

## December 31

**Worship Theme:** *Jesus is worthy of our worship.*

*Children will give Jesus the gift of their worship because he deserves it.*

**Key Verse:** *"Arise, Jerusalem! Let your light shine for all to see.*

*For the glory of the Lord rises to shine on you."* Isaiah 60:1



### BEFORE:

- Arrive at church and have table/gym setup by 9:15 am.
- Review the lesson & activities. They will also be available online for teachers to review before Sunday.
- At 9:50 am, send basketball/kickball players to auditorium.

### DURING:

#### Youth Helper:

Explain "Show 5 rules" Reflection Bell, and dismissal procedure.  
Count kids and leaders, write on sticky note, put on table.

**Lead Teacher:** Go through LARGE GROUP lesson & main point

**Lesson** Let's Praise God script

#### Lesson

"Wise Men Worship Jesus"  
"Wise Men Coloring sheet & decoding"

### Reflection Bell

#### Youth Helper

Offering  
Key memory verse  
\*\*NEW\*\* Prayer ball (if you have time)

### AFTER:

Clean-up, make any notes in notebook on behavior issues, activity challenges, etc.

# Wise Men Find Jesus

Matthew 2:1-12

The wise men, or Magi, were probably religious leaders from Persia or Babylon. They were either astronomers or some type of astrologers. They apparently were not followers of the Jewish religion and had little or no knowledge of God. However, God somehow made it clear enough to them that a special king was being born that they were willing to travel hundreds of miles over dangerous desert wilderness to investigate and worship the new king. All nations had their own objects of worship and usually thought their own gods were better than others' gods. So the Magi's journey to worship Jesus in a lowly colony of the Roman Empire had great significance. Jesus is worthy of the worship of the entire world, no matter what others' beliefs may be!

Some suggest that the "star" was actually the result of the alignment of planets that happened sometime between 7 and 4 B.C. Others say it was a special, localized phenomenon provided by God specifically to guide the Magi to Jesus. Whatever it was, its timing and movement were used by God to let people outside Israel know about the miraculous birth of Jesus. And no doubt, God intended that the Jews realize from this event that salvation in Jesus was not just for them but for the rest of the world as well.

Herod's suspicious response was typical of a paranoid man who had put his own wife and all his sons to death. He not only intended to kill the baby Jesus, but also schemed to use the innocent Magi to lead him to the right baby.

When the Magi arrived in Bethlehem, they found Jesus in a house. Though Christmas pageants everywhere depict

the Magi visiting the stable on the night of Jesus' birth, that time frame is quite likely wrong. It appears that the Magi arrived some months after the birth, and by that time Mary and Joseph were living in a house. Most likely the star appeared to the Magi at the time of the birth, and the months that elapsed before their visit were due to preparation time and for the long, hard journey.

The three gifts indicate the wealth and prominence of the visitors, since the gifts were costly, but the fact that there were three gifts doesn't mean there were three Magi. There may have been two or twenty Magi, and they weren't kings as the song says—though they may have been representing a king.

## **Devotion for Leaders**

Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He is worthy of our worship and praise. And he's our best friend. How cool is that?

**Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** The Magi recognized the importance of Jesus when they saw the signs in the sky. Worshipping this young king was so important that they traveled many miles and many days to find him. How important is worshipping Jesus to you? You don't need to travel anywhere; you can worship him anywhere and anytime. Make worship a part of every day this week.

## *Why We Worship for Leaders*

The Magi traveled a great distance to give their gifts and bow down in worship to the Christ child. The majesty and wonder of the holy Child was communicated to them through the heavens. We who have received the incomparable gift of that Savior's life and love should be no less diligent in presenting our gifts and our worship to the One who is worthy.

Worship is a natural response to Christ's majesty and holiness. When we understand who he is and what he has done for us, we, like the Magi, will fall to our knees, present our gifts, and—from the depths of our beings—worship the Son of God.

# Large Group

When everyone has arrived, welcome the children warmly.

- **What have you come to children's church for today?** (To worship Jesus; to learn about God; to celebrate Jesus.)

Let's stand and sing a song about why we come to church.

Sing "Faith" (Hebrews 11:1).

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

**Great singing! We've come here today because of Jesus. When we sing and celebrate Jesus' love, hope, and truth, we are worshipping him. When we read in the Bible about Jesus and how much he loves us and all that he's done for us, we want to worship him. When we worship Jesus, he is right here with us, giving us his love.**

**Pray** ➤

**Let's worship Jesus with a prayer. Jesus, we praise and worship you because you are God. You came to us as a person, and you showed us how very much God loves us. You are the light of God's love to a dark and lonely world. We praise you and thank you for bringing that light to us. Amen**

## Wise Men Worship Jesus

Gather the children in a circle. As you tell the story, place the pieces on the floor in the center of the circle.

**Say** As we hear the story today, we're going to put together a puzzle. It'll be a clue to something that happens in the story. Listen carefully and see if you can guess what the puzzle will show.

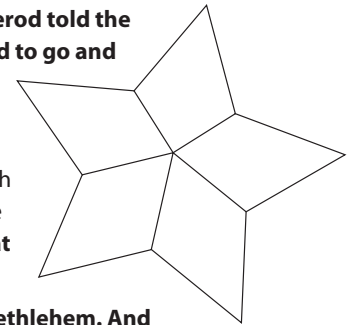
After Jesus was born, wise men came from far away to Jerusalem, where King Herod lived. They asked the king where they could find the new baby who was born to be the king of his people. The wise men told the king about something special they had seen. It had led them to Jerusalem. The wise men told the king that they had come to Jerusalem to worship the new king. Place the first piece of the puzzle on the floor. Can you guess what the puzzle is yet?

Well, that made the king angry! King Herod was afraid that he couldn't be king if there was a new king. So King Herod started plotting. Place the second piece of the puzzle on the floor. Can you guess what the puzzle is yet?

First King Herod asked his helpers to find out where God said the special baby would be born. His helpers told him the new king was born in Bethlehem. So King Herod told the wise men to look for the new king in Bethlehem. Place the third piece of the puzzle on the floor. Can you guess what the puzzle is yet?

Then King Herod told the wise men to come back to Jerusalem and let him know where he could find the new king. Now here comes

the sneaky part. King Herod told the wise men that he wanted to go and worship the new king, too. But King Herod really wanted to kill the new king. Place the fourth piece of the puzzle on the floor. Can you guess what the puzzle is yet?



The wise men went to Bethlehem. And the special thing they had seen earlier led them to Jesus. Place the last piece of the star on the floor to complete the puzzle. What was the special thing that led the wise men to Jesus?

That's right! God created a special star that shone in the sky and led the wise men to Jesus!

The wise men were so happy! The wise men got down on their knees and worshipped and praised Jesus. They opened the presents they had brought to Jesus—gold, incense, and spices.

God wanted to protect Jesus from the bad and sneaky King Herod. So that night God warned the wise men. God told the wise men that they shouldn't go back and tell King Herod where to find Jesus. So the wise men traveled back to their country a different way.

And everything turned out right. The wise men were happy because they had worshipped Jesus, the new King. Joseph and Mary were happy because the wise men had come to see Jesus. And the wise men protected Jesus by not telling King Herod where to find him.