

## The Three Wise Men

### Bible Background and Lesson Objectives



#### Scripture for this lesson set

[Matthew 2:1-12](#)

they saw the star

they were overjoyed

they saw the child

they bowed down

they opened their treasures

they returned to their country

(NIV)

#### Lesson objectives for this lesson set:

- Know where to find the story in Matthew and be able to retell it.
- Know what a Magi is and what the Star is -- and desire to be both!
- Leave changed and ready to tell others what his birth means to you and to everyone.

The story of the Magi is rich with many teaching possibilities, including "follow that star," the meaning of the 3 gifts, "returning home by another way," etc. And indeed, the lessons in this set will touch on these and some of the "surprises" in the story. Given that children will hear or be reminded of this story every year for the rest of their lives, this set takes the opportunity to emphasize the life application of the story and not merely get lost in its pageantry. **The Magi were seekers who found and worshiped the One who had not only changed their lives, but would change the life of everyone ever born.**

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## Bible Background

Before we get lost in the intriguing details about who the Magi were and what they did, let's get right to the two main teaching points of the story:

### 1 Jesus is the one promised by scripture and Isaiah.

"Arise, shine, for the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

*Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn...*

*and all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense*

*and proclaiming the praise of the Lord."*

Excerpts from Isaiah 60:1-6

### 2 Do as the Magi did.

Search for Christ and find him.

Humbly offer him your treasure.

Share the good news back home.

**The story of the Visit of the Magi is so well-known that it is easy to overlook its surprising details and exotic origins—many of which we share in this Background.** Through the lessons in this set, you'll have the opportunity to share many of the following tidbits great and small. Together they remind us of the richness of scripture, the importance of its study, and its hidden surprises.

## Who were the "Magi"?

The word "Magi" is found in many similar forms in Middle Eastern and Roman (Latin) languages. "Magi" can describe someone who is an adviser, a wise counselor, or someone who seeks to know the future by various means, including the use of magic to consult the gods. It is believed that the term "Magi" dates back to ancient Persia—which just happens to be "in the east"

where Matthew says the Magi came from. "Magi" is where we get the English word "magician" as some Magi (seers and such) in various ancient times and countries used magic tricks or illusions to sell their special powers.

In Persian history, "Magi" is a title often used to describe a Zoroastrian priest or ones who devoted themselves to science, including astronomy and philosophy. "Zoroastrianism" was a Persian religion focused on the seeking of signs and wisdom. One of the ways Zoroastrian priests ("Magi") tried to predict the future was to look to the stars for signs. Their unique and mystical skills were highly sought after, especially by those in power.

**Interesting Fact:** Matthew uses the plural form of "MAGOS" which is pronounced with a hard "g"—"Ma-gos". A single "magos" is a "magi"—also pronounced with a hard "g" and not a "j" sound as it became pronounced in English. "THE **MAG-GUY**" is correct!

**The term "Magi" has gone in and out of favor** at various times in Church History—often due to its association with Eastern religions and terms like "magic." Though Matthew definitely uses the term "Magos," it has been translated "Wisemen" in most English translations, and further understood as "Kings," especially in the popular culture (a subject kids want to know about and we'll get to in a moment).

### **How the Old Testament Shaped Matthew's Magi Story**

"Magi" (wisemen, advisers, seers) are mentioned quite a few times in the Old Testament, and almost always in association with a king—wisemen visiting a king, being summoned by the king, giving advice to the king. As they do today, kings and advisers attended the coronation or counsel of other kings, especially those who were powerful. (We might think of them as "chiefs" or "vassal kings." King Herod, for example, visited Rome.)

Psalms 72 and Isaiah 60 are the two most prominent Old Testament passages that describe and perhaps shaped Matthew's recollection of The Visit of the Magi. Like the other Gospel writers, Matthew was eager to show that Jesus fulfilled the scriptures, and these two certainly look like they are fulfilled in Matthew 2:

*"May the kings of Sheba and Seba present him gifts, ...and bow down before him."*  
(Psalm 72: 10-11)

*"Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn...  
and all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming  
the praise of the Lord."*  
(Isaiah 60:6)

**Prophets are also a type of "wisemen."** They seek signs, perform miracles, anoint Kings, and foretell the future—all of which the Magi do in Matthew's story. Prophets also speak to those in power, which the Magi did. By this definition, Joseph, Mordecai, and Daniel are also "wisemen." In Genesis 41, Pharaoh elevates Joseph to a position of authority saying, "*There is none so discerning and wise as you.*" In Esther, Mordecai rises to power as the king's adviser because the king believes God speaks through Mordecai. In Daniel 1:20—which takes place in Babylon and Persia (the lands of the Magi)—we read that "*in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them (Daniel) ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom.*"

**The Queen of Sheba was a "wise woman"!** For she herself came to Jerusalem bearing gifts and seeking the wisdom of Solomon's one true God (1 Kgs 10). This scripture explains why the Magi would have first gone to Jerusalem to inquire where the new king had been born. Being a Magi or Seer or Prophet gave you access to power and got the attention of those in power.

**So how did the Magi become "Kings"?**

It was because of Psalm 72.

*"May the kings of Sheba and Seba present him gifts, ...and bow down before him."*  
(Psalm 72:10-11)

Tertullian, one of the early Church's theologians and "founder of Christian theology," was the first to affirm the identification of Magi as Kings. Undoubtedly he read what you have just read. Then over time, legends about the names and backstories of the Magi developed in the far-flung reaches of the early church. To say the Magi were "definitely kings" is a bit of a stretch, but now at least you can see how the tradition formed and evolved.

**How did we end up with "3" Kings?**

The tradition grew up that there were THREE of them because there were three gifts. This happened despite Matthew's silence about how many Magi there were! A tradition of naming the three kings also grew in the early centuries of Christianity. As Christianity spread, different translations and traditions (and names) appeared while the knowledge of the roots of Magi faded. At some point they acquired camels! And then they started showing up at the newborn's manger, instead of the HOME that Matthew very clearly names as the place they entered into.

**Wait... How old was Jesus when the Magi arrived?**

Jesus may have been a toddler! Matthew 2:10-11 says that the star stopped where Jesus was at a "home" that they would then enter, not a manger or a stable. This means the Wisemen were not part of the "manger" scene as they are so often erroneously depicted. The family had

moved into a house. And this being their "hometown" it seems they stayed for a while until they received word to flee to Egypt. This is another great example for children of how tradition and art can sometimes take license with the actual scripture. No camels. No manger. And maybe not even a "baby" in this Magi scene!

### **What was the "star" they saw?**

Nobody really knows what the "Star of Bethlehem" was, and the only thing most agree on is that is a wonderful metaphor about seeing and following God's sign into the presence of our king.

Many have tried to prove their theory of what the star was. *Was it a bright star or a comet? Was it maybe a planet or a conjunction of planets?*

**The only thing we do know is that it wasn't very obvious.** When the Magi arrive in Herod's court, nobody there knows anything about it, suggesting this star was not as obvious as later religious art and tradition has led us to believe. Astronomers and astrologers track the movement of the planets among the stars, and it is often the movement of a planet (to them, a "star") into a certain constellation of stars that created the "sign" or message they were looking for.

To those of us in modern times, it is best to imagine the "Star of Bethlehem" as a tiny point of light, both then and now. Small like a mustard seed. A message others ignore. A message whose potential is known only to those who wait for its rising. And upon seeing it, they rise up themselves and follow the one who created and gives light, and who tells us to let our light shine before others. **Yes, my friend, you are the real Star of Bethlehem.**

### **When they "fell down and worshipped"**

The literal position of the Magi described in Matthew 2:11's Greek phrase, "pesontes prosekunhsan" (pronounced "pa-son-tes pro-say-kun-san") is explored through sculpture and a reading activity in this lesson set's Art Workshop. But it's an interesting insight for every workshop. The common English translations of "pesontes prosekunhsan" are "fall down and worship" or "knelt down and worshiped" or "bowed down and worshiped." But Matthew's actual words describe a physical position that speaks volumes about the hearts of the Magi as they entered into the presence of the King they had journeyed so far to find. The polite word for "prosekunhsan" is "worship," but it literally means to fall on your face --to prostrate yourself. Elsewhere the word is used to describe kissing someone's hand, or a dog licking your hand. Whether you're a king of wise person, that's some serious humility!

### **Why did they gift Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh?**

Origen, one of the early "Church Fathers" (a 3rd century A.D. theologian), was the first to give the gifts their theological significance.

1. Gold: for a king.
2. Embalming Myrrh (oil): for one who was human or was to die
3. Frank-incense: an offering to God (as it was used in the Temple).

These are expensive and highly symbolic gifts. Gold and incense were "foretold" by Isaiah 60:6. Matthew adds myrrh oil to the gifts Isaiah foretold serving as a sort of symbolic "bookend" to the life of Jesus—being given to him at his birth and brought to the tomb at his death. (Myrrh was an embalming and healing oil.) All these gifts are signs of who the child is and will become.

### **What do you give the child who already has everything?**

Focusing too much on these three gifts can take away from the "fourth gift" and perhaps the most important gift anyone can offer God—humility. The literal Greek of Matthew's story here says they "fell down prostrate, face down." Quite a sight! One can imagine the Holy Family with eyes wide in amazement at the sight of these elite searchers face-down before their child while accepting their gifts with a slightly befuddled look. ("Incense for a baby?")

*What gift did Jesus give THEM in that moment?*

*What does it feel like to lay flat on the floor looking up at little pink toes?*

*What does it feel like to search for the meaning of life and find it?*

*"And they returned to their country by another way."* This may be the most overlooked verse in the entire story, from a teaching point of view. Yes, they wanted to avoid Herod but we can also see it as a metaphor for how our visit to Christmas changes us. We are different after we have searched, humbly prostrated ourselves before Jesus. We are changed when we open our treasures and hearts to him.

Are you looking for a Christmas that means something? ***Search for him, humble yourself, and offer your greatest treasures to him.***

**Yes, you should burst their "Christmas Story Bubble" with the truth.**

Surprises like these are not only attention-grabbing and thought-provoking, they emphasize the importance of actually **READING** the Bible instead of getting our scripture from Christmas pageants and Christmas cards.

*Call them Magi. Call them wise men.  
You can even call them kings if you'd like!*

***Each label shines a light on a different facet of the story.*** *Whatever you choose to call them this holiday season, these men are the first in the canonical New Testament to bow and worship the Lord Jesus. This Christmas we would do well to follow their example. (Quote from [Christianity Today](#))*

**BTW: What about Herod's "murder of the innocents"?**

We are leaving that story out of our lesson set. Children don't need to hear it, and at this point in Matthew's Gospel, it does nothing to help us understand the motivation and quest of the Magi—or our own.

While the known historical records about Herod (and there are several) fail to mention a murder of children, other recorded events show that he was quite capable of it. Herod murdered three of his own sons, so 20 more from a backwater village would not necessarily even be remembered, except by those who survived it.

## (WT) The Magi ~ King Cake Cooking Workshop

 [The Writing Team](#) Fortifying our Supporting Members

### The Magi

#### "King Cake" Cooking Workshop Lesson

from the [Rotation.org](#) Writing Team



#### Lesson Summary

Students will create, bake, and take home their own traditional "King Cake" to celebrate the revealing (epiphany) of Christ as the newborn king heralded and worshiped by the Magi. As part of their Bible study, they will design a parchment paper cover for their cake that shares insights from the lesson.

**Note:** Our writer created a "simpler at-home" version of this lesson as well and posted it in our [Epiphany forum](#). [Take a look.](#)

#### About the "King Cake"

As seen below, this lesson uses a quick assembly and fast baking King Cake recipe that allows the teacher and students to focus on the meaning of the lesson, rather than getting lost in mixing ingredients and long bake times. As an option, the cakes can be prepared for baking at home.

King Cakes are a traditional and fun part of New Orleans' Carnival season that begins with Epiphany and ends with Mardi Gras (aka Shrove Tuesday) to make way for Ash Wednesday and the solemn season of Lent. Both the celebration and the cake were originally themed as celebrations of the visit of the Magi and the Kingship of Christ. In addition to hiding baby Jesus in the cake for a lucky celebrant to receive a blessing upon finding him, the cake is decorated with the three colors of Mardi Gras (purple, green, gold)—which are also the traditional colors

of the three gifts and three Magi. Students will learn the hidden meaning of the colors as they decorate the cake and take it home to celebrate the meaning of the Magi's story with their family.

[Read more](#) about the Magi Mardi Gras connection here at Rotation.org.

### **Scripture**

#### Matthew 2:1-12

they saw the star

they were overjoyed

they saw the child

they bowed down and worshiped

they opened their treasures

they returned to their country

(NIV)

### **Supplies and Advanced Preparation**

- [Read the Bible Background and Lesson Objectives](#) for this lesson set.
- Cake ingredients and baking supplies (amounts required will depend on whether you are making a single cake or one per student—see recipe for details):
  - crescent roll dough
  - cream cheese, softened
  - white sugar
  - cinnamon
  - vanilla
  - lemon juice
  - butter
  - icing sugar
  - water
  - sugar sprinkles (yellow, purple, and green)
  - cooking spray or oil for greasing pans

- forks
- knife
- pastry brush
- Foil cake (pie) pans for each student, if making individual cakes.
- Ice cubes and sandwich bags (if unbaked cakes to be taken home).
- Purchase the Baby Jesus figurines, one per cake/student (inexpensively available in bulk at your favorite online store).
- Squares of parchment or butcher paper (or purchase white cardboard covers with the foil cake pan) to write on and cover the cake for transport.
- Colored markers: purple, gold, and green to write on the cake tin cover.
- Whiteboard or flipchart. (If time is short, write three questions -in Bible Study below- in advance.)
- Make copies of baking instructions to go home that read "*15 minutes or so at 350.*"
- Print or prepare photos to show of [traditional King Cakes](#) and [the Magi](#) at Mardi Gras.
- View the instructional YouTube video "*World's Easiest King Cake*" at <https://youtu.be/v3hGssG5By8>
- Make a cake in advance (if children will be taking home their cakes).

Click the image to open the video in Youtube:



### **A Simple King Cake Recipe:**

The following recipe is based on the one described in the video. Adjust to the size and number of cakes you will be making.

Use Crescent Roll Dough:

2 packages of crescent rolls make one full-size cake.

If you are making individual King Cakes, adjust ingredients accordingly. Using 2 packages of crescent rolls will make approximately 4 small student-created King Cakes. The roll triangles can be stretched and squeezed to fit into a smaller circle.

The Cinnamon & Cream Cheese Filling

According to the video, the ingredients and amounts will make enough filling for one full-size cake. Thus, the following amounts will make enough filling for four small student-created cakes.

Be sure to have extra on hand.



**Steps:**

1. Make the filling by mixing together approximately 1 pack of cream cheese, 1/3 cup sugar, 1 tsp vanilla, 2 tsp lemon juice until creamy. This is enough filling for three or four small King Cakes each made with 1/2 of a roll of crescent dough. Adjust per your needs. (The filling amounts described above are half the amount mentioned in the video, but she also mentions that she made twice as much filling as she needed for one full-sized cake.) After mixing the filling, set it aside.
2. Separate the roll triangles and place on a lightly greased sheet or foil pan to form a circle. Pointy ends to the center. Make sure the edges overlap.  
*We suggest using a foil cake pan so that each student can make his own and take it home baked or unbaked.*
3. Brush triangles with butter.
4. Mash the seams together with a fork all around the middle of each triangle where the cream cheese will go (this will keep it from oozing out during baking).
5. Sprinkle the dough with cinnamon sugar.
6. Spoon on the cream cheese filling

7. Fold the wide end of triangles over the filling, then fold small center points of triangles over the top. Press to keep filling from oozing out.
8. Place in a 350-degree oven for 15 to 18 minutes (checking early depending on size).

*Break for Bible Study and Parchment Cover Activity*

9. Remove from oven and let stand for a few minutes while you make enough simple white icing to glaze the still warm King Cake.
10. Before glazing, use a knife to cut a small slit in the underside of the cake to hide the Christ Child figure inside.
11. Drizzle white glaze over the cake. Make designs, words, symbols, if desired.
12. Liberally sprinkle traditional colored sugars over the glaze: yellow (power), purple (justice), and green (faith) colors.
13. Cover with the paper cover you created during the Bible study.

### **Baking Time and Other Considerations**

Baking time is approximately 15 to 18 minutes @ 350 for smaller cakes. If you don't have the time or oven space, cakes can be prepared to take home for baking (include baking instructions). Check each cake's dough seams before placing it in the oven so that the filling does not spill out and burn. The teacher should prepare a King Cake for the entire class ahead of time (baked or unbaked depending on how much time you have) to decorate and enjoy during the lesson, whether student cakes will be baked in the church or taken home.

### **Adjustments:**

If you are baking the King Cakes during the lesson, you will have to ice them while still warm—which will cause the icing to turn into a thin glaze. Fortunately, sprinkling yellow, purple, and green colored sugar is a King Cake tradition too! ...which is why our recipe above has students sprinkling colored sugar on the icing-glaze.

If you are preparing the cakes to go home, the cream cheese can only be left at room temperature for a maximum of 2 hours. Place a couple of ice cubes in a sealed sandwich bag and place it in the center of the crescent ring to make it last longer.

Traditional King Cakes are circular to represent the eternal nature of Christ. If you need to reduce the cost of ingredients, you can have students prepare and decorate sections of the cake

(including their own baby) and then assemble the sections for baking. You can also simply make smaller ring cakes using fewer crescent roll triangles per cake and overlapping them a little more to create a small circle.

Smaller student-made King Cakes will bake faster so keep an eye on them.

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## **Lesson Plan**

As in many cooking workshop lessons, students need to get a head start on preparing the food in order to get it in the oven. Scripture and discussion will take place during baking time.

The teacher should prepare a King Cake for the class to enjoy during the Reflection time if the student-baked (or prepared) cakes will be going home.

## **Opening**

Welcome your students and explain how today's lesson will unfold.

Show a picture of a [traditional King Cake](#) and [the Magi](#) as they are traditionally portrayed at Mardi Gras celebrations. Explain the connection between the cake and the Magi (see notes below).

## **Prepare the King Cakes**

Wash hands and follow the recipe and steps described above in this lesson.

**If you are baking the cakes at church**, set a timer and assign a helper with the responsibility of checking on the cakes.

**If you are preparing the cakes to go home**, once assembled, place them in a refrigerator while you conduct the Bible study and create a paper cover for the individual cakes.

*Reminder: You will be decorating the cakes after the Bible Study.*

## **Bible Study**

The following brief study assumes your students are acquainted with the story, and thus spends its time on the meaning of the story using the rubric of the three traditional colors of Mardi Gras and your King Cake sugars. The three colors are sometimes correlated to the three gifts, though this is simply a loose tradition. The point is that, like the gifts, the colors help teach the meaning of the story. Feel free to adjust per your needs and age group.

Write the following three questions on the board, then read the story found in Matthew 2:1-12 and briefly discuss these questions and concepts. ***In the next activity, students will transfer these colors and their meaning to a cover for their King Cake.***

What were the Magi hoping that baby Jesus would bring to the world?

1. Power... the power to do what? (Gold = power, authority, who's in charge?)
2. Justice.... what is justice? and what kind of law or rule would Jesus bring? (Purple is the color of royalty, but also the color of "justice.")
3. Faith... what kind of faith did Jesus bring into the world? To be afraid of God? To just obey rules? (Green = a living faith, a living and loving relationship. How is your faith "alive"?)

### **Making the Paper Covers**

*Students will write on the cake covers before decorating the cake because tables and hands will get messy during decorating.*

Give each student a square of paper or cardboard cover. Distribute the three colors of markers and remind the students what each represents based on the reading and discussion you just conducted.

The cover needs a title, name, and a few words about the meaning of the colors in the form of a question that family members can ask. Example shown below:



After decorating the covers, set them aside and decorate the cakes.

#### **Decorating the Cakes \*if you baked them at church\***

- Mix the white glaze and drizzle on the cake in any pattern desired.
- Sprinkle the three colors of sugar on the cake.
- Seal the cake tin with your paper topper. Add instructions if needed.

\*If you are short on time and need to send the cakes home to be decorated, have students help pour a suitable amount of the three colored sugars and white icing in separate sealable baggies, and place under the tin foil for transport home with instructions.

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#### **Adaptations**

For younger children and shorter class times: Prepare the crescent rolls on pans before class starts. Let students mix the filling and place it. Prepare the white glaze ahead of time and put it in baggies they can use to squeeze onto their cakes. Be sure to cut the paper toppers ahead of time and write some of the info on the paper.

You can make your own "crescent roll" dough ahead of time and bring into class.

# The Magi

## Art Workshop Lesson

As a reminder of the travels of the Wise Men, the children will create their own camel marionette. We have pre-assembled some of the parts to save on time.

### Lesson Plan

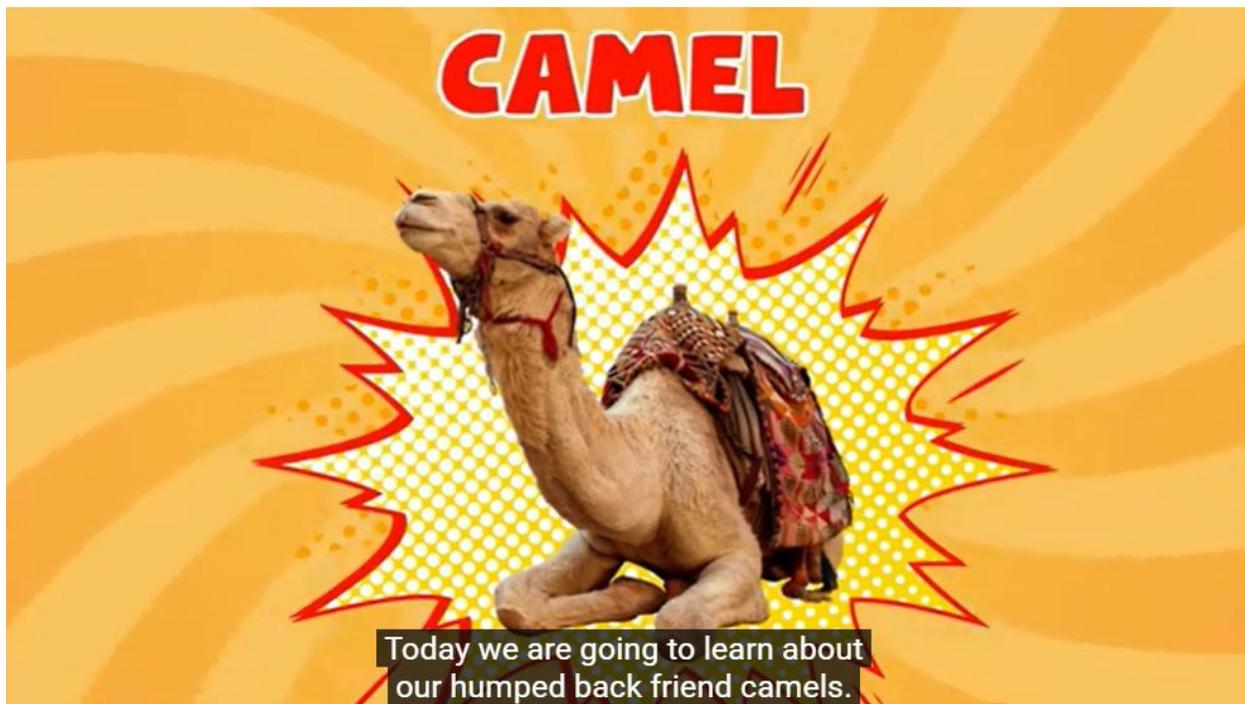
Welcome and Introduction:

Reread the story of the Three Wise Men from Matthew 2:1-11

State that the for travelers, like the Magi (Wise Men) who took long trips, they would often use camels for their transportation. Let's watch a short video about camels to learn more about these amazing animals.

Show video: "Fun Facts About Camels" Duration: 4minutes 26 seconds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6rAj9zWi5s&t=3s>



After the video announce, that today we're going to be making our own camel to help us remember how they played an important role in the journey of the three Wise Men to find baby Jesus.

The Craft:

Wooden Camel marionettes will come pre-assembled. Kids will paint them, put googly eyes on the head, cut out and attach cloth saddles, and glue on fabric ears and tails.



What's needed:

- Brown paint
- Gray paint for hooves
- Googly eyes
- Cloth for camel saddle

While paint is drying, here are some discussion questions to ponder together with the kids:

Why do you think the Magi (Wise Men) wanted to find the baby King of the Jews when they saw the new star?

If you were the Wise Men packing for a long journey, what would you bring with you on this trip?

What do you think it was like to ride on camels during this long trip?

What do you think it was like to finally see baby Jesus, the King of the Jews?

How do you think Mary and Joseph reacted to have the Magi arrive at their doorstep wanting to see baby Jesus? What part of the Wise Men's story shared with Jesus' parents do you think would have been the most interesting for Mary and Joseph to hear?

The Wise Men brought Jesus three gifts (gold, frankincense, myrrh). If you could have joined them on this trip, what gift would you want to give to the baby King?

# The Magi

## Computer (or "Presentation") Workshop Lesson

from the Rotation.org Writing Team

### Lesson Summary



### Summary of Lesson Activities:

Students will explore THE MAGI section of "Fluffy and God's Amazing Christmas Adventure"—an interactive software program from *Sunday Software*. This lesson can be used either in a multiple computer "lab" setting or with the teacher presenting the software from one screen to the group while inviting children to help navigate through the program.

"Presentation" notes (one computer for the whole group) have been added to the following lesson plan which was written with a "lab" concept of computers in mind (small groups of students working through the program at computer workstations). *See more notes about "presenting" in the Adaptations section.*

*The "Fluffy" software is FREE to our Supporting Members. [Download it now.](#)*

★ *This lesson and the software are especially focused on life application—seeing ourselves as the Magi, and thinking about the gifts we can give our King.*

### Scripture

[Matthew 2:1-12](#)

they saw the star  
they were overjoyed  
they saw the child  
they bowed down and worshiped  
they opened their treasures  
they returned to their country  
(NIV)

The software has the Matthew 2:1-12 scripture in it (and also interacts with it).

## Supplies and Advanced Preparation

- [Read the Bible Background and Lesson Objectives](#) for this lesson set.
  - Download and Install your free copies of Fluffy and God's Amazing Christmas Adventure (Sunday Software). The download includes worksheets and a Teacher's Guide.
  - Preview the Magi Section of the Fluffy Christmas software. If using it in a lab setting, make sure each installed copy works—especially checking the "Fluffimation" activity.
  - Print the Fluffy-Magi student worksheet if you plan on using it (can be found and printed from Sunday Software).
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## Lesson Plan

### Opening- Welcome and Lesson Introduction

Greet the children and introduce yourself and any helpers that you have. Explain what today's lesson is about and how it will unfold.

### Dive into "The Magi" in the Fluffy software

**The software has scripture reading, Bible study, and reflection built into it.** If you go through the Magi section of the software (#6 Fluffy Main Menu) in the order of this lesson plan, you will be following an "Open, Dig, Reflect" lesson plan paradigm.

**Here is a screenshot of the Magi Menu and the suggested order** of learning sections the students and teachers should follow (4 and 5 are optional). Some sections are longer than others and **content and class time are weighted toward sections 6, 7, and 8** where there's more life application. Section 6, the Magi "Fluffimation" is a key reflection activity. Each section has questions and thoughts to ponder.



### Overview of the Magi learning areas:

- 1) Matthew 2: 1-12 -- God tells the story of the Magi
- 2) About Magi ~ Take the Quiz!



### 3) About the Star

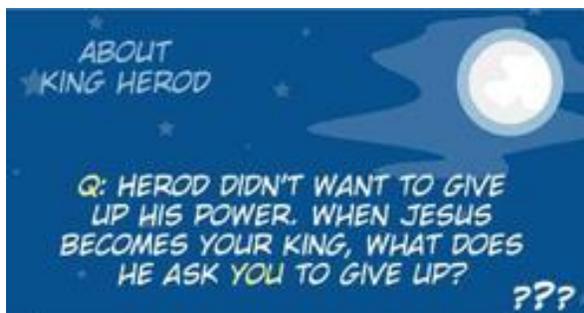
Was it a huge star? Was it a comet or a planet? What does the star mean to us today?

Who are some of the "stars" pointing you to Jesus? What are some ways God sends messages to people in the church?



#### 4) About Herod (Optional)

Why do some people not want to celebrate the birth of Jesus?



#### 5) Another Wise Person looking for the Messiah -- Simeon (Optional)

Simeon was a good old man who lived in Jerusalem...

#### 6) MAGI FLUFFIMATION ...how to look for God

Fluffimations are interactive "mad-lib-like" activities where the kids complete a form based on *Matthew 2:1-12* and then Fluffy puts their answers into a teaching response about "looking for God today."

- The results can be funny and poignant, and you can do it as many times as you want. In a lab setting, have the kids complete a Fluffimation and present it to the class.
- In a "presentation" setting, the teacher prompts the group for suggested completions and then plays it back to them.

#### 7) About ~ Gifts of the Magi

An interactive mini-game appears asking "What are Frankincense, Gold, and Myrrh? and what did they mean?? Students drag the description to the correct item. A question is revealed when they do so. It reads: "What three things

in your world could be substitutes for Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh that might have similar meanings?" (Note: This is essentially the same question asked again at the end of the Fluffy vs Herod game.)



➔ Important Tip about the Gifts of the Magi Matching Game: Click-Hold the ANSWER and drag it to one of the three choices

## 8) Fluffy vs Herod game and discussion

Players bounce Fluffy to reveal real Christmas treasure. After the treasure is revealed, a **REFLECTION QUESTION** appears. *"What gifts would we bring Jesus today that would have the same meaning as gold, frankincense, and myrrh?"* There is some explanation of the three gifts in the software. Here is some more detail:

1. Gold represents wealth. What do you have a lot of that you could share? (time, talents, treasure, good attitude, knowledge, compassion, ability to speak up).
2. Frankincense was incense used in the Temple to make things smell good to God. What things could you do that would "smell" good to God? What things in your life "stink" right now?
3. Myrrh was good smelling oil sometimes used as a perfume, sometimes used to perfume dead bodies, and sometimes used to "anoint" someone (apply a sign) of their special favor, mission, or selection by God.

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## Adaptations

**For younger children:** Use the software in "presentation mode" (a Teacher at the computer showing the software to the class, preferably on a large screen or projected on the wall). Many young children won't be able to read the words on the screen but they will enjoy parts of the presentation anyway. They won't be able to read the Fluffimation but they can provide answers to your questions and hear the presentation when Fluffy speaks it aloud.

**For those short on time:** Skip Magi area 4 and 5 (Herod and Simeon).

**For those "presenting" the software to a group:** Most Bible software programs are interactive and designed for use by the students. That said, a savvy teacher with ONE computer can often easily show the software on one big screen (or project it on the wall) and invite students to step forward and help navigate. Interactive questions designed for individual workstation responses now get asked of the whole group. This "presentation" mode allows the teacher to stay on content as long as needed, elaborate as much or as little as they want, rephrase what's read on the screen, or skip things entirely.

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