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THE WISE MEN

Good News for All Nations

1 | Teacher's Notes

Scripture Matthew 2: 1 – 12

Objectives To explain that

- Our lessons are all a part of a bigger story which is the story of the Forever Kingdom. This big story is found in the Bible.
- The visit of the wise men from the East tells us that Jesus was not just the forever King of Israel, but of all nations.
- God kept Jesus safe. God gave Joseph a dream to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt as Herod would try to kill Jesus. Nothing could stop God from fulfilling his promise of a Forever King.

Memory Verse “...they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him.” (Matthew 2:11a - KJV)

ACNA The following Catechism questions are linked to today's story:

Catechism Connection Q 29 What is in the New Testament? ...Jesus' birth, revelation of Christ's eternal Kingdom...

Q 208 What is evil? ...Evil is the willful perversion of God's good will that defies his holiness and mars his good creation. (Herod was evil and is depicted as such in this lesson)

**Suggested
Materials,
Props, and
Costumes****Big story props:**

- Crown - or picture of a crown
- Large Bible.

(These props relate to the bigger story of the Forever Kingdom, and will be used for every lesson. The crown will be referred to as the Kingdom Crown.)

Lesson props:

- Map showing ancient Middle East
- Chair to be used as a throne for King Herod
- Symbols of Gold, Frankincense, myrrh
- Star
- Cue cards are encouraged if a child reads the part
- Tableau of Mary & Joseph with child (can be figures or children in costume, sitting under the star)

Costumes:

- Three Wise Men
- King Herod

Mary & Joseph with Christ child (optional)

Memory Verse: (Found on the last page of this lesson plan.) Printed out and placed inside the large Bible.

2 | Lesson Outline

Welcome	As the children arrive ensure each one is personally welcomed and everyone knows each other's name.
Greeting & Collect for Purity	Light the candles Say the Greeting and Collect for Purity (see Resource Section)
Prayer of Confession	Say the Prayer of Confession (see Resource Section) Extinguish the candles
Music	Books of the Bible - New Testament Also choose another song from the Resource Section
Review of foundations	Choose from the following as appropriate: The Lord's Prayer, The Apostles Creed, The Ten Commandments or The Greatest Commandment <i>For more information on how to teach these, see Resource Section</i>
Reading	Memory verse (Printed out and placed in large Bible – invite older child to read)
Poster Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss this week's poster. • Ask "I wonder questions" – these will be answered during the story. <p><i>Poster discussion is found in Section 3 and on the back of the poster</i></p>
Props/Costumes	Take a few moments to arrange the narrator and actors. (Props should already be set up prior to the start of the class.) Big story props: Kingdom Crown, Large Bible
Bible Story	<i>Proceed with story and life application found in Section 4.</i>
Related activities	<i>After the story, proceed with related activities found in Section 5.</i>
Preparation for Communion & leaving class	Gather the children together for the Preparation for Communion prayer before exiting the classroom. <i>See Resource Section.</i>

3 | Poster Discussion

Poster

(During the poster discussion, explain any difficult words in the story.)

What do you see in this picture? (3 men with camels, star etc.)

Is there anything you wonder about?

I wonder who these men are.

I wonder where they came from and where they are going.

I wonder why the big star is in the sky.

Let's find out more in our story...



4 | Story and Life Application

CROWN: *Point to the crown and say: 'Today we are continuing our big story of God's Forever Kingdom.'*

BIBLE: *Hold up the Bible and say: 'Our story today is from the Gospel of Matthew, in the New Testament. We know that it is a true story because it comes from the Bible and all the words in the Bible are true.'*

LESSON SUMMARY: *The teacher reads the lesson summary from back of poster.*

STORY:

TEACHER: Last week, we heard about Jesus being born, and the host of angels appearing to the shepherds announcing the birth of Jesus. But there were others who were waiting for Jesus' arrival, and they were coming from a far distance to worship the Forever King.

ACTION: *3 Wise men and camel enter from the East.*

TEACHER: These are the Magi, the wise men from the east who studied the stars.

ACTION: *Point to the map and indicate the distance between Babylon (where the wise men likely came from) and Bethlehem in Judea.*

TEACHER: How many children here have ever looked up to the sky at night and seen all the stars? Has anyone ever found the "big dipper"? The big dipper is a group of stars that looks like a bucket with a handle.

Well, these men studied the stars all the time, and they knew that there was a new star in the heavens and this was something very important. In fact, it meant that a new King was to be born.

These wise men started traveling toward the star, and asking around, "Where is the child that is born, King of the Jews".

ACTION: *Wise men start asking the children, "Where is the child that was born?"*

TEACHER: Now Herod, who was the King of the Jews at that time, was a very jealous man.

ACTION: *King Herod sitting on his throne.*

TEACHER: How do you think King Herod felt when he heard that some very wise men traveled from a faraway country to worship the baby who was King of the Jews? You see... Herod thought that **he** was "King of the Jews"?

Yes – Herod was very troubled...in fact, he was FURIOUS!!

King Herod gathered all the chief priests and scribes together, and he demanded they tell him where this baby king was to be born.

The priests knew what the prophets had written, and they told King Herod that the King of the Jews would be born in Bethlehem.

King Herod was not only furious; he was also a very cunning, evil man. He called the wise men to come to him.

KING HEROD: Hello, Wise men. I have a question for you, "What time did the star appear?"

3 WISE MEN: We have traveled a great distance. We believe that it has been within the last 2 years.

KING HEROD: I want you to search for the young child and when you find him, come back and tell me, so that I can worship him too.

TEACHER: Do you think that King Herod really wanted to worship Jesus? What do you think King Herod wanted to do?

The wise men left King Herod and followed the star to Bethlehem.

When they found Jesus, they fell down and worshipped him. They opened their treasures and presented gifts of gold, and frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus.

ACTION: *The wise men go over to the Holy Family tableau under the star, kneel and put down their gifts.*

TEACHER: That night, when the wise men went to sleep, they had a dream. In the dream, God told them not to return to Herod.

ACTION: *Wise men lie down.*

TEACHER: When the wise men woke up from their dream, they did just as God had told them. They left Bethlehem and did not go back and tell King Herod.

ACTION: *Wise men get up and leave in the opposite direction to Herod's throne.*

TEACHER: The wise men returned to their home. They were excited, for they had

seen and worshipped the new King.

I wonder what the wise men did with this good news when they got back home? *(Pause for a response)* The message of Jesus would be for ALL the nations, just as God had promised to Abraham long ago. Do you think that the wise men told others about the star and about worshipping the wonderful new King, Jesus? Yes, I think so too!

TEACHER: Well, the wicked *King Herod* did not want to worship Jesus, but wanted to kill him. So God told Joseph in a dream to take Mary and Jesus and quickly escape from Bethlehem and travel to the faraway land of Egypt. By doing so, they kept Jesus safe from Herod.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:

- **What does this story tell us about God?** (God cares for all the nations and sent his Son for everyone. God protects)
- What special sign did God put in the sky to let other people know that a King had been born? (a star) Were the wise men Israelites? (no)
- What did the prophets of the Bible say about where the King of the Jews would be born? (in the town of Bethlehem)
- What was King Herod like? What was *his* plan? (He was an evil king of the Jews. His plan was to kill the baby who would be king, Jesus)
- What did the wise men do when they found Jesus? (worshipped him, gave gifts)
- How did God protect Jesus from Herod? (warned Joseph to quickly escape with Jesus and Mary) Where was Joseph told to take Jesus and Mary? (to Egypt)

Life Application (this discussion can also take place during craft/activity time):

The visit of the wise men from the East tells us that Jesus was the forever King of Israel **and** of **all** nations. In our country there are many people from different nations of the world who do not know the Good News of Jesus. How can we tell other people the Good News of Jesus at Christmas time? (Christmas cards to school mates or neighbours, caroling, sharing our faith, giving little gifts, invitations to a Christmas service, etc)

5 | Response Activities

Kingdom News handout and colouring supplement

- Have the children complete the activities in the Kingdom News handout and colouring supplement.

Optional activities

- Different learning stations, such as: a book table, modelling clay, colouring papers.
- Add the wise men to the nativity set.



Two of the Wise Men with their gifts

"...they saw the
young child with
Mary his mother,
and fell down, and
worshipped him."

(Matthew 2:11a)