Year C - The Epiphany of the Lord
Matthew 2: 1-12

We have come from the east to worship the king.

When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem in Judea, Herod was king. During this time some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and said, “Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”
When King Herod heard about this, he was worried, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. Herod brought together the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses and asked them, “Where will the Messiah be born?” They told him, “He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote, ’Bethlehem in the land of Judea, you are very important among the towns of Judea. From your town will come a leader, who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel.’”

Herod secretly called in the wise men and asked them when they had first seen the star. He told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I want to go and worship him too.”

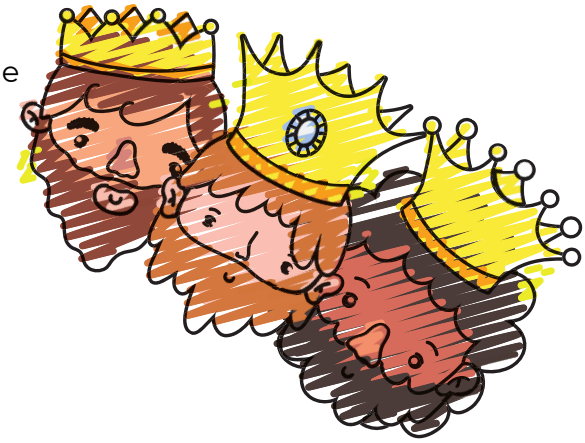


The wise men listened to what the king said and then left. And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were thrilled and excited to see the star.

When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshiped him. They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and gave them to him. Later they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, and they went back home by another road.

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The wise men said ‘A-ha!’

Introduction



- Ask the children if they know what the word 'epiphany' means.
- The word 'epiphany' comes from a Greek word that means 'to reveal'. It's when something really special is revealed; when someone has a really amazing 'a-ha' moment; when they suddenly and unexpectantly 'get it'.
- Have you ever had one of those moments?

Message

- The gospel today, tells us about the epiphany that the wise men had.
- They had watched and studied. They had followed the star and searched for the new King.
- I wonder what they were expecting to find when they got to the place where the star rested? (Get the children's responses).
- Discuss what and who they found instead... They found baby Jesus!
- When they saw him they had an *epiphany*! An amazing 'a-ha' moment when they understood that this tiny little child was God's own son here with them. What an incredible sight to see!
- When they saw him, they 'got it'! They knew, deep down in their hearts, that God loved everyone so much, not just the people from the same land as Jesus (in Israel) but also everyone across the whole world (like us here in Australia).
- The wise men were amazed and they responded by worshipping Jesus. They gave him gifts to honour him... gold, frankincense and myrrh... these were gifts that only a king would have been given in those days.
- By giving Jesus these gifts, the wise men were saying 'Jesus, even though you are a small baby lying here in a place where animals live, we have discovered who you really are!'
- Discuss what the word 'worship' means. It means to express reverence and adoration for Jesus because we know that he is God! It's like saying to Jesus 'you are so big and wonderful and amazing and I am small but I know that you love me'!

Discussion

- If you were in the place of the wise men today, what could you say to Jesus to worship him?
- If you were in the place of the wise men today, what gift would you give to Jesus to show that you know that he is God?