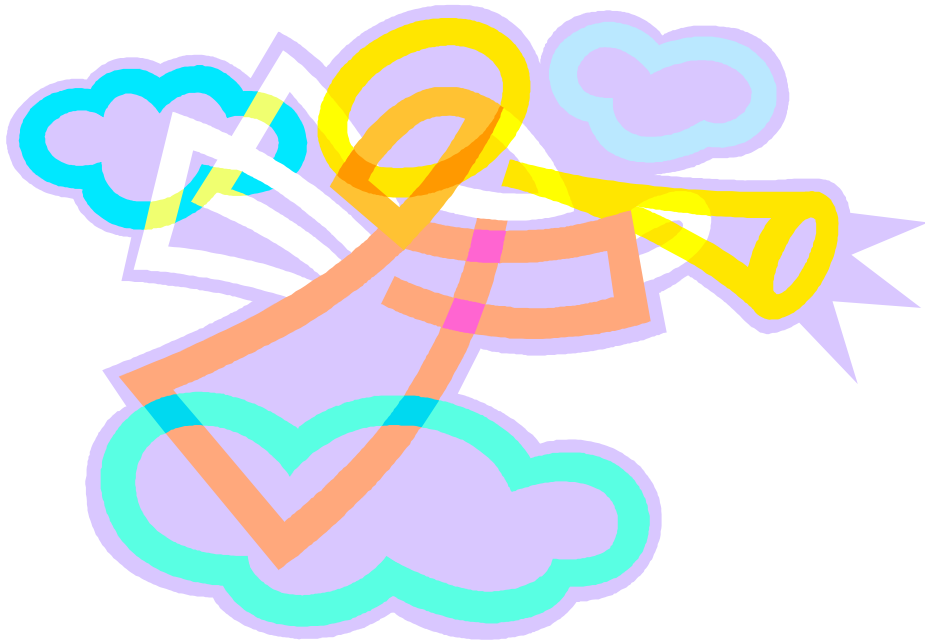


Angels



ANGELS

- Angels
- An Angel visits Zachariah
- Gabriel Surprises Mary
- Joseph
- Good News!
- The flight to Egypt

Make a collage display of as many different pictures and figures of angels that you can find. I'm sure that the children will be able to help you.

(1) ANGELS

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Ask the children

- What is an Angel?
- Where do Angels come from?
- What do Angels do?
- What do Angels look like?
- How do they know?
- What makes them think that?



Talk

There are many references to angels and stories about angels in the Bible. Can the children remember any of them?

- Jacob's Dream at Bethel (Genesis 28 v 10)
- Moses and the Burning Bush (Exodus 3 v 2)
- Elijah

*Written for the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education
By Lisa Fenton, Blackburn Diocesan Senior Advisor to Schools*

Daniel
Christmas Angels
Easter Angels

The Book of Revelation has many references to angels and their appearance. Angels are sent by God to care for us.

Angels are sent by God with messages.

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

Our ideas about what an Angel looks like come from other people's drawings and paintings. What do you think an Angel looks like?

PRAYER

We thank you Father God for the messages that the Angels bring. They remind us of your great love and care for all of us.

(2) AN ANGEL VISITS ZACHARIAH

MAKE THE CONNECTION

How many of you have said the phrase "I don't believe it!" When do you use those words? In what kind of situations?

There used to be a programme on the television which I am sure the teachers will remember with a character who often cried the words "I don't believe it!" He was a grumpy old man, I'm pretty sure that Zachariah wasn't a grumpy old man but he had such a surprise one day that he cried out the words "I don't believe it!" "How can that happen?"

STORY

Tell the story of Zachariah in the temple (Luke Chapter 1 v 5 -25).

You could add the following words to your display "Zachariah was visited by an Angel in the temple." What did the Angel say to Zachariah?"

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

Imagine if an Angel visited you with a message from God. Would you say "I don't believe it!" or would you see the Angel and believe?

PRAYER

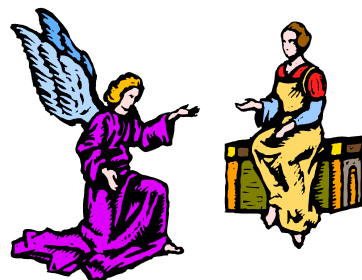
Dear Father God, Very often if we have not seen something or do not fully understand something then we do not believe it to be real or possible.

Although we have never met an Angel we know they are your special messengers, bless us all with a strong belief in Angels. As we prepare for Christmas help us to listen carefully to the words of the Angels and learn more about your love for us. Amen

(3) GABRIEL SURPRISES MARY

MAKE THE CONNECTION

When someone taps you on the shoulder do you jump? Talk to the children about situations when someone has spoken to you or come up and touched you and given you such a surprise that you have 'jumped'.



CHALLENGE:- Do any of them think that they could creep up behind you so quietly, tap you on the shoulder and make you jump? Allow time for a couple of children to try.

Today's story is about a surprise delivered by the Angel Gabriel. Does anyone think they can guess which story it is going to be?

STORY

Tell the story of Gabriel visiting Mary. The children should know this story well so using questions and answers let the children tell the story. Emphasise the surprise of Mary, she probably 'jumped'.

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

Mary said yes!

An Angel from God tapped her on the shoulder and said God wants you to be the Mother of his Son, Jesus, and she said yes! Wow! What a brave thing to do. How many of us would say yes if God came up and tapped us on the shoulder and asked us to do an amazing job for Him?

PRAYER

We pray today Lord that you would bless us all with the courage of Mary. We pray that we will always be quick and willing to do your work so that "Your Kingdom will come here on earth as it is in Heaven.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

(4) JOSEPH

MAKE THE CONNECTION

What does it feel like to be confused?

Sometimes being confused can make us afraid. Why? What sorts of things confuse us? Joseph was confused by the message that Mary had received from Gabriel. So God sent an Angel to speak to Joseph in a dream.



TEACHERS NOTES We understandably often avoid this part of the nativity story told in Matthew's Gospel. To read it straight from the Bible would be too difficult for children and perhaps would lead to difficult questions that staff would not wish to discuss. However, having said that, it is an important part of the story and should not be missed out.

STORY

Begin with a picture of Joseph on an OHT with a troubled face. Explain to the children that Mary has just told Joseph her wonderful news. Ask them if they can remember what it is. Joseph is feeling very puzzled he has promised to marry Mary but now he is not so sure if he should. Change the picture to one of Joseph lying asleep on a mat. During the night Joseph dreams and God sends an Angel to speak to Joseph. Add an Angel to your OHT picture. The Angel tells Joseph not to worry that he must marry Mary and that she will give birth to a Son. The Angel tells Joseph to name the child Jesus and that Jesus is the Son of God. For your final OHT picture show the children a wide awake happy Joseph. When Joseph woke up he did exactly as the angel had told him to.

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

Sometimes we all become fearful, worried and confused about things. You may wish to mention some that would be relevant to the children but in this time of quiet let us

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remember that God is with us and he can help us to overcome worries and understand things more clearly.

PRAYER

Dear Father God, the story today about Joseph reminds us that we all get confused and worried. Help us to remember that you are always with us, that you love us and will send answers to help us to stop worrying. Amen.

(5) GOOD NEWS! ANGELS APPEAR TO THE SHEPHERDS

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine that they are sitting on a hillside gathered around a fire with their friends. It is dark and they are laughing and sharing stories. In the distance they can see the lights of a town. On the hillside surrounding them are the sheep they are watching and so every now and then, they can hear them bleating. They have had a good day and are feeling very happy.



PAUSE

Suddenly! There is a flash of an incredibly bright light. At this point you could create a loud noise! Perhaps a group of children on percussion instruments or the fanfare from a piece of classical music. Hopefully this will startle the children and they will grasp something of the surprise that was felt by the shepherds.

STORY

Ask the children what the shepherds saw. Tell the story which can be found in Luke's Gospel of the shepherds and the angels.

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

How do you think the shepherds felt when the angels appeared?

How would you have felt? What would you have done?

How do you think the shepherds felt when they walked into the stable?

How would you have felt? What would you have done?

PRAYER

Dear Lord, Just as the shepherds came and knelt before you in the stable, we are gathered here before you now. In the midst of all the busyness of Christmas we pray that we will not forget to take time to sit still and remember the real meaning of Christmas. Amen

(6) THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Ask the children who or what warns them of danger: Parents, teachers, road signs, warning signs etc. You may have some pictures of signs that could go onto your display. Jesus was in great danger and so God sent an Angel to Joseph and in a dream the Angel warned Joseph of the danger.

STORY

This is another story which is often left out of the Christmas story and you may only wish to use it in Key Stage 2 Collective Worship. Herod was an evil, jealous King and when he heard about the birth of a new King he was furious. (Who told him? How did they meet him?) The Wise men presented their gifts to Jesus (what did they give him?) and were warned in a dream not to return and tell Herod about the child. After they had left, an Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and warned him that Herod would search for Jesus and kill him. Joseph was told that he must quickly get up and take Mary and Jesus and escape to Egypt. (Matthew 2 v 13-15) Joseph immediately got up in the night and took his family to Egypt.

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

This must have been a very worrying time for Joseph and frightening and confusing time for Mary and Jesus. Joseph was faithful and completely trusted God.

PRAYER

Explain to the children and then pray for the many people in the world who because of war, famine or illness have had to leave their homes and escape to safer places. Pray that they will know that God goes with them and he understands how they feel.