



THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

The Feast of the Epiphany is celebrated on January 6. This feast commemorates the visit of the wise men to worship the baby Jesus. Tradition tells us that their names were Caspar, Melchior and Balthassar. The men were astrologers who were looking for the star that would lead them to the promised Messiah. This was prophesied in the Book of Micah. According to the Gospel narratives, the wise men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh with them. These gifts were very meaningful. Gold was a precious and expensive gift, and showed how important Jesus was. Frankincense is a sweet perfume which was often burned in the temple to worship God. It was a sign that Jesus should be worshipped. Myrrh was used to keep things fresh, and it was used by the women to anoint Jesus' body when he died. By bringing it as a gift to Jesus, the wise men foretold his suffering and death.

As today's feast is a holy day of obligation, all Catholics should participate in Mass. If your school is planning to celebrate a Mass in the school, you will find suitable Readings, songs/hymns and prayers on pages 2-5 of this booklet. If your school is planning to mark the day with a Prayer Service, suggestions for this are offered on pages 6-8 of this booklet. Some activities for children are also provided as part of this booklet (pages 9-12). These can be done in preparation for the Mass/prayer service, or as a follow-up activity.

PRAYER SERVICE

You will need:

- Ten children to read

Sacred Space:

- White cloth
- Bible, open at Matthew 2:1-12
- Candle
- Crib, including wise men figures
- A star

Opening Song: *Following a Star (Alive-O 3 and 4)*

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

All: Amen

Leader: Let us begin with our Morning Prayer:

All: Father in heaven, you love me,
You are with me night and day.
I want to love you always
In all I do and say.
I'll try to please you, Father.
Bless me through the day. Amen.

Leader: We gather together today to celebrate a very special feast day – the Feast of the Epiphany. On this day, we remember the visit of the wise men to worship the baby Jesus. Tradition tells us that the wise men were named Caspar, Melchior and Balthassar. They brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the new baby. Let us listen to the story of how they found the Holy Family by following a star:

Reader 1: A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (*Matthew 2:1-12*)

When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem in Judea, Herod was king. During this time some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and said,

Reader 2: "Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

Reader 1: When King Herod heard about this, he was worried, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. Herod brought together the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses and asked them,

Reader 3: “Where will the Messiah be born?”

Reader 1: They told him,

Reader 4: “He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote, ‘Bethlehem in the land of Judea, you are very important among the towns of Judea. From your town will come a leader, who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel’.”

Reader 1: Herod secretly called in the wise men and asked them when they had first seen the star. He told them,

Reader 3: “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I want to go and worship him too.”

Reader 1: The wise men listened to what the king said and then left. And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were thrilled and excited to see the star. When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshiped him. They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and gave them to him. Later they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, and they went back home by another road.

The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Leader: The wise men were brave. They left their home and their families without being sure of the way. They put all their trust in the star, and in God’s promise that he would send a Saviour, the Messiah, to the people. They must have wondered if they would ever get there! Let’s listen to a poem that tells us about how they may have felt

Ask the three children who are playing the wise men move three or four steps to the left or right between each verse below, indicating the journey they are taking.

Reader 5 (Balthasaar):

You call me a ‘Wise Man’
But I don’t know!

Am I wise or am I foolish
To just pick up and go?
Go where? Follow a star?
Which star? Why?
If I was truly a *wise* man
I'd know these things – wouldn't I?
You call me a 'Wise Man'
But I don't know!
You say, 'It'll be worth it!'
Well... I hope so!

Reader 6 (Caspar):

You call me a 'Wise Man'
I'm not sure you should,
For though we've 'hit the bright lights'
It seems they're not much good.
Herod's not the one we seek
Despite his power and might,
So here we are still following
A light in a desert night.
You call me a 'Wise Man'
But I don't know!
You say, 'It'll be worth it!'
Well... I hope so!

Reader 7 (Melchior):

You call me a 'Wise Man'
I'm not sure you're right.
We've found Immanu-El, but look!
He's only a little mite!
And Mary and Joseph – who might they be?
What've they got to do with God?
I have to be honest, I really must say
I think it's all rather odd.
You call me a 'Wise Man'
But I don't know!
You say, 'It'll be worth it!'
Well... I hope so!

Readers 5, 6 and 7 (Balthazaar, Caspar and Melchior):

You called us 'Wise Men',

You were half-wrong, half-right,
For though we had found Immanu-el
We didn't quite see the Light.
It took us a while to understand
How God could be so...*small*,
How God could be such a baby as this,
Sound asleep in the midst of us all.
At first you called us Wise Men
Though we didn't quite see how,
But we walked by the light in the dark till we found God –
Call us 'Wiser Men' now.

Leader: Having met Mary, Jesus and Joseph, the wise men returned home. They returned to tell the good news about the new leader to their families and friends. The story of the birth of Jesus reminds us of the Good News that God is always with us. Let us remember this in a very special way today as we return to a new year and a new term together. The response to each prayer is, 'God is with us.'

Reader 8: As we return after our Christmas celebrations.

All: God is with us.

Reader 9: As we begin a new year.

All: God is with us.

Reader 10: As we keep the spirit of Christmas alive in our hearts.

All: God is with us.

Leader: We remember all those everywhere who, now that Christmas is over, have returned home or to work or to school. We ask God to be with them as we pray:

All: Our Father/Ár nÁthair

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

All: Amen

Closing Song: *Christ be Our Light (Alive-O 6, 7 and 8)*

MASS

You will need:

- Seven children to read

Sacred Space:

- White cloth
- Bible, open at Matthew 2:1-12
- Candle
- Crib, including wise men figures
- A star

Opening Song: *Following a Star (Alive-O 3 and 4)*

First Reading: A Reading from the prophet Isaiah (*Isaiah 60:1-6*)

Jerusalem, stand up! Shine! Your new day is dawning. The glory of the Lord shines brightly on you. The earth and its people are covered with darkness, but the glory of the Lord is shining upon you. Nations and kings will come to the light of your dawning day.

The Lord said: "Open your eyes! Look around! Crowds are coming. Your sons are on their way from distant lands; your daughters are being carried like little children. When you see this, your faces will glow; your hearts will pound and swell with pride. Treasures from across the sea and the wealth of nations will be brought to you. Your country will be covered with caravans of young camels from Midian and Ephah. The people of Sheba will bring gold and spices in praise of me, the Lord."

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 72

Response: Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

O God, with your judgment endow the king,
and with your justice, the king's son;
He shall govern your people with justice
and your afflicted ones with judgment. **Response.**

Justice shall flower in his days,
and profound peace, till the moon be no more.
May he rule from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth. **Response.**

The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall offer gifts;
the kings of Arabia and Seba shall bring tribute.
All kings shall pay him homage,
all nations shall serve him. **Response.**

For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out,
and the afflicted when he has no one to help him.
He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor;
the lives of the poor he shall save. **Response.**

Gospel Reading: A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (*Matthew 2:1-12*)

When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem in Judea, Herod was king. During this time some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and said, "Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard about this, he was worried, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. Herod brought together the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses and asked them, "Where will the Messiah be born?" They told him, "He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote, 'Bethlehem in the land of Judea, you are very important among the towns of Judea. From your town will come a leader, who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel.'" Herod secretly called in the wise men and asked them when they had first seen the star. He told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I want to go and worship him too." The wise men listened to what the king said and then left. And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were thrilled and excited to see the star. When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshiped him. They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and gave them to him. Later they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, and they went back home by another road.

Prayer of the Faithful

1. We pray in thanksgiving for a happy and safe Christmas holiday. Lord hear us.
2. We pray for all of those who found Christmas this year hard because they were lonely. Lord hear us.
3. We pray in thanksgiving for the gift of God's creation: The moon, the stars, and the sun in the sky. May we always take care of God's creation. Lord hear us.

4. We pray for our parents, teachers, priests, and all those who help to show us the way to Jesus. Lord hear us.
5. We pray for all Mammies who have new babies. We ask Mary to watch over them and to bless them. Lord hear us.

Closing Song: *Christ be Our Light (Alive-O 6, 7 and 8)*



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THE THREE WISE MEN

Use the key below to help you to tell the story of the how the three wise men came to worship Jesus.

			
Jesus	Wise Men	Star	King Herod

At the time  was born, three  saw a . The  knew that the  would lead them to a new king, so the  followed the . When the  came to Jerusalem, they asked  where to find the new king,   told the  to go to Bethlehem where the new king would be born, but  began to worry.  didn't want a new king to take his place, so  told the  to come back and tell him about   didn't want  to be more powerful than him. When the  found  they knelt down and offered their gifts to him. That night, God spoke to the  in a dream and told them not to return to  so the  went home another way.

WHICH GIFT DID EACH WISE MAN BRING?



THE CHRISTMAS STAR

Fill in the blacks to read this poem about the Epiphany

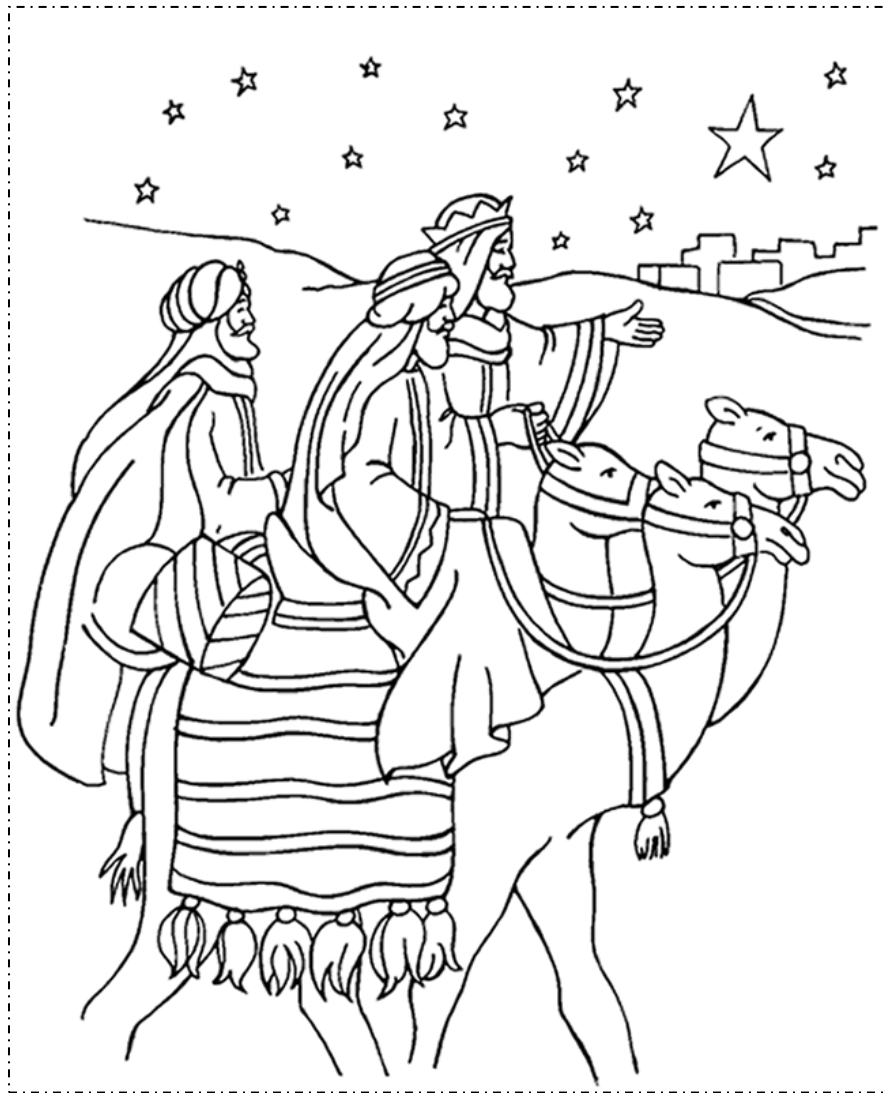
A _____ looked down
from the frosty sky,
saw _____ kings
and winked its eye.



'Follow me', it said
and blazed a _____
over sand and plain,
up-_____ down-dale.

'Here', said the _____
and faded from sight
as sun bathed the Baby
in clear morning _____.

LÁ NOLLAG BEAG
6Ú Eanáir



Lean na trí ríthe ón Domhain Thoir an réalt sa spéir agus tháinig said ar an stabla ina raibh Íosa. Cén t-aimn a bhí ar na trí ríthe?

raCpsa

oieMhrcl

azalahBtr

Thug siad bronntanais leo: Cad iad?

ró

Tsiu

rmroi
