

## Bible background

Matthew 2

## Aim of lesson

To stress that Jesus is so important to all people that wise men came from another country far away to see him.

## Preparation required

You will need colouring materials, scissors, glue and glitter or silver kitchen foil.

## Suggested outline of lesson

1. You may like to discuss briefly the visit of the shepherds to Bethlehem. They were poor Jews from near Bethlehem. Today's lesson is about rich Gentiles from many miles away.
2. Using the activity sheet, help each child to track, first with his finger and then with a crayon or felt pen, the path the wise men took to get where the baby was. Use the third picture to tell how the wise men expected the new baby king to be born in a palace, and how the people at king Herod's palace told them that it was written in the Bible that the new king would be born in Bethlehem. Describe the journey to Bethlehem and of the finding of the child. Tell the children about the angelic warning to the wise men and get the children to take their route back avoiding Herod's palace. Tell the children about the warning to Joseph and the flight to Egypt and of Herod's anger and murder of the children of Bethlehem.
3. When you have finished tracing the journey the wise men took and explaining how they found the child and gave him their gifts and returned, have each child cut out a large star. (You could trace the one on the activity sheet.) They can glue on glitter or a layer of pieces of silver kitchen foil. These stars can be threaded with cotton at the top and hung in the classroom or taken home to be hung in their bedrooms.
4. If you have the time the children could take turns in playing a short game of 'follow-my-leader' round the chairs, with the leading child holding up his star.
5. The song 'That Amazing Boy' could be taught.

## Alternative activities

1. Make some boxes of treasure – gold, frankincense and myrrh. You could draw the outline of 3 caskets on paper or card then cut out matching shapes that can be taped on top to form a flopping lid which can then be lifted to reveal what is inside. Let the children decorate the lids and then glue or colour the 'gold', 'frankincense' and 'myrrh' inside. Alternatively, you could give each child a small plain box, or one that has been covered in plain paper, for them to decorate and fill with one of the gifts.
2. If you have a sand tray, use some plastic, Plasticine or cardboard camels and figures to enact the wise men's journey. Build a Lego or block palace in Jerusalem for Herod and a small house in Bethlehem for Jesus and his parents. You may wish to moisten the sand and build with that. You could also have a cardboard and foil star on a stick or piece of string to hold above the house.
3. Make a collage picture of the wise men on their camels.

## Relevance to the children's lives

Reinforce the story and the song by asking the children why Jesus is special. Why did the wise men want to see him?

## Prayer

Ask the children if they like giving presents. They could thank God that they have enough to be able to give, or they could thank him for presents they have received.

## Verse

'They opened their treasures and presented him with gifts.' Matthew 2:11.