

Wise Men

Lesson At-A-Glance

Scripture Reference
Matthew 2:2-12

Lesson Focus
A powerful king is born!

Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Arrival Time Kids work together to make a beautiful star and do an Activity Page.	Activity Pages 	Pencils, poster board or mural paper, markers, scissors, gift box or bag, yellow paper, tape, glitter glue (optional)
Circle Time Kids greet each other with a class cheer and play the game "Pass the Present."	None	Gift from Arrival Time, CD player, music CD
Prayer Time Kids pray, using the gift from Arrival Time.	None	Gift from Arrival Time

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Wise Men Storytelling Leader or kid reads aloud from the Spark Story Bible, and kids go on a journey around the church, looking for signs of Jesus.	Spark Story Bibles	Star from Arrival Time
Follow that Star! Kids follow the wise men on their journey to see Jesus.	Leaflets, Lesson Stickers	None
My Gifts for a King Kids choose three gifts that they would like to give Baby Jesus, and draw a picture of their own special gift they would give.	Leaflets	Pencils, markers

Lesson At-A-Glance

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Stained-Glass Symbols Kids identify symbols for Jesus, then find hidden symbols in a stained-glass window picture.	Leaflets	Pencils, whiteboard, dry-erase marker, markers
Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh Kids learn about the three gifts the wise men gave to Jesus.	Leaflets	None
My Constellation Kids make constellations out of mini marshmallows and toothpicks.	None	Mini marshmallows, toothpicks, pictures of constellations (optional)

Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Good-bye Time Kids select what they will do at home this week, say the lesson focus statement, and do a good-bye action rhyme.	Leaflets	Pencils, scissors
Prayer Time Kids pray while the leader shines a flashlight on the ceiling like a star.	Leaflets, Family Pages 	Flashlight



Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content! Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find downloadable resources for this lesson: an Activity Page, a Family Page, and two additional in-class activities.

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Time

Before kids arrive, make an outline of a very large star on poster board or paper. Cut out the shape of a crown from yellow paper, as small as needed to fit inside the gift box or bag. Put the crown inside the gift box or bag, and tape shut.

Set out the star poster, markers, pencils, and copies of the Activity Page for this lesson.

Have you ever seen a shooting star? Affirm responses. **Can you find the group of stars called the Big Dipper when you look up at the night sky? How do you feel when you look at the stars in the night sky?** Affirm responses and share your own. **Let's work together to make the most beautiful star of all. I've drawn a star outline to get you started. Each of you can decorate a piece of the star or draw designs all over the star. It's up to you!** If you have glitter glue, invite kids to add lots of sparkle and shine by gluing glittery designs on top of their original ones.

Invite kids to do the Activity Page. When all kids have arrived, invite them to join you in a circle or small group.

Spark Resources

Activity Pages



Supplies

Pencils
Poster board or mural paper
Markers
Scissors
Gift box or bag
Yellow paper
Tape
Glitter glue (optional)

Circle Time

Let's all stand in a circle and put one hand in the middle, so our hands stack on top of each other. Place your hand in first to demonstrate. After everyone has a hand in the circle, shout together, **God loves everyone! God knows our names! Now, we'll each shout our own names out loud and lift up our hands starting with the person whose hand is on top.** Kids take turns saying their names, in the order their hands are stacked from top to bottom. After all names are said, tell everyone, **Raise both of your hands high and shout, "Praaaaise God!"**

If the kids in your class tried the Faith on the Go! activities from last week's leaflet, be sure to invite kids to share what they did. Ask everyone how they showed love to someone or helped another person during the last week.

We're going to play a game called "Pass the Present." It's like the game "Hot Potato!" Listen carefully to the rules before we begin: I'm going to play some music. While the music is playing, you will pass this gift around the circle. Hold up the gift that you assembled before the kids arrived. **When the music stops, the person holding the gift will shake it and try to guess what's inside. If you have already had a chance to guess and are holding the gift when the music stops, then you can pass the gift to someone who hasn't had a turn to guess. We'll play for a few minutes and see if anyone guesses what's inside the box or bag.**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Gift from Arrival Time
CD player
Music CD

Start the music, and play the game for a few minutes. After a while, end the game and remind kids of their various guesses. **Okay, it's time for me to open the gift. What could be inside?** Open the gift and take out the crown. **Who can tell me what this is? Let kids respond. Right—it's a crown! Who wears a crown?** Wait for responses. **A king or a queen wears a crown. Do you know of any Bible stories that have kings, gifts, and stars in them?** Pause. **Today's story has all three. It's called Wise Men. Let's pray, and then we'll read from our Spark Story Bibles and hear what a star, gifts, and kings have in common.**

Prayer Time

Invite kids to stand in a circle. Place the gift in the middle of the circle, and pray this prayer.

**Dear God,
You've given us so much.
Thank you for our families,
Thank you for our friends,
And thank you for Jesus—
The greatest gift of all!
Amen.**

Spark Resources
None

Supplies
Gift from Arrival Time

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

Wise Men Storytelling

Today's Bible story is called Wise Men. What does it mean to be wise? (*to know a lot, to be smart, to make good choices or good decisions*) **The wise men in our Bible story were waiting for a king. They were wise because they knew a lot about stars. They knew that a big star, brighter than any others in the night sky, was a sign from God that the king had been born. Let's read our Bible story to find out what the wise men do when they see this magnificent star!**

Pass out the Spark Story Bibles and invite everyone to find Wise Men, on pages 218–223. Wait until all kids have found the story, assisting those who may need help. Encourage kids to follow along as you read or ask for a volunteer to read out loud.

In today's Bible story, wise men followed a star to find Baby Jesus. Let's do the same thing, right now! Hold up the star that the class made during Arrival Time. **We're going to follow this star on a journey through our church. As we do, you can help me look for signs of Jesus. Are you ready?** Pause. **Then let's get started!**

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bibles

Supplies
Star from Arrival Time

Hold the star high, and lead the kids through the church, stopping anywhere that you see signs of Jesus. Point out things like stained-glass windows that have pictures or symbols of Jesus in them, paintings of Jesus, crosses, a Bible, and so on. If a crèche is set up in your church, end your procession there.

How do we know that Jesus was not an ordinary person? Let kids respond. **When we looked around our church, we saw lots of signs and symbols to remind us of Jesus. When Baby Jesus was born, a powerful king was born! Let's follow our star back to the classroom now, where we'll learn even more about Jesus—and the wise men who came to worship him.** Hold up the star, and lead the kids back to your classroom.

Have a brief conversation about the story. Ask the kids these questions:

1. **Why do you think the travelers in our story were called "wise men"?**
Affirm responses.
2. **Why was King Herod afraid of Baby Jesus?** (*He thought the baby king would grow up and take over.*)
3. **Would you have liked to travel with the wise men? Why or why not?**
Affirm all responses.

Follow that Star!

If kids are not already seated at a table, move to one for this activity. Give each kid a leaflet.

Look at the first page of your leaflet. The wise men had been waiting for someone important to come into the world. What was the sign from God that the king was born? (a star) Use your large sticker to put this sign in the sky. Hand out big stickers so kids can complete the picture.

Let's travel along with the wise men as they look for Baby Jesus! Does everyone see the star on page 1? Put your finger on it while I read the words. Read the first caption: **Three wise men looked into the night sky and saw a bright star.** Invite kids to trace the path with their fingers to the first wise man, the one wearing red. Then, ask if a volunteer would like to read the next caption: **The first wise man knew that the star was a sign that a king had been born.** Ask the kids to trace the path with their finger to the next wise man, the one wearing green, and invite another volunteer to read the next caption: **The second wise man wanted to follow the star and find the new king.** Continue having kids trace the path with their finger, and reading the next caption, ending by reading the paragraph inside the long, light blue arrow.

Wow! What a journey those wise men had! It was good that they listened to God and not to King Herod. Who remembers why King Herod was so jealous? Let kids respond. **Herod knew that a new king had been born. And this new king was so powerful that even the stars in the sky pointed the way to him.**

Spark Resources

Leaflets
Lesson Stickers

Supplies

None

Let's look at the bottom of our page and learn where we can find this story in the Bible. Today's Bible story, Wise Men, is from the Gospel of Matthew. The person who wrote the Gospel of Matthew wanted everyone to know that Jesus was a very special and powerful king. The Gospel of Matthew is the first book in the New Testament.

Hand out word stickers to kids. **Now look at the bottom of the third page in your leaflet. It has the same words that we just read, but it's missing some important words. Use the word stickers to fill in the blanks. Which word do you think goes where?** (*Jesus, powerful, king*) After attaching the stickers, read the statements together.

If you are interested in teaching your kids a Bible Memory Verse from the story, use this one. Teach it to them by inviting them to echo what you say, one phrase at a time.

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

When we say "paid him homage" in our Bible verse, it means that the wise men showed their honor and respect for the new king, Baby Jesus. What gifts did they give to the new king to honor him? (*gold, frankincense, and myrrh*) **Another way they showed their respect for the new king was by kneeling down in his presence.**

My Gifts for a King

Invite kids to open to the second page of their leaflets. **Now, imagine that we are going to see Baby Jesus right now. He's just been born, and we want to bring him a gift. Which of these gifts do you think he'd like best—and why?** Show kids the photos on page two of the leaflet. **Let's look at the first photo together. What is this gift?** (*a fuzzy blue baby hat*) **That would be a fine gift for a little baby! Next, can you find the red and blue teething rings? These are very useful for babies to chew on when their teeth are coming in. Hmmm. That would be a good gift, too.** Continue this sort of explanation, until you have described all of the gift options on the page. **Now I think you're ready to choose three of these gifts that you would bring to Baby Jesus. Check off the three gifts that you'd most like to give to Baby Jesus.** Wait until kids complete this step. Invite kids to talk about why they chose these three gifts.

Now, we know that there are other kinds of gifts, too, beside things. We can always give people gifts of kindness and love. Let's think of some gifts of kindness and love that we can give to share Jesus' powerful love with others. Let kids give suggestions. Some ideas might include: smiling at someone who looks sad; making a get well card for a sick person; offering to help with the dishes; raking leaves; or shoveling snow from a sidewalk. **Inside the box with the yellow frame and the gift card, draw one gift of love and kindness that you can share.** Pause to give kids time to draw. Invite them to share their responses with the class.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils
Markers

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

Stained-Glass Symbols

The wise men honored Jesus by kneeling down and giving him gifts fit for a king. One way we honor Jesus today is by placing stained-glass windows in our church buildings, so we have a beautiful place to honor and worship Jesus. The beauty of these windows can remind us of Jesus' powerful love. Do we have stained glass windows in our church? Pause for responses. If you looked at any stained glass windows during your storytelling review, remind the kids of what you saw.

Let's look at the third page of the leaflet. Draw a large star, crown, manger, and cross on the whiteboard. **The star, crown, manger, and cross are all symbols that remind us of Jesus.**

A symbol is a little picture that reminds us of something real.

How does the star remind us of Jesus? (*When Jesus was born, a bright star appeared in the night sky.*) **Now look really carefully at the stained-glass window. Four stars are hidden in the window. Three of the stars are exactly the same, but one is a little bit different. Raise your hand when you find the four stars.** Pause while kids look. Then, walk around and see if each kid has found the different star. **Color the three stars that are alike blue. Color the star that is different green.** Pause to give kids time to do this.

When you see a crown, why does it make you think of Jesus? (*The wise men followed a star to find the new king, and the new king was Jesus.*) **Look at the window again and find the four crowns.** Give kids time to find the four crowns. **Color the three matching crowns blue, and the one that is different green.** Pause to give kids time to color.

How does a manger remind you of Jesus? (*The manger symbol reminds us that Jesus was born in a manger.*) **Look for the four mangers hidden in the window. Color the one that is different green and the three that are the same blue.** Give kids time to find and color.

Our last symbol is the cross. How can a cross remind us of Jesus? (*Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins.*) **Find and color the four crosses. Remember to color the crosses that are the same blue, and the cross that is different green. Then color the whole window with lots of beautiful colors to remind you of Jesus' love.** Pause to give kids time to complete the activity.

The next time you see a star, a crown, a manger, or a cross you can remember that Jesus is the most powerful king of all!

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils
Whiteboard
Dry-erase marker
Markers

Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh

Turn to the back page of your leaflets. The wise men brought Jesus three fabulous gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Have you ever heard those words before? Pause. **When Jesus was a baby, those three gifts were very special. They weren't things that you would give to just any baby—gold, frankincense, and myrrh were gifts for a king!**

Let's read about the wise men's gifts right now, and see what we can learn about them. The little red lines with the arrow leading to the pictures will help you figure out which ones are gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Read the facts out loud from the leaflet.

Now, I'm going to call out the names of things that we use in our world today. After I name each thing, look at your leaflet and tell me if it is made with gold, frankincense, or myrrh. Ready? Call out the following words. **Coins!** (*gold*) **Mouthwash!** (*myrrh*) **Incense smoke that's used in churches!** (*frankincense*) **Good job! It's amazing to think that people still use gold, frankincense, and myrrh today. Those gifts will always be special, because they remind us of Jesus.**

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
None

My Constellation

Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.

I have a big word for you today. Has anyone ever heard of a constellation? Pause. **A constellation is a grouping of stars in the sky. In ancient times, people would look up at all the stars and see that they almost made pictures—kind of like a dot-to-dot in the sky. People would give the pictures names, like The Big Dipper or Taurus the Bull.** If you have an astronomy picture book or access to the Internet, you could show the kids some photos of constellations. Otherwise, you could draw a dot to dot of stars on the board, making a simple picture with the stars, and joining them together with lines.

The wise men knew all about constellations. They studied stars all the time! So to remind us of our Bible story about them, we're going to make our own constellations. We'll pretend that these marshmallows are the stars. Hold up a mini marshmallow. **And we'll use these toothpicks to connect the marshmallows together!** Demonstrate this by gently sticking a toothpick into a marshmallow. Use a few marshmallows and a few toothpicks to make a simple shape for the kids.

Give each kid about 10 mini marshmallows and 10–20 toothpicks, and let them start working. Give kids additional toothpicks and marshmallows as needed. **While you are working, think of a name for your constellation. Constellations are usually named after something that they look like: a bull, a bear, and a cross are some examples of things that real constellations are named for.** Give the kids a few minutes to build. Then invite them to show and tell about their constellations. Enjoy eating the leftover marshmallows.

Spark Resources
None

Supplies
Mini marshmallows
Toothpicks
Pictures of constellations
(optional)

The wise men followed a star to find Baby Jesus. The wise men might have also used constellations to help them find their way to Bethlehem. When a powerful king like Jesus was born, even the stars in the sky pointed the way to him!

Send (5 minutes)

Good-bye Time

Thank you for coming to class today! We learned how the wise men followed a star to find Baby Jesus. The wise men spent many nights following the star because they wanted to honor the new king. Jesus, a powerful king, had been born—and the wise men wanted to worship him.

Direct attention to the back of the Faith on the Go! slip on the bottom of the back page of the leaflet. Kids can fill in the blanks with the name of someone they want to give this slip to, their own names, and today's date. Encourage them to mark one or more of the ideas or add their own. Have kids cut the slip off on the line, ready to give to someone else.

After class, give this slip to someone you want to do the activity with. It's like a coupon for time with you. Next week, we can tell each other what we did to share God's love and remember our Bible story!

It's time for our Go Out! circle. Give kids time to stand with you in a circle. **Today we heard, "A powerful king is born." Let's say it together: A powerful king is born. Let's go out with God's love!** Say this rhyme together while doing the motions:

**Put both hands in,
Put both hands out,
Put hands up high,
And shake them all about.
Spin around once,
Spin again and shout:
Go, God! Go, us! Let's go out!**

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils
Scissors

Prayer Time

Darken your classroom. Shine a flashlight on the ceiling. **Let's imagine that it's that first night, long, long ago, when the wise men first saw the star in the sky, the star that pointed to the birth of a powerful king—Jesus. Look silently at this star as you listen to the prayer.**

**Dear God,
You led the wise men from afar,
With night skies lit up by a star.
You helped them to see Jesus.
Guide us, too, we ask and pray,
And lead us onward, day by day.
Help us to worship Jesus.
Amen.**

Be sure to send the leaflets, constellations, and Family Pages home with kids.

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Family Pages



Supplies

Flashlight