

WISE MEN VISITED JESUS

MATTHEW 2



CHRIST CONNECTION: The wise men worshiped Jesus as King. Jesus is the true King who deserves all our worship.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save us.

KEY PASSAGE: God loved the world and gave his one and only Son to everyone who believes in him. John 3:16

STORY POINT: The wise men worshiped Jesus.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

The biblical story of the wise men's visit highlights the worthiness of Jesus as Messiah. These men from the east traveled hundreds of miles to worship the young King.

We read in verse 2 that the wise men arrived in Jerusalem proclaiming a star's rising and their mission to worship the King of the Jews. After being asked by King Herod where the Messiah would be born, the religious scholars of the time cited Micah 5:2, declaring that a leader would arise from this humble city to shepherd God's people.

The wise men followed the star to the home where Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were staying. The travelers fell to their knees in worship, offering fine treasures to signify their awe of the one true King. Jesus was more than worthy of their worship—even in His childhood years, before He had begun His ministry or taken to the cross.

The wise men's response to learning about the Messiah couldn't have differed more from the reaction of King Herod, who not only lied about his desire to worship the child but also sought to kill the young boy who Herod considered a rival king. It would be the first of many times that Simeon's prophecy over Jesus would come to pass: "Indeed, this child is destined to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed" (Luke 2:34).

Teach the kids in your group that they too face a choice of rejecting Jesus like Herod did or worshipping Him like the wise men as the promised King. Jesus gave His life for us as a sacrifice for our sins and rose again to defeat death. Only He is worthy of our worship. Pray that each child would recognize the value of knowing Jesus and of trusting in Him for salvation.



Scan the QR code to listen to The Gospel Project for Kids Weekly Leader Training Podcast.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet preschoolers and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel

30-40 MINUTES



LIVE

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



BONUS

60-65 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tip scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.

WELCOME

Find three gifts

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster
- ☐ small gift boxes, 3
- ☐ index cards, 3
- ☐ wrapping paper
- ☐ painter's tape



LEARN

Shine like stars

- ☐ black construction paper
- ☐ flashlight
- ☐ single hole punch

Tell the Bible story

- ☐ "Wise Men Visited Jesus" video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Draw with metallic crayons

- ☐ metallic crayons

Paint with gift bows

- ☐ foam plates
- ☐ washable paint, various colors
- ☐ heavyweight paper, 1 per child
- ☐ assorted gift bows
- ☐ hot glue
- ☐ art smocks

Follow the star

- ☐ heavyweight paper
- ☐ dowel



LIVE

Make glitter stars

- ☐ disposable plates
- ☐ cotton balls
- ☐ heavyweight paper
- ☐ art smocks
- ☐ glitter

Missions activity

- ☐ "Annie Armstrong's Legacy" missions video

Snack and transition

- ☐ hand sanitizer (optional)
- ☐ "Finish the Pictures" activity page, 1 per child
- ☐ Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker
- ☐ toy crown

Explore sand

- ☐ shallow bin
- ☐ sand
- ☐ wise men nativity figures
- ☐ camel nativity figures

Sort gift bows

- ☐ assorted gift bows
- ☐ colored paper



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers opportunities to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ Connection, the story point, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the room. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

FIND THREE GIFTS

Write the words gold, frankincense, and myrrh on three index cards, one word per card. Place one card in each of the three gift boxes. Wrap the gift boxes with decorative paper. Hide the three gifts around the room for kids to find. Place the Big Picture Question Poster on a chair near the large group area. Using painter's tape, create a winding path around the room for the kids to follow to the Big Picture Question Poster. Encourage kids to find each of the gifts and follow the path to the chair. Once all kids have gathered around the chair, open the three gifts and review the big picture question together.

SAY 🗨️ Welcome to church today. I'm so glad you're here. I'm very proud of you for finding the three gifts and following the path. Our big picture question asks, **Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save us.** The wise men knew they were on a journey to find a special king. The route they followed led to Jesus, the Son of God. **THE WISE MEN WORSHIPED JESUS** as King. Jesus is the true King who deserves our worship. 🗨️





LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 SHINE LIKE STARS

Using a single hole punch, create small holes on black construction paper. Use the hole punch to create one larger hole. Tape the paper to the end of the flashlight. Test to see if the lights need to be dimmed in order for the kids to see the one large “star” and several smaller ones on the wall. Once preschoolers are seated in the group-time area, proceed and shine the stars on the wall at the appropriate time.

SAY “How many of you have seen stars in the sky at night? [Allow responses.] The Bible tells of a time when some wise men saw a large star in the sky that puzzled them. They learned about this star and that it meant a new king was born. They wanted to find this special king. So, they packed three special presents for the king and followed the star to see where it would lead them. Listen closely to hear what happened next.”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Matthew 2. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

WISE MEN VISITED JESUS

SAY “After Jesus was born to Mary and Joseph, wise men came to find Him. They went to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the king of the Jews? We saw His star in the east, and we want to worship Him.”

Herod told the wise men, “Go look for Jesus. When you find Him, tell me where He is so I can worship Him too.” But Herod did not want to worship Jesus; Herod wanted to hurt Jesus!

The wise men followed the star until they found Jesus. When they saw Him, they fell to their knees and worshiped Him. Then they gave Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. When the wise men left, they took a different way home and did not tell Herod where Jesus was.

An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Go to Egypt and stay there. King Herod is looking for Jesus and wants to hurt Him.” So, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus got up in the middle of the night and went to Egypt where they would be safe.

King Herod was so mad that Jesus got away. Later, when King Herod died, an angel spoke to Joseph again in a dream. The angel said, “Take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel.” Joseph did what the angel said.”

Christ Connection: The wise men worshiped Jesus as King. Jesus is the true King who deserves all our worship.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Using the Bible Story Picture Poster, ask questions of the kids related to the story. Encourage the kids to stand up and pretend to sneak away as they answer the questions. Sample questions may include “What did the wise men follow to find Jesus?” (star), “Who did they ask for help?” (Herod), “What lie did Herod tell the wise men?” (he wanted to worship Jesus, too), “What did Herod want to do?” (hurt Jesus), “What did the wise men do when they found Jesus?” (gave Him gifts, fell down and worshiped Him), and so on.

SAY “Herod did not worship Jesus. God sent Mary, Joseph, and Jesus to live in Egypt until Herod died. Later, God sent an angel to tell them it was safe to come back to Israel. For the past several lessons, we have been learning who Jesus is. **Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save us.** Herod did not understand who Jesus was. God kept Jesus safe. Jesus was the special king for whom the wise men were looking. God used a star in the sky to lead them to Jesus. **THE WISE MEN WORSHIPED JESUS** as King. Jesus is the true King who deserves all our worship.”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “The Wheels on the Bus”:

God loved the world and gave His one
And only Son to everyone,
God loved the world and gave His Son
Jesus is His name.

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at John 3:16. Invite a kid to open your Bible to the key passage. Say the key passage phrase together three times: whisper it first, say it loud, then say it in a normal volume.

SAY “In our Bible story, the wise men found Jesus and worshiped Him. Our key passage phrase says, ‘God loved the world so much, He sent His one and only Son to save people from their sins.’ The wise men recognized Jesus is the true King who deserves all our worship. **THE WISE MEN WORSHIPED JESUS.**”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for the wise men who knew Jesus is the true King and worshiped Him instead of Herod. Encourage the children to ask for help to only worship God and not put other things above their love for Him.





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 DRAW WITH METALLIC CRAYONS

Search boxes of crayons and choose the metallic colors. Offer gold, silver, and bronze hues to preschoolers along with paper. Encourage boys and girls to draw or color as they choose.

SAY “What sparkly drawings! Those colors remind me of something valuable like fancy jewelry or a crown. In today’s Bible story, God helped some wise men understand that Jesus is the King that God promised. They traveled to find Him, and they brought Jesus some valuable gifts. One of the gifts they brought was gold. **THE WISE MEN WORSHIPED JESUS.**”

2 PAINT WITH GIFT BOWS

Prior to the session, hot glue craft sticks onto the sticky side of gift bows, several per paint color. Prepare foam plates with washable paint, one color per plate. Assist children in putting on art smocks. Give each child a piece of heavyweight paper. Place paint plates with bow sticks within reach of children. Encourage children to dip the bows into the paint and onto their papers.

SAY “The wise men brought gifts to Jesus including gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They traveled a long way to find Him and give the gifts to Him. **THE WISE MEN WORSHIPED JESUS.** We can worship Jesus, too.”

3 FOLLOW THE STAR

Create a star banner by attaching a large, heavyweight-paper star to a dowel. For the first round of play, be the leader and guide the children to follow you as you carry the star around the room. For later rounds of play, children can take turns being the leader.

SAY “A special star in the sky led the wise men to the place where Joseph, Mary, and Jesus were living. When they got there, **THE WISE MEN WORSHIPED JESUS.** They gave Jesus gifts. They recognized Jesus is the true King.”

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 MAKE GLITTER STARS

Cut out large stars from heavyweight paper, one per child. Assist children in putting on art smocks. Place stars, plates with liquid glue, cotton balls, and glitter containers within reach of children. Help children dip cotton balls into the glue and cover their stars with the glue. Encourage children to sprinkle glitter onto the glue. Read the key passage phrase aloud as they work.

| **SAY** “ The wise men followed the star to find Jesus. They knew Jesus is the true King, and **THE WISE MEN WORSHIPED JESUS**. God’s Son, Jesus, is the true King. ”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Explain that Annie Armstrong helped people in need and led churches to support missionaries. Show the “Annie Armstrong’s Legacy” missions video. Thank God for Annie Armstrong and the mission offering named after her that helps missionaries throughout North America.

| **SAY** “ Annie started a mission for people in need living in her city, raised support for missionaries, and helped raise money to build churches. She traveled across America to encourage missionaries and inspire churches to pray, give, and do more mission work. ”

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

| **SAY** “ The wise men worshiped Jesus as King. Jesus is the true King who deserves all our worship. ”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 TOSS A BEANBAG

Draw a crown on a sheet of paper and three presents on another sheet of paper. Lay the paper on the ground. Ask a child to toss the beanbag onto one of the sheets of paper. Tell kids the crown is for Herod and the presents are for the wise men. As they toss the beanbag, encourage children to share what they know about Herod and what they know about the wise men.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Matthew 2. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

WISE MEN VISITED JESUS

- After Jesus was born, wise men came looking for Him. They asked, “Where is the king of the Jews? We want to worship him.”
- King Herod told the wise men to find Jesus and to come back and tell him where Jesus was. Herod lied and said he wanted to worship Jesus, but Herod actually wanted to hurt Jesus.
- When the wise men found Jesus, they worshiped Him and gave Him gifts. Then they took a different way home. They did not tell Herod where Jesus was.
- An angel told Joseph to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt where they would be safe. They went away in the middle of the night and stayed in Egypt until King Herod died.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “The Wheels on the Bus”:

God loved the world and gave His one
And only Son to everyone,
God loved the world and gave His Son
Jesus is His name.

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at John 3:16. Invite a kid to open your Bible to the key passage. Explain that God’s Son, Jesus, is the Savior God promised to send, and He is also the true King the wise men worshiped. Repeat the key passage phrase together while passing the toy crown.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for Jesus, the true King, and for the wise men who worshiped Him.



BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 TRAVEL BACK AND FORTH



Cut pieces of construction paper in half. Roll paper into tight tubes to resemble batons. Invite boys and girls to sit in a circle. Give each child a paper baton. Tell preschoolers to pass their baton to the child on their right. Begin slowly until kids become familiar with the motion. Announce that kids should now move their batons the opposite way, to the child on their left. Switch commands by saying “right” and “left” randomly with varying speed.

SAY “It was fun moving our paper rolls right and left. It was also a little tricky. All that movement makes me think about today’s Bible story. The wise men traveled and followed a star to find Jesus. They stopped in Jerusalem along the way. Later, God told Joseph to leave and go to Egypt to keep his family safe. When it was safe, Jesus’ family traveled back to Nazareth. Back and forth, this way and that, but all that movement showed us who Jesus is, and it kept Him safe. God worked out His plan through Jesus to save people from their sin.”

7 EXPLORE SAND

Fill a shallow bin with about one inch of sand. Place the wise men figures and toy camels nearby. Invite kids to play out the wise men visiting Jesus by making the toy figures travel across the sand.

SAY “**THE WISE MEN WORSHIPED JESUS.** Jesus is the true King who deserves all our worship. The wise men went home a different way after they worshiped Jesus. They did not want to tell Herod where Jesus was. Instead, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus went to Egypt to live until Herod died. God protected Jesus from Herod.”

8 SORT GIFT BOWS

Scatter adhesive gift bows in assorted colors on the floor. Arrange matching colored paper nearby. Invite kids to sort the bows by color, laying them on the paper of the same color. Talk about the Bible story as kids work.

SAY “When the wise men found Jesus, they worshiped Him and gave Him gifts. Then they went home a different way. They did not tell Herod where Jesus was. They knew Herod wanted to hurt Jesus. God sent an angel to tell Mary and Joseph to go to Egypt where they would be safe. They stayed in Egypt until Herod died, and it was safe for them to move home. Herod did not want to worship Jesus, but **THE WISE MEN WORSHIPED JESUS** as King. Jesus is the true King who deserves all our worship.”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.