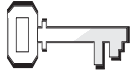


Gifts for Baby Jesus



References

Matthew 2:1-12;
The Desire of Ages,
pp. 59-64



Memory Verse

“They saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him” (Matthew 2:11, NIV).

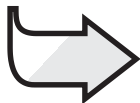


Objectives

The children will:
Know that giving gifts to Jesus as the Wise Men did is a part of worship.

Feel joyful because God has given Jesus to us—a special, wonderful gift.

Respond by promising always to give our best to Jesus.



The Message

We worship Jesus when we give gifts to Him.

Monthly Theme

We praise God for the gift of Jesus.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Somewhere in the east a small group of Wise Men have been studying the prophets, and they realize that soon the Messiah is to be born. When they see an unusual star, they follow it to Jerusalem and ask about the Messiah. King Herod hears about their mission, interviews them, and pretends to want to join in their worship. He consults with the Jewish leaders, then sends the Wise Men to Bethlehem. After the Magi visit Jesus, worship Him, and give gifts to the family, God warns them in a dream not to go back to Herod, so they return to their country by another route.

This is a lesson about worship.

Even though the Wise Men were of a different culture, and a different religion, their hearts were drawn in worship to Jesus. At considerable effort, they followed the star to find Jesus and give Him costly gifts. We don't bring gold, incense, and myrrh to Jesus, but we do give Him our best gifts, including our time, talents, and our heart.

Teacher Enrichment

The Wise Men “were of noble birth, educated, wealthy, and influential. They were the philosophers, the counselors of the realm. . . .

“They were instructed in dreams to go in search of the Messiah. . . .

“The tradition that there were but three Wise Men arose from the fact that there were three gifts (Matt. 2:11), and is without support in Scripture. . . .

“Some have thought that the Wise Men were from the same section of the ‘east country’ as was Balaam. . . . If such was the case, their journey to Bethlehem would be some 400 miles in length and would require two or three weeks of steady travel if they rode, perhaps a month if they walked. . . .

“By this time Jesus was at least 40 days old, perhaps older. . . .

“The gifts presented by the Wise Men provided the necessary means for the journey [to Egypt]” (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 288-291).

“As these magi studied the starry heavens, and sought to fathom the mystery hidden in their bright paths, they beheld the glory of the Creator. Seeking clearer knowledge, they turned to

the Hebrew Scriptures. In their own land were treasured prophetic writings that predicted the coming of a divine teacher. . . . In the Old Testament the Savior's advent was more clearly revealed. The magi learned with joy that His coming was near, and that the whole world was to be filled with a knowledge of the glory of the Lord" (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 59, 60).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 11. Add three things to represent the Magi's three gifts—wrapped boxes or pretty jars.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Star Ornament</i> B. <i>Make a Human Star</i> C. <i>Smells Good</i>	star pattern (see p. 154); paper; scissors; hole punch; glue sticks or tape; art supplies; ribbon, yarn, or string none perfume and/or spices
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Story Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy; The SDA Hymnal</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> star ornaments or Christmas-theme offering device none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	star, pens (optional) star shapes (see p. 154), scissors, marker Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>What Shall I Give?</i>	none
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>I'll Give My Heart</i>	heart pattern (see p. 137), red paper, scissors, art supplies

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week’s memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week’s lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- star pattern (see p. 154)
- paper
- scissors
- hole punch
- glue sticks or tape
- art supplies
- ribbon, yarn, or string

A. Star Ornament

In advance, copy a star pattern for each child (see page 154) and punch a hole at the top. Have the children color and decorate them, cut them out, and thread string, ribbon, or yarn through the hole. The pocket can be cut out and either glued or taped to the star. Let the children place their offering in the pocket and hang the stars on the tree or other appropriate place.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you say: **Show me your stars. You have done a good job! Our Bible story today is about some men who followed a star they saw in the sky. They were looking for someone special. When they found Him, they worshiped Him and gave Him gifts.**

Our memory verse is “They saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him” (Matthew 2:11). We worship Jesus when we bring our offerings to Him, too. Today’s message is:



WE WORSHIP JESUS WHEN WE GIVE GIFTS TO HIM.

Say that with me.

B. Make a Human Star

Ask the children to think of a way to form a human star. Then have them stand in such a way to form a five-pointed star. (Large class: form groups of eight or 10 children.) Have helpers assist as needed. When finished, have the children sit in those same positions.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Did you have fun trying to figure out how to form a star together? Why do you think we made a star today?** (Our story is about a star. We will learn something about stars.) **That’s right. Today’s story is about a special star, one that was made of angels. Those angels helped some men deliver gifts to Jesus. Our memory verse says: “They saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him” (Matthew 2:11). We are worshipping Jesus when we give our gifts to Him too. Our message is:**



WE WORSHIP JESUS WHEN WE GIVE GIFTS TO HIM.

Say that with me.

C. Smells Good

Invite the children to gather around you as you open containers of perfume and/or fragrant spices one at a time. Ask them to try to identify each smell and tell what they think it is.

You Need:

- perfume and/or spices

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Which fragrances did you like best? How do you think they are used? A long time ago perfumes and spices were very expensive and were only used on special occasions. Today we will learn about some special perfume and spices that some people gave to Baby Jesus. Our memory verse tells us: "They saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him" (Matthew 2:11). We are worshiping Jesus when we give our gifts to Him, too. Our message is:**



WE WORSHIP JESUS WHEN WE GIVE GIFTS TO HIM.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing from last week's lesson study and review last week's memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 71 or no. 72)
- "Away in a Manger" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 73 or no. 74)
- "Silent Night, Holy Night" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 76)
- "Some Children See Him" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 77)
- "Now Is Born the Divine Christ Child" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 78)
- "We Three Kings" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 137)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Emphasize how those in the story gave their gifts (money, talents, time, etc.) to Jesus.



Offering

Say: **We worship Jesus when we give Him our gifts of money to be used to help others know about Him.** If the children made star ornaments (Readiness A), point to them now. If not, collect the offering in a Christmas-theme offering device.

You Need:

- star ornaments or Christmas-theme offering device



Prayer

In a short prayer, thank God for accepting our gifts of love.

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- star
- pens (optional)

Experiencing the Story

Darken the room and turn on the angel star (part of room decorations). As you read or tell the story, have the children interact by doing the following:

When you say:	They do:
Wise Men/Man	Press index finger to temple in a thinking motion
star, stars	Point to star in room.
baby or Jesus	Pretend to hold and rock baby in arms.

Or have the children make simple faces with markers or pens (use washable ink) on the tips of their fingers to represent the Wise Men. When they are mentioned in the story, have the children hold up their fingers.

Read or tell the story.

"I see it, I see it!" The **Wise Man** looking into the night sky was suddenly very excited. "What do you think?" he asked the **Wise Man** with him.

"It could be the sign we've been looking for," answered his friend. Together, they discussed the new "**star**" they had been observing.

These men were part of the Magi, a group of men who were known in their country to be intelligent, honest, and wise.

As they had been studying the **stars** in the heavens, they also began to study the Hebrew Scriptures and had learned that it was time for the Messiah to be born. When the beautiful new **star** appeared, they were sure it was the sign of His coming.

After much discussion, some of the **Wise Men** decided to follow the **star**, to

see if it would lead them to the promised one. Traveling at night to keep the **star** in sight, the **Wise Men** journeyed over mountains and across deserts. They kept studying the Scriptures as they went, and God's Holy Spirit was with them, helping them to know God was guiding them.

After weeks of travel, the **star** stopped over the city of Jerusalem. The **Wise Men** expected everyone there to be talking about the birth of their new King, but strangely, no one seemed to know anything about it. Before long, King Herod heard about the strangers and their questions, and he invited them to come talk to him.

"Sir, can you direct us to the King of the Jews who has been born so that we may worship Him?" asked one.

Now, Herod was not a bit pleased at the thought that there could be a new king. He was not well-liked by his Hebrew subjects, and the idea of a new king made him angry and jealous. But he pretended to be interested so he could find out more. Herod asked the priests and scribes what they knew about a Jewish king. They soon reported that Scripture said that the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem.

"Let's be on our way then," the **Wise Men** said to each other, glad that it seemed their search would soon end.

Arriving in Bethlehem, they found Mary, Joseph, and **Jesus**. At first it didn't seem possible that this could be the king they had traveled so far to worship. There was no royal guard or anything at all to show the world that He was a King. But when the **Wise Men** saw the **baby**, they knew that **Jesus** truly was their Savior, and they worshipped Him. They gave their costly gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Mary and Joseph.

Soon it was time to return home, and the **Wise Men** planned to go back to

Jerusalem to share their good news with King Herod. But God gave them a dream, telling them that Herod really wanted to harm the **baby**, rather than worship Him. So they went home another way.

We can bring our best to **Jesus**, to worship Him just as the **Wise Men** did. We can give Him our time and our talents. We can give gifts of money or other things. But best of all, we can give Him our hearts. What will your gift of worship be for **Jesus**?

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

Why did Herod want to kill Jesus?

(He was jealous; he knew the people did not like him and they might try to make someone else their ruler.)

How do you think the Wise Men felt when they finally found Baby Jesus? Why did the Wise Men bring Jesus gifts? (It was the custom to do that for royalty, and they believed He was King of the Jews.)

In what ways did the Wise Men worship Jesus? (by telling what they knew of God's story; by searching for Jesus; by bringing gifts to Jesus; by obeying the warning in the dream, thus saving the baby's life)

How do you think Joseph and Mary felt when the Wise Men gave Baby Jesus gifts and bowed down before Him? What do you think Joseph and Mary did with the gifts? (used them to buy food, helped them when they fled to Egypt)

Remember our message? Let's say it:



WE WORSHIP JESUS WHEN WE GIVE GIFTS TO HIM.

Memory Verse

In advance, copy and cut out 16 paper star shapes (see p. 154) and write

one word of the memory verse on each star. Mix them and have the children take turns putting them in order. Repeat until children know the verse. Be sure the children know who "they" are. The memory verse is: **"They saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him"** (Matthew 2:11).

Bible Study

Say: **The Wise Men studied the Hebrew Scriptures, the same ones that the shepherds studied. Let's look at two of those verses.**

Help the students find Numbers 24:17 and read the first phrase of the second sentence only. Say: **What did this verse tell the Wise Men? What do you think they thought when they saw the bright angel star in the sky many years later?**

Now let's look at Micah 5:2. The book of Micah was written 700 years before the Wise Men read it. People waited a long time to worship Jesus!

Have the children find Matthew 2:13, 14 and have someone read the text aloud. Then read the following statement from *The Desire of Ages*, page 65:

"Through the gifts of the magi from a heathen country, the Lord supplied the means for the journey into Egypt and the sojourn in a land of strangers."

Debriefing

Ask: **What do you think about those gifts now? How important were they? How are our gifts to Jesus used today?** (to tell others about Him; to support missionaries who tell people about Jesus; etc.)

The Wise Men knew something we know too:



WE WORSHIP JESUS WHEN WE GIVE GIFTS TO HIM.

You Need:

- 16 paper star shapes (see p. 154)
- scissors
- marker

You Need:

- Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

What Shall I Give?

Say: **The magi were wealthy men. They brought expensive gifts to Jesus. But all that they brought wasn't enough.**

The shepherds were very poor. They thought they didn't have anything to bring to Jesus, but they did. It's something that everyone can give no matter how rich or poor they are. Do you know what that is? Listen to this poem:

**What shall I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I'd give Him a lamb.
If I were a wise man, I'd do my part.
Yet what can I give Him? I'll give Him my heart.**

Debriefing

Say: **We give our hearts to Jesus each time we worship Him. A few minutes ago we said that the Wise Men worshipped Jesus in a lot of ways. What are some ways we worship Jesus?** (by telling others about Jesus; by reading about Him in the Bible; by bringing our money gifts; by being obedient to our parents and teachers; by using our time and talents to help others; etc.)

Do you want to give Jesus the gift of your heart? He would love your worship in that way. Allow response time, then ask the children who want to give themselves to Jesus to raise their hand while you offer a short prayer of dedication.

Close this activity by saying the message together, then go immediately into the next activity. Say: **Let's say today's message together again:**



WE WORSHIP JESUS WHEN WE GIVE GIFTS TO HIM.

4

Sharing the Lesson

You Need:

- heart pattern (see p. 137)
- red paper
- scissors
- art supplies

I'll Give My Heart

In advance, copy the heart pattern (see page 137), one for each child, on red paper.

Distribute supplies and have each child cut out and decorate a paper heart.

While they work, sing "Into My Heart" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 125) or a similar song of dedication.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Can you read what the heart says? Yes, it's the poem we just learned. Show us**

the hearts you just decorated. They're very nice.

Think of someone to share your heart with this week. As you show them, tell them about the Wise Men giving Baby Jesus their gifts. And remember:



WE WORSHIP JESUS WHEN WE GIVE GIFTS TO HIM.

Closing

Pray that the students will always want to worship Jesus with their gifts of money, time, talents, and their hearts.

What can I give Him,
poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring Him a lamb.
If I were a wise man,
I would do my part.
Yet what can I give Him?
I'll give Him my
heart.

What can I give Him,
poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring give Him a lamb.
If I were a wise man,
I would do my part.
Yet what can I give Him?
I'll give Him my
heart.

Gifts for Baby Jesus

References

Matthew 2:1-12;
The Desire of Ages,
 pp. 59-64

Memory Verse

“They saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him” (Matthew 2:11, NIV).

The Message

We worship Jesus when we give gifts to Him.

Do you like to get presents? Most people do. A long time ago some men gave special gifts to Jesus. Maybe it was like this:

“I see it, I see it!” The man looking into the night sky was suddenly very excited. “What do you think?” he asked the men with him.

“It could be the sign we’ve been looking for,” answered one of his friends. Together the men talked about the new “star” they had been studying.

These men were Magi, men known in their country as honest and wise. Although they were not Jews, they had studied the Hebrew Scriptures and learned about a special star. That star meant it was time for the Messiah to be born. So when the bright new star appeared in the night sky, they rejoiced. They were sure it was the sign of the Messiah, the Savior.

After much discussion, some of these Wise Men decided to follow the star. Traveling at night to keep the star in sight, the men

journeyed for many days. They kept studying the Scriptures as they went. And God’s Holy Spirit guided them.

After many weeks of travel, the star stopped over Jerusalem.

The Wise Men expected to find everyone

talking about the birth of their new King. “Where is He who is born King of the Jews?” they asked. “We have seen His star and have come to worship Him.” But strangely, no one seemed to know anything about it.

Before long, King Herod heard about the strangers and their questions. He wanted to know more, so he sent for them. “Sir, can you direct us to the Jewish king who has been born?” asked one of the men. “We have come to worship Him.”

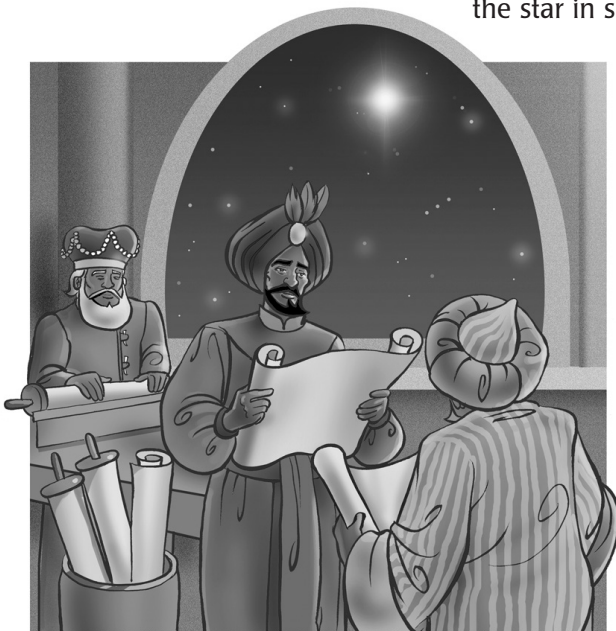
Now, Herod knew that he was not well liked by his subjects. The idea of a new king made him angry and jealous. But he pretended to be interested, so he could find out more. Before answering the men from the east, Herod questioned the Jewish priests and scribes. They reported that Scripture said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

Herod then told the Wise Men: “Go to Bethlehem and search for the child. And when you find Him, come and tell me. I want to worship Him too.”

Soon the Wise Men arrived in Bethlehem. There, they found the place where the little family was staying. But no royal guard stood nearby. There was nothing at all to show the world that this child was special. They wondered, *Can this be the Messiah we have looked for?* At first it didn’t seem possible. But when the Wise Men saw the baby, they knew! This Jesus truly was the Savior! And they bowed down and worshipped Him. Then they gave their costly gifts to Mary and Joseph—gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Soon it was time to leave. The Magi planned to go back to Jerusalem to share their good news with King Herod. But in a dream, God told them not to go there. Wicked King Herod really wanted to harm the baby, not worship Him. So they went home another way.

We can worship Jesus just as the Wise Men did. We can give Him our time



and our talents. We can give gifts of money or other things. But most of all, we can give Him our hearts. What will your special gift of worship be for Jesus?

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- For sundown worship today, sing some Christmas carols. Then read your lesson story together. When it is dark, go outside and find the brightest star in the eastern sky. Is this the star the Wise Men saw? How do you know? (Or look for the brightest light you can find. Is it as bright as the star the Wise Men saw?)
- Teach the memory verse to your family. Talk about gifts your family might give to Jesus. Then thank Jesus for His gifts to you.

Sunday

- For worship, read Matthew 2:1-12. Find Bethlehem on a map of Israel as it is today. Then look north and east of Israel and find the Euphrates River. The Wise Men probably came from a place near that river. Ask: About how far did the Wise Men travel? How long do you think it took? Sing "O Little Town of Bethlehem" before prayer. Pray for people traveling.
- Ask if you can help make some star-shaped cookies. Wrap some as a gift to share with neighbors. As you share, sing some carols, then tell about the gifts of the Wise Men. (Save some cookies for Friday night.)

Monday

- With your family, read and discuss the lesson story. Talk about the gifts the Wise Men brought. Ask your family to help you find the words *magi*, *frankincense*, and *myrrh* in a dictionary. Tell what each word means. What gift can you give Jesus today?
- Share the heart you made in Sabbath School with someone. (Or make a heart and write the memory verse on it.) Tell them about the Wise Men. Talk about how you will give your heart to Jesus. Pray for that person today.

Tuesday

- Ask an adult to bring some perfume or spices to worship. Review your lesson story, then have a smelling test. Ask each person to close their eyes. Hold one thing at a time under each per-

son's nose. Have them guess what they smell.

Ask: What do you think frankincense and myrrh smelled like?

- Make some paper star-shaped ornaments. Hang them on your Christmas tree or in your windows. Sing about the Wise Men, then thank Jesus for stars in the night sky.

Wednesday

- During worship, read Matthew 2:1-12 again today. Say your memory verse together. Make a list of gifts Jesus gave us by coming to earth. Then make a list of gifts we give to Jesus when we worship Him.
- Talk about giving gifts to others at Christmastime. Think of something your family can give to help children who might not receive any gifts. Make a plan to do it. Ask Jesus to help you.

Thursday

- For worship today, read Matthew 2:13-18 together. What happened after the Wise Men left Bethlehem? Compare verse 18 to Jeremiah 31:15. Now read Matthew 2:19-23. Why didn't they go to Judea? In what town in Galilee did Jesus live as a child?
- Use a white or yellow crayon on dark paper to draw a picture of the Wise Men following the star. Show your family as you tell them the lesson story. Say your memory verse together before prayer. Thank God for wisdom.

Friday

- Ask someone to help you make finger puppets. Or draw a simple face on your fingers to represent the Magi. For worship, act out the story with your puppets or fingers. At the end, sing the song "We Three Kings" using the finger puppets. Thank Jesus for coming to earth.
- Go outside and look at stars. Imagine what the angel star must have looked like. What would it be like to follow a star night after night? Why were the Wise Men so determined to worship the King?
- When you go back inside, share a hot drink and some cookies.