

Star Time

Footmarks

Spend time with the Bible story by presenting it using three-dimensional materials. This is a reflective approach to the Bible, based on the method known as «page:Godly Play=803».

1. Gather the group in a semi-circle, using a back row of benches or chairs if necessary so that all the children can see the following presentation of the story clearly.
2. Tell the story slowly, using some carefully chosen items that you draw out of a golden box or from a tray, in the style of Godly Play.
3. The following Epiphany script is written as a reflective story with the title 'Following the Star'.

You will need:

- a gold box or tray
- a length of white felt as underlay to the whole story
- six smaller rectangles of felt in black, a sandy colour, brown, gold, red and green
- some small gold stars and one bigger star
- three camels
- the city of Jerusalem symbol, a small crown and a small scroll of the prophets
- figures for Mary and Joseph and the young child Jesus
- gold, frankincense and myrrh
- a small globe and a tea light

N.B. The different objects should be about the same size as each other so as not to draw excessive attention to any one of them.

Storyteller

Unroll the white underlay slowly from your right to your left, laying a differently coloured rectangle of felt on top of it for each part of the story, as indicated.

Lay down the black rectangle and then scatter some gold stars across it.

I wonder if you have ever looked up at the stars in the night sky and wondered how many there are and how beautiful they look?

I wonder if you have ever thought how amazing it is that God made all these stars and also that God loves you and me?

I wonder if you have ever imagined that this same God might want to speak to you and me?

Long ago there were people who studied the stars. They believed that the way the stars moved and how brightly they shone might hold the secrets to the meaning of life on earth. These people were called astrologers.

Lay down one larger, brighter star in among the others.

Once there were some wise men from the east who were looking up at the stars. Suddenly they saw a very bright star and it was moving. It was a wild star. They knew immediately that this star was showing them the way to someone or something very important.

Unroll the white underlay further and add a sandy-coloured rectangle to the left of the black felt.

Place the three camels onto the sandy-coloured base.

The wise men set off from their homes across the desert. By night they followed the wild star as it led them westward towards the land of the people of God. By day they rested and talked together. They wondered where the star was leading them.

Unroll the white underlay further and add a brown-coloured rectangle to the left of the sandy-coloured one.

Place the symbol for Jerusalem onto this.

Jerusalem was the capital city of this region, so they travelled there first to find out more about the star.

Place a small crown on the same rectangle.

King Herod welcomed the stargazers from the east. He listened to their story about the star and what it might mean. Secretly he was very unhappy that somewhere there might be someone more important than him.

Place a small scroll on the same rectangle.

His advisers searched the scriptures of the people of God to find out more. The prophets had written that a new king would come from Bethlehem. King Herod sent them on their way but asked them to come back if they found anything. He said he, too, wanted to discover the meaning of the star for himself.

Unroll the white underlay further and then put down a gold rectangle to the left of the brown one.

Place the figures of Mary, Joseph and Jesus onto this felt and a candle in an attractive holder that you should light.

When the wise men arrived in Bethlehem, the star seemed to rest over a house. Inside the house, they found Mary and Joseph with their young child. The wise men bowed low and worshipped the child. After their long journey, the star had led them to the meaning of everything. God had spoken to them. They knew that the star had brought them to God's gift of love for the world. This gift was called Jesus.

Unroll the white underlay further and then put down the red rectangle to the left of the gold one.

Place the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh onto this felt.

Then they offered Jesus the very best gifts they could give. Beautiful gold, sweet-smelling incense and a healing ointment called myrrh. These expensive presents were fit for a king—a king who would rule the world.

Unroll the white underlay further to the end and then put down the green rectangle to the left of the red one.

Place a small globe onto this felt.

The star had shown the wise men the way to Jesus. The wise men show us the way to the gift of God for the world. And Jesus grew up to show God to everyone he met.

Wondering questions

- I wonder what you like best about this story?
- I wonder what is the most important part of this story?
- I wonder which part of this story means the most to you at the moment?
- I wonder if there is any part of this story we could leave out but still have all the story we need?

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