A Sense of Advent

Hunting for Stars:

Sight

SCAN ME!

THE SALVATION ARMY

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Devotional: Interrupted Lives

Scripture:
'After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."'
(Matthew 2:1-2)

The Magi were given no pre-warning of when the birth of Jesus would take place; but with sound knowledge of Hebrew Scriptures and ancient prophecies, they awaited with expectation, ready to be interrupted. While out living their lives they noticed 'his star when it rose' and immediately sought to find their Saviour. The wise men were likely astrologers – experts in the stars, spending their time gazing into the night sky. We can only imagine their glee upon discovering a star of divine significance, shaking up the ordinary of their stargazing.

They then set off on a long journey, poised ready to worship. They understood the meaning and significance of this star and exactly who it would lead them to. Arriving with precious gifts, they worshipped and honoured the baby Jesus.

There's a lot that we can learn from the Magi. If our lives aren't interruptible for the worship of our Saviour, there's some helpful reflection to be had. *Do we see the true worth in the one desperate for our attention? Are we too busy with the practicalities of being a Christian to sit at the feet of the one it's all for? Do we recognise the nudges and whispers of a God who is always talking?*

We are all guilty at times of spending more time serving Jesus than being with him. Enjoy this space and time figuratively gazing at the stars which lead you to his presence. Reconnect with the beauty of 'being'. Like the wise men, allow your routine and plans to be interrupted by the divine and see how Jesus replenishes you as you worship him. In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus reassures us, 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.' Rest and retreat into the arms of Jesus. Let your worship lead you to a life interrupted by the divine.

As you sit at the prayer station, take a breath and interact with what you find surrounding you, allowing the words of this devotional to wash over you.

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Reflection: Follow the Star

What is your modern-day star, the thing that leads you to Jesus' presence?

It may be reading the Bible, listening to worship music, prayer, gazing upon an image or other visual aid such as a candle. Whatever your 'star' is, follow it! Chase what makes you chase Jesus.

Below are some suggestions to guide you into your own worship, for those who would find this helpful.

Prayer: Jesus,

Thank you for your constant presence and your promise of rest we can find there. I come ready to worship you – I give you my time and attention. Interrupt my day with your powerful presence. I make space, Lord, to be with you, to hear from you. Do with this time as you wish and guide me by your Spirit to know you more deeply.

Amen.

Worship: Spend some time telling Jesus what you're thankful for – shower him with your adoration and praise for who he is and all he's done.

Listen: Make space to hear from God. Prayer is a conversation with God, yet we so often just speak at him with little expectation of what he would like to say back to us. In this time of stillness you may just feel his presence, his peace. God may bring a memory or thought to your mind. He may stir an emotion or place a person on your heart to pray for and intercede for. It may help to keep your eyes closed or focus on an object to remove distraction as you create space to be with Jesus.

Scripture: You may want to meditate on the Scripture verses below to inspire time of prayer and worship with Jesus.

'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.' (Matthew 11:28-30)

'Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."' (John 8:12 *NLT*)

'Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honoured by every nation. I will be honoured throughout the world.' (Psalm 46:10 *NLT*)

'My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.' (John 10:27)

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Follow the Star!

Children's Prayer Resource

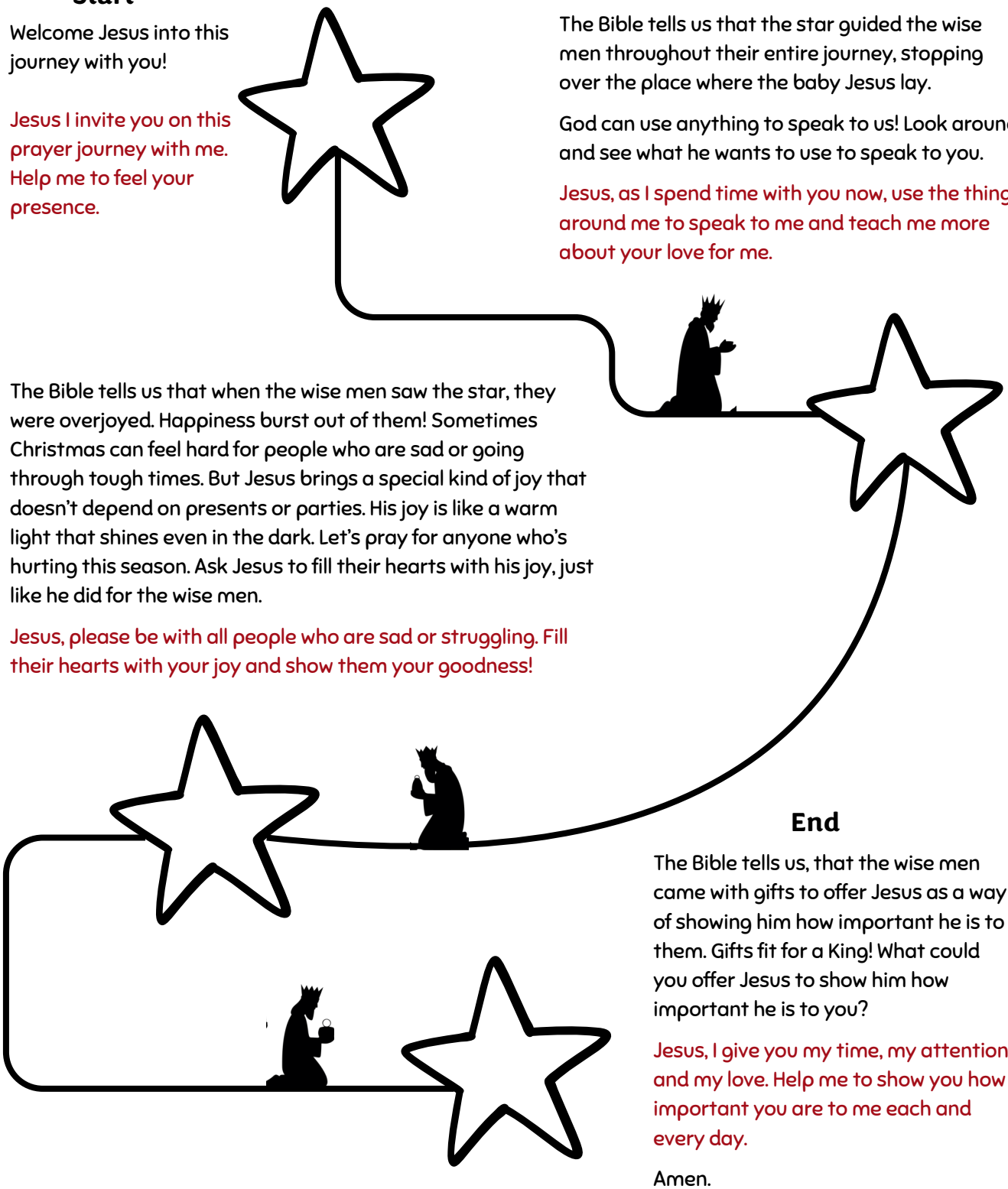
The wise men followed a star to find the baby Jesus. This star led them to God, to his presence. Today, we can access God without travelling thousands of miles! Through prayer.

Follow the star on this sheet, a star that helps you to talk to God, leading you to him just like the wise men in the Bible. Feel free to add your own prayers to the short prayers below. Colour in each star once you've prayed and follow the journey with your crayon.

Start

Welcome Jesus into this journey with you!

Jesus I invite you on this prayer journey with me. Help me to feel your presence.



The Bible tells us that the star guided the wise men throughout their entire journey, stopping over the place where the baby Jesus lay.

God can use anything to speak to us! Look around and see what he wants to use to speak to you.

Jesus, as I spend time with you now, use the things around me to speak to me and teach me more about your love for me.

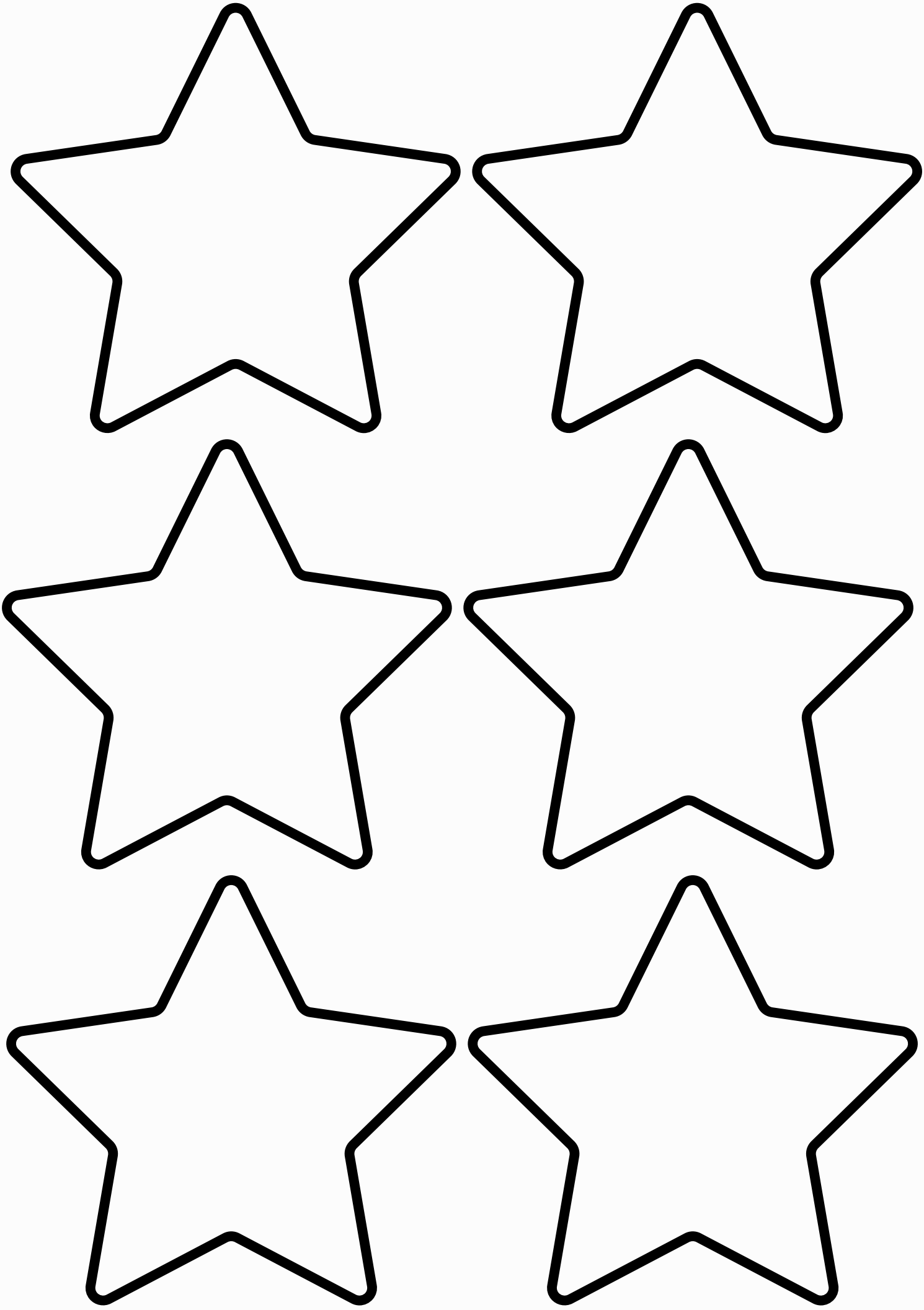
The Bible tells us that when the wise men saw the star, they were overjoyed. Happiness burst out of them! Sometimes Christmas can feel hard for people who are sad or going through tough times. But Jesus brings a special kind of joy that doesn't depend on presents or parties. His joy is like a warm light that shines even in the dark. Let's pray for anyone who's hurting this season. Ask Jesus to fill their hearts with his joy, just like he did for the wise men.

Jesus, please be with all people who are sad or struggling. Fill their hearts with your joy and show them your goodness!

End

The Bible tells us, that the wise men came with gifts to offer Jesus as a way of showing him how important he is to them. Gifts fit for a King! What could you offer Jesus to show him how important he is to you?

Jesus, I give you my time, my attention and my love. Help me to show you how important you are to me each and every day.

Amen.

What I'm Seeking: