

Children's liturgy Resources – The Epiphany of the Lord (Year C)

Preparation of the worship space

Colour: white

Props: star-shaped pieces of paper or card

Song suggestions: We three kings (788 Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)

Welcome: Today we will hear about some wise men who followed a star and came to visit Jesus. Let's think a bit about how we follow God in our lives.

Opening prayer: God of wonder, help us to have as much faith as the wise men who followed your star to find Jesus. Lead us down the right paths and help us to recognise Jesus in the people that we meet as we travel through life. Amen.

First reading (optional): Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalm: Psalm 71:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

Gospel acclamation: everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. Suggestions include: 'Halle, halle, halle' (Caribbean) from 'Sing With the World', Alison Adam & John Bell; 'Alleluia' (Zimbabwe), Abraham Maraire Publications, WCC & GIA; 'Celtic Alleluia' (traditional); 'Alleluia! Raise the Gospel' from 'Go Before Us', Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications.

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

Gospel reflection: What do you remember from the reading today?

Some wise men arrive in Jerusalem at the court of King Herod, asking to meet the new baby who will be King of the Jews. Who is the baby that they were looking for?

Was the baby Jesus at the palace with King Herod? Where was he?

How do you think King Herod felt when he heard that the wise men were looking for a new king? What did he say to the wise men? Do you think he was telling the truth?

The wise men had travelled a very long way to see Jesus. How did they know where they were supposed to go?

The star led them all the way to Bethlehem and there they found Jesus. What did the wise men do when they found the child they had been looking for?

The star is very important in this story. Why do you think that is?

The star showed the wise men where to go. It was a sign from God for them to follow.

As part of their confirmation programme, the young people from St Erconwald's Church reflected on what it means to stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers across the world. They decided to hold an overnight vigil. They imagined what it was like to make a long journey that would take them far from home. They even went on a midnight walk in the cold and the rain. Like the wise men, they decided to do something that was difficult but that, by the end of their vigil, had brought them closer to God.

We do not always have a star to follow, to show us that we are following what God wants us to do. But God has given us Jesus, to show us how we should try to live our lives. And when we pray, God guides us to do what is right, if we listen.

Can you think of any other ways that God guides us to follow the right path in our journey through life?

How do we follow God in our lives? How will you follow God in the coming week?

Intercessions *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

God guides us and shows the right way to live our lives, and so we pray to God together:

We pray for all the leaders in the world: that they may be moved not to think of their own power and wealth but to rule wisely and do what is right for all their people. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for the Church throughout the world: that it may shine like the star, leading people to Jesus, and spread God's message of justice, peace and love. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for those people around the world who are undertaking long journeys, or who are in need of guidance: that they may find their way to a place of safety, welcome and peace. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, our family and friends: that we may always be open to following God in our lives, in both our actions and our words. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: Generous God, we give thanks for all that you have given us. Open our hearts to follow you so that all that we do may be guided by your love. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Activity suggestions

Ask the children to colour in the accompanying optional illustration and on the back to draw or write how they will follow God in their lives over the next week.

Cut star shapes out of card (see the template below). Ask the children to draw or write how they will follow God in their lives over the next week, or to write a prayer inspired by all they have heard and thought about today.

Conduct 'interviews' with various children playing Herod, the wise men, Mary and Joseph. How do these characters feel about the events in the reading? Or act out the gospel reading with the children.

Ask the children to discuss all that they have heard and thought about today with their family. Ask them to think about how they will follow God in their lives in the following week. If the children have written a prayer ask them to say it at home together during the week.

