

# Christmas Truce 1914



## 1. As the pupils enter

Have the webpage open:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/assemblies-ks1-ks2-christmas-truce-1914/zhjpm39>

Play the instrumental of 'Silent Night' and display the image of soldiers during the Christmas Truce:

[http://teach.files.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/assemblies/images/christmas\\_truce.jpg](http://teach.files.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/assemblies/images/christmas_truce.jpg)

## 2. Introduction

Display the image of World War 1 soldiers. Ask some or all of the following:

- *What can you tell me about this picture?*
- *Who do they think these men are?*
- *Where might they be?*
- *When might the photo have been taken?*
- *How do you think the men in the photograph are feeling?*

Establish that the photograph was taken in no man's land on Christmas Day 1914 during the First World War, and shows both German and British soldiers talking to each other as friends, not combatants.

Ask:

- *What do you think Christmas felt like to the soldiers fighting the war?*
- *What thoughts and feelings do you think would lead enemy soldiers to stop fighting and treat each other as friends?*

## 3. Play the video

Play the video. The duration is 3' 35" and the final words are: '...Strangest Christmas I ever had.' The video includes still images of the Truce and the diary entries of a fictional soldier, based on real accounts of the event.

## 4 & 5. Time to talk

Choose one child to read aloud the line: 'We didn't understand the words, but we all knew the tune. It was 'Silent Night'. They had the same carol as us!'

Ask:

- *Why do you think the German soldiers singing 'Stille Nacht' made such an impression on the British soldiers?*
- *What can we learn today from the Christmas Truce?* [Guide the children's responses towards the idea that the Christmas story is so powerful it can stop a war in its tracks - even if only briefly - and that the things that unite us as human beings are stronger than the things which divide us.

## Play video



## 6. Time to sing

**Silent Night - vocal and instrumental versions of the carol**

## 7. Opportunity to reflect

You may wish to play the Christmas Truce slideshow (see 'Key links').

*The Christmas Truce shows us that we are all human. It asks us to treat others with the kindness and respect we ourselves deserve, to share with them and to show good will towards all people. It shows the power of the Christmas 'message'. As you watch, think to yourselves quietly what the power of the Christmas message means to you...*

## 8. Opportunity for prayer

Use your standard form of address ('Dear God', 'Dear Lord', etc) and:

*We thank you for your powerful Christmas message of peace and good will towards all people. Help us to treat others with kindness and respect, to share with them and to never forget that we are all human. Amen.*