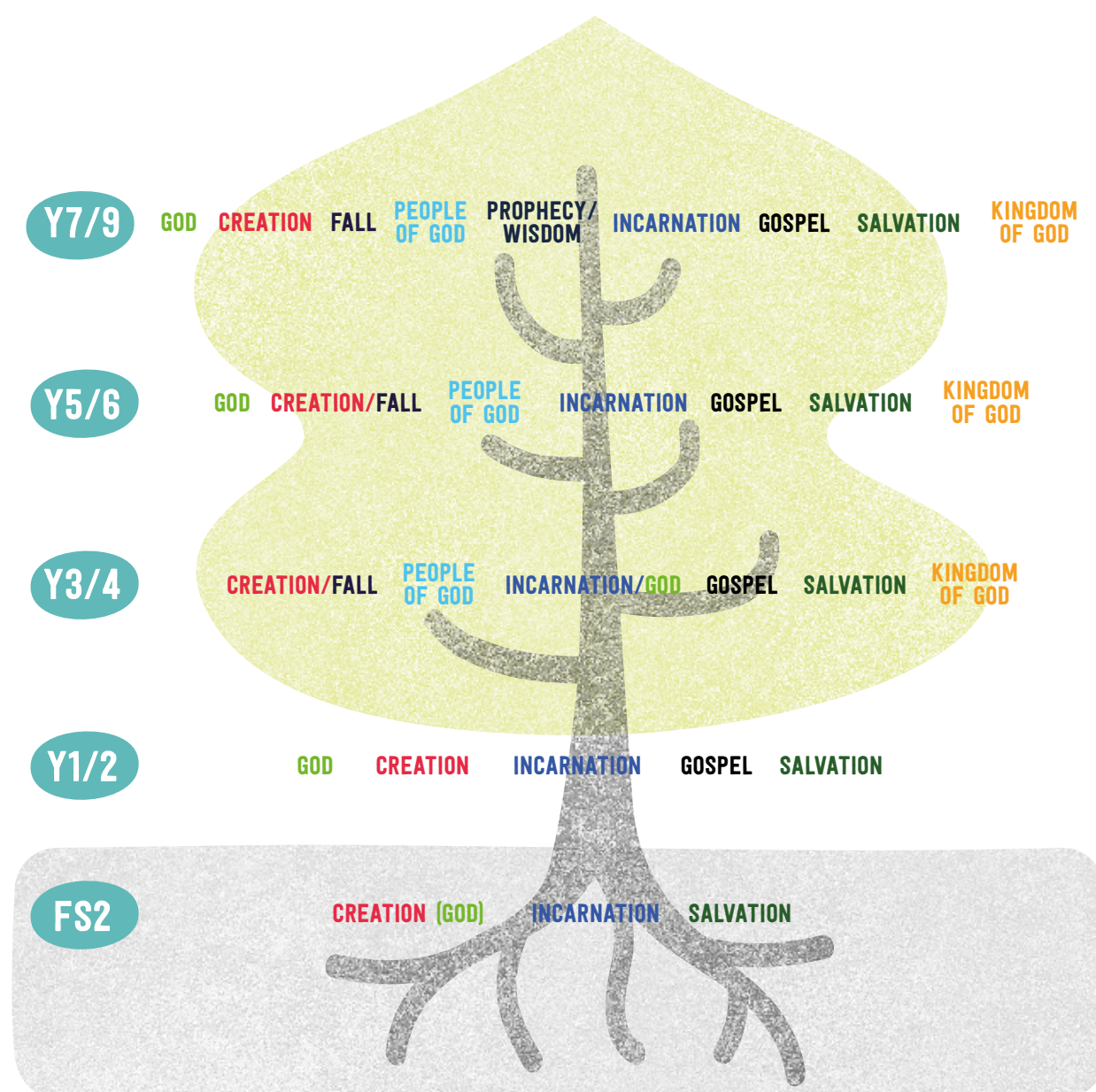
	GOD	Fundamental to Christian belief is the existence of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
	CREATION	The universe and human life are God's good creation. Humans are made in the image of God.
	FALL	Humans have a tendency to go their own way rather than keep their place in relation to their Creator. This attitude is called sin, and Genesis 3 gives an account of this rebellion, popularly called 'the Fall'. This describes a catastrophic separation between God and humans, between humans and each other, and between humans and the environment. This idea that humans are 'fallen' and in need of rescue (or salvation) sets out the root cause of many problems for humanity.
	PEOPLE OF GOD	The Old Testament tells the story of God's plan to reverse the impact of the Fall, to save humanity. It involves choosing a people who will model a restored relationship with God, who will attract all other people back to God. The Bible narrative includes the ups and downs of this plan, including the message of the prophets, ¹ who tried to persuade people to stick with God. The plan appears to end in failure, with the people of God exiled and then returning, awaiting a 'messiah' – a rescuer.
	INCARNATION	The New Testament presents Jesus as the answer – the Messiah and Saviour, who will repair the effects of sin and the Fall and offer a way for humans to be at one with God again. Incarnation means that Jesus is God in the flesh, and that, in Jesus, God came to live among humans.
	GOSPEL	Jesus' incarnation is 'good news' for all people. ('Gospel' means 'good news'.) His life, teaching and ministry embody what it is like to be one of the people of God, what it means to live in relationship with God. Jesus' example and teaching emphasise loving one's neighbour – particularly the weak and vulnerable – as part of loving God.
	SALVATION	Jesus' death and resurrection effect the rescue or salvation of humans. He opens the way back to God. Through Jesus, sin is dealt with, forgiveness offered, and the relationship between God and humans is restored.
	KINGDOM OF GOD	This does not mean that no one sins any more! The Bible talks in terms of God's 'Kingdom' having begun in human hearts through Jesus. The idea of the 'Kingdom of God' reflects God's ideal for human life in the world – a vision of life lived in the way God intended for human beings. Christians look forward to a time when God's rule is fulfilled at some future point, in a restored, transformed heaven and earth. Meanwhile, they seek to live this attractive life as in God's Kingdom, following Jesus' example, inspired and empowered by God's Spirit.

¹ Prophecy is a key concept that will be explored in the project resources, along with the concept of 'wisdom' – which encompasses writing and teaching about how Christians should live and behave in relationship with God.

Children in EYFS will begin to understand some of the main beliefs and practices of Christianity. It is not necessary for children to grasp the 'big story', but it may help the teacher to see where the core concepts of Creation, Incarnation and Salvation fit.

Teachers can see in the diagram below where children's learning will go as they move up the school by noting the way core concepts are revisited in older year groups.

The core concepts fit into a spiral curriculum, whereby concepts are revisited and explored in more depth as pupils move through the school. These are explored through key questions, however, and so are not applied exclusively - links and connections are made between concepts during units.





KNOWLEDGE BUILDING BLOCKS

These indicate the kind of knowledge and understanding children are expected to begin to grasp through their RE activities in EYFS, and then on into KS1. The resources offer opportunities for children to grasp more than these, of course, but the intention is that it is better to focus on developing a deeper understanding of these few concepts than trying to go too broad too young.

CREATION

EYFS	End KS1 (7)
<p>Children will know that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The word God is a name. • Christians believe God is the creator of the universe. • Christians believe God made our wonderful world and so we should look after it. 	<p>Pupils will know that Christians believe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God created the universe. • The Earth and everything in it are important to God. • God has a unique relationship with human beings as their Creator and Sustainer. • Humans should care for the world because it belongs to God.

INCARNATION

EYFS	End KS1 (7)
<p>Children will know that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christians believe God came to Earth in human form as Jesus. • Christians believe Jesus came to show that all people are precious and special to God. 	<p>Pupils will know that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christians believe that Jesus is God and that he was born as a baby in Bethlehem. • The Bible points out that his birth showed he was extraordinary (for example, he is worshipped as a king, in Matthew) and that he came to bring good news (for example, to the poor, in Luke). • Christians celebrate Jesus' birth, and Advent for Christians is a time for getting ready for Jesus' coming.

SALVATION

EYFS	End KS1 (7)
<p>Children will know that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christians remember Jesus' last week at Easter. • Jesus' name means 'He saves'. • Christians believe Jesus came to show God's love. • Christians try to show love to others. 	<p>Pupils will know that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easter is very important in the 'big story' of the Bible. Jesus showed that he was willing to forgive all people, even for putting him on the cross. • Christians believe Jesus builds a bridge between God and humans. • Christians believe Jesus rose from the dead, giving people hope of a new life.

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