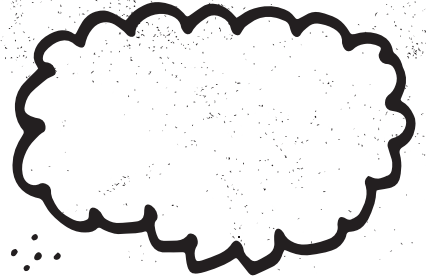
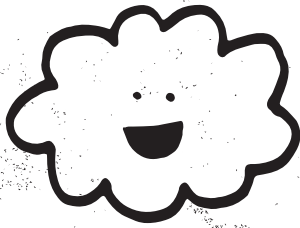


TRUE SAMPLE STORY



SAMPLE

is THERE
A GOD?

HISTORY

Do you remember your first day at secondary school? Do you also remember posing for a ridiculous number of photographs?

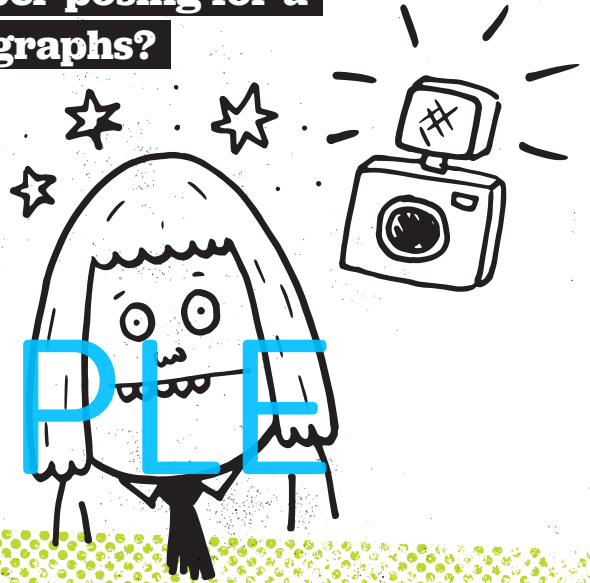
Yep, thought so.

The first lesson I had at secondary school was history, with another Mr Brown. His first question to us was, 'Year 7, what is history?' Silence. It was our first lesson and no one wanted to look stupid.

'History,' said Mr Brown, **'is his story, his story, HISTORY!'** He seemed very pleased with himself at this observation. Very pleased indeed.

I think he meant the story of mankind... but actually, in a different sense, I couldn't agree more.

How can we know there is a God? The central story of the Bible is that God himself was born into our world so that we might know that there is a God and also see for ourselves what he is like. History is his story.



SAMPLE

Every book of the Bible is divided into **chapters** and **verses**. Luke 2:1-20 means Luke chapter two and verses 1 to 20. The large numbers on the Bible pages are chapter numbers and the smaller numbers are verse numbers.

PLEASE READ...

Luke 2:1-20

Now that you have read about the first people who met Jesus, have a think about the following questions. All the answers can be found in the Bible passage.

PAUSE + THINK ...

When did the birth of Jesus happen?

How many witnesses were there to Jesus being born?

What do the angels say about who Jesus is?

SAMPLE

What evidence are we given that God exists?

If you could interview one person from this story, who would it be and why?

Roman history

Everyone learns about the Romans at school, don't they? Roman roads, Hadrian's Wall and even the odd terrible joke from your history teacher - 'Did you know that the Romans divided Gaul into three parts? Apparently, they used a pair of Caesars.' (OK, OK, no more jokes, I promise.)

Caesar Augustus was the adopted son of Julius Caesar and became emperor of Rome following the assassination of his great uncle in 44 BC. He decided one day that his dead adoptive father was divine and so referred to himself as a 'son of god'. Small ego that man, don't you think?

Luke tells us that Jesus was born at the time of Caesar Augustus so that we would know he is writing real history. At the same time as Caesar has decided for himself that he is god, another man is born who will be known as the true Son of God.

Today, 21 centuries later, no one takes Caesar Augustus' claim to be god seriously. But I know lots of people who still believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Luke tells us that Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem to register for a census. Caesar didn't want to miss out on any of the taxes people owed because, after all, it was almost certainly expensive trying to live like a god. It is while they were in Bethlehem that Mary gave birth to Jesus.

Some people today think that Jesus was a mythical figure who never actually existed, but hardly any serious historians would agree. Instead, the best evidence we have shows us that Jesus was definitely born and lived at this time in history.





Angel flash mob

When I was born I think my mum and dad phoned a few friends and family to tell them the news. As far as I know there were no angels. In fact I've not heard of another birth that has ever been announced by first one and then a whole flash mob of angels.

What they said is really important:

'I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.'

I wonder what your opinion of Christianity is? If you know any Christians, what words would you use to describe them? The Christians that I knew at secondary school seemed to be genuinely joyful. I figured that either they were just really weird or they must know something that I didn't.

But, it's the second thing that the angels say that is possibly most important:

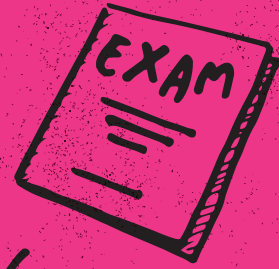
'Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.'

Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, was also known as the town of David.

The angels tell the shepherds that it is here that God himself had been born into the world. If we had been alive at the time of Jesus, we could have seen God with our own eyes. He was born into human history.

The angels also say why God was born. He didn't come as a teacher to educate us, or as a magician to do tricks for us, but as a Saviour to save us.





What does this mean for us?

‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.’

I used to worry about a lot of things when I was growing up. My dad would often say, ‘Cross that bridge when you come to it.’ It was his way of reminding me not to worry about things that might never happen.

But sometimes bad things do happen in our lives and in our world, don’t they? Peace on earth, or even in our lives, seems like something we could only ever dream of.

Maybe you know people at school who worry about exams, about friends, about their appearance... Maybe you are even concerned about some of these things yourself.

Jesus was born so that we can have peace - peace with God and real peace in our lives. He came to show us that there is a God who loves us, who is interested in us and who

was born on earth for us. Jesus can show us what God is really like and he can give us peace.

Sometimes people tell me that Christianity is boring, irrelevant and untrue. I hope that in reading this first Bible passage for yourself you’re prepared to question that.

Is Jesus’ birth boring? It’s not exactly the sort of birth that happens every day, is it?

As for being untrue, Luke goes out of his way to point out that he’s writing real history, that we should treat his Gospel in the same way as other historical documents.

Finally, the angels say that far from being irrelevant, the story of Jesus is actually good news for us all. Not just for the people then, but for us today. Why? Because not only is there a God, he is a God who can give meaning to our lives as his story starts to impact our story.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Why do/don't you believe in God?

What is your impression of what Christians are like?

SAMPLE

What question(s) would you like to ask God?