

Feast of the Epiphany



Overview

The Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 2:1-12) reminds us that Jesus came for the whole world and that we are called to continue to follow the light of His message and share it with others; to live fully in and for Christ, and to be His missionary by sharing the gift of the Gospel.

Materials needed:

Recent daily newspapers or weekly news magazines.

1. Read the Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 2:1-12) and explain in your own words or with the following:

Twelve days after Christmas, the Church observes the Feast of Epiphany. This feast celebrates the revelation of God in human form in the person of Jesus Christ. The word “epiphany” comes from the Greek word meaning “to manifest” or “to reveal or show.” On Epiphany, we commemorate the visitation of the Magi (Three Wise Men) to the baby Jesus. When the Magi visit the baby Jesus with their gifts, they reveal Him to the world as King, Lord and Savior. As the first Gentiles to come to this realization, they also show to the world that Jesus came for all people and for all nations.

2. Allow a few moments of quiet, then lead a group discussion using the following questions:

3. Does anyone know the names given to the Three Wise Men?

Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar

4. Where did the Magi come from?

The Bible only tells us they are from the “East.” However, Venerable Bede (672-735) considered them representatives of the three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa. They are often portrayed racially as white, Asian and black.

5. What were the three gifts they brought to the baby Jesus?

Gold, frankincense (incense) and myrrh (a scent often used in perfume). The gold is symbolic for the royalty of Jesus; the frankincense stands for His divinity; the myrrh, often used to scent the oils used to anoint a body for burial, points to His passion and death.

6. The Magi “made known” to the world that Jesus -- Lord and King -- was born. The Feast of Epiphany reminds all Catholics that we are called to reveal Jesus as the Savior to all people. What are some ways that our parish or school reaches out to our community to bring the Good News of Jesus? What are some ways that we as a group can reach out to other young people?

7. Why is important to remember the story of the Magi each year?

Their story reminds us that Jesus came for the whole world, not just for the Jewish people.

8. Bring out the newspapers / magazines and ask volunteers to read major national and local headlines aloud. Be sure to look at the headlines and be able to connect them to God's presence in our world. Use as many of the following questions with the group as is feasible in the time allowed.

- Where is God in these headlines?
- What is God manifesting to us in this(these) headline(s)?
- How are you able to recognize that this is God made-manifest today?
- Where is God - Father, Son, and Spirit - present in these stories?
- Does it make a difference when you look at these headlines to know that God is present there?
- In your family, among your friends, in your school community, what signs do you have that God is revealing Himself to you? How have you responded? What risk did you have to take?

Finish with the following message. The important thing to notice is where these signs and "stars" lead us so that we can take the very next step in front of us with the assurance that we are not alone when we are following the lead of God Whom we have come to trust.