

Christmas around the world

1. As pupils enter

Play your chosen music and display one of the focus images if you wish.

2. Introduction

Ask pupils what their favourite Christmas tradition is and gather a few responses. Tell everyone that Christmas is celebrated all around the world, by Christian and many non-Christian countries alike. The traditions of Christmas in the UK are shared by many other countries; but some countries enjoy very different Christmas traditions. Tell everyone that they're going to watch a short video about Christmas traditions around the world and, as they watch, to try to remember some of the different traditions they hear about.

3. Play the video

The duration is 4' 16". Final words: a group of children say 'Happy Christmas!'

4. After the video - Time to talk

Lead a discussion of the video by asking some or all of the following questions:

- **Who can tell me why we celebrate Christmas?** (It's a Christian festival marking the birth of Jesus Christ)
- **Can you remember when the tradition of bringing trees into our homes started?** (In the 18th century, but it became popular during Queen Victoria's reign in the 19th century)
- **Who can think of a Christmas tradition that might be more recent?** (Any sensible response - eg wearing Christmas jumpers)
- **What other day is a special celebration in Mexico and what is it called?** (6th January; Three Kings Day) **What other traditions are there in Mexico?** (Processions, piñata, leaving shoes outside, eating Three Kings' cake, the Night of the Radish)
- **Why might it be surprising that people celebrate Christmas in Japan?** (Christianity isn't the main religion there) **Why do you think it is still celebrated?** (Looking for an awareness that Christmas is more than just a religious festival now)
- **What could you expect from a visit from the Yule Lads in Iceland?** (Mischievous, presents or a potato) **Does that remind you of any part of our Christmas tradition?** (Father Christmas, Santa Claus)

Conclude by asking everyone: **Turn to the person next to you and tell them what your favourite Christmas tradition is, and why.**

5. Opportunity to sing

If your assembly is to include a song this would be a good time to sing.

Video page

6. Opportunity to reflect

Sit quietly now as we think about the things we've heard today...

Christmas is a Christian festival celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ... But over time Christmas has grown and changed...and now it is an important celebration for many different countries, including non-Christian ones...

There are many different ways that Christmas is celebrated around the world...

But although the celebrations may differ they all have this in common: each is an opportunity to come together with family and friends...to share together and enjoy...

Think to yourself how you will celebrate this Christmas...and how Christmas celebrations unite people all around the world at this special time of year...

7. Opportunity for prayer

Begin with your usual form of address and:

Thank you for the opportunity to come together with family and friends this Christmas.

Help us to celebrate the things that make us all different, but also to remember the many important things that unite us.

And help each of us make this Christmas a truly special time of year. Amen.