

*Karyn Henley's* PLAYSONGS® MUSICALS

# The Best Gift of All

Matthew 2:1-12

A Bible Story Musical  
with Activities  
for Preschool Children

by Karyn Henley

## Karyn Henley's: The Best Gift of All

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# Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

Your children are learning a short musical *The Best Gift of All*. To help reinforce the songs and actions, we have prepared each family a rehearsal tape.

Please encourage your child to listen to his tape during the week. We want to give the children every opportunity to learn the Bible story. We hope you enjoy letting your child teach you the actions to the script and songs.

Thank you for your help.

## Winter Sky

by Karyn Henley

Winter sky, stars so high,  
What can you tell my watching eye?  
Winter sky, stars so high,  
What will you show tonight?

Stars that wink, stars that blink,  
Which one can show me what I seek?  
Stars that wink, stars that blink,  
Which one will be my guide?

## Camels, Camels, Come

by Karyn Henley

Camels, camels, come, camels!  
Donkeys, donkeys, come, donkeys!  
Carry all our presents.  
We're going to see the king.

Over hills and through valleys,  
Down the streets and through alleys,  
Following the bright star,  
We're going to see the king.

Trip, trop, clip, clop,  
Hip, hop, don't stop.  
Follow,  
follow the star.

## Star Light, Star Bright

by Karyn Henley

Star light, star bright,  
Brightest star I've seen tonight,  
Wish you may, wish you might  
Hear the song I sing.

Star light, star bright,  
Brightest star I've seen tonight,  
Wish you may, wish you might  
Guide me to my king.

## Bethlehem, Bethlehem

by Karyn Henley

Bethlehem, Bethlehem,  
We are going to Bethlehem.  
Bethlehem, Bethlehem,  
We're going to Bethlehem.

Baby king, baby king,  
We will see the baby king.  
Baby king, baby king,  
We're going to see our king.

Worship him, worship him.  
We'll bow down and worship him.  
Worship him, worship him,  
We'll bow before our king.

## The Best Gift of All

by Karyn Henley

This is the best gift of all.  
This is the best gift of all.  
A baby who shows us God's great love.  
This is the best gift of all.  
This is the best gift of all.  
God has come to live with us.

Let the sea waves splash!  
Let the thunder clap!  
Let the trees bow low!  
Let the wild wind blow!  
Let the girls and boys  
Sing a song of joy!  
As the angels laugh  
And the stars in the heavens dance!

# The Best Gift of All

# Script

**Teacher**

This is a true story.

**Children**

It really happened.  
(Nod on "really" and "happened.")



**Teacher**

Long ago and far away there lived some wise men who watched the stars.

**Children**

(Hands circled around eyes as if looking through binoculars.)  
Star light, star bright,  
First star I've seen tonight.



**Teacher**

They believed that the stars could show them important news.

♪ **SONG: Winter Sky**

# Winter Sky

Words and Music by Karyn Henley

♩ = 100    C    G/C    C    G7/C    C    G/C    F/C    G/C

C    G/C    C    G7/C    Fmaj7    G7/F

1. Win - ter sky,            Stars so high,            What can you tell my    wat - ching eye?  
 2. Stars that wink,        , Stars that blink,        which one can show me    what I seek?



C    G/C    C    G7/C    F    G    C    G/C

Win - ter sky,            Stars so high,            What will you show to - night.  
 Stars that wink,        Stars that blink,        Which one will be my    guide?



C    G7/C    C    G/C    F/C    G/C    C

# The Best Gift of All

# Script

**Teacher**

One night, they saw a special star, big and bright.

**Children**

(Point upward.) Big and bright.



**Teacher**

The wise men said, "This can mean only one thing."

**Children**

One thing. (Hold up one finger.)



**Teacher**

Someone important has been born.

**Children**

Who?

(Hands, palm up, by shoulders.)



**Teacher**

A king! The wise men said, "Let's go see this baby king!"

**Children**

I've got an idea! (Pointer finger up.) Let's take presents!



**Teacher**

They took gold presents.

**Children**

Shiny, shiny. (Fingers "sparkle.")



**Teacher**

And sweet-smelling presents.

**Children**

(sniff) Mmmmm.



**Teacher**

They loaded the presents on their camels and donkeys.

♪ **SONG: Camels, Camels, Come**

# Camels, Camels, Come

Words and Music by Karyn Henley

♩ = 102

C  
(VAMP)

C F G C

Cam - els, cam - els come cam - els; Don - keys, don - keys, come don - keys, Car - ry all our pre - sents; we're



(continue up and down as if riding a donkey)

F G C F G

going to see the King! O - ver hills and through val - leys, Down the streets and through al - leys,

C G C C F

Fol - low - ing the bright star, we're going to see the King! Trip trip, clip clop,

(march in step with beat)

C F C G7 C *D.C. al Coda*

hip hop, don't stop. Fol - low, fol - low the star.

⊕ Coda C F C



# The Best Gift of All

# Script

**Teacher**

Over the sand, they marched.

**Children**

Clip, clop, clip, clop. (March in place.)



**Teacher**

Across the rivers they splashed.

**Children**

Splish, splosh, splish, splosh.  
(Pat thighs.)



**Teacher**

Through the day, they plodded.

**Children**

Jig, jog, jig, jog. (Jog in place.)



**Teacher**

Through the night, they nodded.

**Children**

(Close eyes and snore.)



**Teacher**

But they always followed the star.

♪ **SONG: Star Light, Star Bright**

# Star Light, Star Bright

Words and Music by Karyn Henley

♩ = 92

D9 G6/B D9 G6/B

D9 G6/B D9 G6/B

Star light, star bright, bright-est star I've seen to - night,

(no motions for this song)

D9 D9/C# G A

wish you may, wish you might hear the song I sing.

D9 G6/B D9 G6/B

Star light, star bright, bright-est star I've seen to - night,

D9 D9/B G A D

wish you may, wish you might guide me to my King.

G A D G A D D9

Guide me to my King. (whispered:) Guide me to my King.

**Teacher**

The wise men decided to stop and ask directions.  
So they went to the grown-up king, King Herod.  
"Where is the new baby king?" they asked.  
"We've seen his star, and we've come to worship him."

**Children**

(Scratch chin as if scratching a beard,  
and speak in a deep "king" voice.)  
Hmmm. A baby king? I don't know.



**Teacher**

King Herod asked the leaders in his town.  
"Where is God's promised one to be born?"

**Children**

(Scratch chin as if scratching a beard,  
and speak in a deep voice.)  
Hmmm! Hmmm! Bethlehmmm!



**Teacher**

So the wise men followed the bright star to Bethlehem.

♪ **SONG: Bethlehem, Bethlehem**

# Bethlehem, Bethlehem

Words and Music by Karyn Henley

♩ = 130

D G A D G A

D A D G A

1. Beth - le - hem, Beth - le - hem, We are going to Beth - le - hem,  
 2. Ba - by king, Ba - by king, We will see the Ba - by king,  
 3. Wor - ship him, Wor - ship him, We'll bow down and wor - ship him,

1. March
2. Pretend to rock baby
3. Fold hands

D A D A D

Beth - le - hem, Beth - le - hem, We're going to Beth - le - hem.  
 Sent from God up a - bove; We're going to see our King.  
 Wor - ship him, wor - ship him; We'll bow be - fore our King.

D G A D

END here after 3rd verse

**Teacher**

That's just what the wise men did.  
They bowed before baby Jesus,  
and they worshiped him.

**Children**

They worshiped him.  
(Fold hands and bow.)



**Teacher**

Then they gave him their presents.

**Children**

Presents!  
(Hands out, palms up, as if giving gifts.)



**Teacher**

Gold presents.

**Children**

Shiny, shiny.  
(Fingers "sparkle.")



**Teacher**

And sweet-smelling presents.

**Children**

(sniff) Mmmmm.



**Teacher**

But they could see that the best gift of all  
wasn't anything they had brought.

**Children**

Surprise!  
(Hands at cheeks, make surprised faces.)

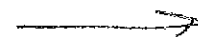


**Teacher**

The best gift was what God had given them.

**Children**

Jesus!  
(Arms up wide.)



**Teacher**

We give each other presents at Christmastime.

**Children**

Presents!

(Hands out, palms up, as if giving gifts.)



**Teacher**

Sometimes gold presents.

**Children**

Shiny, shiny.

(Fingers "sparkle.")



**Teacher**

Or sweet-smelling presents.

**Children**

(sniff) Mmmmm.



**Teacher**

Or tasty presents.

**Children**

Yum, yum!

(Rub tummies.)



**Teacher**

But our presents remind us  
that the best gift of all  
is not what we give.

**Children**

Surprise!

(Hands at cheeks, make surprised faces.)



**Teacher**

The best gift is what God gave us.

**Children**

Jesus!

(Arms up wide.)



# The Best Gift of All

# Script

## Teacher

"God loved the world so much,  
he gave his only Son,  
so whoever believes in him  
can live with him now and forever."

## Children

That's the best gift of all!



♪ **SONG: The Best Gift of All**

# The Best Gift of All

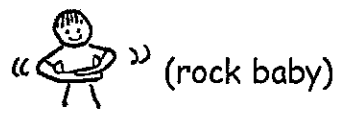
Words and Music by Karyn Henley

♩ = 92

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Chords: C, F/C, G/C, C. Rhythmic patterns: 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes.

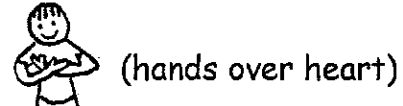
Musical staff 2: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Chords: C, G/B, F/A, C/G, F, C, F, G7. Rhythmic patterns: 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes.

This is the best gift of all. This is the best gift of all: a ba - by who shows us God's great love.



Musical staff 3: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Chords: C, G/B, F/A, C/G, F, G, C. Rhythmic patterns: 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes.

This is the best gift of all. This is the best gift of all. God has come to live with us! Let the



Musical staff 4: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Chords: G, C, G, C, G, C, D, G, C. Rhythmic patterns: 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes.

sea waves splash! Let the thun - der clap! Let the trees bow low! Let the wild wind blow! Let the



(clap)



Musical staff 5: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Chords: G, C, G, C, G, C, D. Rhythmic patterns: 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes. Ends with D.C. al Coda and Gsus G.

girls and boys sing a song of joy, as the an - gels laugh and the stars in the hea - vens dance!



⊕ Coda Musical staff 6: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Chords: C, F/C, G/C, C. Rhythmic patterns: 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes, 3 eighth notes.



# Activities

# Arts and Crafts

## Camel Prints

### Materials

- one copy for each child of the camel (see next page)
- paper plates
- liquid washable preschool paint (see less messy option below)
- paper towels
- hand wipes

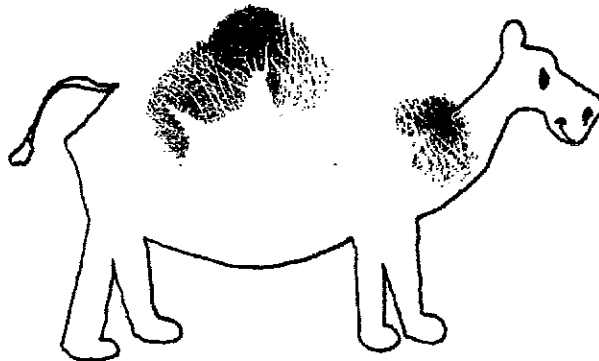
### Guide Each Child to

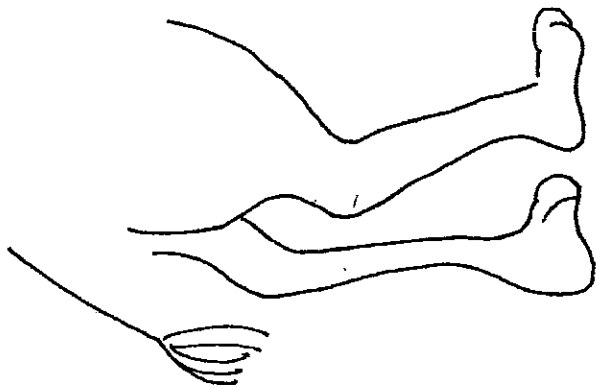
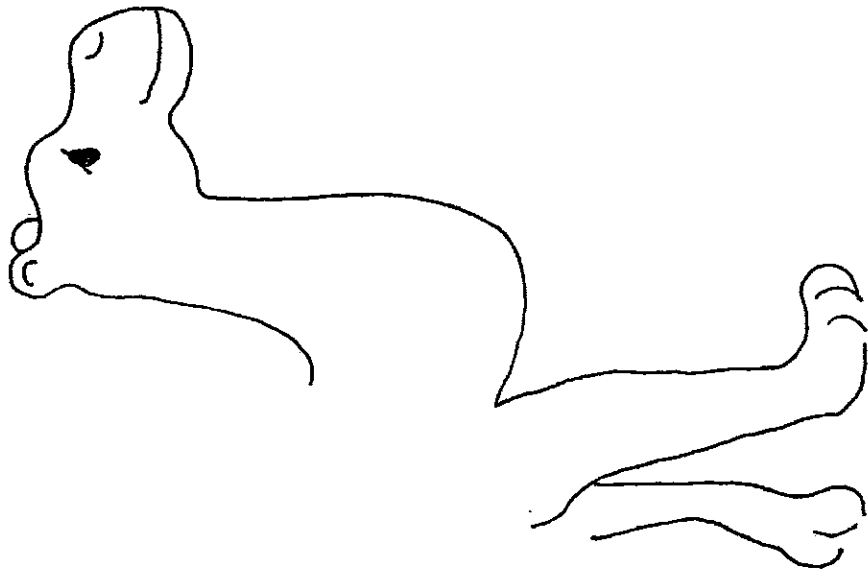
1. Give each child a copy of the camel.
2. Set out paper plates and pour just enough paint onto the plates to cover the bottom.
3. Show the children how to make a fist.
4. Help each child press the side of his fist into the paint, then onto the camel. Their knuckles should be pointed towards the top of the page so the fist print will make a hump for the camel.
5. Immediately wipe the child's hand with paper towels and ask the child to finish cleaning his hands with wipes.

Less messy option: Ask the child to place his fist over the camel's middle so his knuckles point to the top of the page. Then trace around the child's fist. Ask the child to color his camel.

### Things to Talk About

1. When you take a trip, what do you ride in?
2. The wise men didn't have cars or trains or buses or planes. What might they have ridden?
3. Where were the wise men going?
4. How did they know where to go?
5. What did they take to baby Jesus?
6. What was the best gift of all?





# Arts and Crafts

## Cup Wise Men

### Materials

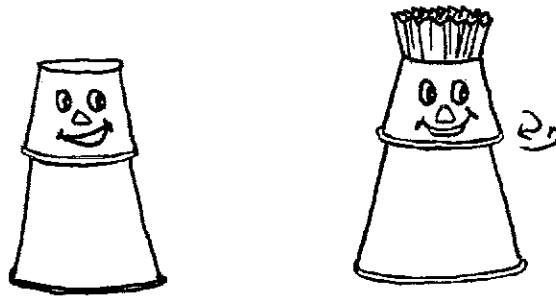
- one large plastic picnic cup for each child (any color)
- one smaller plastic picnic cup for each child (light colors are best)
- sticker sheets of eyes, noses, and mouths OR permanent markers
- small foil muffin tin liners
- glue or temporary plastic adhesive (like Plasti-Tak)

### Guide Each Child to

1. Give each child one large cup and one small cup.
2. Ask the children to turn the cups upside down and slip the small cup over the large one.
3. Now ask them to use the stickers and make a face on the small cup.  
OR, supervising carefully, ask them to draw a face on the small cup with a permanent marker. This makes a "wise man."
4. Give each child a foil muffin tin liner, and show them how to place this on top of the small cup-face to make a crown. Glue the crown on, or stick it on with the plastic adhesive.
5. Show the children how the wise man's head can turn by twisting the small cup from side to side.

### Things to Talk About

1. What did the wise men see in the sky?
2. When they saw the star, what did they think it meant?
3. Where did they go?
4. What did they take with them?
5. Who did they find?
6. What was the best gift of all?



# Arts and Crafts

## Star Prints

### Materials

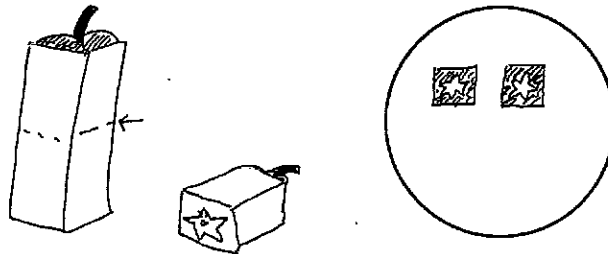
- paper plates
- preschool washable liquid paint
- old newspaper or plastic tablecloth
- old shirts or smocks
- apples
- knives for teacher
- hand wipes

### Guide Each Child to

1. Help cover the work surface with old newspaper or plastic tablecloth. Have the children put on old shirts or smocks.
2. Let the children watch you cut four sides off each apple to get to the core. Cut the core in half horizontally. Show the children how the seeds at the core form a star shape.
3. Now give each child a paper plate. Set out extra plates and pour enough paint on the extra plates to just cover the bottom.
4. Give each child half of an apple core. Show them how to press the star-shaped seed side of the core into the paint, then onto their own paper plate. Ask them to make stars all over their plates.
5. When the children are done, you may ask them to clean their hands with wipes. Then they can eat the apple you sliced away from the core.

### Things to Talk About

1. When the wise men looked in the sky, what did they see?
2. Why did they follow the star?
3. Where did the star lead the wise men?
4. What did they take with them?
5. What was the greatest gift of all?



# Arts and Crafts

## Foil Shoe Prints

### Materials

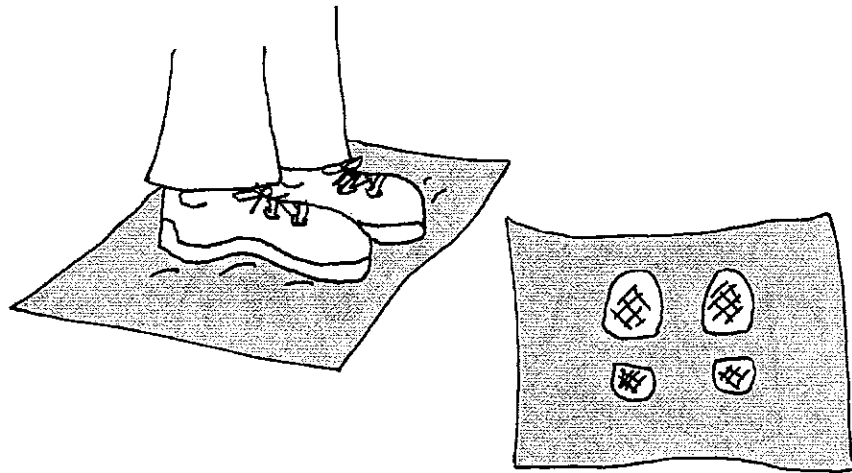
- aluminum foil
- a firm pillow
- large construction paper
- stapler and staples

### Guide Each Child to

1. Place a pillow on the floor.
2. Place a sheet of aluminum foil on top of the pillow and help a child to step gently, but firmly on it.
3. Ask the child to step off and carefully take the shoe print he made to the table, where he places it in the center of a piece of construction paper.
4. Let the child help a teacher staple the edges of the foil shoe print to the construction paper. Each child follows this procedure.

### Things to Talk About

1. Maybe the wise men rode part of the way to Bethlehem. Maybe they walked part of the way. Do you think they left their footprints in some places?
2. Do camels' footprints look like your footprints? Do donkey footprints look like your footprints?
3. Why did the wise men travel such a long way?
4. How did they know where to go?
5. Who did they see at the end of their trip?
6. What was the best gift of all?



# Scripture Memory

"The gift of God is life forever in Jesus." Romans 6:23, paraphrased

## Pass the Gift

### Materials

- a wrapped gift box with stickers or other treat inside (enough for all children)
- a CD of Christmas music and CD player

### Guide Each Child to

1. Sit in a circle.
2. Give one child the gift.
3. When the music starts, children should pass the gift around the circle.
4. When the music stops, they all say the verse together: "The gift of God is life forever in Jesus."
5. Start the music, and repeat the game.
6. When you've finished the game, open the gift and share the contents with the children.

### Things to Talk About

1. What gifts did the wise men take to baby Jesus?
2. What was the best gift of all?
3. What gift does God give us?



# Scripture Memory

"The gift of God is life forever in Jesus." Romans 6:23, paraphrased

## J-E-S-U-S Macaroni Necklace

### Materials

- medium-size tube-shaped uncooked pasta, five tubes for each child
- permanent marker
- one 36" length of yarn for each child, any color
- scissors

### Prepare ahead of time

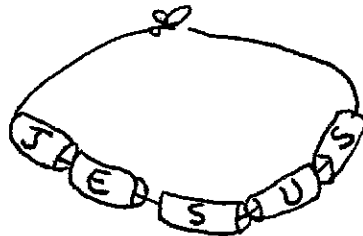
Cut the yarn. With the permanent marker, write one letter on each of five tubes of pasta for each child: J, E, S, U, S.

### Guide Each Child to

1. Take a length of yarn and five tubes of pasta lettered J, E, S, U, S.
2. Help the children thread the pasta onto the yarn in the order that spells "Jesus."
3. Tie the ends of the yarn to fit loosely around the child's neck as a necklace. Trim away excess yarn.
4. Say the memory verse several times as you work together: "The gift of God is life forever in Jesus."

### Things to Talk About

1. What does J-E-S-U-S spell?
2. What gifts did the wise men take to baby Jesus?
3. What was the best gift of all?
4. What gift does God give us?





# Scripture Memory

"The gift of God is life forever in Jesus." Romans 6:23, paraphrased

## Toss a Bow

### Materials

- a gift bow
- a gift box with the top open

### Guide Each Child to

1. Take turns standing some distance away from the box and trying to toss the bow into the box. Adjust the distance from the box so they can be successful at getting the bow in.
2. After each throw, all children should say the memory verse together: "The gift of God is life forever in Jesus."

### Things to Talk About

1. Are you going to give people gifts this Christmas?
2. What gifts did the wise men take to baby Jesus?
3. What was the best gift of all?
4. What gift does God give us?

# Music and Movement

## March to See the Baby King

### Materials

- none

### Guide Each Child to

1. Join you as you sing the following to the tune of "London Bridge is Falling Down" and do the actions.

*March to see the baby king,  
Baby king,  
Baby king.  
March to see the baby king,  
Baby Jesus.*

2. Repeat, asking children to suggest other ways of going to see baby Jesus. (Tiptoe, jump or hop, dance, skip, crawl, swim, fly, etc.) Then for the last verse, sing:

*We will bow and worship him,  
Worship him,  
Worship him.  
We will bow and worship him,  
Baby Jesus.*

### Things to Talk About

1. Are you going to go see anyone at Christmas? Is anyone going to come see you? Will you take gifts?
2. What gifts did the wise men take to baby Jesus?
3. What was the best gift of all?



# Music and Movement

## Jump the River

### Materials

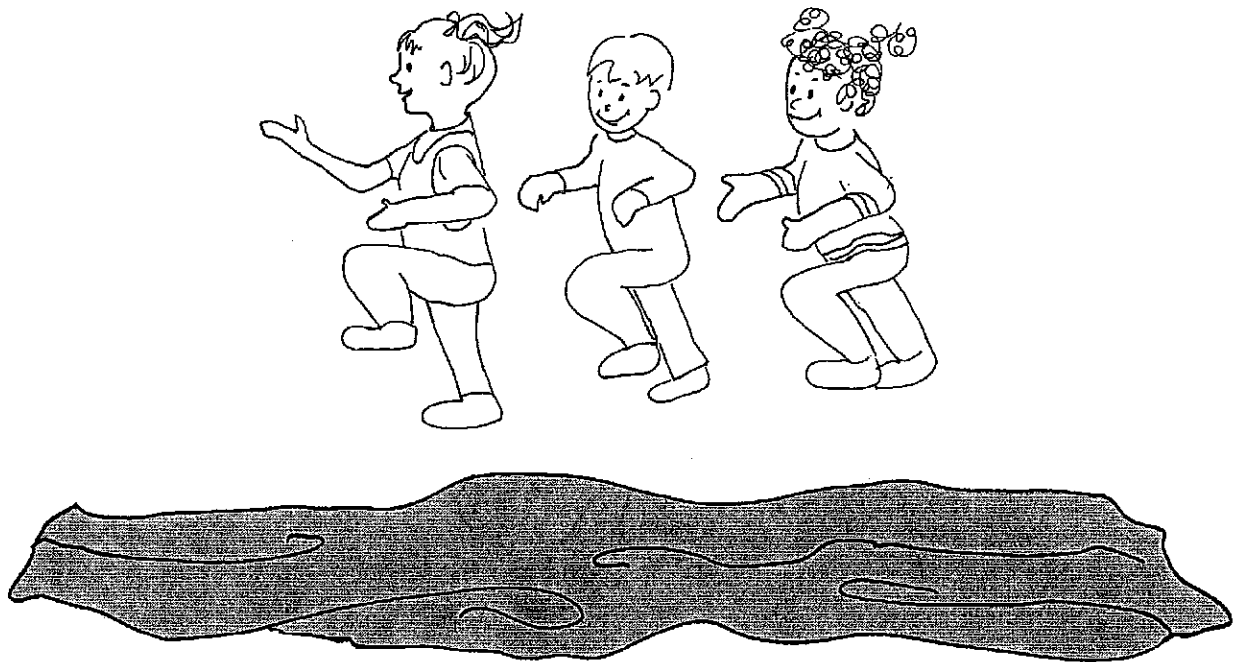
- a blue bedsheet or tablecloth

### Guide Each Child to

1. Watch as you lay the sheet or tablecloth out on the floor, then bunch it up so it's long and narrow, like a river.
2. Lead the children on a trip around the room, pretending to be the wise men.
3. When you come to the "river," take turns jumping across.
4. If you want, you can sing "Camels, Camels, Come" and/or "Bethlehem, Bethlehem" while doing this activity.

### Things to Talk About

1. The wise men traveled a long way to get to baby Jesus. How did they know which way to go?
2. What gifts did the wise men take to baby Jesus?
3. What was the best gift of all?



# Music and Movement

## Clop and Gallop

### Materials

- none

### Guide Each Child to

1. Listen carefully. When you say, "Clop, camels," they will plod around the room. Show them how to "plod."
2. When you say, "Gallop, donkeys," they will gallop around the room. Practice these two directions.
3. When you say, "Night time!" then they must all sit or curl up on the floor and pretend to be camels or donkeys sleeping. Practice this.
4. Now call out the three commands at random.
5. You may add commands to keep it interesting, letting the children practice each movement before you add it in. For example: Skip lambs. Fly birds. Run dogs. Etc.

### Things to Talk About

1. Are you going to go see anyone at Christmas? Is anyone going to come see you? Will you take gifts?
2. What gifts did the wise men take to baby Jesus?
3. How did they know how to find baby Jesus?
4. What was the best gift of all?



# Science

## Reflecting

### Materials

- one or more flashlights
- one or more small mirrors (locker mirrors work well, or mirrors from old makeup compacts)

### Guide Each Child to

1. Ask one child to hold a mirror while you shine a flashlight at it. Shine the light at different angles.
2. Ask the children to describe what they see and point to where the light is reflected.
3. Now let them try it.
4. Show them how to angle the mirror so they'll get a reflection on certain spots on the wall, floor, or ceiling.

### Things to Talk About

1. The light bouncing off the mirror is called a reflection. The mirror is reflecting the light. Where is the mirror reflecting the light?
2. What kinds of lights do you see in the sky?
3. What did the wise men see in the sky?
4. Where did the bright star lead them?
5. What did they take with them?
6. What was the best gift of all?

# Science

## Box Shapes

### Materials

- a variety of shapes of small gift boxes
- plain white paper
- crayons and colored pencils

### Guide Each Child to

1. Take a piece of paper.
2. Set out small gift boxes of different shapes.
3. Ask the children to place a box on their paper and trace around it.
4. Ask them to choose another shape and trace around it on their paper.
5. Continue with the different shapes, helping children trace.

### Things to Talk About

1. What shape is this box?
2. What might fit in this box?
3. What kinds of gifts did the wise men take with them?
4. Who did they take the gifts to?
5. What was the best gift of all?

# Science

## Night Sky

### Materials

- black construction paper
- star and moon stickers (glow-in-the-dark, if possible)
- white crayons

### Guide Each Child to

1. Give each child a piece of black construction paper and stickers.
2. Ask the children to make a night sky with their stickers on the paper.
3. As the children work, draw their attention to your own piece of black paper. Draw different shapes of the moon as show below: crescent, quarter-moon, and full moon.
4. Ask if any of the children want to try drawing the different shapes of moon on their paper. If they do, give them a white crayon, and help as needed.

### Things to Talk About

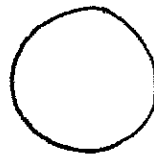
1. What do you see when you look into the night sky?
2. What shapes can the moon appear to be? We see part of the moon that the sun shines on, even if we don't see the sun.
3. What did the wise men see when they looked into the night sky?
4. What did the wise men do? Why?
5. What was the best gift of all?



Waxing  
(growing)  
Crescent



First  
Quarter



Full  
Moon



Last  
Quarter



Waning  
(shrinking)  
Crescent

# Cooking

## Soup-Mix Gift

### Materials

- a variety of shapes and sizes of dried beans
- one 8-oz. paper cup for each child
- plastic sandwich bags
- snack-size resealable plastic bags
- beef bouillon granules
- narrow gift-wrap "curling" ribbon
- one copy for each child of the recipe card (below)
- a hole puncher
- salt
- pepper
- instant minced onions
- chili powder
- instant minced garlic
- measuring spoons
- scissors
- hand wipes

### Guide Each Child to

1. Ask each child to clean his hands with a wipe, then take one paper cup and fill it with different kinds of beans which you've set out ahead of time. Then he pours the beans into a plastic sandwich bag.
3. Give each child a snack-size bag. Help them put into each snack bag:

1 Tbs. beef bouillon granules	1/2 tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. pepper	1/2 teaspoon chili powder
1 Tbs. minced onions	1/8 tsp. minced garlic.

Zip the bag closed and put it inside the sandwich bag with the beans.
4. Give each child a recipe card. Help children punch a hole in one corner of the card and thread a length of curling ribbon through the hole. Then tie the ribbon around the sandwich bag.
5. Ask the children to take home the soup mix and give it as a gift to someone.

### Things to Talk About

1. Why do we give people gifts? Who will you give your soup-mix gift to?
2. Why did the wise men take gifts to baby Jesus?
3. What was the best gift of all?

### Bean Soup Mix

Wash the beans. Put them in a pot. Cover them with water 2 inches above the beans. Soak them overnight. Drain the beans. Add 4 cups of water, the seasoning mix, and one 8-oz. can of tomato sauce. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 1 1/2 hours. Enjoy!



# Cooking

## Starwiches

### Materials

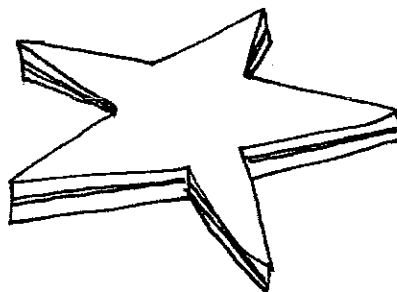
- star shaped cookie cutters
- sandwich bread
- pre-sliced cheese (mild cheddar or American)
- paper plates
- paper towels
- hand wipes

### Guide Each Child to

1. Clean their hands with wipes.
2. Give each child a paper plate, two slices of sandwich bread, and one slice of cheese.
3. Help children use the cookie cutters to cut their bread and cheese into star shapes.
4. Ask the children to stack the star shapes like a sandwich, with the cheese between the bread.
5. Now they may eat the starwiches as well as the parts they cut off to make the stars.

### Things to Talk About

1. What's the best time of day to see stars?
2. What did the wise men see in the sky?
3. How did they know where to go?
4. What did they take with them?
5. What was the best gift of all?



# Cooking

## Star Cinnamon Toast

### Materials

- one slice of bread for each child
- star cookie cutters
- butter or margarine
- plastic picnic knives
- cinnamon-sugar mixture
- optional: toaster oven or other oven, baking sheet, pot holder
- paper plates
- paper towels
- hand wipes

### Guide Each Child to

1. Clean their hands with wipes.
2. Give each child a plate and a slice of bread.
3. Help children use the cookie cutters to cut their bread into a star shape.
4. Help children spread their star-shaped bread with butter, then sprinkle the cinnamon-sugar mixture over it.
5. If you have an oven, you can toast the stars. If not, the children can eat them untoasted.

### Things to Talk About

1. Do you like stars? What do you like about them?
2. Why do you think stars show up at night? (daytime is too bright to see them)
3. What else is in the sky at night?
4. What did the wise men see in the sky?
5. Where did the wise men go? What did they find there?
6. What was the best gift of all?

# Cooking

## Star of David Crackers

### Materials

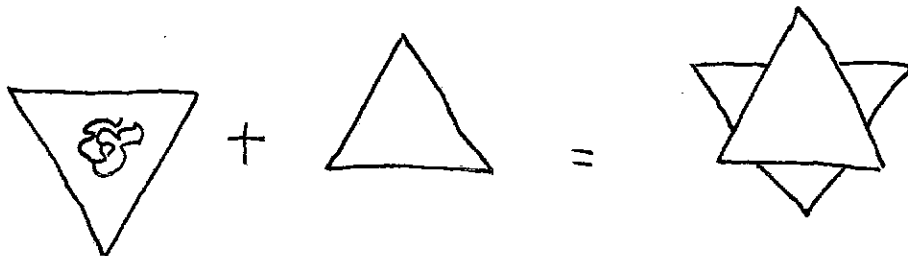
- triangle-shaped crackers
- canned processed cheese that squirts on
- paper plates
- paper towels
- hand wipes

### Guide Each Child to

1. Clean their hands with wipes.
2. Give each child a plate and an even number of triangle crackers.
3. In the center of each cracker, squirt a bit of cheese.
4. Show the children how to stack two crackers, cheese sides together, with their points offset to make a star as shown below.
5. They may eat their stars.

### Things to Talk About

1. Lead children to sing the "Star Light, Star Bright" song as they work.
2. Why did the wise men decide to go to Bethlehem?
3. How did they know where to find the baby king?
4. What did they do when they found him?
5. What was the best gift of all?



# Games

## Stack the Wise Men

### Materials

- plastic disposable picnic cups (lighter colors are best)
- permanent marker for teacher

### Prepare Ahead of Time

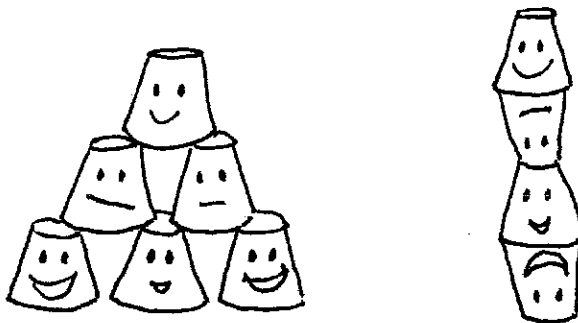
Turn the cups upside down and draw two eyes and a mouth on the side of each one.

### Guide Each Child to

1. Look at the cups turned upside down. Tell them they'll pretend these are wise men.
2. Help the children stack the cups in a pyramid. See how high you can go.
3. To make the game harder, try setting one wise man on his head, the next one on his head, and so on.
4. Children can work in pairs or in small groups. Or do this as a large group with each child in turn adding one cup to the stack.
5. Option: Do this on the floor and roll a soft ball at the stack to knock it down.

### Things to Talk About

1. What made the wise men want to take a trip?
2. How did they know where to go?
3. What did they find when they got there?
4. What was the best gift of all?



# Games

## Hop the Path

### Materials

- eight rectangles (“stones”) cut out of brown construction paper

### Guide Each Child to

1. Space the “stones” apart across the floor to make a path.
2. Ask the children to start at one end of the path and hop down the path, weaving around the left side of the first stone and the right side of the next stone. They should go in and out around the stones and try not to step on them.
3. Change the way of walking the path: march, tiptoe, gallop, etc. If you want, sing “Camels, Camels, Come” while the children trot around the stones.

### Things to Talk About

1. Did the wise men travel to Bethlehem in a car? an airplane? a bus? Why not?
2. How did they know where to go?
3. What did they do when they found the baby king?
4. What was the best gift of all?

# Games

## Gift Basket

### Materials

- a basket
- a cloth to cover the basket
- objects to place in the basket (like an orange or apple, a comb, a ball, a ball cap, a birthday candle, a crayon, etc.)

### Guide Each Child to

1. Listen as you tell the children that sometimes people give gifts in baskets. Then choose one child to hold the basket. Ask the other children to close their eyes.
2. Put an object in the basket, cover it with the cloth, then ask, "What's in the gift basket?"
3. The child holding the basket gives the other children clues about the object's size, shape, color, or use. When the children guess the object, the child holding the basket takes the cloth off so everyone can see.
4. Choose a new basket holder and a different object to play again.

**Option:** Let children feel the object under the cloth, without looking at it. They must not say what they think it is until everyone has had a chance to feel it and you ask, "What is it?" Then they can all shout it out.

### Things to Talk About

1. Are you giving people gifts this Christmas?
2. How do you feel when you give someone a gift and they like it a lot?
3. What gifts did the wise men take to baby Jesus?
4. What was the best gift of all?



# Games

## Catch a Falling Star

### Materials

- large star shapes cut from sponges
- a small bedsheet or beach towel

### Prepare ahead of time

Cut sponges into star shapes. One for each child is best, though not necessary.

### Guide Each Child to

1. Allow you to choose several children to hold the edges of the bedsheet or beach towel so that it's suspended a foot or two above the floor.
2. Let the other children take turns tossing their stars into the sheet or towel.
3. Then let the children holding the sheet count to three and toss the sheet up quickly, sending the stars flying. The other children try to catch a star as it falls.
4. Now choose different children to hold the sheet, and try the game again.

### Things to Talk About

1. What time of day is best to see stars?
2. What did the wise men see when they looked into the sky?
3. Why did they follow the bright star?
4. What did they find when they got to Bethlehem?
5. What was the best gift of all?

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