

Use Week of: **Dec. 19/20/23**

Christmas • Session 3

Wise Men Visited Jesus

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 2

STORY POINT: The wise men worshiped Jesus as King.

Key Passage:

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Galatians 4:4-5 NIV

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.

Additional resources are available at *gospelproject.com.*

LEADER Bible Study

The wise men were magi. Their study of the stars led them to Judea to find and worship Jesus, the newborn King. Before they found Jesus, though, the wise men met King Herod. God had promised the Jewish people a new king—one who would save them from their enemies.

King Herod was not that king. Imagine how he felt when he heard about a new king in town.

The wise men asked him, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?" (Matt. 2:2) The wise men unintentionally challenged Herod's reign. Not only was Herod not a full Jew, he was not a descendant of King David. Herod was deeply disturbed by the news that this child had the birthright of being king.

As Herod's fury grew, he gathered his chief priests and scribes to determine where Jesus had been born. Then he lied to the wise men: "When you find him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him" (Matt. 2:8). What deceitfulness! The truth was, Herod did not want to worship Jesus at all; he wanted to kill Him!

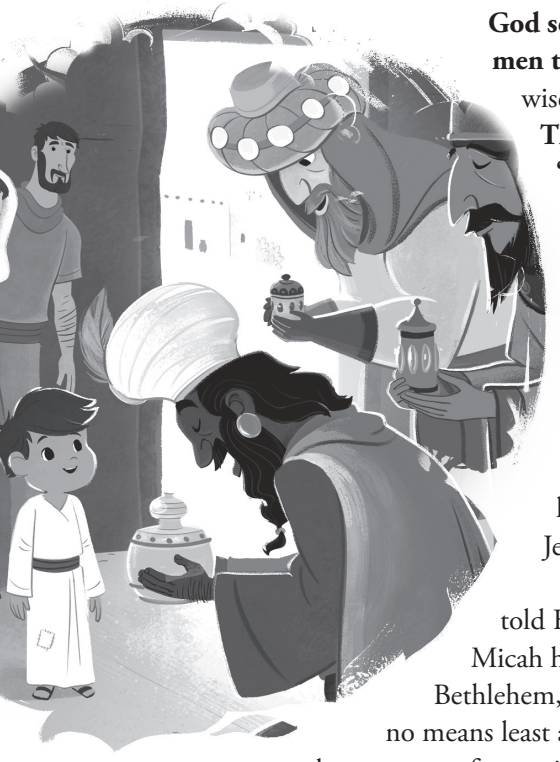
The wise men continued on their journey and found Jesus. Jesus may have been about two years old when the magi found Him and worshiped Him. The Bible does not say how many magi worshiped Jesus, although three are often depicted because of their three gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. God warned the wise men in a dream to avoid Herod, so they returned home by another route.

The wise men came to worship Jesus as King. Jesus is the King who will rule forever, as God promised to King David in 2 Samuel 7. Help the children you teach realize that Jesus is the true King who is worthy of all our worship.

Wise Men Visited Jesus

Matthew 2

Long ago, God promised to send a king to save His people from their enemies. The people waited a long time for their king, but the time had finally come. **Jesus was born in Bethlehem at the same time Herod was king.** Was Herod the king God promised? No! Herod was an evil king.



God sent a star to show the wise men that Jesus had been born. The wise men traveled to find Jesus. **They came to King Herod. "Where is the king of the Jews?" they asked. "We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."**

King Herod was very angry. A new king? Herod was king! He assembled all the chief priests and scribes. They looked at what the prophets had written to figure out where Jesus had been born.

The chief priests and scribes told King Herod what the prophet Micah had written: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah: because out of you will come a leader who will shepherd My people Israel."

Herod spoke to the wise men in secret. **"Go and search carefully for the child. When you find Him, report back to me so that I too**

can go and worship Him." But Herod was lying. He **didn't want to worship the new king; he wanted to kill Him!**

The wise men followed the star until it led them to Jesus. They went into the house where Jesus was with His mother Mary. **The wise men fell to their knees and worshiped Jesus. Then they gave Jesus gifts**: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. **When it was time for the wise men to go home, God warned them in a dream not to tell Herod where Jesus was. So they took a different way home.**

After the wise men were gone, an angel appeared to Mary's husband, **Joseph, in a dream. The angel said, "Get up! Take the child and His mother, flee to Egypt**, and stay there until I tell you. For Herod is about to search for the child to destroy Him." **So in the middle of the night, Joseph got up and took Mary and Jesus to Egypt** where they would be safe.

King Herod was so mad that the wise men didn't tell him where Jesus was. **He killed all the boys in Bethlehem under two years old—just to make sure he killed Jesus. But he didn't know Jesus and His family had escaped.**

A while later, when Herod died, **an angel spoke to Joseph again in a dream.** "Get up! Take the child and His mother and go to the land of Israel, because those who sought the child's life are dead." **So Joseph did what the angel said. He got up and took Mary and Jesus to Israel.**

Christ Connection: The wise men came to worship Jesus as King. Jesus is the King who will rule forever, as God promised to King David in 2 Samuel 7. Jesus is the true King who is worthy of all our worship.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use props:** Gesture toward or hold up props relating to key words in the story. Examples: a crown (king), baby doll (Baby Jesus), star cutout (star), camel or donkey (to reference travel)
- **Vary volume:** Emphasize words in bold. Use pauses to build suspense and gain kids' attention.

Classroom

SESSION TITLE: Wise Men Visited Jesus

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 2

STORY POINT: The wise men worshiped Jesus as King.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to talk about something they are looking forward to or hoping for God to do in the coming year. Explain that in the Bible story kids will hear today, some men were looking and hoping for God to do great things.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Mosaic Puzzle" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "Mosaic Puzzle" on the activity page. Kids should color each square according to the key.

SAY • Today we will hear a story about wise men who looked for Jesus because of a special sign that they saw in the sky.

LOW PREP

- star cutout

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Where's the star?

Direct one kid (the "wise man") to sit in a chair facing away from the rest of the group. Instruct the other kids to be seated, all facing the back of the wise man's chair.

Silently hand a construction paper star to a kid to hide

behind her back. (All the kids should put their hands behind their backs to confuse the wise man.)

Lead the group to chant, "Wise man, wise man, where's the star? We've been looking from afar."

The wise man turns around and takes one guess as to who has the star. If he guesses correctly, he takes another turn as wise man. If he guesses incorrectly, the kid who had the star is the new wise man.

SAY • In today's Bible story, the wise men followed a special star that appeared in the sky. Where do you think the star led them?

OPTION 2: Prophecy pass

Guide kids to sit in a tight circle. Whisper a secret message to the first player: "Jesus was born to be God's promised Savior." That player should whisper the message to the next person. When the message reaches the last person in the circle, invite him to announce the message to the group.

SAY • God spoke through many prophets that He would send a Savior. Our Bible story today is about some wise men who understood these prophecies. Listen to find out what they did because they believed that God's promised Savior had come.

Transition to Large Group

Large Group

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Countdown

· countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

LEADER • Welcome back, everyone. We've been learning about the birth of Jesus, God's very own Son. He had a mom and earthly dad who didn't seem all that extraordinary. Jesus wasn't born in a palace, and the people who came to worship Him weren't fancy, rich people. They were lowly shepherds.

But … God displayed a bright sign to announce that Jesus was the hero—the Rescuer—they had been waiting for. God put this star in the sky, like a spotlight that shouted, "Here He is, everyone! This is My Son!" A few men were on the lookout for this sign. They had studied the promises that God had made long ago. They searched with their eyes and thought with their brains and trusted

with their hearts that when this star appeared, it would lead them to God's promised King.

Big picture question (1 minute)

- Big Picture Question Poster

LEADER • The question we need to ask at this point is, *why*? Why did these men travel so far to see a little boy? Why did they care that He had been born? Had they discovered what you and I know about Jesus? Someone tell me, ***Why was Jesus born?*** [*Call on a kid to answer the question.*] Precisely. ***Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.***

LEADER • Remember that the people of Israel had waited for 400 years between the last prophet and Jesus' birth. We learned that **everything God said about Jesus' birth came true.** Then an angel visited Mary and Joseph to tell them that Jesus was coming! They had to travel to Bethlehem to be counted for the census that Caesar Augustus had ordered.

In Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to have her baby. Then, in a lowly stable, the Savior was born! Jesus had finally arrived! God announced the birth of His Son by sending a choir of angels to some ordinary shepherds in the fields.

Then a star appeared in the sky. Some wise men traveled from far away to Jesus. Let's hear the story.

- Bibles
- "Wise Men Visited Jesus" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 2. Use the Bible storytelling

tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Wise Men Visited Jesus."

LEADER • King Herod was an evil king who ruled over the Jews. So when the wise men showed up at his door and told him that they were looking for the new King of the Jews, he was mad! Herod misunderstood why Jesus was born. Jesus was born to be our Savior and a shepherd for the Israelites, but Herod thought Jesus might be a political king. Herod did not understand who Jesus really was.

When the wise men found Jesus, **the wise men worshiped Jesus as King** and gave Him many treasures—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Frankincense and myrrh are fragrant spices or perfumes. All three gifts were usually given to royalty. The wise men believed that Jesus was the King they had been waiting for!

We can follow the example of the wise men and worship Jesus. Jesus is not only a King, He is our Savior. ***Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.***

Christ connection

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 49 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

LEADER • The wise men came to worship Jesus as King. Jesus is King over all creation, not just a country or a group of people. Jesus came to earth to be the Savior. His death on the cross for our sin provided the way for people to have forgiveness and eternal life.

Jesus is the King who will rule forever, as God promised to King David in 2 Samuel 7. Jesus is the true King who is worthy of all our worship.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Christmas, Session " questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why we give gifts at Christmas. Guide them to discuss how they can share with others the greatest gift ever: God's Son, Jesus.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Galatians 4:4-5.

- Key Passage Poster

LEADER • Let's review the whole passage together. I'd like to have a few volunteers come up here with me to lead us through the verses. Raise your hand if you

remember the motions and want to help me!

Demonstrate hand motions for key words to help them memorize the key passage. Review the passage three times with motions.

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Let's pray. Father, thank You that You sent Jesus to rescue us from sin. Please turn our hearts to worship the One who deserves all of our worship. Help us to worship Jesus! Amen.

Dismiss to Classroom

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

 **God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

 **We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

 **God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

 **Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

 **We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

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KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- Christmas item

Display the key passage poster and lead to group to read Galatians 4:4-5 together. Remove or cover the poster while playing the game.

Guide the kids to stand in a large circle. Stand in the center of the circle and lead the kids to recite the key passage together. Hold up a Christmas object such as a stocking or ornament. Pass the object to one of the kids. Instruct her to say the first word of the key passage.

Then she should give the object to someone else, and he will say the second word. Pass the object until kids say the entire key passage.

SAY • Great work. If you haven't memorized our key passage yet, keep working on it this week. Memorizing God's word helps us remember what is true.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- touch bell or noisemaker

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Matthew 2. Remind kids that the Book of Matthew is one of the Gospels—the first four books in the New Testament that tell about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Explain that Matthew was one of Jesus' twelve disciples, or

followers. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 2:1-2.

SAY • We saw in our Bible story today that **the wise men worshiped Jesus as King**. They went to King Herod and asked if he knew where to find the new king. Herod wasn't exactly happy about that. He didn't want someone else to be king; Herod was king!

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

- Why do you think some people do not want to submit to Jesus as King? *Prompt boys and girls to think about what a person gives up to follow Jesus. Point out that putting God first instead of yourself first can be hard, but Jesus is always worth it!*
  (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 16:24.)
- What makes Jesus the perfect King? *Lead kids to talk about how Jesus uses His power. He loves us! Jesus came to earth not to be served but to serve. Everything He does is for God's glory and our good.*
  (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Phil. 2:5-8.)
- How can we worship Jesus as King? *Guide kids to consider how following Jesus changes how we think and act. When Jesus is our King, we trust Him and obey Him instead of trusting in and living for ourselves.*
  (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 6:22.)

Activity choice (10 minutes)

LOW PREP

- Gospel Plan Poster

OPTION 1: Practice sharing the gospel

Use the gospel plan poster to review the gospel. Help kids begin to feel comfortable sharing the gospel with others. Ask the following questions:

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

- Who rules? (*God rules. God created everything, and He is in charge of everything.*)
- What did we do? (*We sinned. Sin separates us from*

God, and the punishment for sin is death.)

- Who provided? (*God provided. God sent Jesus to rescue us from the punishment we deserve.*)
- Who gives? (*Jesus gives. Jesus gave up His life for us so we can live with God forever.*)
- What do we do now? (*We respond. We can turn from our sin and turn to Jesus.*)

SAY • Think about someone you can share the gospel with this week. Pray that he or she will respond to the good news about Jesus by believing in Him.

OPTION 2: Gift wrap relay

- boxes, 1 per team
- wrapping paper
- tape
- scissors
- gift tags
- bows

Divide kids into teams of five or six kids. Instruct each team to form a single-file line at one end of the room.

At the opposite end of the room, set up one station per team with items necessary to wrap a gift: a box, roll of wrapping paper, tape, scissors, gift tag, and bow.

When you say "go," each team will send one member to their gift station to perform one task toward wrapping the gift. (For example, the first kid may cut the correct amount of wrapping paper, the second kid may use one piece of tape to secure the paper to the box, and so on.)

After completing only one task, the kid will return to his team and tag the next player. Then that player will rush to the gift station to complete another task. The winner is the first team to wrap its gift (box completely covered with paper, gift tag, and bow attached).

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

SAY • **The wise men worshiped Jesus as King** by bringing him special gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We probably all know what gold is, but does anyone know what frankincense and myrrh are?

[*Call on volunteers to respond.*] Frankincense was

used as an ingredient in something like perfume that was burned in the temple where people worshiped God. Myrrh is a spice used in anointing oil; sometimes it is used as a perfume. Why would the wise men bring gifts like these to Jesus?

[*Call on volunteers to give answers.*] All three gifts—the gold, frankincense and myrrh—were very expensive gifts. Presenting gifts to kings was customary; these wise men knew that Jesus deserved to be offered precious, expensive gifts because He was the King of the Jews and the King of all kings.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Words for the Wise" activity page, 1 per kid

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, asking God to give kids the opportunity to share the good news about Jesus with someone who needs to hear it. Pray that the listener would realize his need to be rescued from sin.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Words for the Wise" on the activity page. Kids should unscramble the letters to find some key pieces of today's Bible story.

Journal Page



- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How did the wise men know about Jesus' birth? (See Matthew 2:1-2.)
- How did the wise men show their respect for Jesus?
- How can your family worship Jesus together?

FOLD

Wise Men Visited Jesus

Matthew 2

STORY POINT: THE WISE MEN WORSHIPED JESUS AS KING.

Long ago, God promised to send a king to save His people from their enemies. Jesus was born in Bethlehem at the same time Herod was king.

God sent a star to show the wise men that Jesus had been born. They came to King Herod. "Where is the king of the Jews?" they asked. "We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."



King Herod was very angry. "Go and search carefully for the child. When you find Him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship Him." But Herod didn't want to worship the new king; he wanted to kill Him!

The wise men followed the star until it led them to Jesus. The wise men fell to their knees and worshiped Jesus. Then they gave Jesus gifts. When it was time for the wise men to go home, God warned them in a dream not to tell Herod where Jesus was. So they took a different way home.

After the wise men were gone, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, "Get up! Take the child and His mother, flee to Egypt. So in the middle of the night, Joseph got up and took Mary and Jesus to Egypt.

King Herod was so mad. He killed all the boys in Bethlehem under two years old—just to make sure he killed Jesus. But he didn't know Jesus and His family had escaped.

Christ Connection: The wise men came to worship Jesus as King. Jesus is the King who will rule forever, as God promised to King David in 2 Samuel 7. Jesus is the true King who is worthy of all our worship.

Mosaic Puzzle

Color each square according to the key.

1–blue
2–yellow
3–brown

1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	3	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	2	3	1	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
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3	3	3	1	3	3	3	1	1	3	2	3	2	3	1
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	1
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

Words for the Wise

These words are all mixed up! Unscramble the letters to find some key pieces of today's Bible story.

LOGD _____

HYRRM _____

KINFARNEECNS _____

RTAS _____

HEEMLBETH _____

WESI NEM _____

