

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve animal crackers for today's snack. Invite preschoolers to hold up a sheep and say "baaa" if they find any sheep in their snack mix. Talk about how God sent angels to tell shepherds that His Son was born in Bethlehem. The shepherds praised God and told everyone the good news when they saw Jesus.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Transition

When a child finishes her snack, guide her to throw away any trash. She may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of Baby Jesus in the feeding trough. Remind the preschoolers that Jesus is God's Son. Jesus was born to be our King, but He was not born in a palace. Jesus was born to rescue us from sin, so He was born as a baby just like us, but He never once disobeyed God. Pray for the children.

SAY • Dear Jesus, thank You so much for coming to earth as a little baby. Thank You for always obeying God so You could die on the cross and come back to life to rescue us from our sin when we trust in You. Amen!

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.

- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschool*

Wise Men Visited Jesus

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 2:1-21

MAIN POINT: The wise men worshiped Jesus.

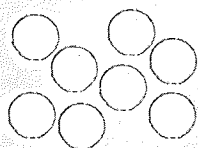
KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

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

SMALL GROUP OPENING

(15–20 MINUTES)

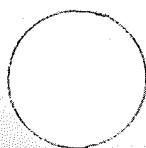
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LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY

(10–15 MINUTES)

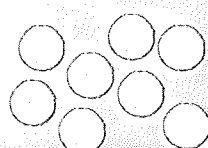
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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

(20–25 MINUTES)

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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.



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

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Wise Men Visited Jesus

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 2:1-21

MAIN 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 the unit 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
- pencils or crayons

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.

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*. 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.

- star cutout
- aluminum foil (optional)

Transition to Bible study

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.

Make a large paper star out 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 the large group area.

- countdown video (optional)
- star cutout

Large Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: Wise Men Visited Jesus

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 2:1-21

MAIN 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

• star cutout

As preschoolers take their seats in the Bible story area, invite a child to bring you a star cutout. Ask children to name the shape.

SAY • This shape represents a star. 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.

Watch or tell the Bible story

• Bible
• "Wise Men Visited Jesus" video
• Bible Story Picture Poster

Open your Bible to Matthew 2.

SAY • Is there any book more important than the Bible? No, the Bible has God's words in it. The stories in the Bible really happened.

Show the Bible story video "Wise Men Visited Jesus" or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided. Use the bolded version for younger preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

• Main Point Poster
• Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

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.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

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*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Who would like to answer our big picture question? *Why was Jesus born?* [Invite a preschooler to say the question and answer from memory.] Great job! **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

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Galatians 4:4-5. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, "Adoption As Sons."

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.

• Key Passage Poster
• "Adoption As Sons" song

Transition to small groups

Small Group ACTIVITIES

SESSION TITLE: Wise Men Visited Jesus

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 2:1-21

MAIN 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.



• 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 Christmas time to celebrate King Jesus’ birthday.

Count stars

- heavyweight paper
- thumbtack or sharpened pencil
- flashlight

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 far away 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 all of the children's feet have been traced, 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!

Decorate crowns

- construction paper
- scissors
- markers or crayons
- adhesive jewels (optional)

Cut pieces of construction paper into crowns. Invite the children to decorate the crowns with markers or crayons. You may also provide adhesive “jewels” for children to stick on their crowns. Write *Jesus is King!* on each crown.

SAY • Jesus certainly didn’t look like a king, but **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.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank 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 chocolate is not an option, consider serving today's snack in small gift snack bags. Talk about the gifts the wise men brought to worship Jesus as King.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Transition

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of the wise men following God's star. Remind children that Jesus is God's Son, and Jesus is King forever. Pray for the children.

SAY • Dear Jesus, thank You for coming to earth to rescue us from our sin by dying on the cross. Thank You for coming back to life so You can be our King forever. Help us to love You and worship You every day. Amen.

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.

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