

Epiphany- Matthew 2:1-12

THE POINT

Focus:

- God leads people to worship Jesus.
- God protects and guides Jesus and Jesus' family

Application:

- We worship Jesus.
- We recognize God's miraculous protection of Jesus and Jesus' family.

HEART CONNECTION (6-8 MINUTES)

MATERIALS:

- 3x5 card for each child
- crayon for each child (just 1-2, it's not a long time for elaborate drawing!)

Content:

Explain that sometimes when we see things, they cause us to think or exclaim, "Oh wow!", and we want to show them to someone else. Invite the children to do a 3-minute "Oh, Wow!" quick-draw on our 3x5 cards and then take a minute to share them with each other. You can either have them share with 2-3 neighbors or with the whole group, depending on how large your group is!

Transition to the story saying something like this:

When Jesus was born, God sent a star to guide some wise and powerful men from far away to worship him. Jesus was their "Oh, wow!" moment, and they brought beautiful gifts to Jesus that probably made Mary and Joseph thing "Oh, wow!", too.

When we read how God miraculously guides and protects the wise men, Jesus, and Jesus' family, we can worship with our own, "Oh, wow!" response!

STORY CONNECTION (7-10 MINUTES)

MATERIALS:

- 3 crowns (paper is fine)
- 3 "gifts" - either wrapped presents, special boxes, etc.- be creative!
- 4 Signs: "The East", "Bethlehem", "Herod's House", "to Egypt" taped in the room
- 1 cut-out star (or flashlight/spotlight)
- nametags
- baby doll (to be Jesus)

Instructions:

Ask for volunteers and assign parts- not all of the children need to act in the story, but feel free to make as many wise men as would be helpful to keep children engaged! You will need...

- Wise men (3+)
- Herod
- Mary
- Joseph

Have one person read the Scripture text aloud (either the lead teacher, assistant, or youth helper) and the other leader help direct the "play" of the story.

Have the children sit in a circle for the story This helps include children who might feel shy, and it helps each child feel equally engaged. It reassures children that they are seen and welcome in the community.

We don't know how many wise men there were who came to visit Jesus, and we don't know exactly what their role was. They probably weren't monarchs in the sense that we think of them, but leaders with wealth, education, power, and an awareness or interest in the spiritual realm. For this lesson, you can use child-friendly words like "powerful, leader, rich/wealthy" if the children ask questions about them. You can also introduce the idea that we sometimes say there were 3 of them because they gave 3 gifts, but there could have been more!

Matthew 2:1-12

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea. This happened while Herod was king of Judea. After Jesus' birth, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. 2 They asked, "Where is the child who has been born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose. Now we have come to worship him."

3 When King Herod heard about it, he was very upset. Everyone in Jerusalem was troubled too. 4 So Herod called together all the chief priests of the people. He also called the teachers of the law. He asked them where the Messiah was going to be born. 5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied. "This is what the prophet has written. He said,

6 "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are certainly not the least important among the towns of Judah.

A ruler will come out of you.

He will rule my people Israel like a shepherd.' " (Micah 5:2)

7 Then Herod secretly called for the Wise Men. He found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem. He said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report it to me. Then I can go and worship him too."

9 After the Wise Men had listened to the king, they went on their way. The star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them. It finally stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. 11 The Wise Men went to the house. There they saw the child with his mother Mary. They bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures. They gave him gold, frankincense and myrrh. 12 But God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they returned to their country on a different road.

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WONDER CONNECTION (3-5 MINUTES)

MATERIALS: None.

After acting out a story, some children might have trouble settling down and reflecting. Invite them to take a deep breath, close their eyes, and count to ten to calm down to reflect together. Children need tools to learn how to manage their energy and emotions; teaching them how to make a calm space can be a good gift!

I wonder what it was like for the wise men as they travelled a long time to see Jesus.

I wonder what the star looked like.

I wonder how Mary and Joseph felt when they saw these wise, powerful men come and see Jesus.

What do you wonder?

SPIRIT CONNECTION (7-10 MINUTES)

MATERIALS: Coloring supplies: paper, crayons, pencils, hard drawing surfaces (floor, clipboard, or a table).

Take a few minutes to talk quietly with the Lord while you draw, write, or just think inside your heard. Talk with God about the story today. This is a quiet time for you to spend with the Lord, not with your neighbor or anyone else.