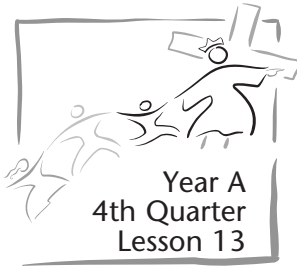


LESSON



Birthday Presents for Jesus

WORSHIP

We are thankful for the birth of Jesus.

References

Matthew 2:1, 2, 10, 11; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 59-67.

Memory Verse

"[The Wise Men] opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh." Matthew 2:11, NIV.

Objectives

The children will:

Know that they can worship Jesus by giving Him gifts as the Wise Men did.

Feel joyful that they can worship Jesus as the Wise Men did.

Respond by giving gifts to Jesus (offerings).

The Message



We worship Jesus when we bring our offerings to Him.

Getting Ready to Teach

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Wise Men from the East see a special star that leads them to Jesus in Bethlehem. They travel a long way to find Him. When they get there, they give Jesus presents and worship Him. Jesus' mother is surprised and amazed, and ponders these things in her heart.

This is a lesson about worship.

The Wise Men worshipped Jesus as they gave Him wonderful rare gifts—gifts He would never have received from the shepherds or any of His parents' rela-

tives. We too can worship Him as we bring our offerings and give ourselves to Him. We give Jesus a present when we tell Him how much we love Him.

Teacher Enrichment

"The wise men from the East were philosophers. They belonged to a large and influential class that included men of noble birth, and comprised much of the wealth and learning of their nation. Among these were many who imposed on the credulity of the people. Others were upright men who studied the indications of Providence

THIRTEEN

Program Outline			
LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>A Surprise Star</i> B. <i>Packing a Box</i> C. <i>Gifts for the Needy</i>	white paper, white crayon, water-colors, brushes, old shirts large box, cards, crayons, colored markers or pencils, stickers, tape, gift items Community Services representative
* Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	See page 137. *Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story	Bible-times costumes, three wrapped gifts, baby doll, star, table
		Bible Study	Bible, <i>Little Voices Praise Him</i>
		Memory Verse	Bible
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>The Gift of Our Hearts</i>	large heart cutouts with the words "I Give Jesus My Heart" (see p. 154); crayons or colored pencils or markers; glitter; glue; stickers of angels, shepherds, Wise Men
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Spicy Gifts</i>	cinnamon sticks or sweet-smelling flowers, colorful ribbon

in nature, and who were honored for their integrity and wisdom. Of this character were the wise men who came to Jesus" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 59).

"The magi had been among the first to welcome the Redeemer. Their gift was the first that was laid at His feet. And through that gift, what privilege of ministry was theirs! The offering from the heart that loves, God delights to honor, giving it highest efficiency in service for Him. If we have given our hearts to Jesus, we also shall bring our gifts to Him. Our gold and silver, our most pre-

cious earthly possessions, our highest mental and spiritual endowments, will be freely devoted to Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 65).

Room Decorations

To the bulletin board, the scenery, and tabletop Nativity scene, add pictures and figures of the three Wise Men and the gifts that they brought. If desired, a Christmas tree could also be brought in and decorated with ornaments that the children make.

Teaching the Lesson

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask them how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. A Surprise Star

Beforehand, with the white crayon, draw lots of stars on the white construction paper, but make one star much larger than all the others. (When the children paint over the paper with watercolors, the stars will appear.)

Say: **Today we are going to make a surprise picture. We will all take turns painting on this piece of white paper. Let's see what happens!** Children paint with the watercolors, taking turns as needed so that everyone participates in the experience. Large class: Form groups of five or six and provide each group with a paper. Have an adult supervise each group.

You Need:

- ☐ white construction paper
- ☐ white crayon
- ☐ watercolors
- ☐ brushes
- ☐ old shirts to protect children's clothing

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What happened when we painted on the white paper?** (Stars appeared.) **Did any star seem different from the others? Which one? What would you think if you saw a big bright star in the night sky? What would you do? We will be learning about a special star in our lesson story today, a star that guided some people who brought gifts to Jesus. And that makes me think of our message for today.**



We worship Jesus when we bring our offerings to Him.

B. Packing a Box

Say: **During the week some of you set aside some things to give to people who need them, things such as clothes, toys, food. Today we are going to use those things to pack a box to send to someone.** Show the children the box and things to pack. **First let's put the things we brought into the box. Now our adult helpers will help you write your name on a card and decorate it. Then we will tape (or glue) our names to the side of the box.** If desired, cover the box

with solid-color paper before children add their names to it. To complete this project, do Activity C.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What do you think about our gift box? Do we have enough things in it? It is good to know that we can give things to people who need them. When we help others, we are helping Jesus. Our offerings help others too. Each week we bring a gift to Jesus when we bring an offering to Sabbath School. Let's remember that:**



We worship Jesus when we bring our offerings to Him.

You Need:

- ☐ a large box
- ☐ cards to use as name labels
- ☐ crayons
- ☐ colored markers or pencils
- ☐ stickers
- ☐ tape
- ☐ items children brought to give away

C. Gifts for the Needy

Invite a Community Services representative to receive the box the children pack. Have him/her tell how needy people get the things that are given to Community Services. Be sure this person actually takes the box with him/her when leaving. The children need visual evidence that what they do makes a difference in someone's life.

You Need:

- ☐ Community Services representative

Debriefing

Say: **Let's say thank you to (name) for coming and helping us with our box. It's nice to know that someone who needs them will get the things we have given. What do you think about being able to share some of your things with others? Is this something you want to do again? Why? Should we help others only at Christmas-time? How can we help people at other times of the year?** Elicit the fact that each week we give offerings that are used to help people in other parts of the world. **Yes, our offerings go to help people here in our country and in other parts of the world. Think about this:**



We worship Jesus when we bring our offerings to Him.

Say that with me.



NOTE: Prayer and Praise appears on page 137.

2

Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

You Need:

- ☐ Bible-times costumes
- ☐ table
- ☐ three wrapped gifts
- ☐ doll to represent Jesus
- ☐ star (electric if possible)

Scenery: Use the Nativity scene from the previous weeks.

Props: Use items from the previous weeks. Place three appropriately shaped containers in a corner. For example, a bag with coins in it for gold, a box for frankincense, and a perfume bottle for the myrrh. If you don't already have one, add a star over the stable/manger, preferably one that lights up, or have someone carry a large star (cardboard covered with aluminum foil) as the "Wise Men" proceed around the room during the story.

Characters in order of appearance:

Wise Men (have more than three wise men), Mary and Baby Jesus with Joseph.

Setting the scene: Have Mary and Joseph, dressed in Bible-times costumes, standing or sitting. Please remove the manger since the Wise Men could not have gotten there while Mary and Joseph were still in the stable. Mary holds Baby Jesus. The Wise Men should appear on the opposite side of the room, each dressed in a Bible-times costume. Three gift-wrapped packages are on a table nearby.

On the night that Baby Jesus was born, far, far away in another country, some Wise Men were looking into the heavens. *[The Wise Men look up.]* They had studied the nighttime sky for years and knew where every star was supposed to be. But on that night, something was different. They pointed excitedly to the sky. *[The Wise Men point upward.]* There—right there—was a new star, a bright star, one that had never been there before. This was the star of a new

King. They would go and worship Him and take Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh—gifts for a King. *[Wise Men talk to one another—"We must go," etc.]*

When it was night again, they checked the heavens once more. *[Wise Men point upward, nod their heads.]* Yes, the strange new star was still there. They were ready to go. They would follow the star, and it would lead them to the new King.

The Wise Men go to pick up their gifts. They set off on their camels. *[The Wise Men walk slowly toward Mary and Joseph, each one carrying a gift.]* When daylight crept into the eastern sky, the angel star faded from sight. *[Star light goes out or star drops out of sight.]* Then the Wise Men stopped to sleep. *[Wise Men lie down and "sleep."]* But as soon as darkness slipped over the land and they could see the star, they were ready to follow its light once again. *[Wise Men "wake up." Star reappears. They walk slowly toward Mary and Joseph.]*

Night after night they traveled this way, for it was a long trip from their country to Bethlehem. But every night the angel star was there to guide them, until at last it led them to Jesus. *[Wise Men approach Mary and Joseph.]*

The Wise Men were so happy to find Mary and Baby Jesus. They fell to their knees and worshipped the baby. *[Wise Men kneel.]* Then they took out their treasures and gave the gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus *[Wise Men hand gifts to Joseph and Mary].*

Mary and Joseph were amazed but pleased. These gifts would help them take care of Baby Jesus, and they were perfect.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Do you have anything made of gold?** (probably not) **Why don't we find gold in everything?** (It's expensive.) **Why do you think the Wise Men gave Jesus gold?** (So Mary and Joseph would have money to care for Jesus; because gold is a gift for kings.) **What sweet-smelling things do you have in your house?** (Mom's perfume, Dad's cologne, etc.) **Why do you think the Wise Men gave Jesus frankincense and myrrh?** (It was expensive and could be sold to give Mary and Joseph money to care for Jesus; they were gifts suitable for important people such as kings.) **Do you like to give gifts to Jesus? What gift did you bring for Jesus today? Our gifts may not be gold or expensive perfume, but let's remember,**



We worship Jesus when we bring our offerings to Him.

Say that with me.

Bible Study**You Need:**

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Little Voices Praise Him

If desirable, begin this activity by singing "The Bible" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 53).

Open your Bible to Matthew 2. Point

to verses 1, 2, 10, 11 and say: **Here is where we find today's story in God's Word, the Bible.** Hold your Bible so the children can see the verses. Point to each verse as you read it aloud, paraphrasing as necessary. Be sure to limit your reading to those four verses.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What gifts did the Wise Men give to Jesus? Were they little gifts or big, important gifts? Every gift we give to Jesus is important, no matter how big or small it may be. What kind of gifts do people give to Jesus today? What kind of gift did we give Him today? Do you like to bring an offering to Jesus? Remember,**



We worship Jesus when we bring our offerings to Him.

Say that with me.

Memory Verse

Open your Bible to Matthew 2:11. Point to the text and say: **This is where today's memory verse is found in God's Word, the Bible.**

Point to each word as you read the text aloud, then proceed to teach the verse as follows:

"They opened their treasures

Point toward others.



and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh."

Pretend to take something from one hand and hold it out toward others.



Matthew 2:11

Palms together; then open.



Repeat until the children have learned the verse.

You Need:

- ☐ Bible

3

Applying the Lesson

The Gift of Our Hearts

You Need:

- ☐ large heart cutout for each child (see p. 154)
- ☐ crayons or colored pencils or markers
- ☐ glitter
- ☐ glue
- ☐ stickers of angels, shepherds, Wise Men

Say: **The Wise Men brought precious gifts to Jesus, gifts that the shepherds could never have afforded. But there is one gift that everyone can give Jesus that doesn't cost any money at all. Can anyone tell me what that gift is?** (The gift of our heart, or choosing that Jesus will be most important.) **Yes, when we love Jesus we want to give Him our hearts. That is the most precious gift we can give Him. Do you want to give your heart to Jesus? Let's make a heart to remind us to give our hearts to Jesus because we love Him.** (Children decorate their heart to take home.)

Debriefing

Say: **I am so happy that you want to give Jesus your heart. This is another way of saying that we love Jesus very much. Giving our hearts to Jesus means living for Him. Doing the things He wants us to do. When we do this, it is like giving Him an offering. It is an offering we give to Him. Remember:**



We worship Jesus when we bring our offerings to Him.

Today we give ourselves as an offering. Jesus is happy because we have done so.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Spicy Gifts

You Need:

- ☐ cinnamon sticks or sweet-smelling flowers
- ☐ colorful ribbon

Say: **One of the presents the Wise Men brought to Jesus was a gift of rare and expensive spices. Spices are sometimes used to flavor food. Sometimes spices are used to make our homes smell nice. Flowers can also smell very sweet.**

At Christmastime people give gifts to one another.

Those gifts should remind us of Jesus' birth. But many people have forgotten about that. Today we will make a gift of spices (or flowers) to give to someone special, just as the

Wise Men brought gifts of spices to Baby Jesus. Our gifts will remind people that Baby Jesus was born. As you make your gift, think of someone you want to give it to.

Have adults assist as children make a cinnamon stick bundle or bouquet of flowers tied with colorful ribbon to give as a gift.

Debriefing

Say: **Now you have a gift to give someone. The Wise Men brought gifts to Jesus, and we can follow their example by giving gifts to others to remind them that Jesus**

was born. To whom will you give your gift? What will you say about Jesus when you give them your gift? When we tell others about Jesus, we are giving Him a gift too. Remember . . .



We worship Jesus when we bring our offerings to Him.

Closing

Sing any Christmas song. Pray and have the children repeat each phrase. **Thank You, God, for giving us the precious gift of Jesus. Amen.**

PRAYER AND PRAISE



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

Sing the following words to the tune of "Angels Singing" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 140).

**Wise Men came to seek Him,
To seek Him, to seek Him.
Wise Men came to seek Him,
To bring Him gifts so fine.**

Select other songs from *Little Voices Praise Him*, nos. 140-153.

Mission

Use a story from *Children's Mission*.

Offering

You may wish to sing the offering song "Giving" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 285) or "Offering Prayer Song" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 33) or "To God's House" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 34).

Prayer

Invite children to share prayer requests and ask for volunteers to pray. Suggest a simple prayer such as: **Thank You, Jesus, for loving us. Amen.** Invite each child to pray, but do not force participation.

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

STUDENT LESSON

Birthday Presents for Jesus

References

Matthew 2:1, 2, 10, 11; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 59-67

Memory Verse

"[The Wise Men] opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh" (Matthew 2:11, NIV).

The Message

We worship Jesus when we bring our offerings to Him.

Have you ever given someone the perfect birthday present? How did you feel when that person opened your gift?

On the night that Jesus was born, the angels came and sang to the shepherds. The shepherds were the only ones who heard the angels, but they weren't the only ones who saw them.

Far, far away in another country, a group of men were looking into the heavens. They had studied the nighttime sky for years and knew where every star was supposed to be. But on that night, something was different. There—right there—was what seemed like a new star, a bright star, one that had never been there before.

These men didn't know it, but they probably were looking at the angel choir that had sung to the shepherds. After their song the angels had faded off into the distance until they looked like a new star glittering in the night sky.

What did it mean? These men studied the Bible until they found special words. "A star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel." That was it! This was the star of a new King! They would go and worship Him right away.

But they wouldn't go without presents. They would take the nicest gifts they could find: gold, the most precious

metal; frankincense, a sweet-smelling incense from faraway countries; and myrrh, an expensive perfume. They were treasures fit for any king. They would be the perfect presents.



When it was night again they checked the heavens once more. Yes, the strange new star was still there. They would follow the star, and it would lead them to the new King.

When daylight crept into the eastern sky, the angel star faded from sight. Then the Wise Men stopped to sleep. But as soon as darkness slipped over the land and they could see

the star, they were ready to follow its light once again.

Night after night they traveled, for it was a long trip. But every night the angel star guided them, until at last it led them to Jesus and His parents.

The Wise Men were so happy to find Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. They fell to their knees and worshipped him. Then they gave the gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus.

Mary and Joseph were amazed, but pleased. These were the first presents for Jesus, and they were perfect gifts of love and worship.

Do and Say

Sabbath

Each day this week read the lesson story and use the following to review the memory verse:

"[The Wise Men] . . . Point toward others.

opened their treasures

and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh." Pretend to take something from one hand and hold it out toward others.

Matthew 2:11 Palms together; then open as if opening a book.

Sunday

Help your child give the cinnamon stick (or flower) gift made in Sabbath School to someone you know and tell them about the gifts of the Wise Men. If appropriate, let your child show them the pictures in the lesson story.

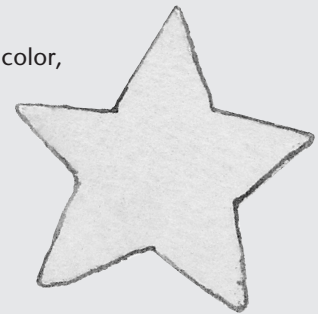


Monday

Talk about the gifts the Wise Men gave Jesus. Ask: What two important gifts can you give to Jesus? (offerings, myself) Help your child pray a simple prayer such as: "Dear Jesus, I give myself to You. Amen." Plan to take a special thank offering to Sabbath School next Sabbath. Thank Jesus that you have something to give.

Tuesday

Help your child draw, color, and cut out a bright yellow star to remind him or her that the Wise Men followed the star to find Jesus. Thank Jesus for the angels who made up that star.



Wednesday

Let your child "read" the pictures as you share the lesson story. Help him or her identify the people and the gifts. Together, count the gifts and the people. Sing a song about giving. Then, thank God for the most precious gift of all—Jesus.

Thursday

Let your child help you prepare and serve a special gift for your family, something all will enjoy, such as a special treat or favorite food for lunch or dinner. Sing a song of thanksgiving and thank Jesus for your family.

Friday

Help your child dress up as one of the Wise Men and "read" the pictures in the lesson story to your family. Afterward, ask your family: What gifts can we give Jesus tomorrow? Set aside your Sabbath offerings and sing a song about giving. Then thank Jesus for His gift of Himself to your family. Remember to take your special thank offering to Sabbath School too.