

Use Week of:

Christmas • Session 4

Wise Men Visited Jesus

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 2

STORY POINT: The wise men
worshipped Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE:

Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to
rescue us.



INTRODUCE THE STORY
(15–20 MINUTES)
PAGE 34



TEACH THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 36



EXPERIENCE THE STORY
(20–25 MINUTES)
PAGE 38



Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

LEADER Bible Study

The wise men were magi. Their study of the stars led them to Judea to find and worship Jesus, the newborn King. Before they found Jesus, though, the wise men met King Herod. God had promised the Jewish people a new king—one who would save them from their enemies.

King Herod was not that king. Imagine how he felt when he heard about a new king in town.

The wise men asked him, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?” (Matt. 2:2) The wise men unintentionally challenged Herod’s reign. Not only was Herod not a full Jew, he was not a descendant of King David. Herod was deeply disturbed by the news that this child had the birthright of being king.

As Herod’s fury grew, he gathered his chief priests and scribes to determine where Jesus had been born. Then he lied to the wise men: “When you find him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him” (Matt. 2:8). What deceitfulness! The truth was, Herod did not want to worship Jesus at all; he wanted to kill Him!

The wise men continued on their journey and found Jesus. Jesus may have been about two years old when the magi found Him and worshiped Him. The Bible does not say how many magi worshiped Jesus, although three are often depicted because of their three gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. God warned the wise men in a dream to avoid Herod, so they returned home by another route.

The wise men came to worship Jesus as King. Jesus is the King who will rule forever, as God promised to King David in 2 Samuel 7. Help the preschoolers you teach realize that Jesus is the true King who is worthy of all our worship.

The BIBLE Story

Wise Men Visited Jesus

Matthew 2

Long ago, God promised to send a king to save His people from their enemies. The people waited a long time for their king, and the time had finally come! God's Son, Jesus, was born in Bethlehem.

At this time, Herod was the king over the land of Judea.

Was Herod the king God promised? No! Herod was a bad king.

Some wise men saw a star in the sky. It was a sign that Jesus had been born, so the wise men went to find Jesus. They came to King Herod.

"Where is the king of the Jews?" they asked. "We saw a star in the east. We want to worship the new king."

King Herod was very angry. A new king? Herod was king! He asked the priests and scribes, "Where is this king supposed to be born?"

"In Bethlehem, just as the prophet said," his priests and scribes replied.

Herod spoke to the wise men in secret.

"Go find this child. When you find Him, come tell me where He is so I can worship Him as king, too." But Herod was lying. Herod didn't want to worship the new king; he wanted to kill Him!

The wise men followed the star to Jesus. They went into the house



where Jesus was with His mother, Mary. **The wise men fell to their knees and worshiped Jesus. Then they gave Jesus gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.**

When it was time for the wise men to go home, God warned them in a dream not to tell Herod where Jesus was. So they took a different way home.

After the wise men were gone, **an angel appeared to Mary's husband, Joseph, in a dream. The angel said, "Take Jesus and Mary to Egypt and stay there. King Herod is looking for Jesus and wants to kill him!"**

So in the middle of the night, Joseph got up and took Mary and Jesus to Egypt where they would be safe.

A while later, after Herod had died, an angel spoke to Joseph again in a dream. "Take Jesus and Mary to the land of Israel, because King Herod is dead now." Joseph did what the angel said. He got up and took Mary and Jesus to Israel.

Christ Connection: The wise men came to worship Jesus as King. God promised to send a King who would be King forever. Jesus is the King who will always be King. Jesus is the true King, and He deserves all our worship.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use props:** Gesture toward or hold up props relating to key words in the story. Examples: a crown (king), baby doll (Baby Jesus), star cutout (star), camel or donkey (to reference travel)
- **Monologue:** Invite a male guest to dress in lavish Bible times clothes and tell the Bible story as a monologue from the perspective of one of the wise men.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Wise Men Visited Jesus

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 2

STORY POINT: The wise men worshiped Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.

Welcome time

- "Joy to the World" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "Wise Men Maze" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Guide preschoolers to complete the maze to get the wise men to Jesus.

SAY • Some wise men followed a star to find Jesus. When they found Jesus, they worshiped Him and gave Him special gifts. They knew He was a King! We will find out more in today's Bible story.

LOW PREP

Follow the leader

Invite the preschoolers to line up single file and to follow you around the room. Make the game more challenging by hopping, skipping, side-stepping, and traveling around or over obstacles. After a few moments, invite a preschooler to take over as leader and lead his friends around the room. Play until each child has a turn being leader.

SAY • In today's Bible story we are going to learn about some wise men who saw a bright star in the sky.

When they saw the star, they followed the star all the way to Jesus just like we played follow-the-leader!

Pass the star

Cut out a star from cardboard or heavyweight paper before class. You may also wrap the star in aluminum foil. Invite preschoolers to sit with you in a circle. Hold up the star and say the big picture answer, ***Jesus was born to rescue us.***

- star cutout
- aluminum foil (optional)

Pass the star to the child next to you and invite him to say the big picture answer as well then pass the star. Younger preschoolers may pass the star in a circle, but older children may pass the star to a friend in a random pattern. Make sure each child gets a chance to say the big picture answer.

SAY • Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.

Today, we are going to learn about some wise men who traveled a long way to visit Jesus after He was born. They saw a star in the sky. The star was a sign that Jesus had been born. Let's find out what happened.

Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy.

- countdown video (optional)
- star cutout

Make a large paper star out of construction paper. Invite the preschoolers to line up single file and give the star to the first child in line. She will hold up the star so the other children can see it as she follows you to Bible study.

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Wise Men Visited Jesus

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 2

STORY POINT: The wise men worshiped Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.

Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline
- star cutout

Place a bookmark at Matthew 2 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • Is there any book more important than the Bible? No, the Bible is God's words. The stories in the Bible really happened. [*Invite a child to bring you the star cutout.*]

God made the stars to shine in the sky so we have a little bit of light at nighttime. God shone a very bright star in the sky when Jesus was born. Wise men used that bright star to lead them to Jesus so they could worship Him.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline.

Remind children that all the stories in the Bible are telling an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Wise Men Visited Jesus" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

SAY • **The wise men worshiped Jesus as King.** God promised to send a King who would be King forever. Jesus is the King who will always be King. Jesus is the true King, and He deserves all our worship.

Practice the key passage

Cut out the key passage marker and place it at Galatians 4:4-5. Invite a volunteer to come up and open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Practice the motions you created for the verse.

SAY • We celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas by remembering that God the Son left His Father in heaven and came to earth as a baby. God sent Jesus to rescue us from sin. Jesus is our King forever! He deserves all our worship.

Sing the key passage song, "Adoption as Sons," and the theme song, "Joy to the World."

- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- "Adoption as Sons" song
- "Joy to the World" song

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Who would like to answer our big picture question?

Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.

Great job! Yes, ***Jesus was born to rescue us.*** The wise men knew that God promised to send a special King, and they knew Jesus is that King. We can worship Jesus, too! Jesus is the true King who rescues His people from their sin.

- Big Picture Question Poster



Missions moment

Show the "Ministry Needs" video.

SAY • The missionaries in this video traveled to Moldova to share the gospel with children there. They love the children there by meeting their physical needs and showing them Jesus' love. They also tell them the good news about Jesus so that the children can believe in Him too. Let's pray for them.

- "Ministry Needs" video

Pray and transition to experience the story

EXPERIENCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Wise Men Visited Jesus

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 2

STORY POINT: The wise men worshiped Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.

LOW PREP

• gift bags (optional)

Bring gifts to friends

Invite the preschoolers to pick one thing from the classroom to put in a gift bag. Explain to preschoolers that gift is to play with at church and not to take home. Once everyone has a gift, invite the children to sit in a circle and exchange gifts with a friend. When you count to three, invite children to open their “gifts.” Invite children to play with their gifts, or they may put back the items and play again as time allows.

SAY • Wise men traveled a long way to visit Jesus. They also brought Jesus special gifts to show that He is King.

The wise men worshiped Jesus. We give gifts to our friends and family at Christmastime to celebrate King Jesus’ birthday.

- heavyweight paper
- thumbtack or sharpened pencil
- flashlight

Tip: If your room is too bright, place a blanket over a table and shine the flashlight under the table.

Count stars

Use a thumbtack or sharpened pencil to poke 10 to 12 holes in a piece of heavyweight paper. Make one hole noticeably larger than the others. Dim the lights and shine a flashlight under the paper to project the “stars” onto the ceiling. Invite preschoolers to lay on the floor and count the stars. Ask preschoolers to point out the biggest star.

SAY • The wise men lived in a faraway land. They had been taught that God promised His people that He

would send a special King. They watched the stars in the sky. When they saw God's star, they knew God's King was born. **The wise men worshiped Jesus.** Jesus is the King who will always be King. Jesus is the true King, and He deserves all our worship.

Get Jesus to Egypt

Print and cut out the "Jesus" printable. Designate a spot in your room to serve as Egypt. Allow preschoolers to take turns hiding Jesus while the other preschoolers have their eyes closed or are looking away. Once Jesus is hidden, invite preschoolers to find Him. When a preschooler discovers Jesus, she must immediately place Him in Egypt. Continue play until each preschooler has had a turn hiding Jesus.

• "Jesus" printable

SAY • The wise men worshiped Jesus. After the wise men were gone, an angel warned Joseph in a dream to take Jesus to Egypt where He would be safe from King Herod. When King Herod died, an angel told Joseph to take Jesus back to Israel. Jesus is not a King like King Herod. Jesus is the King who will always be King. Jesus is the true King, and He deserves all our worship.

Trace feet

Lay out a large sheet of paper and tape it to the floor to make a path. Instruct each preschooler to stand along the path and wait for an adult helper to come around to trace her feet. Trace each child's feet and write her name where she was standing. After adults trace all the children's feet, invite the children to decorate their traced feet with crayons and markers.

• large sheet of paper
• pencils
• crayons and markers (optional)

SAY • The wise men traveled a long, long way to see Jesus!

The wise men worshiped Jesus when they saw Him. Jesus was important to the wise men, and Jesus should be important to us. Jesus is King of everything, and He is worthy of worship and praise!



Sample “Cozonac”

Post an allergy alert. Wash hands and serve cinnamon raisin bread to preschoolers or find a recipe online for Moldovan cozonac (KOZO nak) and prepare this traditional holiday bread for preschoolers to sample. The Italian bread, panettone, is similar as well and readily available during the holidays.

SAY • Many people in Moldova celebrate Christmas on January 7 instead of December 25. One of the ways people in Moldova celebrate the birth of Jesus is to eat cozonac. Cozonac is a sweet bread that usually has raisins and walnuts in it. As we eat this bread, let’s pray for the people of Moldova. Let’s pray that like **the wise men worshiped Jesus**, the Moldovian people will worship Jesus too.

- Allergy Alert download
- cinnamon raisin bread
- cozonac (optional)
- plates
- napkins

Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Consider serving bite-sized chocolate candies wrapped in gold foil to represent the gold the wise men gave to Jesus if you did not already serve cozonac for snack. If chocolate is not an option, consider serving today's snack in small gift snack bags. Ask children, ***Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.*** Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. How did the wise men know God's King had been born? (*They saw a star in the sky.*)
2. What lie did King Herod tell the wise men? (*that he wanted to worship the new King too*)
3. How did the wise men know King Herod was lying? (*God warned them in a dream.*)
4. Where did Joseph take Mary and Jesus so they would be safe? (*Egypt*)
5. ***Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.***

Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- gold-foil wrapped candy (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "Joy to the World" song (optional)
- "Adoption as Sons" song (optional)
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers