

Jesus seeks safety



Verse:

Luke 2:1-7; Matthew 2:1-15
Wise men come to visit Jesus



Aim:

To see migration in Jesus' own story



In today's session we will think about the characters in the Christmas story who travelled to new places.

Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem as they need to take part in the census. The wise men travel to meet Jesus and bring him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. In this session we will think about what gifts we can bring to Jesus.

Each child will need:

- Memory verse wristband
- Coloured or patterned paper 20cm by 20cm, a glue stick, a small slip of paper and a pen
- **A Covenant Sunday C&Y card** (optional)
- *Explore it ideas* handout

You will need:

- Memory verse poster
- A flip chart and pens
- To watch **DIY: Mini box** by Ventuni Art (1:10)
- You may wish to provide an opportunity for children to complete a **Covenant Sunday C&Y card** (optional)



Start it

Ask:

- What is the favourite gift you have ever received for Christmas? Why is it your favourite?
- What is the favourite gift that you have given to someone else for Christmas? Why is it your favourite?

- Are there any gifts you asked for this year that you have already stopped playing with or using? Why is that?
- If you could ask for any gift today, then what would it be? Explain why.

Say:

In our story today the wise men brought precious gifts to the baby Jesus. Rather than bringing cuddly toys or a rattle, they brought gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Ask:

Did any of you put gold, frankincense or myrrh on your Christmas list? If not, why not?

Say:

We'll find out more about the gifts from the wise men later on.



Sing it

Say:

Our song for today is a fun version of the Christmas carol 'We three kings' from the animated film *The Star*.

Song

'We three kings' by Kirk Franklin, Sony Pictures Animation
(3:48)



Tell it

Say:

The sixth day of January is also known as Three Kings' Day. Some churches hold a feast or festival called Epiphany, celebrating the wise men visiting Jesus. Before we think about the journey of the wise men, let's focus on Mary and Joseph and all the travelling they had to do prior to Jesus' birth.

Read:

'At that time, Augustus Caesar sent an order to all people in the countries that were under Roman rule. The order said that they must list their names in a register. This was the first registration taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone went to their own towns to be registered.'

'So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee. He went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea. This town was known as the town of David. Joseph went there because he was from the family of David. Joseph registered with Mary because she was engaged to marry him.'

(Mary was now pregnant.) While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have the baby. She gave birth to her first son. There were no rooms left in the inn. So she wrapped the baby with cloths and laid him in a box where animals are fed.'

(Luke 2:1-7 ICB)

Say:

The journey to Bethlehem is thought to have taken at least a week. Although the Bible doesn't mention how they travelled there, it would have taken a lot longer than it would today.

Ask:

How do you think Mary and Joseph felt as they travelled all that way to Bethlehem?

Say:

At a time when they probably wanted to stay at home and prepare for the birth of their baby, Mary and Joseph had to go to a new place. As Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the wise men began their journey to meet the newborn king.

Read:

'Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the baby who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east. We came to worship him."

'When King Herod heard about this new king of the Jews, he was troubled. And all the people in Jerusalem were worried too. Herod called a meeting of all the leading priests and teachers of the law. He asked them where the Christ would be born. They answered, "In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet wrote about this in the Scriptures:

**'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are important among the rulers of Judah.
A ruler will come from you.
He will be like a shepherd for my people, the Israelites.'**

'Then Herod had a secret meeting with the wise men from the east. He learned from them the exact time they first saw the star. Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. He said to them, "Go and look carefully to find the child. When you find him, come and tell me. Then I can go and worship him too."

'The wise men heard the king and then left. They saw the same star they had seen in the east. It went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was.'

(Matthew 2:1-9 ICB)

Ask:

- What do you think it was like for the wise men to travel all that way to find Jesus?
- Would you have been willing to join their group with only a star to guide the way? If not, why not?

Read:

‘When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. They went to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshipped the child. They opened the gifts they had brought for him. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.’

(Matthew 2:10-11 /CB)

Say:

The wise men travelled many miles to meet Jesus and brought him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

- The gold represented Jesus as the newborn king
- The frankincense released a fragrance that was used for worship in the Temple
- The myrrh was used to heal wounds and was offered to Jesus again when he died on the cross

Say:

All of the gifts told a story of the importance of this baby boy. Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem and stayed there for a while. The wise men travelled a long way to a new land to meet Jesus.

Ask:

Do you know anyone who has travelled to a new city or country to live? Where did they go?

Say:

People often move to new cities or countries to learn more about them, to start a new job, or to experience living in a new place. This is called migration.

Say:

Throughout our sessions this month we will be thinking about migration, people moving to live in new countries. Many people who migrate bring their own customs and traditions to their new homes. Epiphany is celebrated differently across the world. Think about this question as you watch the clip.

Ask:

If you could travel to one of the locations mentioned in the clip, where would it be and how would you celebrate Epiphany there?

Video

Epiphany around the world for kids! by Twinkl! South Africa (2:30)

Action it

Say:

The wise men brought precious gifts to Jesus to celebrate his birth. We may not be able to give gold, frankincense and myrrh, but there are lots of things we have to offer Jesus as a gift.

Ask:

What kind of gifts can we bring to Jesus?

As the children to suggest ideas, and write them up on a flip chart so that they can refer to them later.

Covenant Sunday

Say:

7 January this year is a special day for The Salvation Army; it is called Covenant Sunday. A covenant is a relationship between God and us in which we make binding promises to each other. Covenant Sunday is a day for renewing promises, committing ourselves to God, and remembering his covenant with us. Just like the wise men, we can bring gifts to Jesus throughout this new year.

You may wish to provide an opportunity for children to complete their **Covenant Sunday 2024 C&Y card**.

Craft

Show the children how to make a mini gift box to take home with them. You may wish to share the video with them.

Video

DIY: Mini box by Ventuni Art (1:10)

After the boxes are made, give each child a small slip of paper to write down one gift they can give to Jesus as they start the new year. The paper can be placed inside the box and *Explore it ideas* will build on this.

When the children have completed their box, ask them to share with the group the gift they are giving to Jesus.



Pray it

Say:

Our memory verse for this month reminds us that no matter where we come from, or who we are, we are all one in Jesus. Let's read it together.

Display the memory verse and read it through together. Give each child a memory verse wristband to take home. Encourage the children to colour the hands in a variety of colours.

Memory verse

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

(Galatians 3:28 *ESV*)

Ask:

- What does our memory verse teach us about the different people we meet every day?
- How does Jesus see them?
- How should we treat people who have come to live in our country from another place?

Introduce the song 'Neither Jew nor Greek'. It will be used as part of the prayer time for each session.

Video

'Neither Jew nor Greek' Galatians 3:28 by I Believe (1:05)

After the song has finished, pray for those who have come to our country from another place, and ask God for guidance to treat people with love and respect. In future weeks the prayer focus will be more specific for those living as refugees in the UK and abroad, but for today the aim is to encourage the children to think about difference and how we are all one in Christ.

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore it ideas* for children and families.



Explore it is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)

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Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



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Aim:

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Pray

Take a moment each day to read the slip of paper in your gift box. Ask Jesus to help you use your gifts for him. Jot down moments where you have used your gift for Jesus.



Share

Show the people at home the gift box that you made and share with them the gift you offered to give Jesus this year.

What opportunities are there for you to use your gift at home?

Encourage others at home to think of a gift that they could offer to Jesus. If you would like to show them how to make their own mini giftbox, then watch the video below.

DIY: Mini box by Ventuni Art



Song for the week

'We three kings' by Kirk Franklin, *The Star*
Sony Pictures Animation



Memory verse

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

(Galatians 3:28 *ESV*)

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