

NAZARETH

BETHLEHEM



## Welcoming the holy family at school: Posada

Suggested format for introducing and 'launching' posada in whole-school collective worship:

1

Start with asking pupils and adults how they got to school this morning - school vote: walking, car, bike/scooter, something else?

2

And how was that journey? Show slide with facial expressions - ask people to decide which one sums up their journey to school best - invite some to share?

3

Want to talk today about a special journey that happened \*2025\* years ago - a journey that two people took from a place called Nazareth to Bethlehem. Sound familiar to anyone? Does anyone know who those two people were? Establish that it was Mary and Joseph - recap on what we can find out in the Bible - hear about the angel visiting Mary and telling her she's going to have a special baby, hear about the announcement that everyone has to travel to the hometowns of their ancestors to be registered, and that Joseph has to go to Bethlehem, and take Mary with him. But we never get to hear what that journey was like! It's like we fast-forward straight to when Mary and Joseph get to Bethlehem, find nowhere to stay, are given a place in a stable/stall, and Jesus is born. But it was a long and difficult journey!

4

So, what was it like? Some facts: about 90 miles, would have taken about two weeks, would involve travelling for about eight hours every day. Would have been dangerous - robbers, wild animals. Would have been winter, too (we think of them being in a hot country) - raining, cold and bitterly cold at night. And Mary very pregnant!

In pictures on Christmas cards we often see Mary, Joseph and a donkey travelling alone, but more likely they would have travelled in a group with other people who also had to register in Bethlehem.

5

Revisit pictures of facial expressions - so, now we know more about what it was like, how do you think Mary and Joseph were feeling about the journey?

6

Introduce Los Posadas - tradition that comes from Mexico that thinks about and celebrates the journey that Mary and Joseph took from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

In villages and towns in Mexico, each night a procession takes place, where children dress up as angels, or as Mary or Joseph, and adults follow behind carrying lit candles. They go to a house in the village or town, and sing a special song asking for shelter for the night. The people who live in the house open their doors and everyone goes in and has a party with food and drink, thinking about those special visitors all those years ago, and how people would have invited them in to stay and rest overnight as Mary and Joseph travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem. And then the next night, the procession goes to a different house in the town/village and the party and celebrations happen again! And this carries on up until Christmas Eve.

7

Unfortunately we can't have a big school party with food and drink every evening from now until Christmas (!), but we can think about that journey that Mary and Joseph took, and think about how we would have welcomed and looked after them if they had needed a place to shelter and rest.

8

So we're going to start the posada tradition at our school!

Show kit - here, we have figures of Mary, Joseph and a donkey, and we're going to send them on their journey around school, as if they're travelling from Nazareth to Bethlehem. They will stop off at every classroom, and each class will have a chance to welcome them and be their hosts, however you and your teachers choose. You could set up the posada in your classroom, spend some time talking about the journey and what Mary and Joseph might have been thinking, feeling or experiencing, there's a candle so you could use that and pray or reflect on the journey, you could use it in class worship, RE or at another time.

It's great for everyone to be able to see the journey around school, so each class should take a photo and send it to XXXXX and then we can look at those photos in collective worship (or at Christmas service in school/church?) to see how everyone in our school has welcomed Mary, Joseph and the donkey!

They will also be stopping off at (school office/staff room/headteacher's office?) so the grown-ups will be hosting them and giving them shelter too!