**Children’s liturgy – The Epiphany of the Lord (Year C)**

**Preparing for worship**

**Colour:** white

**Props:** star-shaped pieces of paper or card

**Song suggestions:** We three kings (788, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)

**Welcome:** Today we will hear about some wise men who followed a star and came to visit Jesus. Let’s think about how we follow God in our lives.

**Opening prayer:** God of wonder, help us to have as much faith as the wise men who followed your star to find Jesus. Lead us down the right paths and help us to recognise Jesus in the people that we meet as we travel through life. Amen.

**First reading (optional):** Isaiah 60:1-6

**Psalm:** Psalm 71:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

**Gospel acclamation:** *Everyone stands and sings the acclamation together.*

**Gospel:** Matthew 2:1-12

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea, during the time when Herod was king. Soon afterward, some men who studied the stars came from the East to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the baby born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the east, and we have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard about this, he was very upset, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem.He called together all the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and asked them, “Where will the Messiah be born?”

“In the town of Bethlehem in Judea,” they answered. “For this is what the prophet wrote:

‘Bethlehem in the land of Judah,
    you are by no means the least of the leading cities of Judah;
for from you will come a leader
    who will guide my people Israel.’”

So Herod called the visitors from the East to a secret meeting and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem with these instructions: “Go and make a careful search for the child; and when you find him, let me know, so that I too may go and worship him.”

And so they left, and on their way they saw the same star they had seen in the East. When they saw it, how happy they were, what joy was theirs! It went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.They went into the house, and when they saw the child with his mother Mary, they knelt down and worshiped him. They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and presented them to him.

Then they returned to their country by another road, since God had warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod.

(*Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation® and used with permission\*)*

**Gospel reflection:** What do you remember from today’s reading?

Some wise men arrive in Jerusalem at the court of King Herod, asking to meet the new baby who will be king of the Jews. Who is the baby that they are looking for?

Was the baby Jesus at the palace with King Herod? Where was he?

How do you think Herod felt when he heard that the wise men were looking for a new king? What did he say to the wise men? Do you think he was telling the truth?

The wise men had travelled a long way to see Jesus. How did they know where they were supposed to go?

The star led them all the way to Bethlehem and there they found Jesus. What did the wise men do when they found the child they had been looking for?

The star is very important in this story. Why do you think that is?

The star showed the wise men where to go. It was a sign from God for them to follow.

Have you ever been on a long journey? How did you know which way to go?

Our whole lives are like a journey. We have to choose which way to go and whether we will follow God in all that we do. Will we do the right thing or the wrong thing? Will we be kind to others and look after them, or will we only do what is best for us?

We do not have a star, or a sat nav, to follow each day, to show us which way that God wants us to go. We might meet people like Herod who try to lead us to do something that we know is wrong.

But God has given us Jesus, to show us how we should try to live our lives. And when we pray, God guides us to do what is right, if we listen.

Can you think of any other ways that God guides us to follow the right path in our journey through life?

What will you do to show that you follow God in the coming week?

**Intercessions** *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

God guides us and shows us the right way to live our lives, and so we pray together:

We pray for all world leaders: that they may be moved to think not of their own power and wealth but to rule wisely and do what is right for all their people. Lord, in your mercy…

We pray for the Church throughout the world: that it may shine like the star, leading people to Jesus, and spreading God’s message of justice, peace and love. Lord, in your mercy…

We pray for those people around the world who are on a long journey or who are in need of guidance: that they may find their way to a place of safety, welcome and peace. Lord, in your mercy…

We pray for our parish, our family and our friends: that we may always be open to following God in our lives, in both our actions and our words. Lord, in your mercy…

**Closing prayer:** Generous God, we give thanks for all that you have given us. Open our hearts to follow you so that all that we do may be guided by your love. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

**Activity suggestions**

Invite the children to colour in the accompanying illustration and to write or draw on the back how they will follow God in their lives over the next week.

Cut star shapes out of card and invite the children to write or draw how they will follow God in their lives over the next week. Or encourage them to write a prayer inspired by all they have heard and thought about today.

Conduct ‘interviews’ with various children playing Herod, the wise men, Mary and Joseph. How do these characters feel about the events in the reading? Or act out the gospel reading with the children.

Remind the children to share all that they heard and thought about during the liturgy with the people at home during the week, and to think about how they will follow God in their lives this week.

\*Gospel passage taken from:

Good News Translation® (Today’s English Version, Second Edition)

© 1992 American Bible Society. All rights reserved.

Anglicisation © The British and Foreign Bible Society 1976, 1994, 2004. The copyright for the derivative work of Anglicisation pertains only to the text within the Good News Translation (GNT) that British and Foreign Bible Society adapted for British literary usage, consistent with Section 103(b) of the United States Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C. § 103(b).

Bible text from the Good News Translation (GNT) is not to be reproduced in copies or otherwise by any means except as permitted in writing by American Bible Society, 101 North Independence Mall East, FL 8, Philadelphia, PA 19106 (www.americanbible.org).

®