

TEACHING THE 1914 CHRISTMAS TRUCES RESOURCE PACK

...and him now but with this added sorrow
and afraid I have one man now who is
...and Paris has wired not to send any
...you men there. I wish the personnel office could
...some of its selections in action. If they
...use any lanceit it would certainly cure them
I wish you could enjoy some of this mild
...weather. Still it is not healthy. We have three
...girls now out of 7 and four sick men-
...ars. But I do not boast I am only thankful for
...is much better than I deserve. Another fact
...was a student officer at Stanley Camp. I am
...not
...get a number
...Carlotta is
...now I am counting
...in Music and
...Lots of Love
-

Lesson, assembly and carol service plans to help
teachers commemorate the 1914 Christmas Truces
for the centenary of World War 1



TABLE OF CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THESE RESOURCES	4	ACTIVITY PLANS KEY STAGE 3/4	31
INTRODUCTION: A HOPEFUL BIT OF HISTORY	6	Creating Truce Images to the track of 'Silent Night'	32
THE MARTIN LUTHER KING PEACE COMMITTEE	8	Art / Music	
CHRISTMAS TRUCES POWERPOINT: INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS	11	Interrupting the War	34
Section 1: The War	12	English / Creative Writing	
Section 2: Opposing the War	13	Christmas Truce Street Graffiti	37
Section 3: Combat and Trench Warfare	13	Art	
Section 4: The December 1914 Christmas Truces	14	Research Local Participants via Letters to Newspapers	38
ACTIVITY PLANS KEY STAGE 2/3	17	History	
Introduction to the Christmas Truces	18	What's the Point of Christmas Today?	40
History / Moral Reflection		RE / Ethics / PSE	
Writing a Letter Home	20	Court Martial	41
English / History		History / Ethics / PSE	
Christmas Truces Game	22	Overcoming Barbed Wire	44
P. E.		Art	
The Handshake	23	Perceptions and Images of the Enemy	45
Art / Literacy		Art / PSE / History	
Multi-session: Christmas Truce Re-enactment	24	Truce Words: Dominic McGill	46
History / P. E. / Ethics / Music / Languages / Drama		Art	
Christmas Cakes for the Truces	26	Shared Elements of the Truces	47
Cookery		Modern Languages	
Learning about Countries in 1914	28	Christianity and World War 1	48
Geography		RE / History / Ethics	
The Christmas Gift	30	Fighting or Football	51
Art / Literacy		History	

A CHRISTMAS TRUCE-THEMED ASSEMBLY	53
A SCHOOL CAROL SERVICE	55
APPENDICES	60
Appendix 1: Images	60
Appendix 2: Eyewitness Testimonies	62
Appendix 3: Further Resources for Teachers	64
Appendix 4: Multi - Lingual Resources	65



HOW TO USE THESE RESOURCES

The purpose of this pack is to provide teachers with concrete lesson plans as well as pointers and ideas for developing their own ways of bringing elements of the 1914 Christmas Truces to their schools' programme between 2014 and 2018. The exercises and activities within are designed to be used in the immediate run-up to Christmas during this time, and also in the November / December half-term.

The Resource Pack is a pdf document containing a variety of activities and lesson plans across a range of subjects including History, English / Literacy, RE, Music, Drama, PE, Cookery, Modern Languages and PSE. These are aimed primarily at 8-14 year-olds, with some activities for 15-18 year-olds, but can be modified for younger school pupils.

The pack also contains ideas for a ready-made assembly to be used at any point during the commemorations but particularly at Christmas time, and also for an entire school Christmas carol service.

To accompany this pack, other resources are available at www.mlkpc.org for free download. The main one is the Christmas Truces [PowerPoint slideshow](#). Almost all the lesson plans in the Resource Pack refer to the slideshow, which has been created specifically for this pack. The purpose

of the slideshow is to enable teachers to talk their pupils through the origins of the war, popular support of and opposition to it, and the realities of combat and life in the trenches – all of which form a background to its main focus on the outbreak, conduct and termination of the December 1914 Christmas Truces. Some lesson plans suggest modifications to the slideshow, and teachers are welcome to alter it according to their needs by adding or removing images or text. This pack contains accompanying notes for teachers allowing them to talk students through the slides.

There are two other slideshows available for download that are used for specific lessons, mostly art. Instructions are provided in the relevant lesson plans.

Finally, the website also contains a text only document with the words for the carol service, so that it can be easily modified into booklets for parents.

The individual activities in the Resource Pack can be used in isolation or as part of a themed week beginning with an assembly explaining the truces and followed up with various lessons during the week. As the 1914 Christmas Truces were made possible because of the shared traditions of Christmas celebration, they readily lend themselves as the theme for such a week in December between 2014-2017, or a school Christmas carol service. The pack thus includes a complete carol service plan as well as an assembly plan, but teachers should feel free to incorporate any elements into their own classes or events.

As well as providing ready-made lesson outlines, the ideas in this pack are intended to help give creative teachers inspiration

to assist them in thinking about how to connect their lessons and other elements of the school diary with the marking of the December 1914 Truces, exploring their relevance today. Many of the ideas within have been devised by teachers and tested in the classroom.

We hope that these resources will not only be used flexibly, but will themselves be flexibly developed over the coming years. To this end we would encourage teachers who have modified these resources or created their own to send them to us. With your permission we will incorporate them into future versions of this pack or add them to our website to be used by others.



INTRODUCTION: A HOPEFUL BIT OF HISTORY

Christmas Eve 2014 sees the 100th anniversary of one of the most remarkable events in the annals of modern warfare: the unofficial Christmas Truces of 1914. They commonly began with German soldiers and officers putting up Christmas trees, shouting or writing Christmas greetings, and singing songs recognisable to their British counterparts such as *Stille Nacht* (Silent Night). From these beginnings troops met in no-man's land to bury their dead, exchange gifts and souvenirs, share festive food and drink, give cigarettes and cigars, sing and entertain each other, swap names and addresses, conduct joint religious services, and even, some letters home claimed, to play football. These were not isolated incidents but were widespread right down the Anglo-German and Franco-

We wish you all
a Happy Xmas and New Year
success Victory and
safe return



Xmas . 1914 .

from
Lady Rawlinson
and
The friends of the
4th Corps.

German fronts from the North Sea to Switzerland, made possible by shared traditions of Christian celebration. It was a hopeful moment of recognition of common humanity and a (brief) rejection of the terrible violence of industrialised war pursued by rulers in a deadly game of global imperial competition for territories and resources. It was quashed by orders backed by threats, and by replacing troops with men 'untainted' by the truces.

Although the most famous, the 1914 Christmas Truces weren't one-off events in the war. They followed weeks of unofficial fraternization by soldiers who discovered that, rather than being the monsters portrayed in state propaganda, the other side were men like themselves with a preference for staying alive rather than dying. Indeed throughout the entire war many combatants managed, through a 'live-and-let-live' system, to reduce discomfort and risk of death by complicated local truces and tacit understandings that angered the high commands of both sides. Nonetheless the December 1914 truces are a key moment in the history of the period that reopened the possibility of a Europe based on peace and solidarity rather than imperial violence and nationalism.

As Britain marks the centenary of World War I, the question of how we remember is being hotly debated. In 2006 Harry Patch who, when he died in 2009, was Britain's last World War I veteran, told Prime Minister Tony Blair that, 'War is organised murder, nothing else' and said that for him the annual November 11th Remembrance events are 'just showbusiness.' In contrast, when announcing in 2012 major plans to fund and organise four years of commemoration, Prime Minister David Cameron said he looked forward to 'A commemoration that captures our national spirit in every corner of the country... that, like the Diamond Jubilee celebrations this year, says something about who we are as a people.' This contrast reminds us that memory is always contested and politicised. The government's commitment to remember this important episode in modern European history is welcome, but it is a concern that the language of 'celebrations'

and 'national spirit' risks teaching the wrong messages. Therefore including the December 1914 truces in our remembrance of the First World War is one way to help young people engage with the commemorations whilst also questioning the militarism of the time (and our time) and giving an original angle to approaching Christmas. The truces are worth teaching about because they are simply extraordinary in themselves and so inherently evocative that even younger Key Stage 2 pupils can imaginatively engage with them, while older pupils can be pushed to think hard and creatively about some of life's big questions. But they are also worth teaching because of what they symbolise about the choices that individuals or societies can make for war or peace.



THE MARTIN LUTHER KING PEACE COMMITTEE



These resources have been put together by the Northumbria and Newcastle Universities **Martin Luther King Peace Committee**. Rev. Dr. King came to Tyneside in 1967 to receive an honorary degree, Newcastle University having the distinction of being the only UK university to so honour him. The Committee commemorates his visit and exists to 'build cultures of peace' by drawing on his ideas and example.



*Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King receives honorary degree,
Newcastle University, November 1967.*

What does this have to do with World War One?

King's distinctive Christian philosophy of enemy love and nonviolent resistance to injustice was decisively influenced by mentoring from members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR), of which he was a member. FoR grew out of a pact made at the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 by Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze (from Germany) and Henry Hodgkin (from Britain), who were attending an international meeting of Christian leaders in Germany. As they exchanged farewells on the platform of Cologne railway station, they pledged, 'We are one in Christ and can never be at war.' This was one of many alternative visions of Europe held by various religious and political groups across the continent that questioned or opposed the war, and it is a vision dear to members of the Peace Committee.



This pack was created by **Nick Megoran** and **Andii Bowsher**, who would like to acknowledge the help of many other people in providing ideas for and comments on it. They include teachers Pete Sanderson, Helen Johnson, Karen Hall, Alex Snowdon, Sue Blakemore, Tony Dowling, Janice Wanley, Stephen Ord, Nicola Bishop, Sebastian Bees, Norma Blackith and Stephen Atherton. Thanks also to Richard Smith of the Tank Museum, Dorset, to Clive Barrett of the Peace Museum, Bradford, to Alan Ramsay, Jake Conrad and Katerina Brunelikova of Roots & Wings, and to Kate Hudson of Newcastle University.

CHRISTMAS TRUCES POWERPOINT: INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



To accompany the lesson/activity plans in this pack we have produced a PowerPoint slideshow for teachers, which is available for free at www.mlkpc.org, the Martin Luther King Peace Committee's website. The slides give a basic introduction to the origins of the First World War, support of and opposition to it, and trench warfare. This serves as an introduction to the origins, course and ending of the Truces, illustrated with first-hand accounts from the front.



In some cases the slideshow can be used unmodified. In other cases, teachers may wish to add or remove slides. Many of the slides can be passed over very quickly and some aspects, for example, the causes of the war, may not be relevant for particular lessons. Teachers may want to calibrate images and descriptions used to the sensitivities of pupils, add poems that the class has studied, or include photographs of local war memorials or truce participants. Images of the wounded and dead have not been included: teachers can easily find these online if they feel them to be appropriate. In a series of lessons on the truces there would be no need to show the slideshow in full each time.



The following is a crib sheet to accompany these PowerPoint slides. It is divided into 4 sections, with comments on each slide.

Some slides have additional information under the heading 'In greater depth'. This is to enable the teacher to provide greater historical detail for older pupils, or to provide a number of moving and evocative first-hand accounts of the truces if time allows.

SECTION 1: THE WAR

Slide 3: The Conference of Berlin in 1885 is where powerful European politicians met to divide up African land between their empires. This was a long time before World War One, but it matters because the countries that fought in the war all wanted more land and more resources. The biggest countries spent many years building up their armies and navies. Factories producing ships and weapons brought great wealth to their owners and governments.

Slide 4: This is a map of Europe in 1914. Different countries were grouped together in alliances. On one side were France, Britain and Russia. This alliance is coloured green. On the other side were Germany, Austria and Turkey. This alliance is coloured red. When the war began, these two big alliances of countries were fighting against each other. Some countries were neutral, seen on the map in yellow, meaning they were not part of either side.

In greater depth: In June 1914 Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated by Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip. Austria declared war on Serbia, and pre-established alliances set the war in motion as Russia mobilised its army against Austria, and in response to that Germany mobilised against Russia. France responded by declaring war on Germany, which invaded Belgium as the shortest route to attack Paris. Britain, which had a treaty with Belgium, declared war on Germany. Later in the war other countries joined, for example, Turkey on the side of Germany and Austria, and Italy and the USA on the side of France, Britain and Russia.

Slide 5: This is a propaganda poster produced to encourage young men to sign up for the U.S. Army. There were lots of posters designed to get young men to enrol in the armed forces, and all of the different countries involved in the war produced this kind of poster.

Slide 6: These were British posters. They are probably the most famous World War 1 recruitment posters of all.

Slide 7: The birth of Jesus Christ is celebrated as the coming of the 'Prince of Peace', yet his image was used by politicians and armies to recruit soldiers to fight. The image used in this slide is just one example from Germany.

In greater depth: The text beneath the image translates as "Go, oh soldier, and fulfill your duty! Christ, the good shepherd, will tend his flock. O Lord! May Your Kingdom befall us and may Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven."

Slide 8: Germany is represented giving a good bashing to naughty Russia, France and (sprawling on the ground) Britain.

In greater depth: The translation of the message is 'Dear Fatherland – you can sleep easy' (i.e. you can be sure that the combined threats of enemy states will be dealt with).

Slide 9: Many people in all the countries greeted the outbreak of war with enthusiasm. They thought their own country was right. Some thought that war would be an adventure. They believed that their side would win – and probably very quickly, without many people having to die. It was said that "it will all be over by Christmas". The British men signing up at the Army Recruitment office in this picture believed that Germany was the enemy and that they should fight Germany and its allies.

In greater depth: In Britain, that helpless little Belgium was invaded by its giant neighbour made many people angry, especially after reports of German atrocities – some of which were untrue – were widely circulated. In Germany, there was great enthusiasm for finally taking a stand against the world-dominating British Empire. A common Biblical analogy drawn by German leaders was that their country was like plucky David fighting the evil Philistine giant Goliath (i.e. the British Empire).

SECTION 2: OPPOSING THE WAR

Slide 10: Not everyone agreed with the war though.

Slide 11: Thousands of people gathered in Trafalgar Square on August 2nd 1914 to demonstrate against the war.

In greater depth: Here we see Keir Hardie, the first Labour member of parliament, addressing the crowd.

Slide 12: One of those present was 16 year-old Harold Bing. He walked 11 miles to take part, and spent the first two years of the war handing out leaflets against it. In 1916 he was summoned before a military tribunal and told them he would not fight as it was against his conscience. He was told 'You're too young to have a conscience.' He spent 3 years in jail. When he left prison he wanted to work as a teacher, but found it hard to find work as schools would not hire him when they knew he had opposed the war.

Another opponent of the war was Catherine Marshall, a member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She was a suffragette, which means she campaigned for women to have the vote – at that time only men could vote in elections. She believed that war was against Christianity, and that women were more likely to find ways of settling international disputes without war than were men. When men were put in prison, women like her led the peace work in Britain.

Slide 13: Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze (of Germany) and Henry Hodgkin (of Britain) were at a meeting of Christian leaders in 1914. They said, 'We are one in Christ and can never be at war.' They founded the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR) which called on its members to refuse to join in the war. Many Christians were arrested and put in prison for this stand against the war.

Slide 14: Around 80 conscientious objectors – men who refused to fight in the war - died in British jails during the war. Across Europe men

who 'deserted' – stopped fighting often because they were scared or suffering from stress - were sentenced to harsh punishments or death. Some 300 British soldiers were shot, and were only pardoned in 2006. This slide shows 'The Deserter' by artist Boardman Robinson. The cartoon depicts Jesus facing a firing squad made up of soldiers from five different European countries.

SECTION 3: COMBAT AND TRENCH WARFARE

Slide 16: World War 1 was marked by new types of weapons including tanks, airships, and powerful artillery and machine guns.

Slide 17: Both sides made 'trenches' – networks of ditches, holes and tunnels dug in the ground and supported by sand-bags to protect themselves from enemy shots. They were laced with barbed wire and machine-gun emplacements.

Slide 18: The British and German front-line trenches were usually between 50 and 250 metres apart, with the space between them known as 'no-man's land.'

Slide 19: When told to attack the enemy trenches, hundreds of men would charge across no-man's land, running into a 'storm of steel' of bullets and artillery shells. Later in the war, poison gas was used. If they reached the enemy and somehow got through the barbed wire, they would fight at close-quarters in the muddy trenches.

Slide 20: Men who went 'over the top' were very vulnerable to these new types of weapon. On July 1st 1916, at the start of the Battle of the Somme, nearly 20,000 British soldiers were killed in one day alone.

Slide 21: Trenches became infested with lice, beetles, diseases, and hordes of rats gorging on dead bodies, and often stank of excrement and rotting corpses. Many wounded men were sucked into the deep mud and drowned. This slide shows German trenches excavated in 2012 by archaeologists. The bodies of 21 soldiers were found. They had been buried underground when the tunnel they were sheltering in had collapsed under shelling.

Slide 22: When they joined the army, many men believed that the war would be over by the first Christmas. Instead, by then thousands of people had been killed and there was no sign of an end. The war continued until 1918 by which time some 10 million soldiers across all countries had died. More British soldiers were killed in this war than in any other in our history, including World War Two. Sometimes men from the same village, factory, or sports club would join the army together and be allowed to serve together. These so-called 'pals battalions' often suffered heavy losses. This slide is a picture of the Bermuda Volunteer Rifles, a British army corps which between 1914 and 1915 lost 75% - three quarters - of its men.

SECTION 4: THE DECEMBER 1914 CHRISTMAS TRUCES

Slide 23: At Christmas 1914, just a few months after the war began, something unusual happened. It is known as the Christmas Truces, when thousands of soldiers on both sides stopped fighting. The following slides show some actual photographs of German and British soldiers fraternising, a newspaper headline, and some artists' impressions.

Slide 24: The British and German trenches were often so close together that enemy soldiers could see each other and hear each other shout messages across. Therefore in some places soldiers had agreed not to fight. But

on a frosty Christmas Eve 1914, when soldiers were thinking of family at home, something amazing happened. It is described by a soldier from Gateshead, writing a letter on Christmas Day to a friend in Low Fell:

"Last night the Germans lit up their trenches and started calling across 'Merry Christmas'. We responded in the same way and then we started singing songs and carols to one another. All shooting had stopped. We walked about the tops of the trenches and called out to one another. Then some of our chaps walked out and met some of the Germans halfway, wishing each other a merry Christmas, shook hands and said they would not fight today."

Slide 25: This slide shows men of the German 134th Saxon Regiment and the British Royal Warwickshire Regiment in no man's land on the Western Front. Soldiers met, gave each other presents, and shared food and drink. Before the war many Germans had worked in Britain as butchers and hairdressers, and there are accounts of Germans giving British soldiers haircuts in no-man's land!

In greater depth:

"After the 19th December attack, we were back in the same trenches when Christmas Day came along. It was a terrible winter, everything was covered in snow, everything was white. The devastated landscape looked terrible in its true colours -clay and mud and broken brick- but when it was covered in snow it was beautiful. Then we heard the Germans singing 'Silent night, Holy night', and they put up a notice saying 'Merry Christmas', and so we put one up too.

While they were singing our boys said, 'Let's join in,' so we joined in and when we started singing, they stopped. And when we stopped, they started again. So we were easing the way. Then one German took a chance and jumped up on top of the trench and shouted out, 'Happy Christmas, Tommy!' So of course our boys said, 'If he can do it, we can do it,' and we all jumped up. A sergeant-major shouted 'Get down!' But we said, 'Shut up Sergeant, it's Christmas time!' And we all went forward to the barbed wire.

We could barely reach through the wire, because the barbed wire was not just one fence, it was two or three fences together, with a wire in between. And so we just

shook hands and I had the experience of talking to one German who said to me, 'Do you know where the Essex Road in London is?' I replied, 'Yes, my uncles had a shoe repairing shop there.' He said, 'That's funny. There's a barber shop on the other side where I used to work.'

They could all speak very good English because before the war, Britain was invaded by Germans. Every pork butcher was German, every barber's shop was German, and they were all over here getting the low-down on the country. It's ironic when you think about it, that he must have shaved my uncle at times and yet my bullet might have found him and his bullet might have found me."

- Private Frank Sumter, London Rifle Brigade.

Slide 26: Over the previous months no-man's land had become scattered with the decaying corpses that it was unsafe to recover. Men used the truces to bury their friends, and also to mark Christmas as a joint religious festival with prayers, carols and Bible readings in both languages.

In greater depth: 19 year-old Arthur Pelham-Burn, a lieutenant in the 6th Gordons who was planning to study to become a church minister after the war, took part in a joint service on Christmas Eve, and wrote home that:

"The mass burial of the dead was awful, too awful to describe so I won't attempt it, but the joint burial service was most wonderful. Chaplain Adams arranged the prayers and the twenty-third psalm etc and an interpreter wrote them out in German. They were read first by our Padre and then in German by a boy who was studying for the ministry. It was an extraordinary and most wonderful sight. The Germans formed up on one side, the English on the other, the officers standing in front, every head bared. Yes, I think it was a sight one will never see again."

Slide 27: Some letters written home by British and German soldiers claim that games of football were played in no-man's land.

In greater depth: Company-Sergeant Major Frank Naden wrote that after making friends:

"The Scotsmen started the bagpipes and we had a rare old jollification, which included football in which the Germans took part. The Germans expressed themselves as being tired of the war and wished it was over."

Slide 28: British and German soldiers took photographs of each other, showed each other pictures of their families, and promised to stay in touch. A German soldier asked a British soldier to post a letter to his girlfriend in Manchester, which he later did. The Gateshead soldier wrote:

"One [German soldier] has given me his address to write to him after the war. They were quite a decent lot of fellows I can tell you. I know this seems an unbelievable story but it is fact. I am sure if it was left to the men there would be no war."

Slide 29: However it wasn't left to the men: the heads of the British and German armies were angry that their men had stopped fighting and ordered them to start again. Many soldiers on both sides were reluctant to fight again. In some cases they pretended to fight, shooting at the 'enemy' when officers came to inspect them but missing on purpose or warning them in advance to keep down. Some soldiers who didn't obey orders were punished and new soldiers sent to the trenches to fight.

In greater depth: Company-Sergeant Major Frank Naden wrote:

"Next day we got an order that all communication and friendliness with the enemy must stop but we did not fire at all that day, and the Germans did not fire at us."

Sergeant George Ashurst, 2nd Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers, wrote:

"Eventually, we got orders to come back down into the trench, 'Get back in your trenches, every man!' The order came round by word of mouth down each trench. Some people took no damn notice."

Anyway, the generals behind must have seen it and got a bit suspicious, so they gave orders for a battery of guns behind us to open fire and a machine-gun to open out, and officers to fire their revolvers at the Jerries. That started the war again. We were cursing the generals to hell. You want to get up here in this mud. Never mind you giving orders in your big chateaux and driving about in your big cars. We

hated the sight of generals, we always did. We didn't hate them so much before this, but we never liked them after that.

Then we had newspapers coming here from England accusing us of fraternising with the Germans: parsons accusing us of fraternising with the Germans when there had been an armistice on Christmas Day. I wrote back home and told my family off. I said we could do with that parson and the fellows that are writing in the newspapers here, I said. We want them here in front of us instead of Jerry so we could shoot them down for passing remarks like that while nice and safe in England."

A soldier from Jarrow wrote a letter on Boxing Day about stopping fighting to celebrate Christmas with the Germans, but finished by adding:

"Now today it is different. Where we were at peace with them yesterday, we are at war today and the guns are roaring as usual and the rifles are being fired. It is a queer time right enough!"

It was certainly strange to be fighting again: and the armies continued fighting until 1918, by which time around 10 million soldiers had died. High command sought to prevent future similar fraternisation by soldiers in future Christmases by issuing orders expressly forbidding it, and order attacks instead. Lance-Corporal George Dyce, who participated in the truces, said of the Germans:

"They don't want to fight any more than we do; they are as fed up of this game as we are fit to be. They told us that they would not shoot if we did not, so we have had a holiday for the last two days we were in the trenches... I thought peace was proclaimed, but no such luck."



ACTIVITY PLANS

KEY STAGE 2/3



INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRISTMAS TRUCES

History / Moral Reflection

Objective: To reflect on different perceptions of the December 1914 Christmas Truces. This lesson could be used in a school's programme as a way of introducing the truces, and could lead on to a range of other lessons.

In addition to the Christmas Truces PowerPoint Slideshow, this plan utilises a supplementary Perspectives Slideshow. Please note that this slideshow contains disturbing imagery and teachers may want to modify it before showing it to pupils.

Starter: Which war are we commemorating from 1914 to 1918? What do we know about it?

Share new information:

Introduce the history of the Christmas Truces using the Christmas Truces PowerPoint Slideshow.

Activity 1: Consider how the truces might be viewed in different ways by different groups of people using the worksheet on the following page. Show slides from the Perspectives Slideshow, putting the slides up in turn and pausing for a few minutes after each to ask pupils to write answers on individual worksheets or in their exercise books. Review / reflect as a group before advancing to the next slide.

Activity 2: Show sentimental film extract from *Joyeux Noel* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaJcSNBh-ok>) or *Oh What a Lovely War* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHObCL2luMw>)



Plenary Review / Reflect:

Based on what we have learnt from the Slideshow and our reflections on different perspectives, how accurate is the idea of the truces in popular culture?

WORKSHEET: INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRISTMAS TRUCES

PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHRISTMAS TRUCES

Perspective of...	What they would say?
The new recruit	
The veteran soldier	
The officers	
The politicians	
The weapons manufacturers	
The anti-war activities	
The dead	
The grieving family	
The badly wounded soldier	
The people of occupied France and Belgium	

WRITING A LETTER HOME

English / History

Objective: For pupils to engage with non-fiction texts and express themselves through creative writing by imagining themselves in another person's position.

Share new information:

Share the Christmas Truces story with pupils using the supplementary Christmas Truces PowerPoint. Ask pupils how they think it would have felt to take part in the truces.

Activity: Imagine that you were a participant. Write a letter home to either your parents, other family or friends telling them what has happened.



Demonstrate: Provide pupils with the template on the next page (on whiteboard or as printed copies) and explain how to use it. Remind pupils that the British Army in 1914 contained soldiers from all over the British Empire, including troops from as far afield as Australia, Canada and India. Encourage pupils to consider adopting the perspective of non-UK troops.

Plenary Review / Reflect:

Some pupils may want to read out their letters. What emotions (surprise, mistrust, anger etc...) do they express?

*breuk, met een meid... addings doop - bij schip
hij gaat hooren. Hij met
thuis maar toch van des. Hij met
op het zoverhuis kom. Hij met
niet home, alle nu gevapend met
Opulom er nu vele bewares, uit des weg
belont er toch nog opulom er toch nog
sleutel v neboras, had en se niet
sover waren. Maar alles liep ead af me
nae kevanen, me kevanen op om
de den winkel, de kevanen en de sleutel
dat alles bekegt hadde, zets met es
in de hamerdeur. - Pradaatal was het
in den winkel, me kevanen op om
dat alles bekegt hadde, zets met es
in de hamerdeur. - Pradaatal was het
hij had gelater... moke bene ik had juist alles
open gekeht. Waer ditte, doch mijn
in mijn hoofd. Wat zit er toch in mijn
Het zelfde wat is mijn hart zit, het zelfde wat
in mijn bloed zit, het zelfde wat in mijn
zit, in mijn mes, in mijn ingewand: klinksh,
en nog eens klinksh.
De keunsh was des ten slotte - na lang
de schuld. Ook was de keunsh de schuld dat je
en je vrouwe moer ~~moer~~ moer en daorbin
vergeet plein het... je minde
Theoestignita*

WORKSHEET: WRITING A LETTER

- Give personal details about yourself and the date: for example, 'Private Jackson, 26th December 1914'.
- Who are you writing to? (eg 'Dear Parents, Darling Children').
- Give a personal greeting and ask how they are.
- Explain what happened: how did the truces begin, what did you do, what was it like to meet the Germans?
- Explain why you took part – for example curiosity, to bury dead, religious motivations, or others.
- Explain how the truces ended.
- Explain your feelings about the truces and the continuation of the war – surprise, disbelief, anger, suspicion, hope etc.
- Sign off with personal messages.

CHRISTMAS TRUCES GAME

P. E.

Objective: To introduce pupils to World War 1 and the Christmas Truces, and to use up lots of energy! To reinforce understanding by re-enacting forms of combat and the truces.

Starter: Which war are we commemorating from 1914 to 1918? What do we know about it?

Share new information:

In the classroom, show the Christmas Truces PowerPoint (depending on prior knowledge of World War 1) focusing on the final set of truce slides. Look at Slide 27. What is the significance of this? What is happening? Does anything puzzle you? Does it remind you of anything?

Activity: Divide the sports hall into two halves using cones or rope. Pupils are divided equally into two teams (British and German). An equal number of soft balls are scattered on either side, and when the signal is given the teams have three minutes to throw as many balls as possible over to the other side. When the stop signal is given everyone freezes and the team with the fewest balls on its side of the boundary wins. This is a frenetic game and can easily be imagined as trench warfare. The final time the game is played no 'winner' is declared, but pupils meet in the middle and shake hands. They can also mime the exchange of gifts. Snacks and drinks are shared by the two teams in a symbolic 'truce'. This is great fun and uses up lots of energy!

If time allows and there is still excess energy, standard games of football could be played at this point.



THE HANDSHAKE

Literacy



Carol Ann Duffy

This lesson uses Art Project 1 (slide 2) from the additional Christmas Truces Art Projects PowerPoint, available online.

Objective:

To learn about the Christmas Truces by creating a soft dough handprint, and to explore responses to poetry.

Starter:

Why do people shake hands? What other ways are there to greet people?

Share new information:

Teacher reads to class the illustrated Carol Ann Duffy poem 'The Christmas Truce' (can be purchased as an illustrated book, with text available online at <http://www.stopwar.org.uk/poetry/carol-ann-duffy-the-christmas-truce>). Ask pupils to observe the handshake in the poem and what it meant.

Activity: Create soft-dough handprints to represent the Christmas Truce handshakes. These can be presented alone or with either an object in the hand representing the presents given, or a word related to the Christmas Truce.

Plenary Review / Reflect:

How would it feel after the truces ended for a soldier to shoot at someone who had given him a Christmas present?

MULTI-SESSION: CHRISTMAS TRUCES RE-ENACTMENT

History / P.E. / Ethics / Music / Languages / Drama

Objective: Taking place over three sessions and culminating in a playing field recreation of the truces and a football match, this multi-session combines elements of history, literacy, languages and critical thinking. As the actual re-enactment includes elements learnt in earlier sessions, pupils should have a good understanding of the re-enactment and ownership of it. Post re-enactment reflections can add to the poignancy of the activity.

Session 1: Show the Christmas Truces PowerPoint in part or in full, depending on prior knowledge of World War 1, but focusing on the final set of truce slides. Look at Slide 27. What is the significance of this? What is happening? Does anything puzzle you? Does it remind you of anything?

Play '*Christmas in the Trenches*' by John McCutcheon.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTXhZ4uR6rs>)

Lyrics : <http://www.wanttoknow.info/christmastruce>

(NB: the claim that this is a 'true story' based on the experience of Ian Calhoun is incorrect. Calhoun was court martialled in 1916 for allowing a brief truce to occur at Christmas 1915, and was only reprimanded, not sentenced to death.)



Questions: What emotions does the song convey?
What facts about what happened did you hear?
[Higher ability]: Why did high command want to stop any further truces from happening?

Session 2: Introduce pupils to the song

'*Stille Nacht*'. A version with words on screen sung by Nana Mouskouri is available here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUb8ySdERKs>). Lyrics and a pronunciation guide are also available in the appendices of this resource pack.



Questions: What does it remind you of? Do you know this song? Encourage pupils to learn the first few lines of the song.

Session 3: Explain to the pupils that we will re-enact the

Christmas Truces. Talk them through the events. Divide the pupils into German and British regiments and line them up facing each other approximately 50 metres apart on a football pitch or playing field. One child is chosen from each side to walk forwards and cross enemy lines to shake hands with someone. Then all pupils will meet in 'no man's land' and shake hands with someone. Pupils can also mime exchanging gifts. The two sides will then play each other in football matches, stopping halfway through to sing 'Stille Nacht'. At the end, pupils will walk backwards from the person they shook hands with, back to their lines to prepare for battle. We will pause for a second here to absorb that moment.



Plenary Review / Reflect:

Ask pupils to discuss how they felt looking back across 'no-man's land' at the person they just shook hands with. How did it feel? What were they thinking? Did you want to fight them?

CHRISTMAS CAKES FOR THE TRUCES

Cookery



Objective: Bake a traditional recipe Christmas cake and a wartime rationing version. This activity can be connected to the celebration of Christmas in the truces, and in activities such as the re-enactments outlined in other activities in this pack. Pupils are provided with a traditional Christmas recipe and the rationing version, and should be able to identify differences in ingredient type and amount, as well as identifying the rationed ingredients.

Share new information: Show the Christmas Truces PowerPoint in part or in full, depending on prior knowledge of World War 1, but focusing on the final set of truce slides. Look at Slide 27. What is the significance of this? What is happening? Does anything puzzle you? Does it remind you of anything?

Activity: Divide the class into 2 groups, with one group making the traditional cake and the other group making the rationed version. Assemble the equipment and ingredients. Pupils should work in pairs, making mini cake-bar versions for a shorter session.

Demonstrate: Pupils follow the recipe. To provide a more complex activity for higher level pupils some words or instructions could be removed, or instructions given on cards which pupils then have to re-assemble in the correct order to create a recipe that works. Lower ability pupils could collect pre-weighed ingredients. All pupils should follow kitchen health and safety guidelines.

Here are recipes for popular Christmas items. You'll find that, though they're not extravagant with ingredients, they give you the traditional Christmassy flavour.

CHRISTMAS CAKE

3 oz. sugar, 4 oz. margarine, 3 level table-spoons warmed treacle or syrup, 8 oz. plain flour, ½ level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda, pinch of salt, 1 level teaspoon cinnamon, 1 level teaspoon mixed spice, 2 eggs, fresh or dried, 1 lb. mixed dried fruit, 3 tablespoons cold tea.



Cream the sugar and margarine together and beat in the treacle or syrup. Mix the flour, soda, salt and spices together. Add alternately with the eggs to the creamed mixture

and beat well. Add the fruit and mix in the tea. Put the mixture into a 7" tin, lined with greased paper, and bake in a very moderate oven for 2½ hours.

ICING: 6 oz. icing sugar, 1 tablespoon water, few drops lemon juice or lemon substitute. Sift sugar into a bowl to remove lumps. Add water and lemon juice and mix till smooth with a wooden spoon. Spread with knife on cake, dipping knife into water occasionally to give a smooth surface. This is sufficient for a thin layer on top of 7" cake.



(S.186)

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOOD

Decoration: As part of the Christmas Truces soldiers exchanged messages as well as gifts. Pupils can use icing to write a message onto their cake bar and swap with another pupil in the class. Half the pupils can ice an English message and half can ice a German message, before exchanging them.

Plenary Review / Reflect:

Swap cakes with a German / English counterpart and complete a sensory evaluation by taste testing. Evaluate against criteria: Taste, Texture, Smell, Consistency and Sweetness. Teachers can also provide a shop-bought Christmas cake to compare the rationed version to a more luxurious version.

BE-RO CHRISTMAS CAKE



300 g Be-Ro self-raising flour (12 oz)
 1 x 5 ml spoon mixed spice (1 tsp)
 100 g ground almonds (4 oz)
 200 g butter (8 oz)
 200 g caster sugar (8 oz)
 4 eggs beaten with 125 ml milk (8 tbsp)
 (or ½ milk and brandy)
 200 g currants (8 oz)
 200 g sultanas (8 oz)
 200 g raisins (8 oz)
 100 g halved glacé cherries (4 oz)
 100 g cut mixed peel (4 oz)

- 1 Sieve together flour, spice and ground almonds.
- 2 Cream butter and sugar, stir in flour mixture and eggs with milk (alternately, a little at a time).
- 3 Lastly add fruit. Mix thoroughly.
- 4 Place mixture in a greased and lined 23 cm round or 20.5 cm square tin. Protect with brown paper (see note on page 45).
- 5 Bake in slow oven, 150°C, 300°F, Gas mark 2, for about 1½ hours.

LEARNING ABOUT COUNTRIES IN 1914

Geography

Objective: To introduce the Christmas Truces and teach basic country identification skills on a map of 1914 Europe. As such it could be used as a one-off lesson or as part of a number of World War 1-themed sessions.

Starter: Which countries were involved in World War 1?

Share new information:

Show section 1 of the Christmas Truces PowerPoint.

Exercise: Give each pupil a copy of the blank 'Map of European Powers, 1914' available on the following page. Ask pupils to colour in the two sides (Allies and Central Powers) using a different colour for each.

Share new information:

Having seen how so many countries were involved, can we imagine that ordinary people could have stopped it? Show the Christmas Truce PowerPoint, Parts 2 – 4, or the *Balls to War – When a World War Stopped to Play Football* film, available here:

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zo35wfYXo9g>)



Plenary Review / Reflect:

What would have happened if the soldiers had simply refused to return to fighting after the Christmas Truces?

Advanced: Can ordinary people stop, or just pause wars? Were the soldiers right to stop fighting for Christmas, and were the generals right to make them start fighting again afterwards?

WORKSHEET: LEARNING ABOUT COUNTRIES IN 1914



● Central Powers

Germany
Austria-Hungary
Turkey
Bulgaria (1915)

● Allies

France, Britain
Belgium, Russia
Serbia
Italy (1915)
Romania (1915)
Portugal (1916)
Greece (1917)

Locate on the map and then colour in the two sides in the war. Use one colour for the Central Powers and another for the Allies.

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT

Art / Literacy

Starter: Why do people give presents at Christmas?
What is the most important gift that you have been given?

Share new information:

Read the poem, *The Christmas Truce* by Carol Ann Duffy. Words also available at <http://www.stopwar.org.uk/poetry/carol-ann-duffy-the-christmas-truce>. Ask pupils to pay particular attention to what gifts are mentioned in the poem.

Activity: Decorate a large matchbox as a Christmas present. The matchbox could contain objects representing the presents given, photographs representing the photos of family members shared, a letter or poem written from a soldier's point of view, or paper sculptures of images symbolising peace.

Demonstrate: Show Art Project 2 (slides 3 & 4) from the additional Art Projects PowerPoint Slideshow, available online.



Plenary Review / Reflect:

How would it feel after the truces ended for a soldier to shoot at someone who had given him a Christmas present?



ACTIVITY PLANS
KEY STAGE 3/4

CREATING TRUCE IMAGES TO THE TRACK OF 'SILENT NIGHT'

Art / Music

Objective: Inspired by the 1966 Simon and Garfunkel song '7 O'Clock News/Silent Night', pupils will produce a slideshow that juxtaposes the traditional carol with their own artistic interpretations of World War 1 and the Christmas Truces, and in doing so explore the contradictions inherent in celebrating Christmas at wartime.

Share new information:

Share the Christmas Truces story with pupils using Christmas Truces PowerPoint slideshow.

Additional information:

In 1966 Simon and Garfunkel released a traditional version of *Silent Night*, singing in the background as a newsreader reads out the 7 o'clock evening news of war, murder, violence and protest from the USA at that time. The idea came to Paul Simon when he was listening to the news on his car radio, and began singing 'Silent Night' gently in the background. Numerous slideshows are available on YouTube, some more graphic than others – teachers should select one of these based on class sensitivities. Lyrics for 'Silent Night' are available in Appendix 4.

Activity: Divide the class into two to **draw or paint** pictures on A4-sized paper (to enable easy scanning) inspired by the slideshow. Group 1 creates work about the war itself (the trenches, combat, power politics) and Group 2 creates work about the Christmas Truces.

Production: The images produced by the class are scanned in by the teacher or by pupils, and set to a slideshow of '7 O'Clock News/Silent Night', or of other songs inspired by the truces, including Paul McCartney's 'Pipes of Peace' (1983) or The Farm's 'Altogether Now' (1990). This requires some expertise in software packages such as those used to set photographs to music. Alternatively, the pictures can be used in a traditional wall-mounted art display, perhaps interspersed with reproductions of actual images of the truces.



Silent Night

Silent night, Holy night,
All is calm, all is bright:
Round yon virgin mother and child,
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, Holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight:
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia:
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born!

Silent night, Holy night,
Son of God love's pure light;
Radiance beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Stille Nacht

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Alles schläft; einsam wacht
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Hirten erst kundgemacht
Durch der Engel Halleluja,
Tönt es laut von fern und nah:
Christ, der Retter ist da!
Christ, der Retter ist da!

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Gottes Sohn, o wie lacht
Lieb' aus deinem göttlichen Mund,
Da uns schlägt die rettende Stund'.
Christ, in deiner Geburt!
Christ, in deiner Geburt!

Words: Joseph Mohr, 1816

Plenary Review / Reflect:

Some pupils can show their work to the class and explain what they have drawn and why. What do you think it was like to take part in the truces? How do you think British soldiers felt about shooting at German soldiers before and after the truces?

Further idea: The final slideshow could be uploaded to the school website, loaded onto an iPad or other tablet as part of a classroom display for parents, or used as an element of a Christmas carol service or assembly.

INTERRUPTING WAR

English / Creative Writing

Objective: This exercise sees the Christmas Truces as an interruption to war, and asks pupils to rewrite the poem *We Interrupt This War* by Cappy Hall Rearick. In analysing and understanding the structure of a poem, this lesson develops creative writing and analytical thinking skills, and explores the decisions that poets make about structure. It also encourages pupils to discuss their local area and their lives.

Starter:

Ask pupils to think of times when they have been busy doing something (having a meal, playing computer games, doing homework etc...) and have been interrupted, and ask them how they felt?

Share new information: Share the Christmas Truces story with pupils using the PowerPoint slideshow. Sections 1 and 2 (historical background) can be omitted. Focus on Section 3 (combat/life in the trenches) and Section 4 (the truces as an interruption).

Share new information: Introduce the poem 'We Interrupt This War' written in 2001 by US poet Cappy Hall Rearick, reprinted on page 36. The poem can be read by the teacher, or pupils can take turns to read out lines. Although not about the Christmas Truces, the truces were an interruption that was as unwelcome to the generals as it was welcome to the soldiers.

Activity 1: Ask pupils to search for meaning. Choose a number of couplets from the poem and ask pupils to arrange them in order of the importance of the 'interruption'. For example, is 'Disneyland' more important than 'saving the whales'. Pupils can work independently, with less able pupils working with fewer couplets, or working in pairs or groups.

Activity 2: The poem was written by an American adult. Explain to pupils that they have been asked to rewrite the poem from a British teenager's point of view. Give out large strips of paper (cut up from A3) and pens. Each student, group, or pair must write a couplet starting 'We interrupt this war to...'. Pupils should write a number of couplets, depending on ability, and the original poem can be used as a reference. Pupils can use UK-specific examples such as Bonfire Toffee, the FA Cup, Bank Holiday barbecues, as well as making references to local events.



THE POWER OF PEACE IN THE TIME OF WAR

THE TRUCE IN THE TRENCHES THAT BROUGHT IN THE NEW YEAR



British and German soldiers fraternizing during the Christmas and New Year truce, which, though unofficial, was welcomed on both sides. "At this point," writes the officer who sent us the photograph, "a crowd of some 100 Tommies of each nationality held a regular mothers' meeting between the trenches. We found our enemies to be Saxons."

Plenary Review / Reflect:

Instruct pupils to disregard any lines that they are unhappy with and to choose their 1 or 2 best couplets. Pupils now work together as a class or a group to consider what is the best structure of the poem by ordering the verses. Pupils should be able to explain any decisions they make relating to structure to the teacher as he/she circulates room. You may want to include some couplets from the original. Read out the final whole class version or group versions.

Further plenary review/reflect:

How do you think the soldiers felt about the interruption to the war? How did the generals feel?

Further activity 1:

Pupils could write the poem up neatly and decorate it with small illustrations around the edges.

Further activity 2:

Write a pro-war poem. For example, 'We continue this war to ... protect the innocent from genocide'). This may lead to a discussion concerning whether there is such a thing as a 'just' war.



We Interrupt This War by Cappy Hall Rearick

We interrupt this war for doctors to heal,
teachers to teach, and pupils to learn.

We interrupt this war to marvel at sunsets,
listen to music, and to laugh.

We interrupt this war for poets to rhyme, sculptors to
chisel, and writers to paint pictures with words.

We interrupt this war to plant tomatoes, mow
the grass, and to smell the roses.

We interrupt this war to feed the hungry, build
new schools, and to stamp out ignorance.

We interrupt this war to clean up the air, save
the whales and to find a cure for cancer.

We interrupt this war to rebuild New Orleans,
tickle babies and for world peace.

We interrupt this war for PTA meetings, band
concerts, and high school graduations.

We interrupt this war for Girl Scout Cookies,
church bake sales, and the Special Olympics.

We interrupt this war for Disneyland, the
World Series, and the Super Bowl.

We interrupt this war for Halloween candy,
Thanksgiving Turkey, and 4th of July fireworks.

We interrupt this war for Hanukkah,
Christmas and Kwanzaa.

We interrupt this war to bring sons,
daughters, sisters and brothers home.

We interrupt this war to hear a message from
Our Sponsor: THOU SHALT NOT KILL.

CHRISTMAS TRUCES STREET GRAFFITI

Art

Objective:

Create Banksy-inspired art representing the Christmas Truces.

Share new information:

Share the Christmas Truces story with pupils using the Christmas Truces PowerPoint Slideshow. Introduce the work of street artist *Banksy* using Art Project 4 (slide 7) from the additional Christmas Truces Art Projects PowerPoint, available online at www.mlkpc.org. What do images created by Banksy have in common? How is colour used effectively?

Activity: Ask pupils to find quotes from soldiers' letters which are meaningful to them. Some examples of letters from soldiers can be found in Appendix 2, as well as on the website 'Christmas Truce 1914 - Operation Plum Pudding' (see Appendix 3 for URL). Pupils should use their selected quote to create an image which can be developed into a stencil in the style of a piece of Banksy artwork.



RESEARCH LOCAL PARTICIPANTS VIA LETTERS TO NEWSPAPERS

History

Objective: To research and engage with a range of non-fiction writing, to examine how opinions are expressed in writing, and to explore local perspectives on the Christmas Truces and the First World War in general. This allows teachers to build into their World War 1 teaching an element of area-based curriculum.

Starter:

Ask pupils if they know anyone who has served in the armed forces.

Share new information:

Share the story of the Christmas Truces with pupils using the PowerPoint slideshow.

Research activity: By December 1914 the UK government had not yet introduced its stronger censorship regime, so local and national papers throughout the country printed excerpts from soldiers writing home about the truces. The website <http://www.christmastruce.co.uk/about.html> contains numerous examples of letters home from troops who witnessed the truces, and is organised via region allowing pupils to be directed to the accounts of people from near their home area.

Find letters written by people who lived near their home. Record their name, age, and home location; summarise what they witnessed in the truces; and describe their attitude towards the war and towards the Germans.

Advanced: In what ways do these letters differ from one another? What explains that?

Dear Grandma,

I received your last letter when we were in the front line of trenches, and I was on my way to go at about 7 o'clock. It is awfully funny reading letters up there with the Germans in trenches about 200 yards away.

We had a ripping Christmas pudding out of a tin and some tinned beef from Uncle Ted. We were in the sort of truce here; the Germans over and both sides met in the middle and they all talked and exchanged souvenirs and there was no firing. We went up on the first day and they waved back and waved to the next day. They were again fairly quiet. I don't seem silly fighting

Usual address

You are

planning out of a tin and some tinned beef from Uncle Ted. We were in the sort of truce here; the Germans over and both sides met in the middle and they all talked and exchanged souvenirs and there was no firing. We went up on the first day and they waved back and waved to the next day. They were again fairly quiet. I don't seem silly fighting

Plenary Review / Reflect:

What emotions do these letters contain? Which do you find particularly interesting and why?

NB: This exercise could be used in other ways too. Pupils could imagine that they took part in the truces and were writing letters home to family or friends about their experiences, or construct dramas based on what they have learnt. If a Christmas truce-themed assembly or carol service is being organised (available on p.53 & 54, and p.55-59 respectively) letters could be read out.

WHAT'S THE POINT OF CHRISTMAS TODAY?

RE / Ethics / PSE



Objective: This lesson asks pupils to use the Christmas Truces and the life of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to reflect on the meaning of Christmas today.

Starter:

What's the point of Christmas today? What does it mean to you?
Is it just about family, presents and food, or does it have any relevance to the violent world in which we currently live?

Share new information:

Share the Christmas Truces story with pupils using the PowerPoint slideshow.

Activity: On December 24th 1967, his last Christmas before his murder, Rev. Martin Luther King gave a sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church entitled, 'A Christmas Sermon on Peace', available at (<http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/christmas-sermon>). This powerful address revisits many of his core themes and famous rhetorical phrases. Study the text of this sermon, and think about the Christmas Truces. What did Christmas mean for the soldiers in 1914 and for King in 1967?

Plenary Review / Reflect:

Can these sources help us re-think how we celebrate Christmas and what it could mean to us today?

COURT MARTIAL

History / Ethics / PSE



Objective: This lesson asks pupils to play out roles in an imaginary court-martial of a junior officer and an ordinary private soldier who took part in the truces. In doing so pupils must imagine themselves in the position of someone else, and formulate a judgement based on comparing a range of legal and moral arguments.

Starter:

If someone breaks the law, what happens to them?

Share new information:

A court martial is a military court. The Field General Courts-Martial was a system of courts used on the western front. It could sentence soldiers to death for a range of offences such as murder, plundering a house, deserting, defiance of an officer's orders, falling asleep when on lookout duty, or causing a mutiny or endeavouring to persuade persons in His Majesty's forces to join in a mutiny. During the war they imposed about 3,000 death sentences on British soldiers, about 300 of whom were executed (the rest being pardoned or given alternative sentences). France executed about twice as many men, Germany fewer. General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien sent a memorandum to British Officers on December 27 1914 deploring reports of the truces that were taking place, issuing strict orders that they be forbidden, and asking for "names of officers and units who took part in this Christmas gathering with a view to disciplinary action."



Activity: We will conduct a court martial of two imaginary soldiers, Lieutenant Thomas Pickering and Private Simon Churchyard, whose unit took part in the truces. Explain the true background to the truces adding that, a few weeks earlier, the commander of the British 2nd Corps, General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, had issued a warning to his senior officers that “friendly intercourse with the enemy” and “unofficial armistices, however tempting and amusing they may be, are absolutely prohibited” lest they “destroy the offensive spirit in all ranks.”

Divide the pupils up into five groups, and give each of them a **Character Card** (available on the following page) to assume a role in the court martial. Give them time to prepare.

Plenary Activity: Convene and act out the court martial as described under the activities of Group 1.

If the verdict is ‘death by firing squad’, then the teacher should assume the role of the Field Marshall whose responsibility it is to confirm or commute the sentence.

Plenary Review / Reflect:

Stepping back from these roles, do you think that the right verdicts were reached? How did you feel in taking on these roles? Teachers should aim to emphasise the range of opinions about the war and the truces. Teachers could add that in 2006 all 306 British soldiers executed in World War I (mostly for cowardice or desertion) were pardoned. The BBC has an article and a photograph about one, Private Harry Farr, and includes an interview with his daughter, then aged 93, available on the following link (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4796579.stm>)

Group 1

President of the Court Martial, Colonel Sir James Mackay



Who: President of the Court Martial, in the absence of a more senior officer Sir James has presided over a number of court martials on the western front. Aged 39, he has been a career soldier who has served around the British Empire.

What: Firstly, prepare a formal statement of the crimes of the accused. How are they different for officer and private? The group should appoint one person to be Sir James, and the others to act as his advisers/assistants.

Secondly, be in charge of proceedings when everyone is ready: (1) Explain the purpose of the court martial, (2) Read out the accusations and the names of those accused and ask the accused to confirm their names, (3) Ask the accusing witnesses to present their version of events (4) Ask the accused to present their version of events, (5) Allow any cross-examining.

Thirdly, when these steps have been completed, retire and reach verdicts and sentences. Sentences if found guilty can be, in order of seriousness: reprimand (telling off), cashiering (ritually humiliating and demoting an officer for example by pulling off medals and throwing to the ground), imprisonment, penal servitude (a period of time working hard in prison, for example digging in a quarry), or death by firing squad.

Group 2

Accused officer, Lieutenant Thomas Pickering



Who: Thomas Pickering is a professional soldier, aged 33, who has previously won medals for serving his country in the Boer War (1899-1902). During the truces he was the British officer who negotiated with his German counterpart for a ceasefire, initially to bury the dead. This was later extended to Boxing Day, when fraternisation including exchanging gifts and playing football occurred. During the truce Pickering met a German soldier who had worked as a barber in London before the war when he had actually cut Pickering's hair. When his men refused to fire at the Germans on December 27th, his unit was moved from the front line and replaced with soldiers who had not participated in the truces.

What: Prepare a defence: how can his actions be defended? Use your imagination, and what you know about the First World War and the truces, to construct a defence.

Group 3

Accused private soldier, Private Simon Churchyard



Who: Simon Churchyard was a 17 year old private soldier who enthusiastically responded to the government's call to enlist by lying about his age (saying he was 18). Previously he was a farm labourer and keen amateur football player. During the truces he played football with the Germans, got drunk with German soldiers, and spoke offensively to an officer who told him to stop fraternising and return to the trenches. He refused to fire at the Germans on his return to the trenches on December 27th. In his possession was found a letter from one of the Germans he had met, addressed to the German soldier's British girlfriend in Manchester where the soldier had worked as butcher. Churchyard had promised to post it for him.

What: Prepare a defence: how can his actions be defended? Use your imagination, and what you know about the First World War and the truces, to construct a defence.

Group 4

Witness against the accused men: Captain Samuel Jones



Who: Samuel Jones, aged 27, served in a unit that was away from the front lines over Christmas. When Thomas Pickering's men refused to fight, his unit was drafted in to replace them. He witnessed the refusal of Pickering's men to fight. Being fiercely anti-German, he was enraged. What is more, Churchyard called him 'a damned fool' who was 'worse than the Hun.' As well as personal conduct of the accused, how might Jones view the possible political and military consequences if the truce had spread and become permanent?

What: Prepare the arguments that he will make against Pickering and Churchyard. Use your imagination, and what you know about the First World War and the truces, to construct a case.

Group 5

Witness for the accused men: Captain Andrew Thompson



Who: Captain Andrew Thompson, aged 34, did not take part in the truces, but he observed them as his unit was positioned next along the line. He is a friend of Pickering, having served with him in the Boer War.

What: Prepare the arguments that Thompson will make in their defence. Use your imagination, and what you know about the First World War and the truces, to construct a defence. Think up arguments about the good character of the men, as well as defences against the charge that they were organising a mutiny.

WORKSHEET

COURT MARTIAL: CHARACTER CARDS

OVERCOMING BARBED WIRE

Art

In addition to the Christmas Truces Slideshow, this lesson uses Art Project 4 (slides 8-11) from the additional Art Projects PowerPoint, available at www.mlkpc.org.

Objective: To create artwork that represents the role of barbed wire in the Christmas Truces.

Starter:

Show Art Projects slide 8. Where might this photo have been taken? What does it symbolise to you?

(Note for teachers: it is a flower growing in a tear gas grenade hanging from barbed wire near a memorial to Bassem Abu Rahmah, a young Palestinian protestor killed by Israeli troops in the West Bank).

Share new information:

Share the Christmas Truces story with pupils using the PowerPoint slideshow. Ask pupils how barbed wire featured in the narrative. Emphasise barbed wire as last line of defence in the trenches; soldiers who made the charge over no-man's land were often impaled on it and shot (show Art Projects slide 9). During the truces soldiers bypassed the barbed wire to fraternise.

Activity:

Show Art Projects slide 9. Create images of hope out of wire.

Display:

Create a display of class art using ideas in Art Projects slide 10.



Objective:

To examine the concept of 'the enemy' in war. Images of the other side as enemies, dangerous, evil and different to us are necessary to persuade people to fight against them. A common observation by participants in the truces is that in befriending the enemy they were surprised to learn that they were men rather like themselves. This exercise explores how personal encounters can challenge our preconceptions. Images may be printed off in advance or accessed via computers/tablets.

Starter:

Ask pupils to think about a time when they have had a negative opinion about a person or thing, which has then changed once they have got to know them or it.

Share new information:

Share the Christmas Truces story with pupils using the PowerPoint slideshow. Emphasise Sections 1 and 4 (propaganda and truces respectively). Explain that in this lesson we will examine the view of Mark Campbell, composer of the opera about the truces 'Silent Night', that "War is not sustainable when you come to know your enemy as a person." Ask the class whether they think that this is always true.

Activity 1: Explore images of the Germans in British World War 1 propaganda and recruitment posters. You can find a selection of these images in Appendix 1. What do these posters tell people about the 'enemy'? What are their differences and similarities? For more advanced pupils, how do these posters use markers of identity such as race, gender and homeland to convey their message?

Plenary Review / Reflect:

How do you react to these posters?

PERCEPTIONS AND IMAGES OF THE ENEMY

Art / PSE / History

Activity 2: Explore images of the Germans as seen through the Christmas Truces. Sources are from photographs and artistic representations of the truces (see Appendix 1) and letters (Appendix 2). Each pupil or pair should select two letters: what are the points of difference and similarity? Or, assign some pupils to look at the truce photographs: how do you react to them? What do these images tell people about the 'enemy'?

Plenary Review / Reflect:

How do these two sets of perceptions/images compare and contrast? How do you think the soldiers felt about shooting each other before and after the truces?

TRUCE WORDS - DOMINIC MCGILL

Art



Dominic McGill | Escape Into Life

This lesson uses Art Project 3 (slides 5 & 6) from the additional Christmas Truces Art Projects PowerPoint, available online from www.mlkpc.org

Objective:

Create artwork about the Christmas Truces inspired by the work of **Dominic McGill**.

Share new information:

Christmas Truces story shared with pupils using the Christmas Truces PowerPoint slide show. Introduce and discuss work of Dominic McGill using slides 5 and 6 from the Arts Projects Slideshow.

Activity: Ask students to write up a list of important words and phrases about World War 1 and in particular the Christmas Truces. Once they have produced a list of related words, ask them to try writing or drawing the words in as many different fonts as they can. They can then go on to create an illustrated doodle-style image linked to the Christmas Truces in the style of Dominic McGill.





SHARED ELEMENTS OF THE TRUCES

Modern Languages

Objective: To engage with the internationalist spirit of the Christmas Truces by learning key multi-lingual hymns and prayers shared by belligerent forces during the First World War. These can form the basis of a language lesson in themselves, or can be used alongside other activities such as a re-enactment of the truces (p.24 - 25), an assembly (p.53 - 54) or a carol service (p. 55 - 59).

Share new information:

Share the Christmas Truce story with pupils using the PowerPoint slideshow. Emphasise that the truces began with the singing of shared hymns such as 'Stille Nacht/Silent Night' and 'O Tannenbaum/Oh Christmas Tree' and the praying of the Lord's Prayer at joint burial/Christmas services.

Activity: Learn *Silent Night* or *The Lord's Prayer* in German and English (or in French for the latter). Both sets of lyrics are available in Appendix 4. Use this to teach relevant grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

Further activity: Get the class to perform the song or recite the prayer as part of a carol service, nativity play, or Christmas Truce-linked assembly.

CHRISTIANITY AND WORLD WAR 1

RE / History / Ethics

Objective:

To examine patriotic jingoism, the Christmas Truces, and other sources to explore the ambivalent role of Christianity in World War 1.

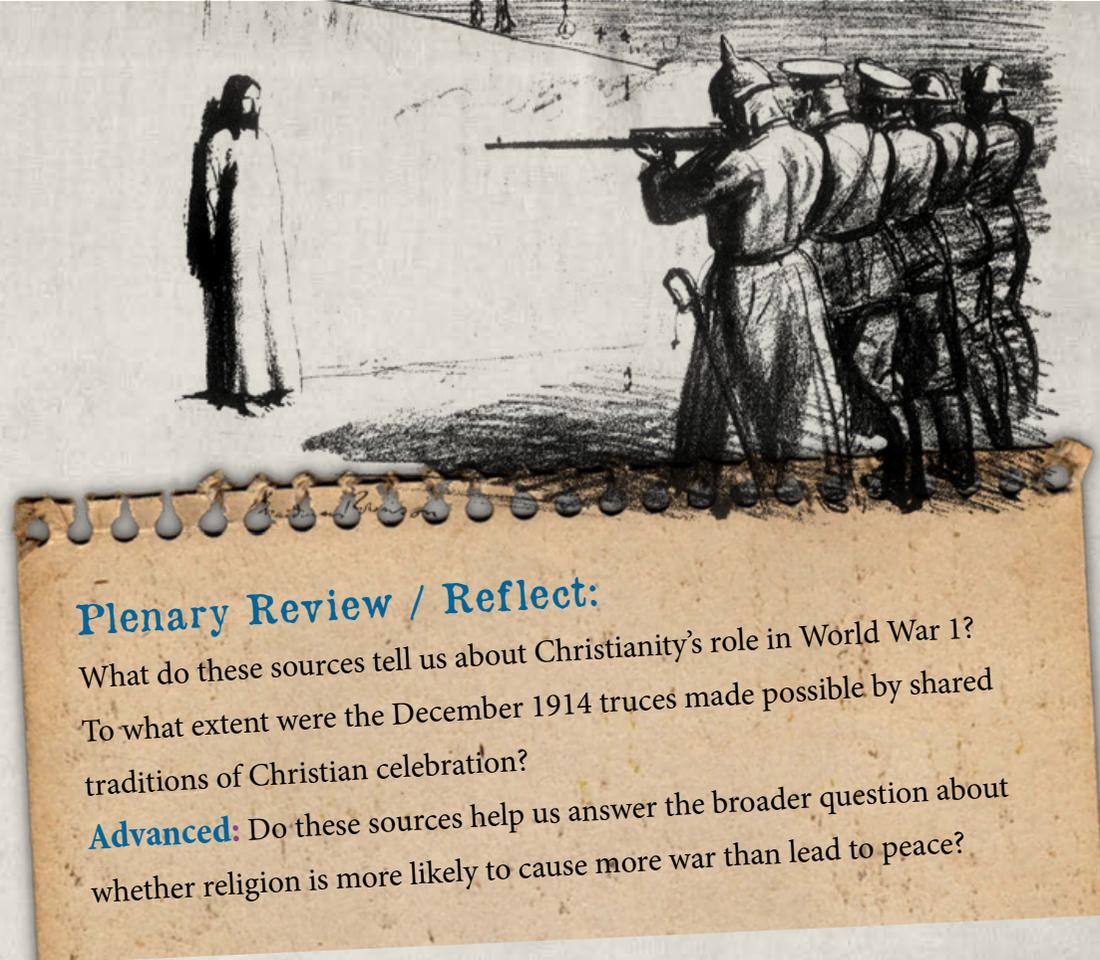
Advanced: To provide an angle on contemporary debates around the 'New Atheist' charge that religion is essentially violent.

Starter: Does religion cause war? Encourage pupils to give examples from their own knowledge.

Share new information:

Use the Christmas Truces PowerPoint slideshow (or the *Balls to War – When a World War Stopped to Play Football* film, URL available in Appendix 3) to introduce pupils to the First World War and the 1914 Christmas Truces.

Activity: Make available, either in stations around the classroom or in packs for each table, the eight sources below given on the following pages. Give each pupil/group a copy of the worksheet to fill in. (NB this can be done in pairs or groups, or as an individual task).



Plenary Review / Reflect:

What do these sources tell us about Christianity's role in World War 1? To what extent were the December 1914 truces made possible by shared traditions of Christian celebration?

Advanced: Do these sources help us answer the broader question about whether religion is more likely to cause more war than lead to peace?

Additional ideas: The multilingual film *Joyeux Noël* (Christian Carion, 2005) depicts the Christmas Truces through the lives of a French Soldier, a German opera singer, and a Scottish military chaplain. Key moments include a joint Christian service in no-man's land, and when the previously pro-war chaplain whose perspectives are altered by participation in the truces is reprimanded by his bishop who delivers a fiercely bellicose sermon. This film is inspired by the truces rather than being an historical representation of them, but nonetheless these two moments could be shown in class or played on a loop on a tablet as an additional 'source.'

CHRISTIANITY AND WORLD WAR 1

LIST OF SOURCES

Source 1: Recruitment/propaganda posters

Reproduced images from slides 6 and 7.

Source 2: The Deserter by artist Boardman Robinson.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boardman_Robinson)

Reproduced from slide 14.

Source 3: A joint Anglo-German Christian burial service in no-man's land

19 year-old Arthur Pelham-Burn, a lieutenant in the 6th Gordons who was planning to study to become a church minister after the war, took part in a joint service on Christmas Eve, and wrote home that:

“The mass burial of the dead was ‘awful, too awful to describe so I won’t attempt it,’ but the joint burial service was ‘most wonderful. Chaplain Adams arranged the prayers and the twenty-third psalm etc and an interpreter wrote them out in German. They were read first by our Padre and then in German by a boy who was studying for the ministry. It was an extraordinary and most wonderful sight. The Germans formed up on one side, the English on the other, the officers standing in front, every head bared. Yes, I think it was a sight one will never see again.”

Source 4: A bellicose British World War I sermon

Extract from a sermon by Arthur Winnington-Ingram, Bishop of London, 1915.

“Everyone that loves freedom and honour ... are banded in a great crusade – we cannot deny it – to kill Germans; to kill them, not for the sake of killing, but to save the world; to kill the good as well as the bad, to kill the young as well as the old, to kill those who have shown kindness to our wounded as well as those fiends... who sank the Lusitania... and to kill them lest the civilisation of the world itself be killed.”

Source 5: A bellicose German World War I sermon

Extract from a sermon by Johann Kessler, Pastor in Dresden, World War 1.

“We believe in a world calling for our nation. A nation that God has equipped with such gifts of the spirit and such depths of mind, that he called to be a bearer of the gospel in the days of the Reformation, that he chose in the War of Liberation to be a harbinger of the new era, a nation to which God has given a Luther and a Lessing, a Goethe and a Schiller, a Kant and a Bismark - this nation cannot be cast aside! God has great things in store for such a nation, Such a nation could defy a world of enemies and still triumph.”

Source 6: An anti-war reflection by a notable British pacifist.

“War is a devil’s game from beginning to end. You cannot begin it without a campaign of lies, and you cannot sustain it without continuing the campaign. You cannot carry it through without all manner of trickery and deceit, and suspending the moral law in every direction. There is no such thing as a just war. You may undertake a war for a just cause, but you cannot carry on a just war. You may go to war for a worthy ideal, but you smash the ideal to pieces long before the war is over.... war means that you must, if you can, deal out more destruction to your enemy than he can deal out to you - that, surely, is the antithesis of Christianity.”

Rev. Rhondda Williams, Minister of Union Church, Brighton, World War 1.

Source 7: Fellowship of Reconciliation

Reproduce the images from slide 13, and add this accompanying text:

Siegmund-Schultze (of Germany) and Henry Hodgkin (of Britain) were at a meeting of Christian leaders in 1914. They separated on Cologne Railway Station saying ‘we are one in Christ and can never be at war.’ They founded the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR) which called on its members to refuse to join in the war. FoR’s work continued: civil rights leader and US Christian pastor Martin Luther King was a member, and the organisation strongly influenced his adoption of a strategy of non-violence to oppose US racial segregation.

Source 8: Christian opposition to World War 1

Reproduce images from slide 12, Catherine Marshall and Harold Bing, with the accompanying text:

Harold Bing believed that following Christianity was incompatible with warfare. A member of the No Conscription Fellowship, he refused to serve in the army and spent three years in jail as a result. Catherine Marshall, a member of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, a suffragette, and a prominent peace campaigner during World War 1, wrote ‘...all the horrors of war... do violence to the whole spirit of civilisation, the whole teaching of Christianity’ and ‘I believe that women...are more likely than men to find some other way of settling international disputes than by an appeal to force.’

WORKSHEET: CHRISTIANITY AND WORLD WAR 1

Key Question: Did Christianity encourage violence or promote peace in World War One?

Activity: Look at each of the eight sources and fill in the table below.

Source	Description / explanation of purpose	How is religion used to encourage or criticise the war?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

FIGHTING OR FOOTBALL?

History



An artistic representation of a World War 1 football match.

Objective:

To teach pupils a basic familiarity with the truces and ask them to think and write creatively from another person's point of view, and to reflect on the moral questions raised by the truces. This exercise is intended to be used as homework or solitary work. It draws on the teachers' resource pack 'Sport, Courage, Peace and Friendship' produced by the Peace Museum, Bradford, 2012.

Instructions:

Read the text on the following pages and answer the questions below.

Question:

Why did the soldiers stop fighting?

Activity: Imagine that you were a soldier participating in the Christmas Truces. Write a letter home to your family or friends describing what happened.

Imagine that you were a soldier who stopped fighting that Christmas. What would you have done if you were ordered to start fighting again?

Advanced: Seeing that the German army was occupying parts of France and Belgium, were the British soldiers right to stop fighting? Find as many arguments for and against the Christmas Truces as possible.

Advanced: Were the generals right to stop the truces?



FIGHTING OR FOOTBALL?

World War I began 100 years ago, in 1914. The most heavily armed countries in the world including Britain, France and Germany were competing to be stronger than each other, and this led to the war. Thousands of young men and teenage boys, many of High School age, joined the British army to go and fight the German army which had invaded France and Belgium. They dug 'trenches' – ditches, holes and tunnels dug in the ground and supported by sand-bags to protect themselves from enemy shots, and laced with barbed wire and machine-gun emplacements. These trenches often stank of sewage and rotting bodies, and became deep in mud making life unpleasant and dangerous. Sometimes wounded men were sucked into the mud and drowned. The British and German front-line trenches were usually between 50 and 250 metres apart, with the space between them known as 'no-man's land'. When told to attack the enemy trenches, hundreds of men would charge across no-man's land, running into a 'storm of steel' of bullets and artillery shells, and later in the war poison gas. If they reached the enemy and somehow got through the barbed wire, they would fight hand-to-hand in the muddy trenches. On July 1st 1916, at the start of the Battle of the Somme, nearly 20,000 British soldiers were killed in one day alone.

When they joined the army, many men believed that the war would be over by the first Christmas. Instead, thousands of people had been killed and there was no sign of an end. The British and German trenches were often so close that enemy soldiers could see each other and hear each other shout messages across. Therefore in some places soldiers had agreed not to fight. But on a frosty Christmas Eve 1914, when soldiers were thinking of family at home, something amazing happened. It is described by a soldier from Gateshead, writing a letter on Christmas Day to a friend in Low Fell:

"Last night the Germans lit up their trenches and started calling across merry Christmas. We responded in the same way and then we started singing songs to one another, carols etc. All shooting had stopped. We walked about the tops of the trenches and called out to one another. Then some of our chaps walked out and met some of the Germans half way, wishing each other a merry Christmas, shook hands and said they would not fight today."

Soldiers met, gave each other presents, and shared food and drink. They buried their friends who had died in no-man's land. They also held Christmas services with prayers, carols and Bible readings in both languages. Before the war many Germans had worked in Britain as butchers and hairdressers, and there are stories of Germans giving British soldiers haircuts in no-man's land! Some letters written home by British and German soldiers claim that games of football were played in no-man's land. Thus Company-Sergeant Major Frank Naden wrote that after making friends:

"The Scotsmen started the bagpipes and we had a rare old jollification, which included football in which the Germans took part. The Germans expressed themselves as being tired of the war and wished it was over."

British and German soldiers took photographs of each other, showed each other pictures of their families, and promised to stay in touch. The Gateshead soldier wrote:

"One [German soldier] has given me his address to write to him after the war. They were quite a decent lot of fellows I can tell you. I know this seems an unbelievable story but it is fact. I am sure if it was left to the men there would be no war. "

However it wasn't left to the men: the heads of the British and German army were angry that their men had stopped fighting and ordered them to start again. Frank Naden wrote:

"Next day we got an order that all communication and friendliness with the enemy must stop but we did not fire at all that day, and the Germans did not fire at us."

Some soldiers who didn't obey orders were punished and new soldiers sent to the trenches to fight. A soldier from Jarrow (south of the River Tyne) wrote a letter on Boxing Day about stopping fighting to celebrate Christmas with the Germans, but finished by adding:

"Now today it is different. Where we were at peace with them yesterday, we are at war today and the guns are roaring as usual and the rifles are being fired. It is a queer time right enough!"

It was certainly strange to be fighting again: and the armies continued fighting until 1918, by which time around 10 million soldiers had died.



A CHRISTMAS TRUCE- THEMED ASSEMBLY

The Christmas Truces PowerPoint slideshow and accompanying notes (p.11-16) provide the basis for a Christmas truce-themed assembly. Ideal in the run-up to Christmases from 2014 to 2017, it is a simple way of introducing pupils to some of the key points about World War 1 and the remarkable and evocative events of the Christmas Truces of December 1914.

Teachers will have their own preferred ways of delivering this material: for example, asking questions as they go along before explaining each slide, or inviting some pupils to read out the first-person narrative extracts added in the 'In greater depth' sections of the accompanying notes.

For schools that teach carols, an assembly could be interspersed with appropriate songs, particularly those that actually featured in the truces such as 'Silent Night' and 'O Christmas Tree.' If the assembly follows on from lessons based around the Christmas Truces theme, then outputs from those lessons - such as a slideshow of art work or letters home from the trenches written by pupils - could be readily incorporated.

Church Schools

The PowerPoint Christmas Truces slideshow clearly provides a link to both historical and religious concerns, given that the truces were only possible due to shared traditions of celebrating a Christian religious festival.

However, schools linked to churches might want to place more emphasis on this aspect.

There are potentially various ways in which this can be done. For example, drawing on carol service material in the subsequent section of this pack, the traditional Biblical rendering of Jesus Christ's birth as bringing 'peace on earth' could be emphasised, with the truces as exemplifying that. Alternatively, the assembly could be bookended with St Paul's statement in Galatians Chapter 3 Verse 28, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Having begun with this statement, the first part of the slideshow could explain that imperialistic war contradicts that Biblical vision (i.e. is 'sin'); part two could emphasise the Christian elements of much anti-war opposition, from Keir Hardie and Harold Bing to Catherine Marshall and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The December 1914 truces themselves (Section 4 of the slideshow) could be interpreted as a momentary glimpse or symbol of Paul's vision for the church as it is meant to be where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, explaining that a 1914 equivalent of these First Century national enemies would be 'neither German nor Britons.' This approach could also address the dissonance here revealed in propaganda posters in slides 6 and 7 – that the churches of 1914 arguably forgot this vision and lined up behind their respective governments.

For additional ideas, consult the 'Christmas Truces Resource Pack for Church Leaders', available for free at

www.mlkpc.org

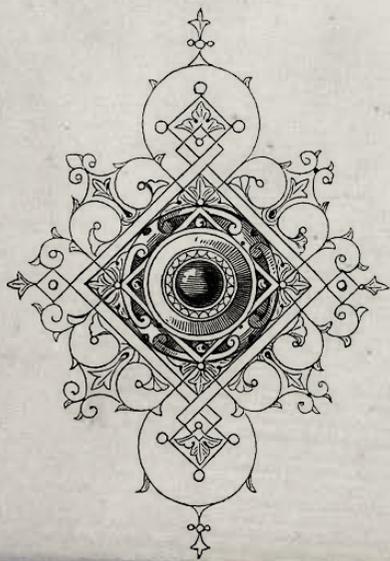


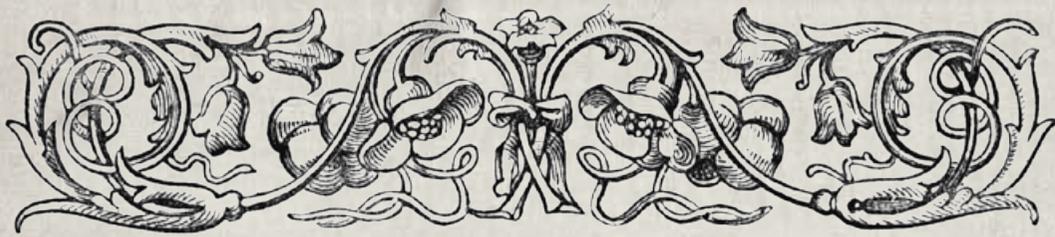


A SCHOOL CAROL SERVICE

This is envisaged as a fairly standard Carol Service with readings and carols interspersed. For the most part this example does not suggest specific carols or other music except for Silent Night which is included early on in the service to recall the fact that in many places down the front singing it was crucial to the beginning of the truces. As well as Christmas story Bible passages taken from the traditional 'Nine lessons and carols,' the service suggests readings of extracts from first hand soldiers' accounts of the truces.

Various elements from the lesson plans could be incorporated into a performance: for example, a child reading their version of the 'We Interrupt This War' poem (p.36), their letter home based on imagining they took part in the truces (p.20) or the songs/prayers learnt in English and German/French that we know actually figured in the truces (p.47).





Carol 1

Procession: white flags could be paraded in at the start of the service and placed prominently to preside over the service. It would be best to explain them as flags of truce rather than surrender; a sign that this service is one of peace. National flags of Britain, Imperial Germany and France could also be used.

Opening Prayer, Welcome and Soldier's recollection

Children, parents, staff and guests, year by year we gather for the remembrance of Christ's birth. When we do, we recall together his title as Prince of Peace, we imagine the angels' song of 'Peace on earth and goodwill to all people' and we remind ourselves of the mission of the Messiah to 'guide our feet into the way of peace'.

This year we also remember that a century ago our nations began a war so terrible that it was called the War to End all Wars. Tonight [as our flag(s) of truce reminds us] we also remember that one hundred Christmases ago, in no-man's land on the western front, peace broke out spontaneously. They sang songs of Christ's birth, enemies briefly became friends, festive gifts were given, and addresses were swapped with promises to write after the war. These truces are not myths, they are well-attested by first-hand accounts and occurred right down the Western front from the North Sea to Switzerland. Though their truces were short and broken by those in command, they remain a hopeful reminder that we human beings are not born to war and that the Prince of Peace still works in this world by the Spirit of holiness.

So, in a few moments of quiet now, pray with us for the peace of the world, for fairness and justice; that wars may cease and negotiation replace fighting to resolve conflicts. *[A time of quiet recollection and prayer may be kept]*

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.
Before singing our first carol, we listen to the first-hand account of the beginning of the truces as recorded by Sergeant Frank Sumter, London Rifle Brigade:

"After the 19th December attack, we were back in the same trenches when Christmas Day came along. It was a terrible winter, everything was covered in snow, everything was white. The devastated landscape looked terrible in its true colours -clay and mud and broken brick- but when it was covered in snow it was beautiful. Then we heard the Germans singing 'Silent night, Holy night', and they put up a notice saying 'Merry Christmas', and so we put one up too.

While they were singing our boys said, 'Let's join in,' so we joined in and when we started singing, they stopped. And when we stopped, they started again. So we were easing the way. Then one German took a chance and jumped up on top of the trench and shouted out, 'Happy Christmas, Tommy!' So of course our boys said, 'If he can do it, we can do it,' and we all jumped up. A sergeant-major shouted 'Get down!' But we said, 'Shut up Sergeant, it's Christmas time!' And we all went forward to the barbed wire."

Carol 2 ' Silent Night / Stille Nacht'

Many of the accounts of the Christmas Truces mention hearing singing, and Stille Nacht is one of the songs mentioned, it being familiar to both German and British troops. The basic idea here is to sing some, at least, of the carol in German. This might be done by singing one of the verses in German all together (perhaps a bit of help with pronunciation might be needed) or to invite those who can read German to sing one or more verses in German. In a school, perhaps part of the rehearsal could be to have some sing in German. It might be effective to light the tree lights as this is sung, to remind us that in many places the truces began with the singing of Silent Night and the lighting of candles on little Christmas trees.

Lyrics for 'Silent Night' are available in Appendix 4.

Reading 1: Isaiah 9: 2,6-7 The prophet foretells the coming of the Saviour.

Soldier's account, Company-Sergeant Major Frank Naden of the 6th Cheshire Territorials:

“On Christmas Eve as each fireball went up from the German lines our men shouted ‘Hurrah’ and ‘Let’s have another’. They also sang Christians Awake and other Christmas hymns. On Christmas Day one of the Germans came out of the trenches and held his hands up. Our fellows immediately got out of theirs, and we met in the middle, and for the rest of the day we fraternised, exchanging food, cigarettes and souvenirs. The Germans gave us some of their sausages, and we gave them some of our stuff. The Scotsmen started the bagpipes and we had a rare old jollification, which included football in which the Germans took part. The Germans expressed themselves as being tired of the war and wished it was over.”

Carol 3

Reading 2: Isaiah 11: 1–3a; 4a; 6–9 The Prophet foretells the peace that Christ will bring.

Soldier's account: a soldier from Gateshead wrote:

“One [German soldier] has given me his address to write to him after the war. They were quite a decent lot of fellows I can tell you. I know this seems an unbelievable story but it is a fact. I am sure if it was left to the men there would be no war.”

Carol 4

Reading 3: Luke 1: 26–35; 38 The angel Gabriel visits Mary

Soldier's account: 19 year-old Arthur Pelham-Burn, a lieutenant in the 6th Gordons who was planning to study to become a church minister after the war, took part in a joint service on Christmas Eve, and wrote home that:



“The mass burial of the dead was ‘awful, too awful to describe so I won’t attempt it,’ but the joint burial service was ‘most wonderful. Chaplain Adams arranged the prayers and the twenty-third psalm etc and an interpreter wrote them out in German. They were read first by our Padre and then in German by a boy who was studying for the ministry. It was an extraordinary and most wonderful sight. The Germans formed up on one side, the English on the other, the officers standing in front, every head bared. Yes, I think it was a sight one will never see again.”

Prayers

Not all carol services include prayers, but for those that do there is a form of prayer given below. However, you might like to consider other ideas instead or alongside. For example, placing decorations on the tree representing prayers, lighting candles with prayers (perhaps in front of a nativity scene), or something like placing flowers (poppies?) in the barrels of symbolic rifles.

At the end of each section, it may be appropriate to use a brief response such as, **“Lord, in your mercy; Hear our prayer”**.

Jesus said: ‘Blessed are the peacemakers’. As we remember the Christmas Truces of 1914, let us ask God to bless all those who work to bring peace in our world and to give that gift of peace wherever it is lacking in the world. Let us pray for ourselves. Give us the imagination, the words and the gestures which can bring peace where there is none, even in our own families and school. We ask for making friends where there is conflict; for peace where there is fighting. We remember today especially [name situations of oppression or violence in the news at the moment ...]

We bring to mind all who work for peace and justice and take risks for peace. We ask God's blessing today especially on the work of Peacemakers working in places of danger. May they have good ideas, courage, and success in their efforts to help people understand one another and make a way together without fighting and killing.

If your school uses the Lord's prayer in collective worship, now might be a time to do so. You might consider tutoring some pupils or classes to say it in German or French:

English

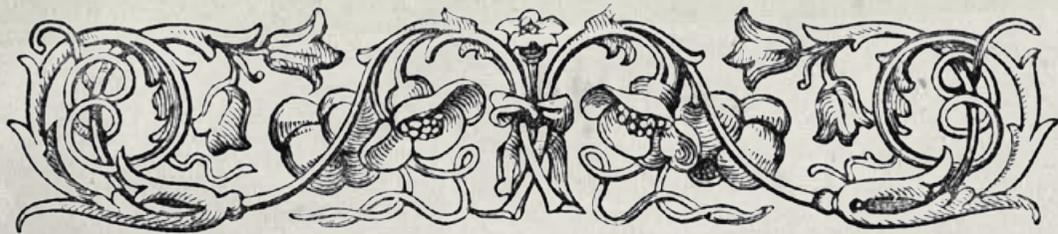
Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.

German

Vater unser im Himmel.
Geheiligt werde dein Name.
Dein Reich komme.
Dein Wille geschehe, wie im Himmel, so auf Erden.
Unser tägliches Brot gib uns heute.
Und vergib uns unsere Schuld,
wie auch wir vergeben unsern Schuldigern.
Und führe uns nicht in Versuchung,
sondern erlöse uns von dem Bösen.
Denn dein ist das Reich und die Kraft
und die Herrlichkeit in Ewigkeit.
Amen.

French

Notre Père, qui es aux cieux,
Que ton nom soit sanctifié,
Que ton règne vienne,
Que ta volonté soit faite sur la terre comme au ciel.
Donne-nous aujourd'hui notre pain de ce jour.
Pardonne-nous nos offenses
Comme nous pardonnons aussi à ceux qui nous ont offensés.
Et ne nous soumet pas à la tentation,
mais délivre-nous du mal,
car c'est à toi qu'appartiennent le règne,
la puissance et la gloire, aux siècles des siècles.
Amen.



"I never thought we would spend Christmas Day the way we did. On Christmas Eve, the Germans were in front of us started singing what appeared to be hymns. We were shouting out for encores - their trenches are only about 150 yards in front of us. They kept the singing up all night. On Christmas Day some of them started to shout across to us to come over for a drink. It started with one or two going over halfway and meeting the Germans between the two lines of trenches. Then it got that there was a big crowd of Germans and British all standing together shaking hands and wishing each other a merry Christmas. They were giving us cigars and cheroots in exchange for cigarettes, and some of them had bottles of whisky. They seemed to be a decent crowd, those in front of us. They were all fairly well dressed and the majority could speak broken English. Some of them could speak it as well as I can myself. They said they were not going to fire for three days. They kept their word too."

Prayer: Lead us, Father, to the Great Feast of your Kingdom and help us to share that joy with all who are in need. Hear these, our prayers, which we make through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Choir Anthem, motet or other item

Reading 4: Luke 2: 1,3-7 the story of the birth of Jesus

Soldier's account: Corporal Robert Renton, Seaforth Highlanders, in a letter to his parents:

Sermon/message

Not all school carol services include a talk. This can be omitted, or replaced with a presentation of truce-related student drama, art, poetry or prose created in lessons.



Carol 5

Reading 5: Luke 2: 8-16 The shepherds go to the manger

Poem: This could be very effective as a dramatized reading.

We Interrupt This War

*We interrupt this war to exchange Christmas gifts,
Sing carols, and play football in no-man's land.*

*We interrupt this war for doctors to heal,
teachers to teach, and students to learn.*

*We interrupt this war to marvel at sunsets,
listen to music, and to laugh.*

*We interrupt this war for poets to rhyme, sculptors to
chisel, and writers to paint pictures with words.*

*We interrupt this war to plant tomatoes, mow
the grass, and to smell the roses.*

*We interrupt this war to feed the hungry, build
new schools, and to stamp out ignorance.*

*We interrupt this war to clean up the air, save
the whales and to find a cure for cancer.*

*We interrupt this war to wash the dishes,
tickle babies and for world peace.*

*We interrupt this war for PTA meetings, band
practice, and high school graduations.*

*We interrupt this war for Girl Guide cookies,
church bake sales, and the Para-Olympics.*

*We interrupt this war for Legoland, the
World Cup and the Great North Run.*

*We interrupt this war for bonfire toffee,
Christmas crackers, and Bank Holiday barbecues.*

*We interrupt this war for office parties,
Advent Calendars, and silly Santa hats.*

*We interrupt this war to bring sons,
daughters, sisters and brothers home.*

*We interrupt this war to decorate the tree,
and welcome the babe in the manger.*

*We interrupt this war to hear a message from
Our Sponsor: THOU SHALT NOT KILL.*

Based on a poem by Cappy Hall Rearick (2001) modified to fit with the context

Soldier's account: Sergeant George Ashurst, 2nd Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers, wrote:

*Eventually, we got orders to come back down into the trench, 'Get back in your
trenches, every man!' The order came round by word of mouth down each trench.
Some people took no notice.*

*Anyway, the generals behind must have seen it and got a bit suspicious, so they gave
orders for a battery of guns behind us to open fire and a machine-gun to open out,
and officers to fire their revolvers at the Jerries. That started the war again.*

Soldier's account: Lance-Corporal George Dyce, who participated in the truces:

*[The Germans] don't want to fight any more than we do; they are as fed up of this
game as we are fit to be. They told us that they would not shoot if we did not, so we
have had a holiday for the last two days we were in the trenches... I thought peace
was proclaimed, but no such luck.*

Reading 6: Matthew 2: 1-12 The wise men are led to Jesus.

Blessing and dismissal

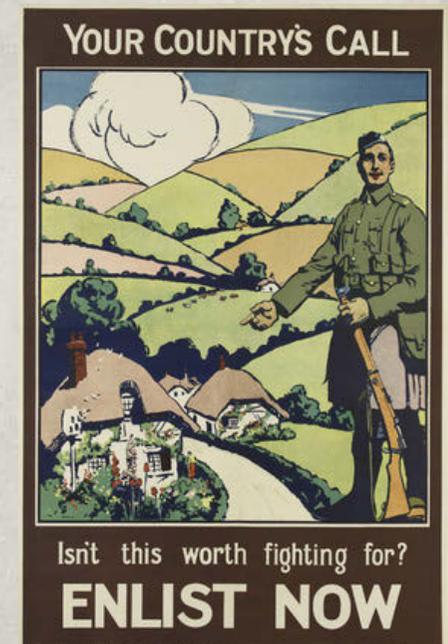
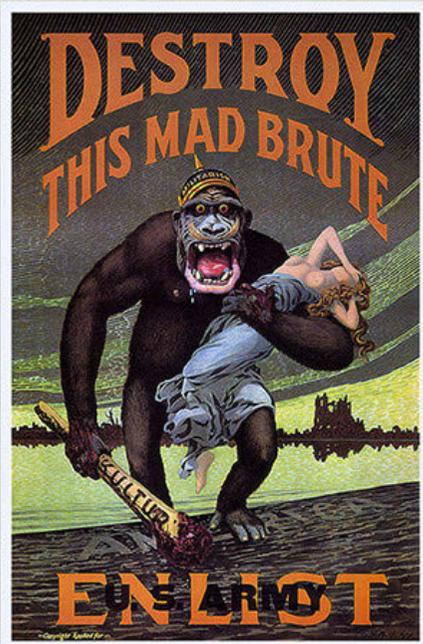
Carol 6

Recessional: the flags could be taken out if they were brought
in at the start.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - IMAGES

These are propaganda posters produced to encourage young men to join the British army.



Artistic and real images of British and German soldiers fraternising at Christmas 1914.



APPENDIX 2 - EYEWITNESS TESTIMONIES

Sergeant George Ashurst, 2nd Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers

There was still 200 yards between us and the Germans. We did not intermingle until some Jerries came to their wire waving a newspaper. 'What's that lads?' 'Are you going for it?' 'I'm not going for it!' Anyway a corporal in our company went for it. Well, he got halfway and he stopped. I don't know if he'd changed his mind or not, but the lads shouted 'Go on' Get that paper!' He went right to the wire and the Germans shook hands with him and wished him a merry Christmas and gave him the paper.

He came back with it but we couldn't read a word of it so it had to go to an officer. And there were still fellows walking about on top of our trench at 5 o'clock, at teatime, and not a shot had been fired, although the armistice had officially finished at 1 o'clock. And we could see Jerries knocking about all over the place. It was so pleasant to get out of that trench, from between those two clay walls, and just walk and run about. It was heaven. And to kick this sandbag about, but we did not play with the Germans. Well we didn't, but I believe quite a lot did up and down the place. Eventually, we got orders to come back down into the trench, 'Get back in your trenches, every man!' The order came round by word of mouth down each trench. Some people took no damn notice.

Anyway, the generals behind must have seen it and got a bit suspicious, so they gave orders for a battery of guns behind us to open fire and a machine-gun to open out, and officers to fire their revolvers at the Jerries. That started the war again. We were cursing the generals to hell. You want to get up here in this mud. Never mind you giving orders in your big chateaux and driving about in your big cars. We hated the sight of bloody generals, we always did. We didn't hate them so much before this, but we never liked them after that.

Then we had newspapers coming here from England accusing us of fraternising with the Germans: parsons accusing us of fraternising with the Germans when there had been an armistice on Christmas Day. I wrote back home and told my family off. I said we could do with that parson and the fellows that are writing in the newspapers here, I

said. We want them here in front of us instead of Jerry so we could shoot them down for passing remarks like that while nice and safe in England.

(Source: Imperial War Museum Sound Archives, recorded by Max Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of the Great War*. London: Ebury, 2002)

Private Frank Sumter, London Rifle Brigade.

After the 19th December attack, we were back in the same trenches when Christmas Day came along. It was a terrible winter, everything was covered in snow, everything was white. The devastated landscape looked terrible in its true colours -clay and mud and broken brick- but when it was covered in snow it was beautiful. Then we heard the Germans singing 'Silent night, Holy night', and they put up a notice saying 'Merry Christmas', and so we put one up too.

While they were singing our boys said, 'Let's join in,' so we joined in and when we started singing, they stopped. And when we stopped, they started again. So we were easing the way. Then one German took a chance and jumped up on top of the trench and shouted out, 'Happy Christmas, Tommy!' So of course our boys said, 'If he can do it, we can do it,' and we all jumped up. A sergeant-major shouted 'Get down!' But we said, 'Shut up Sergeant, it's Christmas time!' And we all went forward to the barbed wire.

We could barely reach through the wire, because the barbed wire was not just one fence, it was two or three fences together, with a wire in between. And so we just shook hands and I had the experience of talking to one German who said to me, 'Do you know where the Essex Road in London is?' I replied, 'Yes, my uncles had a shoe repairing shop there.' He said, 'That's funny. There's a barber shop on the other side where I used to work.'

They could all speak very good English because before the war, Britain was invaded by Germans. Every pork butcher was German, every barber's shop was German, and they were all over here getting the low-down on the country. It's ironic when you think about it, that he must have shaved my uncle at times and yet my bullet might have found him and his bullet might have found me.

The Officers gave the order 'No fraternisation' and then they turned their backs on us. But they didn't try to stop it because they know they couldn't. We never said a word about the war to the Germans. We spoke about our families, about how old we were, how long we thought it would last and things like that. I was young and I wasn't that interested, so I stood there for about half an hour then I came back. But most of the boys stayed there the whole day and only came back in the evening. There were no shots fired and some people enjoyed the curiosity of walking about in no man's land. It was good to walk around. As a sign of their friendliness the Germans put up a sign saying 'Gott mit uns' which means 'God is with us' and so we put a sign in English saying 'We got mittens too'. I don't know if they enjoyed that joke.

(Source: Imperial War Museum Sound Archives, recorded by Max Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of the Great War*. London: Ebury, 2002)

Lieutenant John Wedderburn-Maxwell, Royal Field Artillery

There was a party, a couple of hundred yards away, of our troops and the Germans all fraternising. And so I said I was going to go and look at this. And I told the infantry to keep an eye on me, in case anybody tried any rough business, so they'd know what was happening, and I went up and met a small party who said, 'Come along into our trenches and have a look at us.' I said, 'No, I'm quite near enough as it is.' And we laughed at each other, and I gave them some English tobacco, and they gave me some German - I forget what it was - and we walked about for about half an hour in no man's land.

And then we shook hands wished each other luck and one fellow said, 'Will you send this off to my girlfriend in Manchester?' So I took his letter, and franked it, and sent it off to the girlfriend when I got back. And then after that I came back, and at midnight we were ordered into action because there was a strong rumour from a German deserter that there was going to be an attack.

(Source: Imperial War Museum Sound Archives, recorded by Max Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of the Great War*. London: Ebury, 2002)

Rifleman Henry Williamson, London Rifle Brigade.

That evening the Germans sent over a note saying that their Staff was visiting their trenches that night, so the truce must end and they would have to fire their machine-

guns. They would fire them high but could we in any case keep under cover in case regrettable accidents occurred. At 11 o'clock precisely they opened up. We saw flashes of the machine-guns going high and it was passed back to Intelligence that the Germans were using Berlin time in the trenches, which is one hour before British time. I suppose that was an important item for Intelligence, and that was the end of our truce. We did not fire, and they did not fire for a day or two, but then the Prussians came in and relieved the Saxons and then we began to lose more men from sniping and we went out after that.

(Source: Imperial War Museum Sound Archives, recorded by Max Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of the Great War*. London: Ebury, 2002)

The Newcastle Daily Journal, Thursday December 31st 1914:

Combatants Shake Hands. Christmas Day at the Front. A Gateshead soldier, who is serving at the Front, writing to a friend at Low Fell, gives an interesting description of the way in which Christmas Day was spent by some of the troops. He states: "On Christmas Eve the Germans lit up their trenches and started calling across, A Merry Christmas. We responded in the same vein, and then we started singing songs to one other another, carols etc. we then sang the Austrian National Anthem and they responded with God Save the King, after which we cheered lustily. By this time all shooting had stopped. We walked about the parapets of the trenches and called out to one another. Then some of our chaps walked out and met some of the Germans half-way, wished each other a Merry Christmas, shook hands and said they would not fight today. We had Communion this (Christmas) morning in a farm about half a mile away. We set off before daylight to be on the safe side. It was very strange. The farm had been bombarded and consequently it was in a bad way. Where we held the service half the roof was off. I don't suppose I shall ever go to such another service - it was so reverent and the surroundings so rough. When we came back we decided to come along the top, although we would be in full view of the enemy. We got back safely, and then some of our chaps started kicking a football about outside the trenches. Then the Germans showed themselves and, to cut a long story short, it finished with us meeting halfway, shaking hands and exchanging fags and souvenirs, and parting the best of friends. One has given me his address to write to him after the war. They were quite a decent lot of fellows, I can tell you. I know this seems an unbelievable story but it is a fact. I am sure if it were left to the men there would be no war."

APPENDIX 3 - FURTHER RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

Websites

Christmas Truce 1914 - Operation Plum Pudding

Letters home from troops who witnessed the truces, organised via region.

<http://www.christmastruce.co.uk/about.html>

'Balls to War – When a World War Stopped to Play Football'

Short film with lots of extracts from Christmas Truce participants, and both original photographs and subsequent artistic impressions.

http://noglory.org/index.php/articles/182-how-true-is-the-1914-christmas-truce-when-enemies-played-football-instead-of-killing-each-other#.U3lyl_IdWtM

Football Remembers: the 1914 Christmas Truce

Produced by British Council, Premier League and the Football Association, encouraging teachers primarily to 'think about the courage of the soldiers in the trenches' as they teach the truces through the lens of football. Some valuable resources and imaginative ideas, however it is weak on the causes of the conflict and thus weak on lessons that can be learnt from the war and the truces.

<http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/classroom-resources/football-remembers>

World War 1 – Playing the Game

Resources based on illustrated children's book War Game by Michael Foreman.

<http://www.ww1playingthegame.org.uk/>

Football and Peace

National Children's Football Alliance, using the 1914 truces to celebrate peace through sport.

<http://www.childrensfootballalliance.com/international/football-peace/>

No Glory in War

Material opposing the glorification of the First World War, some of which is useful for

teaching about the truces.

<http://noglory.org>

First World War Centenary Partnership

A network of cultural and educational programmes/resources led by Imperial War Museums.

<http://www.1914.org>

History books

These texts are not recommended for pupils, but as background reading for teachers if desired. The book by Brown and Seaton is regarded as the most authoritative scholarly text on the truces; Ashworth shows how truces, fraternization and tacit agreements characterised much combatant behaviour throughout the war, rather than being an exception. Arthur's book is mostly excerpts from diaries and letters compiled by date and incident. Weintraub's is a readable summary, and makes good stocking-filler material for the non-historian, but purists may find the mix of history and fiction annoying.

Arthur, Max. *Forgotten Voices of the Great War*. London: Ebury, 2002.

Ashworth, Tony. *Trench Warfare 1914-1918: The Live and Let Live System*. Pan Grand Strategy. London: Macmillan, 1980.

Brown, Malcolm, and Shirley Seaton. *Christmas Truce: The Western Front, December 1914*. Pan Grand Strategy. London: Macmillan, 1999.

Weintraub, Stanley. *Silent Night: The Story of the World War I Christmas Truce*. New York: Free Press, 2001.

Books to use with younger children

Carol Ann Duffy *The Christmas Truce*, 2011. Moving poem, accurately indicating many elements of the truce and including German phrases from carols, prayers etc that featured in the truces. Finely illustrated.

Michael Foreman, *The War Game: From Village Green to No-Man's Land*, 2006 (re-issue due 2014). TLS described this as 'a masterpiece.' Some editions are beautifully illustrated. See above for accompanying website.

APPENDIX 4: MULTI-LINGUAL RESOURCES



Silent Night

*Silent night, Holy night,
All is calm, all is bright;
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.*

*Silent night, Holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight:
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia:
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born!*

*Silent night, Holy night,
Son of God love's pure light;
Radiance beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.*

Stille Nacht

*Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Alles schläft; einsam wacht
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!*

*Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Hirten erst kundgemacht
Durch der Engel Halleluja,
Tönt es laut von fern und nah:
Christ, der Retter ist da!
Christ, der Retter ist da!*

*Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Gottes Sohn, o wie lacht
Lieb' aus deinem göttlichen Mund,
Da uns schlägt die rettende Stund'.
Christ, in deiner Geburt!
Christ, in deiner Geburt!*

Words: Joseph Mohr, 1816

Guide to Pronunciation

*Shtiller nakht haye-ligger nakht
Ahl-erz shlefft, ayenzam vakht
Noor das trouter hokhayeligger Par
Holder k-nahber im lokiggen har
Shlaff in him-lisher roo
Shlaff in him-lisher roo*

*Shtiller nakht haye-ligger nakht
Heer-tun airst koond-gemakht
Doorkh dair engle Halleluyah
Ternt ez lout fon fairn oond nah
Khris-t dair retter ist da
Khris-t dair retter ist da*

*Shtiller nakht haye-ligger nakht
Gott-us zone, o vee lakht
Leeb ous die-num gertlikhen moond, /
dah oons shlekt dee rettender shtoont.
Khris-t in diner geboort
Khris-t in diner geboort*



The Lord's Prayer

English

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.

German

Vater unser im Himmel.
Geheiligt werde dein Name.
Dein Reich komme.
Dein Wille geschehe, wie im Himmel, so auf Erden.
Unser tägliches Brot gib uns heute.
Und vergib uns unsere Schuld,
wie auch wir vergeben unsern Schuldigern.
Und führe uns nicht in Versuchung,
sondern erlöse uns von dem Bösen.
Denn dein ist das Reich und die Kraft
und die Herrlichkeit in Ewigkeit.
Amen.

French

Notre Père, qui es aux cieux,
Que ton nom soit sanctifié,
Que ton règne vienne,
Que ta volonté soit faite sur la terre comme au ciel.
Donne-nous aujourd'hui notre pain de ce jour.
Pardonne-nous nos offenses
Comme nous pardonnons aussi à ceux qui nous ont offensés.
Et ne nous soumetts pas à la tentation,
mais délivre-nous du mal,
car c'est à toi qu'appartiennent le règne,
la puissance et la gloire, aux siècles des siècles.
Amen.

Produced in 2014 by Northumbria and Newcastle Universities Martin Luther King Peace Committee, Newcastle.

Version 1.4



Content developed in collaboration with Northumbria University, whose input is greatly appreciated.

Artwork designed by Roots & Wings



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We hope that you have found these ideas and resources useful. If you have used them in any way we would love to hear, so please let us know; likewise, please contact us with questions or comments. We are also sure that many teachers will modify these resources for their own ends, or be inspired to produce brand new lesson plans. If you have improved our resources or created new ones and think that others might benefit from your ideas, please do show us what you have done and we will endeavour to add your ideas to future iterations of this pack or place them on our website – of course giving full acknowledgement to you. If you would like to be put on a mailing list to be informed of additions to these resources, please email Nick Megoran: nick.megoran@ncl.ac.uk