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The Wise Men Follow the Star

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

Theme: Jesus is the King worth seeking and worshipping

4th-6th Grade (Ages 9-11)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Lesson Overview: "The Wise Men Follow the Star" Themes: Jesus is the King worth seeking and worshipping --- Introduction (Engage & Set Up) Start with a simple question: "What do you think it would be like to follow a mysterious, glowing star all the way home?" Use a flashlight or glowing object to visually demonstrate how the star led the Magi (wise men) on their journey. Explain that just like these travelers, we're called to follow Jesus, even when the path isn't easy! End by asking: "Who or what do you trust to guide your life right now?" --- Lesson Content (Explain & Explore) The Magi traveled thousands of miles from the East to visit a baby king in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1, 2). They didn't know where to go, until they saw a shining star over Jerusalem! (Show a diagram or simple drawing of the star's path.) Their journey wasn't just about getting there; it was about worshipping Jesus as the true King (verse 11). Unlike kings who demanded gold and gifts, these men gave Jesus everything, their time, their treasures, and their praise. Key Point: God calls us to seek Him with all our heart, not just when it's convenient. Deeper Question for Discussion: "If the Magi had hesitated or given up, what might have happened? How can we tell if we're really following Jesus, or just chasing something else?" --- Application (Reflect & Apply) The Magi left their homes, risked danger, and traveled far for one purpose: worship. Today, we can apply this in small ways! - Like the star, let's pay attention to God's direction in our lives, through Bible stories, prayers, or even a quiet moment of worship. - Like the gifts, offer something precious to Jesus: a kind word, a time to pray, or a small sacrifice (e.g., sharing with someone in need). - Like their joy, celebrate God's love even when the journey is hard. (Show a heart-shaped rock or glow-in-the-dark stars as props!) Personal Challenge: "This week, write down one way you'll 'follow the star' today, like spending time in God's Word or thanking Him for His love." --- Closing (Encourage & Send Off) End with a heartfelt prayer or simple song (e.g., "This Little Light of Mine"). Remind kids: "No matter where life takes us, Jesus is worth following. And when we do, He shines brighter in our lives, and in the world!" Send them home with a promise: "You're never too small to be a follower of the King." --- Teacher Tips: - Use props (glow sticks, star cutouts) to make it interactive. - For older kids, hint at the mystery of the star's origin (was it a real event? See Matthew 2:9). - Emphasize that worship isn't just about singing, it's about loving God with all our heart (Matthew 22:37). Optional reflection: children can draw

a picture of Jesus helping their friends, then share one way they can help someone else this week. This extra activity supports the lesson's theme and gives teachers a simple, lowprep option for extending the discussion.

Bible Story

The Wise Men Follow the Star (A Bible Story from Matthew 2:1-12)

Long ago, in a place called Bethlehem, a special baby was born, a baby named Jesus. His family, Joseph and Mary, had just moved to Bethlehem because of a prophecy that would one day save all people. Soon after Jesus was born, wise men from far away saw a bright, shining star in the night sky. They said, "This star is a sign!" They knew it meant something amazing was happening, and they wanted to see the baby Jesus. So, they set out on their journey, following that star.

The star led them all the way to Jerusalem, where King Herod was living. The king was afraid that Jesus might become a leader one day, so he called all the wise men to come to him. When they arrived, Herod asked, "Where is the baby king?" The wise men told him they wanted to pay respect to the newborn king, but they didn't know where he was. King Herod was upset and worried. Then, the wise men left quickly and followed the star again. It led them straight to the little family in a quiet home, where they knelt down and worshipped the baby Jesus. They gave him precious gifts: gold to represent his royal kingdom, frankincense to honor his divinity, and myrrh, which was often used in burial ceremonies, showing they understood the future would be full of both joy and sorrow.

When the wise men returned home, they didn't go to tell Herod. Instead, God had a plan: a dream warned them to stay far away from Herod, so they traveled a different way. This showed that God always protects those who love him, even when things look scary. The story ends with the wise men leaving, happy in their hearts, because they had seen Jesus and knew his love was real.

Reflection Questions: 1. Why do you think the wise men saw a special star? 2. How did the wise men show they believed Jesus was special? 3. What does it mean that they gave gifts to Jesus? What does gold, frankincense, and myrrh represent to you?

Personal Application: This story teaches us that when God shows us a sign, like a dream or a feeling in our hearts, we should listen and act. Just like the wise men, we can follow God's guidance, even when it's hard. It also reminds us that Jesus was born to be king, and his love is meant to change our lives. Who can you tell about Jesus this week?

Why This Story Matters: This passage shows how God uses ordinary people (the wise men) to bring his plan to life. It also teaches us that God often reveals his love in special ways, like stars or dreams, and that his love is worth following, even when it's not easy.

Key Verse

Matthew 2:2 , 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.'

This passage is from the story of the wise men (also called magicians or star-gazers) who saw a bright, special light in the sky. God had planned this so the wise men could find the baby Jesus, who was born the King of all nations, the greatest ruler who had ever lived. Their journey wasn't easy: they traveled far, followed the star carefully, and brought gifts (gold, frankincense, and myrrh) to honor the baby Jesus as if he were royalty. The wise men didn't know why they saw this star, but they trusted that God used it to guide them to Jesus. This shows how even strange or mysterious things can have a special purpose, like how God sometimes uses unexpected people or moments to lead us to him! Their worship was a celebration of Jesus' importance, because he was the King who saves us from trouble and brings peace. Here's something amazing: the wise men didn't just ask about Jesus; they acted. They left their homes, risked long journeys, and even avoided kings who might have tried to take advantage of the baby (Matthew 2:12). Their courage reminds us that following God's path, even when it's hard, can be powerful! Have you ever felt like God is leading you toward something big? What might that look like for you? Now, let's think about how we can worship Jesus in our own lives. Worship doesn't just mean singing

songs or praying loudly; it's giving our hearts and lives to him, just like the wise men gave their gifts. What small way could you show Jesus today that he's the most important person in your life? Maybe it's thanking him for your family, helping someone, or choosing to trust him like the wise men trusted the star. Would you like to pray together about how to do that?

Activities

Activity 1:

Students create a simple map of the Wise Men's journey, then discuss how their own "stars" (guiding beliefs or hopes) lead them in life.

1. Set the Scene: Begin by reading Matthew 2:1-12 aloud, highlighting the Wise Men's journey. Ask: "How did they know to follow the star?"
2. Create the Map: Give each student a piece of paper and have them draw a simple world map (focus on the East/West divide). On one side, label "Home" (where they're from), and on the other, draw a star and write "Follow!" beneath it.
3. Add Details: Have them draw the star's path leading from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, including cities/landmarks along the way. Add notes like "Magnetic star," "Shining bright," or "Guided them home."
4. Reflect & Share: In pairs or small groups, students write/draw one thing that "guides them" (like faith, family, or God's Word) on an index card. Share with the group: "What's my 'star' today?" Connect to Matthew 2:2 ("They asked, 'Where is this Baby King?'" , do we ask God the same questions?).

Activity 2:

Students craft a star to represent their faith witness, then pray together to share their "shining light."

1. Explain the Star: Read Matthew 2:10, 11 ("They fell down and worshipped him") and ask: "How do we 'worship' with our lives?"
2. Decorate the Star: Each student decorates their star with Bible verses, colors, or doodles. Add a tag: "My star witnesses!"
3. Light the Way: Glue stars to a jar with a paper "ribbon" string. Turn off lights (or dim the room) and light the jars as a group. Discuss: "How can our faith be like a light for others?"
4. Pray Together: Share one way they'll "witness" this week (e.g., tell a friend about kindness in the story). End with a group prayer, asking God to guide them like the star led the Wise Men.
5. Why These Work:
6. Map Activity: Combines art with biblical truth, making connections to real-life guidance.
7. Star Craft: Hands-on and visual, with a clear call to share faith in action.
8. Both activities use minimal supplies, encourage teamwork, and invite deeper questions like "How can my choices today be like a star guiding someone else?"

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions designed to engage upper elementary students (ages 9, 11) in deeper reflection on The Wise Men Follow the Star (Matthew 2:1, 12). Each question encourages exploration of the story's meaning, personal application, and spiritual growth.
- 1. Why do you think the Wise Men traveled so far to see King Herod? How does this story show us to seek truth even when it's difficult?
- (Encourages empathy, courage, and a willingness to search for answers.)
- When the Wise Men left their comfortable homes to follow the star, they faced uncertainty, maybe long journeys, unfamiliar places, and even danger from Herod. Do you know of a time when you had to step out of your comfort

zone to find something important, like a new friend, a hidden treasure, or even a deeper truth? How did you feel when you finally discovered what you sought? The Wise Men didn't just follow the star out of curiosity; they knew it led them to something greater, Jesus! How can we be like them when we're tempted to avoid challenges or distractions?

- (Deeper reflection): Sometimes, seeking God requires us to trust Him even when we don't understand why. Have you ever done something for Him that felt risky? What helped you keep going?
- 2. The star guided the Wise Men, but they still got lost along the way. What does this tell us about how we trust God's guidance in our own lives?
- (Explores patience, faith, and the reality of setbacks.)
- The star didn't give up on the Wise Men, it led them through the night sky, even when they stumbled. If a star could be so faithful, how much more can God guide us? Have you ever felt like God's direction was unclear or confusing? What helped you stay on the right path? Sometimes, God's guidance comes in small ways, like a text, a friend's advice, or even a quiet stillness in our hearts. The Wise Men didn't rely only on their own wisdom; they listened to the star's light. How can we learn to trust God's guidance, even when we don't see it immediately?
- (Personal connection): Think of a time when you were unsure about a big decision (like where to go to school or what to do for homework). How did you handle it? Did you ask for help, pray, or wait for a sign?
- 3. After visiting the baby Jesus, the Wise Men gave Him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Why do you think God chose these specific gifts, and what do they represent for us today?
- (Connects the story to worship, sacrifice, and preparation for Jesus' life.)
- Gold symbolized Jesus' kingship, He is the King of all creation. Frankincense was used in worship, showing that Jesus is holy and worthy of honor. Myrrh was a rare, expensive spice that would later be used to prepare Jesus' body for burial, reminding us of His sacrifice. These gifts were more than treasures; they were offerings of worship and love. How can we, like the Wise Men, give something valuable to God? Maybe it's time to think about how we honor Him with our words, actions, or even our possessions.
- (Deeper question): Some people might think giving gifts to Jesus is too much, like "I have to buy something expensive." How can we show our love for Him in ways that are sincere, even if they're not flashy? For example, could we spend time listening to Him, serving others, or being kind to someone who needs it?
- 4. Herod tried to kill the baby Jesus, but the Wise Men left by a different route. How does this story remind us that God has a plan, even when things seem scary or unfair?
- (Encourages hope in God's sovereignty and the importance of fleeing danger.)
- Herod's fear shows how easily people can be tempted to harm others, but the Wise Men didn't stay to fight. Instead, they trusted the star's lead and found safety in God's protection. That's a powerful lesson: God doesn't always take away our troubles, but He can lead us out of them. Have you ever felt like someone or something was trying to hurt you or take something away? How did you respond? Did you run away, fight back, or find a different way? The Wise Men's escape reminds us that God can turn danger into safety if we trust Him.
- (Personal application): Think of a time when you felt like you were in a "storm" (like a big test, a family fight, or feeling left out). What helped you remember that God was there? How can we be like the Wise Men and trust Him to guide us away from harm?
- These questions invite students to explore the story's themes, trust, sacrifice, worship, and God's plan, while connecting them to their own lives. Would you like any adjustments to better fit a specific lesson or group dynamic?

Prayer Focus

Prayer Focus: Following the Light of God's Love "Dear God, You sent a bright star to guide us, just like You guide us in life. Help us to trust You, even when the way isn't always clear. Teach us to listen for Your voice, like the wise

men did when they saw the star shining over Bethlehem. Give us courage to follow You, no matter how hard it feels. Help us to share Your love with others, just like the wise men brought gifts to honor Jesus. Amen." --- Deeper Reflection for Upper Elementary: 1. The Star's Message (Matthew 2:1-2) The wise men didn't just follow a random light, they followed a meaningful star. Just like they saw its special meaning, we need to recognize God's guidance in our lives. Have you ever felt like something was pointing you toward the right choice? What was it, and how did you decide? How can we learn to trust that God is leading us, even if we don't always understand the path? 2. The Journey Wasn't Easy (Matthew 2:9-10) The wise men traveled far and faced dangers (maybe even strangers or difficult roads). Jesus knew this, He knew their journey would test their faith. When have you been tempted to give up or doubt God's plan? How did you push forward? God is with us in our struggles, just like He was with the wise men. 3. The Gift of Adoration (Matthew 2:11) Instead of asking for treasure or power, the wise men gave Jesus worship, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts weren't just gifts; they were offerings of honor and love. How can we show Jesus we care? Maybe it's a kind word, helping someone, or even just spending time praying for Him. 4. The Warning in the Dream (Matthew 2:12) God didn't just stop the wise men, He protected them. That's like when you pray and God keeps you safe from trouble! When have you felt God's protection? How can we trust that He's guiding us even when we can't see the whole story? 5. Personal Application: Can We Follow? The wise men's story challenges us: Will we follow God's light, even when it's hard? Maybe you're waiting for a sign or unsure about a choice. Let's ask God: "Help me see Your light today, and guide me step by step." Then, share one small way we can follow Him this week, like praying before a big decision or helping someone who needs kindness. --- How the Teacher Can Lead the Prayer: "Lord, You shine like a star for us, just like You did for the wise men. Help us to turn toward You, like they did when they saw the star over Bethlehem. Teach us to trust You, even when the path isn't easy. Give us hearts that worship You with all we have, gold (our treasures), frankincense (our prayers), and myrrh (our love). And protect us, like You protected those wise men, so we never doubt You. Amen."

>> Missions Spotlight

The Magi (wise men) likely came from Persia (modern-day Iran). Today, Iran has one of the fastest-growing church movements in the world. Many Iranians are discovering that the 'star' their ancestors may have followed leads to Jesus.

-> To the Cross

The wise men traveled a long, hard way to find Jesus. They brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Myrrh was used for burial, a sign that even at His birth, Jesus' death was part of the plan. He came to be King AND Savior.