Christmas Lesson
THINK: What is Christmas for you?

Do you know where the name Christmas comes from?

How do you think?

The word *Christmas* originated as a compound meaning "Christ's Mass". It is *derived* from the Middle English *Christemasse* and Old English *Cristes mæsse*, a phrase first *recorded* in 1038.[8] "Cristes" is from Greek *Christos* and "mæsse" is from Latin *missa* (*the holy mass*). In Greek, the letter Χ (chi), is the first letter of Christ, and it, or the similar Roman letter X, has been used as an abbreviation for Christ since the mid-16th century. Hence, Xmas is sometimes used as an *abbreviation* for Christmas.

**EXERCISE 1 – VOCABULARY AND SPEAKING EXERCISE.**

1. MEMORISE THE WORDS: derive, record, holy mass and abbreviation.
2. NOW ANSWER THE QUESTION BELOW USING THE WORDS:

WHERE DOES THE NAME “CHRISTMAS” COME FROM? WHAT IS THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD “CHRISTMAS”? 

**EXERCISE 2 – VOCABULARY EXERCISE**

MATCH THE WORDS WITH THEIR DEFINITIONS:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>generosity</td>
<td>the action or advantage of using a lever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nourish</td>
<td>to love, protect and care for someone or something that is important to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diminish</td>
<td>the state of knowing what something is like, when something will happen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reinforce</td>
<td>accepting that something is true or right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appreciation</td>
<td>to make something stronger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acknowledgement</td>
<td>the quality or condition of being generous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>willingness</td>
<td>to provide provide people or living things with food in order to make them grow and keep them healthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cherish</td>
<td>when you recognize or understand that something is valuable, important or as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>predictability</td>
<td>to reduce or be reduced in size or importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leverage</td>
<td>to be happy to do something if it is needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Christmas Happiness and Psychological Health Through Giving”.

By Bernadette Dimitrov

Christmas is a time for giving and giving is the act of generosity. It nourishes love in our relationships and builds the human spirit. Research shows that people who give without expectation and who do not feel diminished by the act of giving are the most psychologically healthy in our society today. Here are seven benefits of giving:

1. Builds Relationships - giving reinforces appreciations and acknowledgement of each other and thus is an important ingredient for building relationships.

2. Deepens Relationships - by sharing past and future thoughts we give of ourselves in an intimate way. It can be a wonderful ritual such as at Christmas to come together and openly give and share feelings, experiences and wishes for the coming year. This deepens relationships as we share and express more of who we are.

3. Expresses Feelings - giving is a way to express and show feelings especially if you are not comfortable expressing feelings through words. Giving is an opportunity to express a whole range of feelings such as gratitude, appreciations and thanks.

4. Creates Memories - through giving we have many ways to create and leave lasting memories. Our willingness to care, show interest, give time, loyalty, honesty and by going out of our way to do something extra for someone else such as preparing a special meal, writing a special verse on why we love and cherish someone or making a special gift as a symbol of our love, are some of the ways we can give and create lasting memories.

5. Creates Predictability - we all love predictability; especially children as it gives them a sense of security. Through the predictable act of giving especially at birthdays and Christmas celebrations, the expectation of appreciations, acknowledgement, love and being made to feel extra special is created by the ritual of giving.
6. De-stressor - giving is all about looking outside of ourselves with no expectation of anything in return. It is putting others first for concentrated moments in time. The ritual of giving takes the focus off ourselves and our stresses in life are handled with a more balanced focus.

7. Creates Miracles - connecting into the community by giving has huge benefits. It reinforces love in all our lives. It creates leverage which creates miracles when together we give for the greater good.

Giving is an expression of our love. We give in many ways with our supportive words, our listening, attention and giving of our time and of course through material giving too. Giving materially, emotionally and physically is the glue that holds people together and is a way to renew our love for one another, create lasting cherished memories, deepen relationships and create psychological health and happiness for ourselves!

Source: [http://www.santaspostbag.co.uk/christmas-happiness-psychological-health.shtml](http://www.santaspostbag.co.uk/christmas-happiness-psychological-health.shtml)

EXERCISE 3 A - VOCABULARY EXERCISE

- Underline the words from exercise 2 in the text.

EXERCISE 3 B – SPEAKING

- Summarize each paragraph, try to use the words from exercise 2.
- Do you agree with the text? Why? Why not?
- Give some examples that illustrate the text?

EXERCISE 4 – SPEAKING AND READING COMPREHENSION

- DID YOU KNOW? HOW DO YOU THINK?
- Why a donkey has got a cross on its back? Brainstorm as many ideas as you can!

- What is the origin of Christmas Carols and what was probably the first Christmas Carol recorded?

- Do you know how the tradition of Christmas Lights began?

Now read the paragraphs below. Were your ideas right or wrong? Did you know the answers to all questions?

1. If you are familiar with the story of the nativity you will know that Mary and Joseph had to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be counted, a journey of around 95 kilometres. This was no small distance back in those days when there weren't any motorised vehicles. Additionally the journey was over a hilly terrain, which made the long journey even harder. Poor Mary was heavily pregnant and the prospect of such a journey must have been daunting. It's little wonder then that she rode a donkey on this long journey. A
special thing happened to the little donkey as it carried it's precious load. As the donkey carried Mary and
the unborn Son of God, a mark of the crucifix appeared on the donkey's back. The top of the cross
starting on the donkey's neck and running down his spine. The shorter line of the cross ran along the
donkey's shoulder blades. The sign of the crucifix was given as a reward to the little donkey for the hard
work it had endured, getting pregnant Mary safely to Bethlehem.

Source: http://www.santaspostbag.co.uk/Little-Donkeys-Special-Secret.shtml

2. Some of our songs about Santa Claus, Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer, Baby Jesus, and the holiday of
Christmas are probably older than you think. Can you believe that one of the oldest Christmas carols was
actually put together in the 300s? That is 1,700 years ago if you need us to do the math for you. It is
believed that "Of the Father's Love Begotten," written by Aurelius Prudentius may have been the first
recorded Christmas carol. Over the years, Christian leaders have created Christmas carols to sing with
their congregations and neighborhoods during the Festival of Lights. There were songs by St. Francis of
Assisi, and those by Italians during the days of the Renaissance. Even the English added some Christmas
carols to the mix.

Source: http://www.santaspostbag.co.uk/The-History-Christmas-Carol.shtml

3. Originally, Christmas lights were used in Germany in the homes of only the very wealthy as long ago as
the 17th century. This was before electricity, and the lights were actually candles. They were only used on
trees at that time, and were strategically placed to illuminate the ornaments that hung from the branches.
The candles were held in place by either gluing melted wax to a tree branch or using pins to hold the
candle. Around 1900, candleholders were being used, and by 1915 small lanterns and glass balls became a
means of holding the candles in place.

Source: http://www.santaspostbag.co.uk/the-history-of-christmas-fairy-lights.shtml

EXERCISE 5 – SPEAKING – pair work

- Summarize each paragraph answering the questions in exercise 4. Try to use your own
  words.
- Look at the pictures, build more questions and discuss them with your partner?
What is the name of this animal?

Do you like this house?

Do you sing Christmas carols with your family?

EXERCISE 6 – VOCABULARY EXERCISE
CHRISTMAS GLOSSARY

Before you reading the definitions, give your own explanation of each word.

Advent - From the Latin Adventus (coming) the four week period preceding Christmas which serves as a time of reflection in preparation for the celebration of the Nativity.

Boxing Day - The day after Christmas day when presents are given to extended family and friends. Possibly dating from the Middle Ages when the householder would give presents to the servants and tradesmen. A public holiday in some Commonwealth countries.

Christmas Days:

- 6th December - in memory of St. Nicholas
- 24th December - Christmas Eve
- 25th December - Birthday of Jesus, Christmas Day
- 26th December – Boxing Day
- 1st of January - the New Year
- 6th of January - The Epiphany, day of the Three Wise men, the Magi

Mistletoe - A semi-parasitic plant that grows on certain types of trees, typified by the sticky substance surrounding the seed which helps it to attach to a potential host when excreted by birds. Mistletoe is used as a Christmas decoration.

Crèche - A crèche (pronounced KRESH), or Christmas crib, is a replica of the Nativity scene; the stable where Jesus was born in Bethlehem. It usually includes a manger, with figures of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the Magi, shepherds, sheep, and other animals.

Decorate - to add something to an object or place, especially in order to make it more attractive

Father Christmas, Santa Claus

Gingerbread - a type of cake, usually very dark brown and soft, which contains ginger.

Manger - an open box from which cattle and horses feed.
**Midnight mass** - a church service that happens at midnight.

**Sheep** - a farm animal with thick wool, that eats grass and is kept for its wool, skin and meat

**Shepherd(s)** - a person whose job is to take care of sheep and move them from one place to another.

**Snow sled (US for sledge) / sleigh** - an object used for travelling over snow and ice which has long narrow strips of wood or metal under it instead of wheels, and which is either a low frame, or (also sleigh) a vehicle like a carriage pulled by horses or dogs.

**EXERCISE 7 – VOCABULARY EXERCISES**

- Complete the sentences below with the words from the glossary.

1. _______________ is the period of four weeks before Christmas.

2. In cultures across pre-Christian Europe, ____________ was seen as a representation of divine male essence (and thus romance, fertility and vitality), possibly due to a resemblance between the berries and semen.

3. In Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and some states of Australia, _______ _____________ is primarily known as a shopping holiday.

4. ________________ a Christmas Tree is one of the favorite activities of children and their parents.
EXERCISE 8 – VOCABULARY EXERCISE

- Label the pictures with their names.

**MISTLETOE / SLEIGH / MANGER / SHEPHERD AND SHEEP / CRECHE / GINGERBREAD**

![Images of mistletoe, Christmas cookies, shepherds, and a creche.]

**CHRISTMAS GLOSSARY** – additional exercises.

- Build your own sentences with chosen words from the glossary.
- Using the vocabulary from the lesson prepare a short presentation of Polish Christmas traditions and customs.

**HERE IS A LINK TO AN INTERESTING CHRISTMAS QUIZ – CHECK HOW MUCH DO YOU REALLY KNOW ABOUT CHRISTMAS.**

http://www.santaspostbag.co.uk/a-christmas-quiz-print-off-for-the-kids-and-family.shtml