



It's Epiphany! Let's Worship Jesus!

(based on Matthew 2:1-12)

Not long after Jesus was born in Bethlehem, magi, also called wise men, discovered a new, bright star in the sky. The magi were far away from Bethlehem, but the star looked very special. They thought the appearance of the star meant that a new king of the Jews had been born. So they prepared for a long trip.

They traveled by land, always following the star. They trekked through the desert, always following the star. They must have rested during the day and traveled at night. Day after day passed. Finally, they came to Jerusalem.

They began asking anyone they saw, "Where is the child who has been born to be the king of the Jews?"

When people looked puzzled, even afraid, the magi said, "We have been following this bright star and know that this new king is nearby."

The people they asked did not want to answer them because they knew that King Herod, who was king of everybody, did not want to hear about a new king. King Herod would be afraid that this new king would take his place. Terrible things would happen if King Herod heard the news about a new king!

Word of these travelers got to the advisers of King Herod. It was the custom to greet the ruler of a city or country if you were a stranger there. So when the magi came to the palace and stood before the king, not knowing that he would be afraid, they asked, "Where might we find the child who has been born to be king of the Jews?"

King Herod was clever. He didn't let the magi know that he was afraid. He consulted his advisers and then told the magi, "My advisers tell me that this child is to be born in Bethlehem, not far from here. When you find this baby, come back, and tell me where he is so I can worship this new king too."

King Herod was lying, of course. He wanted to keep this baby from becoming king in his place.

The magi started off for Bethlehem. The star led the way. In Bethlehem, the magi found Mary and her son, Jesus, in a house. They went in and knelt before Jesus, who was just a little boy. They gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

The star had led the magi to Jesus. Now it was time to go home. Before they left Jerusalem, they had a dream in which they were warned not to return to King Herod. So the magi went home a different way.



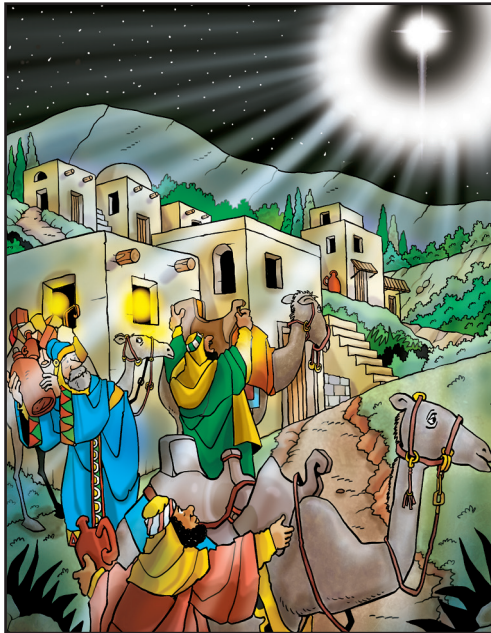
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Frankincense and myrrh are made from the resin of trees and have a scent that is beneficial. If you can cut boughs off a living evergreen tree, you may be able to show your children how they ooze resin. Let your children smell the aroma of the fresh-cut greenery and imagine how frankincense and myrrh would have been aromatic gifts to the baby Jesus.
- Talk with your children about a long trip they have taken, like the long trip the magi took. Long is relative! Remember or imagine what would be involved in traveling a great distance over many nights and sleeping during the day.
- Talk with your children about dreams. Some dreams are silly, and some are scary. Wonder what they can learn from the dreams they have.



Responding to God's Grace

- If you have added a piece to your nativity scene each week, this is the week to add the wise men and camels.
- Using a variety of art supplies, let your children draw a large star on paper with the caption, "We worship Jesus."
- Search YouTube for a recording of the song "We Three Kings of Orient Are." Learn the refrain and sing it with the recording.
- Read *Home by Another Way* by Barbara Brown Taylor (Flyaway Books, 2018) or watch the YouTube video "Home By Another Way" ([bit.ly /HomeByAnotherWay](https://bit.ly/HomeByAnotherWay), 13:15). Discuss what each of you might have done if you were one of the magi.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- On a clear evening, find a place where there are fewer lights, and enjoy looking at the stars. Wonder how the magi noticed one new star among so many.
- Do an Internet search for different Epiphany traditions around the world. See if there is one that you would like to celebrate with your family.
- Pray the following prayer each day this week:

*God, we thank you for leading us to Jesus.
Just like the magi, we want to worship Jesus,
too. Help us to follow him. Amen.*

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.