



Introduction

The theme is Messy Wise Men - a reminder that they came a bit later than the shepherds to see Baby Jesus. If the star that they followed appeared at the time when Jesus was born, they might have arrived two and a half months later, assuming they set out immediately and travelled daily. Given the amount of planning for such a trip (900 miles with camels and teams of helpers needed), it's likely that they would have set off after quite a few months. They would probably not have travelled every day, so it was more likely that they arrived six or more months after Jesus' birth.

Traditionally in churches, the arrival of the Three Wise Men is celebrated on January 6th – the day after the 12th day of Christmas. We know it as the start of Epiphany, when we think about how Jesus has been shown to many different people and we keep our crib scenes up for the whole of this season which finishes on 30th January.

The bible passage is from Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

*⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"*

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

(New Revised Standard Version)

Activities:

1. Make lolly stick wise men

You will need: lolly sticks (or you could use cardboard sticks or rolls), shiny paper, glue stick, ribbon or pipe cleaner, tissue paper, cotton wool ball, pens, scissors



Wrap some shiny paper around the lolly stick and glue in place to make a robe, with a gap at the top for the face and bottom for the feet. Fold a ribbon or pipe cleaner around the middle for a belt. Stick everything in place with glue stick.

Take a rectangle of tissue paper and glue two top corners to the front of the lolly stick to make a cloak.

Glue some cotton wool to the bottom of the face for a beard.

Cut some shiny gold or silver paper into triangles to stick on the top of the head as a crown.

Add felt tip eyes, nose, mouth and shoes.

Once you have three wise men, make them into a scene with an added star.

If you don't have lolly sticks, use a piece of cardboard or a cardboard roll.

Talk about: The wise men came from a place where there rich and clever people. They were looking for a new king and sometimes they were thought to be royal themselves. What kind of men do you think they were?

2. Collage

You will need: coloured paper, scissors, glue stick, A4 sheet of paper or card

Cut out 3 triangles, 3 circles, 3 crowns and a star to make a simple picture of the wise men.

Talk about: We easily recognise the three wise men, even if they are not pictured with camels and their fine clothing. They followed a star because they thought it gave a signpost to a new king. What signs do you follow to take you to a special place where you can see Jesus?



3. Make a jigsaw puzzle

You will need: Christmas cards with pictures of the three wise men, scissors, envelope.

Cut up your cards into four or five pieces and see if you can reassemble it into the original picture.

You could play a game to see who can put the jigsaw pictures together quickest.

Talk about: What are the common features that are included in cards showing the wise men? Why do you think this is?



4. Create a gift box

You will need: a small size box with a lid, wrapping (or other coloured) paper, PVA glue, glue stick.

Cover a small box with wrapping paper or stick other pieces of coloured paper to a box to make it into a special gift box.

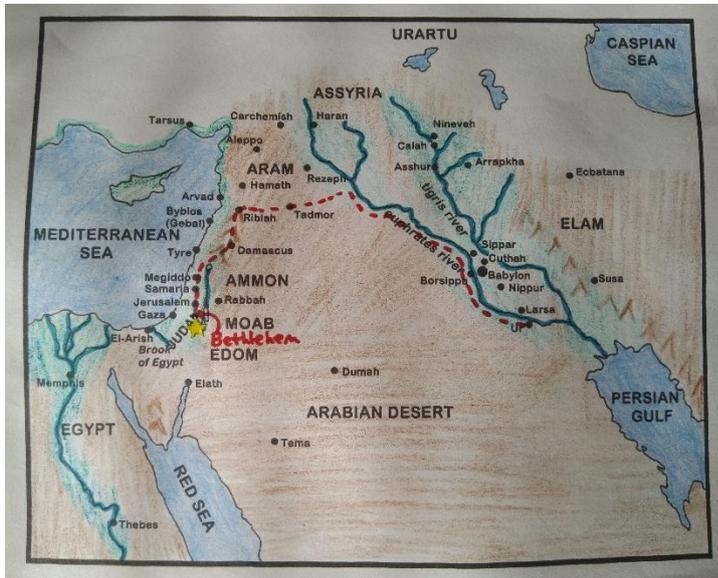
Talk about: What you might put into the box as a present (maybe some sweets or biscuits)



and who you might give it to. Tell the person you give the gift to about how the wise men brought gifts for Jesus.

5. Map of the wise men's journey

You will need: Print out of the map attached to this document, pens, atlas or globe.



Find where the map attached to this document is on a map of the world or a globe. Which of the place names still exist today? Colour in the map to show where there is desert, mountains, sea and land where plants will grow. We don't know where the wise men started their journey, except it was in the east: it may have been Ur, or Susa.

Talk about: Why do you think that the star guided them by a

round-about route from their start to Bethlehem? Think about what the conditions of travel would have been like across different lands.

6. Make a crown

You will need: a paper plate, scissors, stickers

Find the centre of a paper plate and make 8 equally spaced cuts from the centre to about 2cm from the edge of the plate. Decorate the points with stickers or other decoration. Push the triangles upwards to make a crown and adjust the cuts so the crown fits your head.

Talk about: We sometimes call the wise men kings (mostly as a result of the carol 'We 3 Kings'). What things can make someone seem special, like royalty?



Song: We three kings

There is one song that is associated with the arrival of the wise men to see Baby Jesus. Here's a link to a version that you can sing along to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUBTERdTKUg>

Prayer

Remembering the three gifts that the wise men brought to Jesus can be a prompt for a prayer:

- Gold is to recognise Jesus as king of our lives
- Frankincense reminds us that it is because of Jesus that we can pray to God ourselves, rather than asking others to do it for us
- Myrrh is for healing all our pains and ills.

They can be combined into the following prayer:

Dear Father,

Thank you that you have given us Jesus to show that life is full of love when we follow him.

Thank you that we can come to you in prayer because of him.

Please heal and comfort all those who are hurting this day.

Amen

Messy Grace:

This is a prayer that we say at Messy Church to ask God to always be with us, as we try to keep connected to Jesus.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (hold out hands as if expecting a present)

And the love of God (put your hands on your heart)

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (hold hands)

Be with us all (raise arms)

Amen (drop hands)

Next date: Friday 11th February 2021

www.facebook.com/MessyChurchWestWickham/

