



Bible Point ▶

The wise men knew that Jesus came to save us.

Bible Verse

“The Savior...has been born today in Bethlehem” (Luke 2:11a).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Children will ■ discover that God sent the star to lead the wise men to Jesus,
 ■ understand that the wise men came to worship Jesus as king,
 ■ learn that God protected Jesus, and
 ■ help Pockets learn about the best gift to give.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ The wise men seek Jesus.

**Matthew
2:1-13**



The Bible tells us little about the Magi who came to Bethlehem seeking Jesus. We know they were scholars who studied the stars and other sciences. The costly gifts they carried indicate their wealth. We know they were Gentiles, possibly from Persia, and that they followed a star to find a king. Though we don't know many details about these men, we do know their purpose. They came to worship a king. It didn't matter that the child didn't live in a palace or that his parents weren't wealthy; “they bowed down and worshipped him.” The Magi knew the importance of the Christ child, even when God's own people didn't.

Children today don't have to follow a mysterious star to find Jesus. They can learn about Jesus in Sunday school, children's church, a club, and at home. Yet, like the Magi, children need to capture the wonder and excitement in finding and worshipping the newborn King. When we help children discover the joy of worship, we equip them with the tools to grow closer to God. Use this lesson to help children follow the wise men's example of worshipping Jesus.










Prayer

- Read Matthew 6:33.
- Think about how you can seek out Jesus within your everyday life and how you can help your students learn to do the same.
- Pray: Dear Lord, in the midst of the hustle and bustle of daily life, please help me to see you in all places including...

Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use. Refer to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies columns to determine what you'll need.
- Make photocopies of the “Today I Learned...” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God's direction in teaching the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Welcome Time	Welcome! —Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher.	“Star Name Tags” (p. 26), markers, pins or tape	
Let’s Get Started Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Option 1: Wise Men Munchies —Decorate tasty wise men as a treat to share.	Gingerbread-men cookie cutters; flour tortillas; plastic knives; decorating items such as soft cream cheese, chocolate chips, and red cinnamon candies	
	Option 2: Star Bright —Make a shiny star for the <i>Learning Mat</i> .	Foil gift wrap, glue sticks	
	Option 3: Camel-Track Trail —Make camel tracks like the wise men did.	Potatoes, finger paint, bowls, paper grocery sacks, tape, newspapers	
	Pick Up Our Toys —Sing a song as they pick up toys, and gather for Bible Story Time.	CD player	
Bible Story Time	Setting the Stage —Play a “Star Search” game.	Paper stars	
	Bible Song and Prayer Time —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.	Bible, basket of surprise cards from Lesson 1, CD player	
	Hear and Tell the Bible Story —Help the wise men travel to Jesus, and hear of their adventures from Matthew 2:1-13.	CD player, sequins, brown yarn, glue stick, tape	 
	Do the Bible Story —Sing about the wise men’s journey.	Blanket, CD player	 
	The Best Gift —Help Pockets learn that the best gift is love.	Gift list, tape	
	Jesus Came to Save Us! —Share treats and affirmations.	Treats from Option 1	

*See the end of this lesson for extra-time ideas and supplies.

Welcome Time

Welcome!

SUPPLIES: “Star Name Tags” handout (p. 26), markers, pins or tape

- Kneel down to make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them about last week’s “Today I Learned...” discussion. Use questions such as “How did you tell others about Jesus’ birth?” and “What new ways did your family continue to celebrate Jesus’ birth?”
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that** ► the wise men knew that Jesus came to save us.
- Hand out the star name tags children made in the first lesson, and help them attach the name tags to their clothing. If some of the name tags were damaged or if some of the children weren’t in class that week, have them make new name tags using the photocopiable handout.
- Direct the children to the Let’s Get Started activities you’ve set up.



It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.



Let’s Get Started

Set up one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate among the children to offer help as needed and direct children’s conversation toward today’s lesson. Ask questions such as “What is God’s best gift to us?” or “What gift can we give to God?”

Option 1: Wise Men Munchies

SUPPLIES: gingerbread-men cookie cutters; flour tortillas; plastic knives; decorating items such as cream cheese, chocolate chips, and cinnamon candies

Bring flour tortillas, gingerbread-men cookie cutters, plastic knives, and decorating items such as cream cheese, chocolate chips, raisins, and red cinnamon candies. Let children cut gingerbread-man shapes from the tortillas and then decorate them with the other items. Have children decorate enough treats for each child to have one during the Closing. Tell children that today’s story is about wise men who wanted to find Jesus and worship him. Explain that ► the wise men knew that Jesus came to save us.



Option 2: Star Bright

SUPPLIES: foil gift wrap, glue sticks



Lay the *Learning Mat: Nativity* on the floor or a table where children can reach it. Set out glue sticks and scraps of foil gift wrap. Have children tear the shiny paper and glue bits of it on the large star on the *Learning Mat*. Encourage children to fill in the star



BIBLE POINT



teacher tips

Before class, cut two potatoes in half and shape to look like camel prints. (See margin illustration.)

completely so it'll look nice and bright for your story today. Explain that today they'll hear about wise men who followed a star to find the baby Jesus. Say that ► the wise men knew that Jesus came to save us.

Option 3: Camel-Track Trail

SUPPLIES: potatoes, finger paint, bowls, paper grocery sacks, tape, newspapers

Have children help you cut several paper grocery sacks apart and then tape them together with the plain sides facing up to form a long "road." Lay this paper road along one wall. Set out bowls of brown or black finger paint and the two cut potatoes.

Cover a work area with newspapers. Demonstrate how to dip the potato stamp in the paint and then make tracks on the paper road. Explain that today's story is about wise men who rode camels on a long trip to find Jesus. Explain that the wise men wanted to find Jesus because ► they knew that Jesus came to save us.

When everyone has arrived and you're ready to move on to the Bible Story Time, encourage the children to finish what they're doing and get ready to clean up.

Pick Up Our Toys

SUPPLIES: CD player



Lead children in singing "Pick Up Our Toys" (track 2) with the CD to the tune of "Skip to My Lou." Encourage the children to sing along as they help clean up the room.

If you want to include the names of all the children in your class, sing the song without the CD, and repeat the naming section. If you choose to use the CD, vary the names you use each week.



**We will pick up our toys.
We will pick up our toys.
We will pick up our toys
And put them all away.**

**There's [name] picking up toys.
There's [name] picking up toys.
There's [name] picking up toys,
Putting them all away.**

(Repeat.)

This Bible story is featured in the new *My First Hands-On Bible*. Order several now for your ministry at group.com.



Bible Story Time

Setting the Stage

SUPPLIES: paper stars

Before class, cut stars from yellow construction paper or shiny gift wrap. (You'll need one star for each child in your class.) Hide the stars around the room.

Tell the children you'll clap your hands to get their attention. Explain that when you clap your hands, children are to stop what they're doing, raise their hands, and focus on you. Encourage children to respond quickly so you'll have time for all the fun activities you've planned.

Form a circle and say: **I've hidden some stars around our room. Let's see if you can be good detectives and find them all! When you find a star, bring it back to our circle area, and sit quietly.**

When children have found all the stars, ask:

• **How did you know where to look?** (I guessed; I saw one on the wall; I heard someone else find one over there.)

Say: **Today's Bible story is about wise men who wanted to find Jesus. They found a star, too—a special star God put in the sky to help lead them to Jesus. ► The wise men knew that Jesus came to save us. We'll hear how their trip to find Jesus was quite an adventure!**



■ Bible Song and Prayer Time

SUPPLIES: Bible, basket of surprise cards from Lesson 1, CD player



Set the basket of surprise cards that you made in the first lesson next to you. If you don't have surprise cards, follow the directions in the "Bible Song and Prayer Time" section of Lesson 1 for this activity. Bookmark **Matthew 2:1-13** in the Bible you'll be using.

Have the children sit in a circle. Say: **Each week when we come to our circle for our Bible story, I'll choose someone to be the Bible helper. The Bible helper will bring me the Bible marked with our Bible story for that week. Before I choose today's Bible helper, let's sing our Bible song. As we sing, I'll pass out the surprise cards. Don't look inside your card until the song is over.**

Lead children in singing "Read God's Book" (track 3) with the CD to the tune of "The Muffin Man." As you sing, pass out the folded surprise cards.



SING

**Now it's time to read God's book,
Read God's book, read God's book.
Now it's time to read God's book.
Let's hear a Bible story.**

**Now it's time to read God's book,
Read God's book, read God's book.
Now it's time to read God's book.
Let's hear a Bible story.**

(Repeat.)

Then say: **You may look inside your surprise cards. The person who has the angel stamped inside his or her card will be our Bible helper for today.**

Identify the Bible helper, and then have the rest of the children clap for him or her. Ask the Bible helper to bring you the Bible. Assist the Bible helper in opening the Bible to the marked place, and show the children where your story comes from. Then have the Bible helper sit down.

Say: [Name] **was our special Bible helper today. Each week we'll have only one special Bible helper, but each one of you is a special part of our class! Today we're learning that ► the wise men knew that Jesus came to save us.**

Let's say a special prayer now and ask God to help us learn why Jesus came to save us. I'll pass around this basket. When the basket comes to you, put your surprise card in it and say, "God, thank you for sending Jesus to save us."

Pass around the basket or box. When you've collected everyone's surprise card, set the basket aside for use next week, and pick up the Bible. Lead children in this prayer: **God, thank you for the Bible and all the stories in it. Teach us today that ► the wise men knew that Jesus came to save us.**



■ Hear and Tell the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: CD player, sequins, brown yarn, glue stick, tape



Before this activity, fold the *Learning Mat: Nativity* in half, horizontally. Tape it to a wall near your story area so just the starry sky is showing.

Form a circle, and spread all of the *nativity kit figures* (except the wise men and camel) on the floor in the middle of the circle. Hold up the *plastic ring* and say: **Let's see what you remember about our story. We'll take turns tossing the plastic ring into the middle of the circle. Try to make it land on one of the figures, and then tell us one thing about the character it lands on.** Pass the *plastic ring* around, and have children recall different parts of the story. When everyone has had a turn, put the *plastic ring* out of sight.

Great job of remembering our story! Today's story is about some other people who came to see the baby Jesus. Far away in the east lived men who studied lots of things. They were very smart! One thing they studied was the stars, and that was how they noticed a new star in the sky. It was a special star they'd never seen before. The wise men knew the star meant that a special child had been born—a child who would be a king. So they got on their camels and followed the star. We can help the wise men follow the star, too.

Form a line starting at the *Learning Mat*, and give each child at least three sequins and a short strand of brown yarn. Stand at the back of the line, and use a glue stick to spread glue on the wise men and camel *nativity kit figures*. Pass each figure down the line, and have children add their sequins to the wise men's robes and their brown yarn to the camel's fur. As children are working, play "We Three Kings" (track 10) on the CD, and encourage children to sing along.



SING

**We three kings of Orient are,
Bearing gifts we traverse afar.
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star:**

**O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.**

(Repeat.)

"We Three Kings" by John H. Hopkins, Jr.

When the figures reach the *Learning Mat*, have children gather near it. Place a small amount of the *sticky tak* on the back of each figure, and allow volunteers to place them on the *Learning Mat*.

Say: **The wise men traveled for a long time and finally reached Jerusalem. There they went to see King Herod. He wasn't a very nice person and he... well, let's listen to what happened when the wise men talked with King Herod.** Play "Wise Men's Worship" (track 11) on the CD.

When the track ends, turn off the CD player and ask:

• **Did King Herod really want to worship baby Jesus? Explain.** (No, he was mean; no, he wanted to kill the baby; no, he was lying.)

Say: **You're right! King Herod was a bad guy! Well, the wise men left and went to Bethlehem. When they found baby Jesus and his mother, Mary, they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they gave him three very special gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Those were expensive gifts fit for a king! You see, ►the wise men knew that Jesus came to save us. Then God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to King Herod. So they went home a different way, and mean King Herod never found out where Jesus was.**

Ask: • **Why did the wise men want to find Jesus?** (They knew Jesus came to save us; they wanted to worship him.)

• **How do you think the wise men felt when they saw Jesus?** (Glad; excited.)
 • **Why did they bring such special presents to him?** (Because they knew he was important; they knew he was a king.)

Say: ► **The wise men knew that Jesus came to save us. That's why they traveled so far to worship him. And God protected Jesus from King Herod's evil plan. God loves and takes care of you, just like he took care of Jesus.**



■ Do the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: blanket, CD player



Before this activity, expose the *glow-in-the-dark stars* from the Learning Lab to a bright light. Cover a table with a large blanket for kids to sit under. If your class is large, put two tables together. (Or simply turn off the lights, if that darkens the room.)

Hold the baby Jesus *nativity kit figure*. Gather children and say: **Let's sing our Bible-story song to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me." I'll pass out the nativity kit figures to help us with the song. When you hear about the figure you're holding, pass it toward the baby Jesus figure.** Set the baby Jesus on the floor in front of you. Sing "The Savior Has Been Born" (#2) (track 9) with the *CD*.



**The Savior has been born today,
 Born today in Bethlehem.
 Horses, donkeys, cows, and sheep
 Watched the little baby sleep.**

(Chorus)

He came to save me. *(Point to self.)*
He came to save you. *(Point to someone else.)*
He came to save us *(open arms to include others)*
Because God loves us so! *(Hug a friend.)*

Shepherds heard the angels sing,
Then they found the newborn king.
Wise men came to worship, too,
Just like you and I should do!

(Repeat chorus.)

BIBLE VERSE

You may want to sing the song again without the CD but give the figures to different children. After the song, turn off the CD player, and gather together for a group hug. Say: **The wise men heard the news that ►“the Savior...has been born today in Bethlehem,” and ►the wise men knew that Jesus came to save us. They celebrated Jesus’ birth by worshipping Jesus and giving Jesus gifts. Let’s pretend we’re the wise men seeking Jesus right now. God put a bright star in the sky for the wise men to follow.** Hold up the sheet of star stickers, and show the children.

Say: **Let’s follow these stars and see where they lead us.**

Lead kids around the room to the covered table. Before kids go under the table, put a star sticker on each child’s shirt over his or her heart. Tell them to sit quietly under the table until everyone gets in; then join them under the table. Say: **Where do you see stars now? Over your heart! That’s because that’s where Jesus wants to live, in your heart. I don’t mean inside your body, I mean inside your thoughts and feelings—that kind of heart. Like the place inside you that loves your mom and dad.**



Say: **We can be like the wise men and seek Jesus, too. When we come to Sunday school, we’re seeking to learn more about him. The more we learn, the more we understand how much he loves us. Let’s place our hands over our hearts as we worship Jesus for coming to save us.**

Have kids take turns making worship statements such as, “I love you, Jesus,” or “Thank you for coming to save us.”

Pray: **Thank you, God, for loving us and sending Jesus to save us from sin. Help us to be like the wise men who wanted to know more about Jesus. We love you. In Jesus’ name, amen.**



BIBLE POINT

►**The wise men knew that Jesus came to save us. They looked for Jesus until they found him.**

Ask: • **How can we find Jesus?** (By praying; by going to church; by talking to God.)

• **How does it make you feel to know that Jesus came to save you?** (It makes me happy; I’m glad Jesus came to save me.)

Say: **God gave us the Bible so we could learn about Jesus. He also gave us other people to tell us about him. That’s why we read the Bible and go to church—to learn about Jesus! So you see, we are “wise men” after all because we seek Jesus, too! Let’s see if Pockets knows the exciting story about the wise men.**

Closing

■ The Best Gift

SUPPLIES: gift list, tape

Before class, make a gift list on a slip of paper. Write several gifts such as a new car, a trip to Disney World, a new set of LEGO blocks, or a stuffed animal. Tape the list to Pockets' hand.

Bring out Pockets the Kangaroo, and go through the following puppet script. When you finish the script, put Pockets away and out of sight.



Pockets: Hi, everyone! I'm glad you're here 'cause I sure need some help! (*Waves list.*) I'm trying to figure out what's the best gift for the baby Jesus.

Teacher: Why do you want to give Jesus a gift?

Pockets: Well, after I heard about those wise men giving Jesus fancy gifts, I decided I wanted to give him one, too. I want to show how much I love him, just like they did.

Teacher: So what do you have on your list so far?

Pockets: (*Reads list.*) A new car, a trip to Disney World, new LEGO blocks...

Teacher: Wait a minute, Pockets! Those things cost a lot of money for a little kangaroo! Do you think those are the kinds of gifts Jesus wants?

Pockets: Well, I don't know. The problem is I've only got (*looks in pouch*) one, two...two dollars. But I want to give Jesus something really nice to show how much I love him.

Teacher: I've got good news for you, Pockets. The best gift you can give Jesus doesn't cost money.

Pockets: Good gifts always cost money!

Teacher: Not really. The gift Jesus really wants is your love.

Pockets: How do I give him that? I can't wrap it up or put a bow on it.

Teacher: Children, can you think of ways that Pockets can give her love to Jesus? (*Allow children to offer answers, such as obeying the Bible, praying, and loving others.*)

Pockets: You mean Jesus would rather have our love than anything else? (*Cheerfully*) That's great! Because I do love Jesus!

Teacher: You know, God gave us the very best Christmas present of all—Jesus!

Pockets: Wow! No wonder Christmas is a time for giving gifts! I'm sure glad you helped me out. I'm going to go home to find new ways to show Jesus I love him. 'Bye everyone!

Permission to photocopy this script from Group's Hands-On Bible Curriculum® Pre-K & K granted for local church use. Copyright © Group Publishing, Inc., 1515 Cascade Ave., Loveland, CO 80538. HandsOnBible.com



■ *Jesus Came to Save Us!*

SUPPLIES: *treats from Option 1*

You'll need the treats from Option 1 or another treat.

Say: ► ***The wise men knew that Jesus came to save us. Let's share these tasty treats together. As we pass them out, find a partner and say, "I'm glad Jesus came to save you!"*** Let children pass out the treats and exchange affirmations. Before children eat, pray: **Dear God, we thank you for giving us the best gift ever. You sent Jesus to save us and to teach us about your love. Help us to share the good news about Jesus with everyone we love. In Jesus' name, amen.**



BIBLE POINT ►



Want even more activity ideas for this lesson? Check out HandsOnBible.com/tips.



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Today I Learned..." handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week's topic.



For Extra Time

If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

■ *Lively Learning: Nativity Kids*



Tape the *Learning Mat: Nativity* to the wall. Have children hold different *nativity kit figures* and re-enact the Christmas story. If you have more than 13 children, have some students be Herod, Elizabeth, or extra angels.

■ *Make to Take: Cardboard Kings*



Gather markers, cardboard tubes from paper towels or toilet paper rolls, construction paper or gift wrap, foil, and glue. Cut several 2-inch circles from white, pink, or tan construction paper or gift wrap.

Distribute cardboard tubes. Help children make wise men by covering their tubes with construction paper or gift wrap. Demonstrate how to sculpt a crown from a strip of foil and set it in place. Have children draw faces on the paper circles and then glue them in place.

■ *Treat to Eat: Apple Stars*



Before this activity, lay an apple on its rounded side, and cut it into several slices. Cut enough apple slices for each child to have two. You'll also need a small jar of cinnamon sugar.

Tell children that they'll be able to find a star in each apple slice. Distribute the apples, and see if anyone can find the star in the middle. Help children remove the seeds and then sprinkle the apple slices with the cinnamon sugar. As children eat their apple slices, talk about how the wise men followed the star to find Jesus.



■ *Story Picture: The Wise Men Bring Gifts*

Give each child a photocopy of the "Today I Learned..." handout. Fill the cups of a muffin tin with small colored beads, and set out glue, scissors, shiny gift wrap, and crayons. Direct children to color the picture and then use the beads to decorate the wise men's clothes. Children may also glue the shiny gift wrap on the star.

Today I learned...

Today your child learned that the wise men knew that Jesus came to save us. Children learned that the wise men followed a star to worship Jesus. They talked about ways they can follow Jesus, too.

The wise men knew
that Jesus came
to save us.

Verse to Learn

"The Savior...has been born today in Bethlehem" (Luke 2:11a).

Ask Me...

- How did God lead the wise men to Jesus?
- What gift can I give to Jesus?
- How can our family worship Jesus?

Family Fun

- Make a family nativity scene by sculpting aluminum foil into different characters involved in the Christmas story. Turn a shoe box on its side, and decorate it with raffia and brown paper from grocery bags. Share what it might have felt like to be in the stable the night Jesus was born.
- Celebrate Jesus' birth by bringing out the family photo album. Share fun memories of the children as babies. Remind each child that he or she is a special gift from God to the family.

The Wise Men Bring Gifts (Matthew 2:1-13)

