

ADAPTABLE TEACHING RESOURCES



THE ADVENTURE OF CHRISTMAS

A journey through advent
for churches & families

**ALL-WELCOME SERVICE:
THE WISE MEN'S ADVENTURE**



faithin**kids**

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The Adventure of Christmas All-welcome Service

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These resources tie in with 'The Adventure of Christmas' book of family Bible times and advent calendar. Published by The Good Book Company.

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'All for the glory of God alone' (1 Corinthians 10:31)

The Adventure of Christmas

All-Welcome Service: The Wise Men's Adventure



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Big Idea:

The wise men knew they had found God's shepherd King, so worshipped that child, Jesus.



Faith in Kids looks like:

Children who are certain that Jesus is God's final King and are ready to give their best to him.



Aim

Our Christmas adventure finishes with a long and challenging journey, following a star. What could possibly have convinced Eastern scholars from a different land and culture to pack their bags and journey to Palestine?

The prophecies they had read and the stars they had studied pointed to the arrival of God's promised King. Distance, time, effort and cost were no obstacle to them. The child the wise men found may not have appeared impressive, but their response reveals that they were totally convinced that he was God's King. They joyfully fell down in front of the child and offered their gifts.

That worshipped toddler is now fully-grown, seated in heaven and still deserves the same response. Let's love the incredible King Jesus and worship him with all of our lives.



You will need

Sellotape, scissors, ten rolls of sellotape and five rolls of wrapping paper (optional), school bag, wrapped present with gift tag, Christmas tree (optional), pickle shaped tree decoration or a picture of one, smart phone, rucksack, t-shirt, towel, tin of beans, frying pan, teddy, google maps image of walking from Tehran to Jerusalem, large map book or Ordnance Survey map, large Bible with powder inside, coat hanger bent into a star shape wrapped in tinsel, picture of the surface of the sun, rucksack containing three wrapped gifts.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome

Carol 1

Carol suggestion:

- O Come all ye faithful
- Joy to the world

A carol that your congregation is familiar with and that begins to direct their attention towards the theme of the service - finding God's King.

PART 1

How do you find what you're looking for?

How do you find what you're looking for? Perhaps you are so organised that everything has a place in your home. *[Hold up sellotape and scissors.]* Is wrapping presents easy because the sellotape and the scissors are *always* put back exactly where they belong? Or is your house one where someone shouts, "We own six pairs of scissors but I can't find any!" and "Who had the sellotape last? Where did you put it?!" *[You could have hidden ten rolls of sellotape and five rolls of wrapping paper for the children to run and find with manic music, to kickstart concentration.]*

Maybe you have a finder in your family - a person who does the everyday miracle of finding things when no one else can. I think often that person is Mum! When your school bag is nowhere to be found. You *don't* know where you put it. You *can't* think back to where you last had it. You *have* looked everywhere. It really has disappeared! But then, Mum seems to be able to just lay her hands on it immediately. *[Walk over to pick up a school bag from underneath a chair or table.]* How does she do that? Is it radar or some kind of X-Ray vision? Can Mums find hidden gold and buried treasure as well?

Christmas is a time for finding wonderful things. We make it very simple at this time of year. *[Hold up a wrapped present with a gift tag. If there is a Christmas tree, you could place it under it at the right time.]* We make sure there is a name on every present, so exactly the right person gets each one... and then we place all the presents under the tree. So easy for us to find.

Other countries like to make finding more of an adventure at Christmas. In some parts of America, a decoration in the shape of a pickle is hidden on the Christmas tree on Christmas eve, tucked away where it is hard to find. *[Hold up a pickle shaped decoration - if you can find one - or have a picture on a screen.]* On Christmas day, the first person to find the pickle gets to open their present first, or even gets an extra gift as a reward. Everyone knows the pickle is somewhere on the tree, but it isn't easy to find a green pickle on a green tree! You have to look very carefully.

Make the connection: Today we're looking at the true Bible story of the adventure of the wise men. They were looking for something that first Christmas, something more important than sellotape, shoes or a pickle on a tree. We are going to see how the wise men found what they were looking for. For their adventure they couldn't use SatNav *[hold up your phone]* because it hadn't been invented. They couldn't go to the place where they last saw it *[hold up the sellotape and scissors]* because they travelled hundreds of miles to somewhere they had never been before. And in the Bible there is absolutely no mention of their mums helping them look! The wise men needed an amazing miracle. Listen carefully to what they were searching for and how they found it (or him!).

Reading: Matthew 2: 1-10 (ICB)

[If you have a large screen, we recommend you show some images to illustrate the story during this reading. Images that accompany the Adventure of Christmas can be found at the end of this document and in a PowerPoint. We suggest the following; v1-2 show image 1, v3-8 show image 2, v9-10 show image 1 again. Be careful not to show image 3 of the wise men meeting the child Jesus - keep this for later!]

Carol 2

Carol suggestion:

- Calypso Carol
- Happy Happy Day by Colin Buchanan

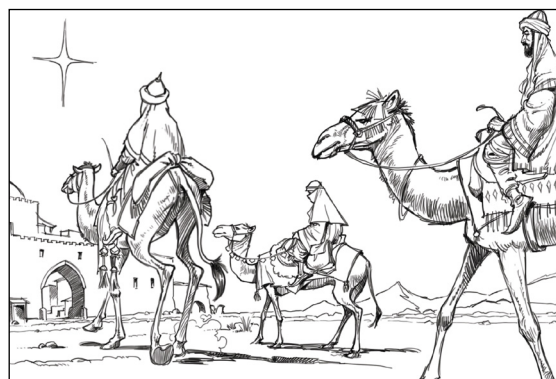


Image 1 ^

^ Image 2



PART 2

An ancient promise and a miracle star

Strap on your brains, here we go! Today, we're all about the wise men, sometimes people call them Kings, or as they were known 2000 years ago, 'the Magi'. That word "Magi" is where we get the English word "magician" from. Because they were mystical men. They spent their days looking at the stars, trying to predict the future, studying books and sacred writings.

They came from the East. From the area that is Iraq and Iran today. *[Get a rucksack and pack a T-Shirt, a towel, a tin of beans, a frying pan and a teddy as you talk...]* They packed their bags when they saw a new star shining in the sky. This was the sign they were waiting for. *[Throw your rucksack onto your back.]* They were off! Starting their adventure to find the new King of the Jews! *[Show google maps image of the walking route from Tehran to Jerusalem.]* They must have travelled for a month or more, with servants and camels and tents. A long, hard, hot journey, with sand getting everywhere. Following a star.

They were searching for a King, where would they start? Put yourself in their sandals. You arrive in a foreign land, far from home, looking for a new King. Where would you go to find him? *[Ask people to talk to the person next to them. Take some answers.]*

The Wise Men went to the Jewish capital city, to Jerusalem. That sounds right doesn't it. If you were looking for the baby King of England, London would be a good place to start. *[Open a large map like a tourist.]* The wise men asked, "Where is the baby who was born King of the Jews?" *[Walk to the left, then the right. Look left. Look at the map. Look right.]*

When King Herod heard about this, he was shocked! Because King Herod was the **King** - the clue's in the name! He hadn't heard about any other King. He didn't want there to be any other King! He called in the big brains bunch, the religious teachers and the Bible experts. Herod wanted to know where the Christ would be born. 'Christ' is the name for God's final promised King. The big King! So how do we find him? *[Hold up a large Bible, open it and blow powder out of it.]* You look at the manuscripts, the prophecies and the ancient promises of God to see what they say.

They found the prophecy in the Bible in the Old Testament, written 800 years earlier. *[On screen, read from the Bible.]*

'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are important among the rulers of Judah.

A ruler will come from you.

He will be like a shepherd for my people, the Israelites.'" Micah 5:2

[Slam closed the Bible and exclaim...] Bethlehem! That's where to find the Christ. That's where he would be born. And this prophecy tells us that God's promised King would be a shepherd for his people - a brave protector, a careful guide - the one to bring the lost sheep home to their loving God. This is a King worth finding.

[Reading Matthew 2:9-10] "They saw the same star they had seen in the East. It went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was. When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy."

[Hold up a coat hanger bent into a star shape, wrapped in tinsel.] We all think the star is kind of sweet and a bit fun. But this star is a big deal. The wise men first saw the star when they were at home, and after they left Herod the star moved and came to rest above Bethlehem where Jesus had been born.

God was really helping these wise men to find his King! On a car journey you're doing well if someone is checking google maps for you, telling you where to go at the next roundabout. *['Follow' the tinsel star across the room. Then show a photo of the surface of the sun on the screen, if you can.]* The wise men had God moving a million billion trillion tons of exploding nuclear fire around the sky to show them where to go. God used the star like a huge sign saying, "The King is over here!" Next time your mum amazes everyone by finding your missing shoe, you can say, "You're good Mum but God moved a star to help the wise men find Jesus". *[You could get everyone to say this, telling them it will encourage Mum next time. Say it once then ask people to repeat it after you say it once more.]*

How hard are you looking?

The wise men were desperate to find God's promised forever King. They travelled hundreds of miles following a star, they risked upsetting King Herod, they studied an 800 year old promise. They did *whatever* it took to find Jesus.

What about you? Are you looking for the King? God's forever King who will bring people home to their loving God. What could you do to find him? *[Hold up the big Bible.]* If God gave people a prophecy 800 years before Jesus was born, and we can read that prophecy in the Bible, then we can read the rest of the Bible to find out what else it says about King Jesus. *[Hold up the rucksack.]* If the wise men travelled across nations to find Jesus, then we can travel a short way to find out more, perhaps back to this very church. Did someone invite you here? Well, get them a hot chocolate and ask them your questions about Jesus! How did they find out about him? What has happened on their adventure to meet him? Don't let the wise men have all the fun! We can all go on an adventure to meet the long promised King. It might take some effort but it will certainly be worth it.

Carol 3

Carol suggestion

- Away in a Manger
- O little town of Bethlehem
- We three Kings

Reading: Matthew 2: 9-11 *[Show image 3 as you read.]*



PART 3

The Best Response

[Have a rucksack on your back, containing three wrapped gifts. Hold the tinsel star in front of you.] The wise men arrived. They had found the King! The wise men weren't Jewish - they were not God's people. They didn't go to church, or the synagogue. They were from a very different culture. But when they arrived, they bowed down and worshipped Jesus. *[Demonstrate physically, e.g. bow down, raise hands, kneel].* And they brought him gifts, three gifts fit for a King. *[Take them out of your rucksack as you name them.]* Gold, frankincense and myrrh. Three expensive, rare and precious gifts. That's not the normal way to meet a toddler - however important he is! These men worshipped Jesus because they were certain that he is brilliant - that he is God's final King.

In this story Jesus is given three titles, or names. I wonder if you spotted them? *[Have these three names with their simple definitions come up one at a time on the screen.]*

He is the **King** (v2). **The ruler of God's world.** All of creation answers to him, he is God himself.

He is the **Christ** (v4). **God's promised forever King.** He is where all history points, the King whose rule will never end.

He is the **Shepherd** (v6). **Come to serve his flock not himself.** Just like a shepherd puts the needs of his sheep first, Jesus would give even his life to protect his people, so that they can be safe.

Could you dream of anyone better to worship? How could we not worship him too?

In the story 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe,' CS Lewis imagined what it was like for three people from a far off land to meet the long promised King, Aslan, for the first time. CS Lewis was a Christian who believed Jesus was the Christ. Watch this clip and see if this helps you to imagine what it was like when the wise men met Jesus Christ.

Show Meeting Aslan - Narnia

Play this *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* video from 1.15-2.32.

A Licence may be needed from www.uk.ccli.com

The wise men went on an adventure that first Christmas. An adventure to find the King. An adventure to worship the King they found. Christmas is for people like the wise men. People who want to understand who Jesus is - the King, the Christ, our Shepherd. People who want to worship the King they have met. The wise men didn't feel like they belonged with God's people - they were from outside - but that didn't stop them finding and worshipping the King.

Find Jesus this Christmas. And if you do, you will discover just like the wise men, that you want to give him what is most precious to you. Not because he tells you to, but because he is more amazing than you can imagine. We don't bring physical gifts to Jesus, but we do give him our best. If you are fast, you will want to win races for him. If you are an artist, you will play music or paint pictures for him. If you love lego, you will build castles and monsters for him. If you are brilliant with people, you will be kind and friendly for him. Whatever God has given us, we will want to thank him and use those things to show other people how brilliant our King is, how much he loves us, how he helps us as our shepherd. Worshipping Jesus, worshipping the King, is trusting him and bringing him our best each day.

Find the King. Worship the King. He is worth it.



Prayers

Is there a family from your church who would lead very simple prayers. It can be a powerful witness to see a family do this in a natural way.

Carol 4

Carol suggestion:

- Hark the Herald Angels Sing!

Direct people to one next step. How can they find out more? Who can they talk to if their children ask great questions? Is there something you want to give people as they leave - The Adventure of Christmas giveaway comic, another book for children or adults, a gospel?

Pray to finish



Image 1

All-Welcome Service

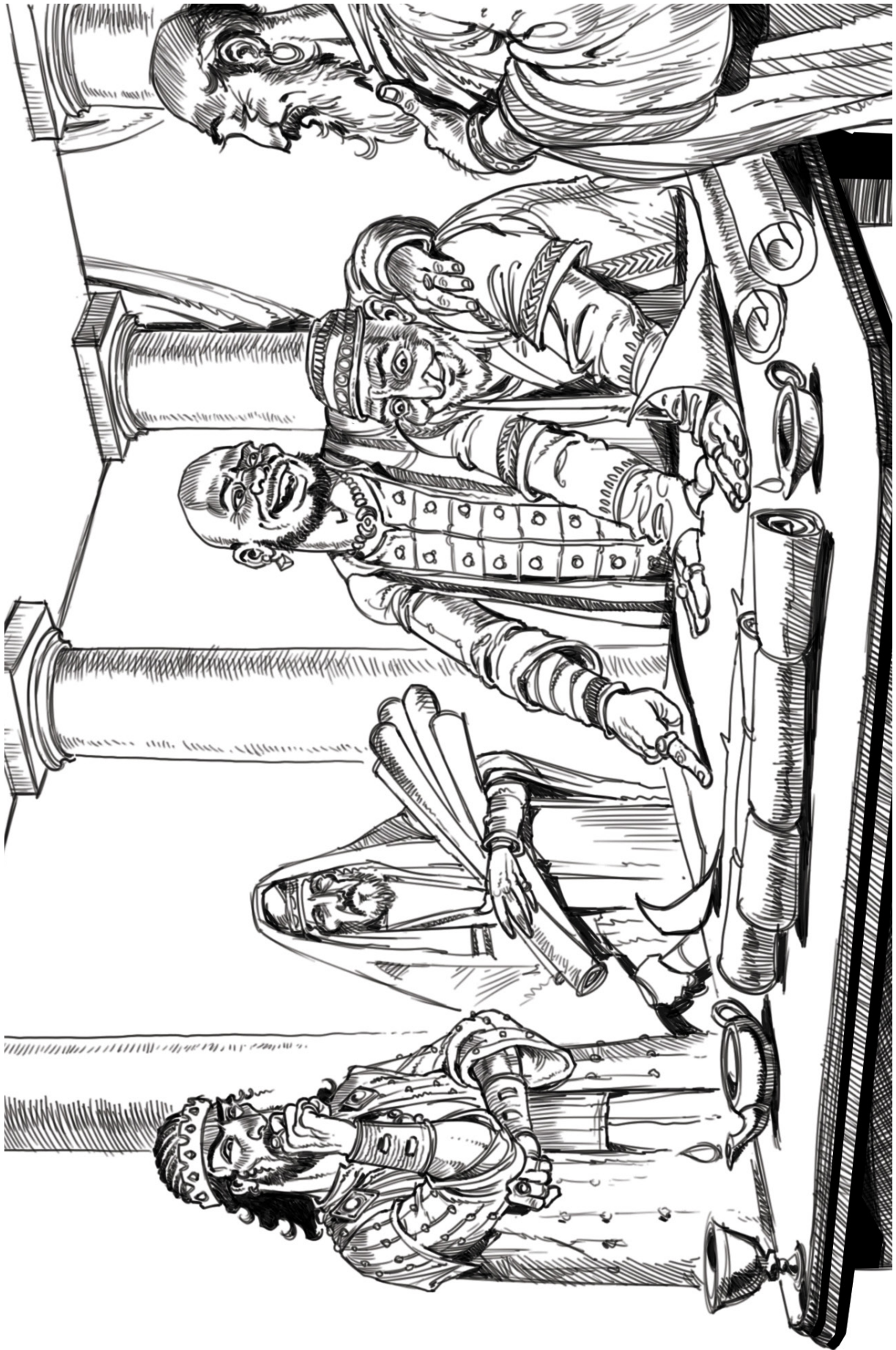




Image 3

All-Welcome Service



Faith in Kids exists to support churches and parents in raising children to trust in Jesus Christ eternally.

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