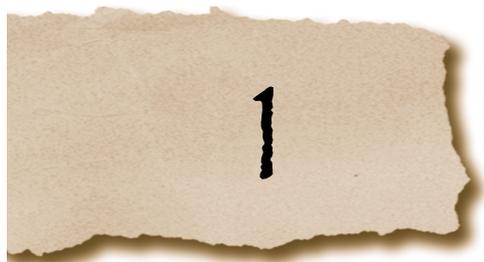


Star Leads to Jesus



Bible Text

Matthew 2:1-12

Key Verse

On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Matthew 2:11

BIG

Idea

God guides everyone to Jesus.

LR = Learner Resource
TCK = Teacher Class Kit
M&P = Materials and Preparation

Session at a Glance	What You Need	What Learners Do
Ready for the Story (20 minutes)		
Welcome the Witnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postcards and pictures from a trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about trips they have taken.
Story Warm-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items with distinctive smells like lemon, cinnamon, scented candles, and flowers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guess the smells.
Story Fire-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witness CD (TCK), CD player, Bible, map, cardboard, aluminum foil, construction paper or card stock, markers, poster board, scissors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go on a scavenger hunt and put together a puzzle.
Explore the Story (20 minutes)		
Story Set-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflet 1 (LR), pencils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify people who are good guides for us.
Storytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflet 1 (LR), star, items with distinctive smells, Bible time costume (robe, head covering), wrapped box 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the story of the Wise Men.
Faith Traits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflet 1 (LR), reverence Faith Traits cards (Reproducible Sheets D and E in TCK), binder rings, markers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore what reverence means and map the travels of the Wise Men.
Live the Story (20 minutes)		
Ways to Witness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflet 1 (LR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest ways to thank those who are good guides.
Kids Create	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copier paper, craft sticks or thin dowels, markers, glue or tape, yarn or ribbon • White paper plates, scissors, glitter glue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make an Announcement Scroll. • Make a shining star.
Wrapping It Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Star, copies of Family Letter (back of this guide) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray for those who guide them to Jesus.

Session 1

Bible Background What Factors Shaped This Story?

Herod was a Jewish ruler beholden to Rome whose imperial forces occupied Jesus' homeland. Under Herod's leadership, Roman troops had conquered Palestine in 37 B.C. with the siege of Jerusalem. Responding to local rebellions through Palestine, the Romans again subdued the people around the time Jesus was born. Exploitation and brutality characterized Herod's rule. The Jewish people had long expected the fulfillment of prophecy that God would send a Messiah to deliver the people. Herod was aware of the prophecy. He sought to destroy anyone—even an infant—who might threaten his rule or that of his descendants.

What Is This Story About?

The Wise Men who came seeking the child were guided by astrologers who told them to follow a star. By this star, the heavens proclaimed the birth of a new king. Herod was unaware of the birth until the Wise Men came to him, not to pay him homage but to find the new king. Though they were wise, they came to Herod as naive outsiders from Persia, a country to the east. In their ignorance of local political realities, they exposed the child and his family to Herod's jealousy and murderous intent. Later, guided by their dream, the Wise Men knew not to return. Returning to Herod with knowledge of the family's whereabouts would expose the child further.



Why Is This Story Important?

This story is the first in Matthew in which divine intervention saved Jesus' life. The Wise Men interpreted their dreams and the stars. They used what knowledge and means they had to accomplish what they understood as their mission.

The story contrasts two kings: Jesus and Herod. We read of a helpless infant in out-of-the-way Bethlehem and of a powerful tyrant in the capital city of Jerusalem. Compare the heavens' visible leading with Herod's secret plotting. The international visitors ask Herod the king about a newborn king. On entering the place where Jesus lay, they knelt down and paid homage, offering precious gifts.

Age-Level Connection

Young children look to others, especially adults, to help guide them to where they need to go and to what they need to do. Help them to understand that God puts people and events in their lives to help guide them to ways to love Jesus and live the way God wants us to live. God is happy when we want to live in loving and caring ways. God will always show us how to do this.

Teacher Prayer

God of Light, open my eyes and heart to where you lead me. Sometimes I am so busy with the tasks of each day. Help me to put the tasks aside for a while and focus on your light and your path. Keep me focused on what you would have me do. Amen

Question for Reflection

God used a star to guide the Wise Men to Jesus. What people or events has God used to guide you to Jesus?

Learner Goals

KNOW

the story of the Wise Men's visit to Jesus

GROW

in their faith by seeing how God guides us

SHOW

their trust in God by asking God to guide them

FACTOID

Frankincense is a white gummy substance produced by certain trees in Arabia. It becomes a sweet smelling powder when crushed and was used in Jewish worship ceremonies.

Ready for the Story (20 minutes)

Witness WORDS

worship, king, guide

FACTOID

Myrrh is a dark red gum that smells strong and tastes bitter. It comes from a bush in Arabia and Africa and was used to make perfume and ointment.

Welcome the Witnesses

M&P *Display the postcards and pictures from your trip.*

Warmly welcome learners and thank them for making the trip to the classroom today. Show them the postcards and photos from your trip, and ask them several questions about trips they have taken. **Where have you gone? Who went with you? How did you know how to get there? Who helped you get there? Did the people who helped you get there have any things to help them guide you?** Accept a variety of learner responses.

Story Warm-Up

M&P *Gather a variety of items that have a distinctive smell like lemon, cinnamon, scented candles, flowers, perfume, and chocolate. Bring enough for one item per learner.*

I've brought some things with me today that have very distinctive smells. Close your eyes and I'll bring different things around for you to smell. See if you can guess what they are. No peeking! Allow time for each learner to smell something different. **The Wise Men brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh for Jesus. Frankincense and myrrh were both ingredients that were used to make perfume. They were very special and very expensive. The Wise Men brought gifts they thought were right to bring a king. If you were to bring a gift to Jesus today, what might it be? What do you think a king or very important person might need?** Allow each learner an opportunity to answer and accept a variety of responses.

Story Fire-Up

M&P *Have Track 1 from the Witness CD (TCK) and a CD player ready. Gather the following items for a scavenger hunt: Bible, map, star made from sturdy cardboard and covered with aluminum foil, drawings of several road signs (stop, slow, directional arrows, caution, exit, and so on) on construction paper or card stock. Provide at least one item per learner. Before learners arrive, hide scavenger hunt items around the room or another space around the church. Make a puzzle by writing the names of all the items gathered on a piece of poster board. Cut into puzzle pieces, one item named on each piece.*

The Wise Men in the story traveled a great distance to find the baby Jesus. They had to find their way to a new place. Here is a puzzle that names things that help us know where to go and what to do. We're going on a hunt to find the things named on the puzzle piece. Find what's on your piece and bring it back. Then we'll put the puzzle together. Give each learner a piece, making sure they know what they are looking for. Play "Everything Shines Bright a Little" (track 1) from the Witness CD as they hunt. Gather around and work together to put the puzzle pieces together. Briefly discuss how each item helps us know what to do and where to go.

Transition Tip

Give one learner the star, directing the learner to hold it up high for everyone to see. Ask the other learners to form a line behind the star. The learner with the star leads the children several times around the room. Play "Everything Shines Bright a Little" (track 1) from the Witness CD as they move around the room. Everyone then sits down, ready for the story.

Session 1

Explore the Story (20 minutes)

Story Set-Up

M&P Have Leaflet 1 (LR) and pencils available.

Distribute the leaflets and read the directions for “Giving Good Directions” on the front page. Ask learners to look at the people pictured. **Who helps us if we get lost, have questions, or want to make good choices?** Briefly discuss each one and guide learners as they circle the ones who help and put an X over the people who are not good helpers.

Storytelling

M&P Have leaflets available. Use the star from the scavenger hunt. Choose one of the fragrant items from the Story Warm-Up and place it in a wrapped box. Use a Bible time costume like bright fabric, a robe, or a cape to portray one of the Wise Men.

Introduce the story by getting into character as one of the Wise Men. Put on your costume and place the scented item in the wrapped box. **People think I’m wise. After our latest trip, I know I have a lot more to learn. What a trip it was! We scurried to get all of our supplies together. We had to think of just the right gifts to bring along. We knew we were going to see some important people. Oh my, oh my! What a trip! Let me tell you about it.** Read the story from the second page of the leaflet with vivid expression. As the trip begins, one learner can carry the star high and another learner can carry the wrapped box. Ask learners to follow you as you walk around the room and read the story.

FAITH Traits

M&P Provide the Session 1 Faith Traits stickers (LR). Make copies of the reverence Faith Traits card from Reproducible Sheets D and E (TCK) for each learner. Punch a hole in each card and have a binder ring for each learner. Have the leaflets available. Provide enough markers so each learner will have two different colors.

Distribute a Faith Traits card and ring to each learner. Open leaflet to page three. Give each learner two markers of different colors. **The Wise Men knew that something amazing was happening. A king was being born. It was so important to them that they made a long journey to worship this new king of the Jews. For this story the Faith Trait is reverence. Look at the words across the top of the page. These are words that can help us understand what reverence is.** Discuss what the words mean. **How did the Wise Men show reverence for Jesus?** (*Made a long journey to find him and worship him. Brought him special gifts. Wanted to keep him safe.*) Show learners how to place the Faith Traits card on the ring and place the sticker on the card. Let them know you will add a card to the ring each week. **Look at the map on the bottom of the page. Let’s plan out a route with one color marker to get the Wise Men to Jesus and a different route away from King Herod to go back home.**



Talk about the people in their lives they love, respect, and treasure. Who are the special people that guide them? Share with them stories of those who are special to you, too.



Invite learners to show ways they can move or “travel” from one side of the room to the other. Travel movement ideas: slowly, quickly, quietly, with both hands and feet on the floor, sideways, backwards, with a partner guiding the other.

Session 1

Teacher Boost

Remember that God is using you to guide your learners to know Jesus better. You play an important role in their lives. Ask God to use your voice to speak to them.

Witnesses in the World

Choose a country in the world where children hear about Jesus. Visit the global mission area of your denomination's Web site to learn more about ministry around the world. Talk about who helps guide these children to Jesus. Discuss how their situation is the same and different for your group of learners.

Go Global!

Check out the Session 1 Go Global! activity on Reproducible Sheets I and J (TCK). See page 3 of this guide.



Trace your foot on a piece of paper and make copies so each child can have one footprint. Write "Jesus" on each footprint. Give everyone a footprint as they leave, reminding them that God guides their feet to Jesus.

Live the Story (20 minutes)

Ways to Witness

M&P *Have the leaflets available.*

Look at the people on the front page of the leaflet. Jesus would like us to thank the people who help and guide us to live as his followers. How have some of these people helped you? How can we thank them? (Accept learner responses.) Choose one person to thank this week. Who will you choose? Ask each learner to name one person to thank.

Kids Create (Choose One!)

M&P *Announcement Scroll: Cut copier paper in half the long way. Cut craft sticks or thin dowels into 6-inch (15 cm) lengths. Provide markers, glue or transparent tape, and yarn or ribbon.*

Follow the Star: Provide white paper plates, scissors, and glitter glue.

Announcement Scroll: The Wise Men would have studied from writings on scrolls. We can make a scroll that tells everyone that Jesus is born. Give each learner a piece of paper, markers, and two sticks or dowels. Direct learners to glue or tape their sticks to the short ends of the paper. Next, invite them to write, "Jesus is born. Come adore him." in the middle of the paper. They can also add drawings around the writing. Roll paper around sticks or dowels equally on each end. Tie with yarn or ribbon. Discuss who they would like to share their Announcement Scroll with after Sunday school.

Follow the Star: The Wise Men had a star to help guide them on the journey. The star reminds us that God provides something to show us the way we are to go. Give each learner two or three paper plates and a scissors. One or two paper plates can be used to cut four long points and four short points. Glue the long points onto the top, bottom, and two sides of the uncut plate. Glue the short ones in between the long points. Learners can then use glitter glue to decorate their star.

Wrapping It Up

M&P *Use the star from earlier activities.*

Gather learners into a circle. Ask them to name again the people who guide them to Jesus and help them each day. The closing prayer allows each learner to name and thank God for one person who helps them. Start the closing prayer by holding the star and saying, **Thank you God for _____** (person who helps you). Give the star to the learner next to you. Invite him or her to say the same words and name someone in their life. Pass the star around the circle until everyone has had a turn. **Thank you God for guiding us each day.**

Amen

Send home a copy of the Family Letter from the inside back cover of this guide.