

The story of 'Silent Night'



1. As the pupils enter

Have the webpage open:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/assemblies-ks1-the-story-of-silent-night-christmas-carol/zrjpxbk>

Play the guitar instrumental of 'Silent Night' as the children enter:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/primary-school-songs-assembly-collective-worship-silent-night/zysqtky>

Display the image of the Silent Night Chapel:

http://teach.files.bbci.co.uk/schoolradio/assemblies/images/silent_night_chapel.jpg

2. Your introduction to the video

Tell the children: *In the village of Oberndorf in a country called Austria, there's a chapel - a tiny church. Two hundred years ago, a song was sung in Oberndorf that you know very well. And a little chapel with a round curved roof was built to remind everyone about it. Can you guess what that song is? [Take suggestions and guide them to 'Silent Night'.] Continue: Silent Night is the song, the Christmas carol, that the little chapel was built to remind us of. People call it the Silent Night Chapel. But what does the word 'silent' mean? [Establish that it means noiseless, soundless, completely quiet.] Conclude: The song is hoping for silence, so the little baby Jesus will sleep and not get woken up. In 1816, Father Joseph Mohr wrote a poem about the birth of baby Jesus. He spoke German, so he called his poem 'Stille Nacht' which is German for 'Silent Night'. But two years passed before the song finally got its music. This is the story of how that happened...*

3. Play the video

Play the video. The duration is 3' 30" and the final words are: '...and right across the world.'

4 & 6. Time to talk

Use the Story questions, if you wish, to help children recall the video. Say: *On Christmas Eve, the 24th December 2018, it will be exactly 200 years since 'Silent Night' was sung for the very first time. Some people say the organ at Joseph's church wouldn't work because hungry mice had nibbled away at it... and that's why a new song had to be written in such a hurry and why it was written to be sung to a guitar. So if it hadn't been for those hungry mice, we might never have heard 'Silent Night'.*

Discussion questions: How does 'Silent Night' make you feel? / What other Christmas songs do you know with animals? / Why do we sing carols at Christmas? / Why do you think so many people love the carol 'Silent Night'? / What is your favourite Christmas song? Conclude with: *Singing gives us a chance to all join in. It's fun to do and it helps us feel that we belong together and care for each other.*

Play video



5. Time to sing

Sing with the vocal or instrumental versions of 'Silent Night' available on the website.

7. Opportunity to reflect

'Christmas is a time for people to come together, celebrate and have fun...

When we sing together it reminds us of what we have in common and fills us up with a warm, happy feeling... It's good to sing together...

Think to yourself about singing 'Silent Night' all together...and how it made you feel.'

8. Opportunity for prayer

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

'We thank you for the Christmas songs and carols that fill us with joy. Help us to sing together and care for each other as we celebrate the happiness that Christmas brings. Amen.'