



1. Three Kings' Day

Age range: Primary

Theme: We gather as a community for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community. *This is the first collective worship of this new term, the first week back and a brand new year! You may need to tailor this script to suit the needs, age range & levels of concerns of your school community, which of course includes adults as well as children. This assembly references the festival of Epiphany, Three Kings' Day, when the visit of the Magi is remembered. It also links to the theme of songs and singing through reflection on the beautiful Christmas carol 'In the bleak midwinter'.*



How does this link to your school's Christian vision & values?

Use this section to reference your school's values with the concept of **worship**, focussing on giving of your best at the start of this new calendar year – and on the place of worship in the life of your school community.

Resources:

- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation.
- You will need three boxes, wrapped up as presents: these need to each contain a word (time, friendship, love) Keep one to put into your classroom reflective area for this week (and repurposed for week 2 as well!)
- **Three Kings' Day** is a celebration marked on 6th January in many parts of the world, though Orthodox traditions usually mark Epiphany much later in January (19th). Some traditions are referenced here, but you can find out more here: [Epiphany \(holiday\) - Wikipedia](#) or here: [A Complete Guide to Three Kings Day and Epiphany](#)
- Play the carol '**In the bleak midwinter**' as children settle down for your worship time. There is a lovely modern video version [here](#), or more traditional [here](#).

Gathering:

- **Slide 1:** Use your usual gathering greeting to **welcome** your school community [*We'll learn a new greeting next week, for the new term of themes*]



Engaging:

- **Slide 2:** I wonder what the most unusual gift you received for Christmas was? [*Talk together for a few minutes*]
- **Slide 3:** 'Today, Monday 6th January, marks the end of the Christmas season in many parts of the world. People sometimes call it 'Epiphany', others call it 'Twelfth Night', but some call it 'Three Kings' Day'. There are lots of different traditions across the world linked to this day, such as eating....
- **Slide 4:** **Rosca des Reyes** (*pron. rows-ka de ray-ehs*) or Kings' Bread, which is a special bread baked with fruit and sugar, shaped like a crown. Inside the cake, a baby Jesus doll is sometimes hidden. In France, it's called **Galette des Rois**, (*pron. Gah-LEHT deh roo-AH*) and again, it's traditional to hide a small toy or coin inside the cake.
- **Slide 5:** In Argentina, children observe Three Kings Day by leaving their shoes out filled with grass and snacks for the magi's camels!
- **Slide 6:** In some places, people 'chalk their door' with letters representing the names of the wise men (Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar), as a blessing over their house for the New Year. So why is this day so important in so many cultures?
- **Slide 7:** I'm sure you've already guessed by the name that it's because of the visit of the three wise men to the young child Jesus, with three very important (and unusual!) presents. I am sure that many of you will be able to remember what they were! [*ask children*] Each of these presents had a special meaning – something that Christians believe was connected with the life that Jesus would live as a man. The kings brought **gold** to show that Jesus was a king – not just an earthly king, but king of heaven too. They brought **frankincense** – a very expensive perfume – to show that Jesus was a priest and came to show people the way to God. They also brought **myrrh** – a special ointment that was used when people died – to explain that Jesus came to earth to die on the cross as Saviour for all mankind. Whatever people might believe about the gifts that the kings brought, they were certainly very expensive – and rather unusual gifts for a child! I don't expect many of you got gold, frankincense or myrrh for Christmas – in



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fact, you might have been rather upset if you did! However, the three kings brought the best that they could afford as presents for Jesus, who they believed was born to be king and Saviour.

- **Slide 8:** We've spent a lot of time over Christmas giving and receiving presents, just like the wise men. Some of them might even have been expensive gifts, gifts that cost a lot of money. Maybe some of them were not quite what we were expecting! At the start of this new year, it's good to think about things we can offer, either to God or to others....maybe they're not things that might cost lots of money..... but things that might be considered to be our 'best'....things that might be costly in other ways.....Christians believe that this is just as much 'worship' as singing or praying in church. Let's think together now, using my three gifts here. [Invite someone to open each present in turn – and talk about how each might be a 'costly' gift – and what giving your 'best' might look like for each. When you get to the word 'love', refer to the song you played at the start]
- **Slide 9:** At the start of our time together today, we played one last Christmas carol, which contains these words:

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

- Christina Rossetti, the person who wrote this song, was a Christian, and for her, giving Jesus her heart was a way of saying that she loved him and was offering the very best thing that she could. She believed that her heart, her love, was the best thing that she could offer as her worship.
- Worship – and singing – is important to us as a school as well. We show it's important by....[insert your own school ethos about worship / singing here] and we share it in the life of our school community through our school's vision and values. And we'll be thinking a bit more about singing as we start a new theme for this term next week!

Responding (and words for worship):

... We're going to have some quiet moments now to think about all the different things we've explored today.....

...we've been reminded of the story of the gifts of the wise men – and how they gave their best....

...we've thought of three things that we each have to offer at the start of this new year...

...time is one of the most precious things we can offer....to others....or to God.

...in the quietness, think about how you might offer your time today...

...bringing our friendships to God as an offering is like asking him to bless them....

...in the quietness, think about your friendships, or bring them before God in your heart if you'd like to...

we can offer our love to God in worship.....or to others....

...in the quietness, think about what this might mean for you...

...whatever we can bring, like the wise men, it's good to bring our best....

...at the start of this new year, I wonder what the 'best' looks like for you?.....

If you want to offer what you have to God at the start of this new year, then I invite you to join with me as I pray, or if you prefer to, you can continue to be still with your own thoughts...

Slide 10:

God of new beginnings

At the start of this new year – we are here together.

As we think of all we bring to this time – our hands and hearts are open, to give to you and to others.

Whatever this year may hold, help us to offer our best.

Amen

Sending: Slide 11

Leader: As we leave this place and time and go into the day ahead,

All:May we give our best in all that we do.



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To listen to:

As you gather, play the carol 'In the bleak midwinter' as children settle down for your worship time. There is a lovely modern video version [here](#). You will use the words of one of the verses during the worship time.

Additional material for this week might be: (see Appendix Three for question starters to unpack the Bible content.)

Words from Ecclesiastes 9:10 'Whatever work you do, do your best.' Talk together about why this is important for yourself and for others to build self-esteem and trust.

Ideas for classroom reflection (this week, there are a few ideas to choose from!):

- **'I offer today the gift of...':** Make one final present, out of a box with a lid, wrapped so that it looks like a present, but so you are still able to open the lid. You could use a gift box, with a bow attached to the top. You can then put this into your class reflection area, into which children can insert their own gift promise. Or you could offer it as an option to reflect at the other end of the day, to reflect on and celebrate the moments where children feel they have really offered their best during that day, before they go home.
- **Play dough mat** idea for EYFS, from [Flame Creative Kids](#). Craft a gift for Jesus out of play dough.
- **'Giving my gift'** is a prayer activity on the Prayer Spaces in Schools website in which pupils reflect on using their gifts and talents to help others. [see here](#)
- **Hopes and dreams....** Cut some cloud shapes out of paper and leave them in your reflective area. Encourage children to write about their hopes and dreams for 2025 – an especially significant new beginning as we hope to emerge from the pandemic during this new year.
- **Go outside with a bubble blower & bubble mix:** as you blow the bubbles and watch them burst, think of the things that you would like to disappear with the 'old year', 2024– and pray or think about your hopes for the new year, 2025.
- **Make a small origami box:** Simple instructions [here](#) or video [here](#). What will your gift be to others this New Year? Love, kind words, patience, help? Before assembling the box, write the gift that you will give on the paper so that it is folded into the box. Gather these in your reflection area.



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*.....the wise men brought gifts for Jesus.....
....they gave the very best that they could give.*



Think about a ‘gift’ you might offer to others– or to God – maybe your time or your love.



Talk together about what it might mean to give your ‘best’ to others in 2025 – your class, your family, or to God.



Take a piece of paper and on it draw or write something that you can give to others – or to God – this year. Place it inside the ‘gift’ box.

