

Magi & Kings Herod (Matthew 2:1-12) Epiphany Bible Lesson

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This lesson plan is based on the visit of the wise men to see baby Jesus. First they come to see King Herod, but his dangerous plan fails and the infant Christ escapes to Egypt. Children will learn how God protected the Holy family despite the wicked king. This lesson shows that God is in control, despite the pretenders like King Herod.

Bible scholars are not certain as to when the Magi would have arrived at Bethlehem. Many suppose that Jesus could have been nearly 2 years old at this point, based on the age group Herod ordered to be killed. However, scripture is not specific. We are safe to say Jesus was still very young and without defense against the wicked King Herod – expect that God preserved him and his family.

This lesson as first written for kids church, but you could modify it for use in any ministry context. Many other readers have already used it as the Bible lesson for the first Sunday after Christmas. Like all our materials, this printable lesson plan is 100% free to use in your church, home, or school.

Bible Passage: Matthew 2:1-12

Bible Story Title: Magi visit the King Jesus

Target Age Group: Kindergarten – 5th Grade

Target Time Frame: 25 minutes

Original Teaching Context: Children's Church

Coloring Page: [Two Very Different Kings](#)

Learning Objectives: After this lesson Children will demonstrate knowledge of the people, places and events in Matthew 2 ... by retelling the story in their own words.

Target Age: Kindergarten – 5th

Items Needed:

- Marked Bible: Read Matthew 2. Prepare the copy in advance by highlighting the significant points to emphasize and underlining items that will need additional explanation.

- Poster board with map of New Testament period Israel. Map must include the cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth. It should also show the region of Galilee and the nation of Egypt. (This could also be done with a marker board or flannel graph.) Save this map for later lessons.
- Small pictures of the people in the story. These should be small enough to fit on the poster board map. Use sticky tack to attach and remove these characters during the story. (This could also be done with a marker board or flannel graph.)
- Baby doll to use as Jesus in the play acting review.

Explanation: Since Matthew 2 is information rich; this lesson aims mostly at teaching knowledge. In my children's church the Gospel is emphasized in the singing, memory work and other elements outside the formal lesson time. If that is not the case, you will want to modify this lesson plan to include more Gospel.

Teaching Plan: Magi and Two Very Different Kings

Hook:

Show the children the map and the characters. Briefly introduce each person or place. Ask the children to listen carefully for how all these fit together in the story.

- Israel – the promised land God gave to Abraham's family (the Hebrews)
 - Judea – the larger area around Jerusalem (it was like a state)
 - Jerusalem – the city King David built as his capital, this was where people worshiped God at the Temple
 - Bethlehem – a small town where King David's family had lived
 - Galilee – a part of Israel where many non-Hebrews lived (Gentiles), next to the sea of Galilee
 - Nazareth – an important city in Galilee
- Egypt – a far away country where Abraham's family had been slaves.
- The East – many far away kingdoms like Persian, Babylon and India
- King Herod – the wicked King who was ruling the Hebrews from Jerusalem.
- Wise Men – Men who studies the stars to try to tell the future
- Jesus' family – Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus

Book:

Read (and summarize) Matthew 2. (Read with emotion and pause often to engage the children with the reading.) Make special note of the people and events listed above.

Brief review: After the story, show the children the main characters and ask for volunteers to explain how they fit into the story.

Review with map: Ask for children to come one-by-one to tell what happens next in the story by using the people and the map. Begin with all the characters in their starting locations. Let the children move the characters and tell what happened next.

Was this in the story? Read the following and ask the children to raise their hand if the person or place was in this story. If the person is not in the story the children should cross their arms: King Herod, Moses, Jesus' family, Egypt, John the Baptist, Capernaum, Angel, Wise Men, Pharaoh, Elizabeth, Abraham, Galilee, Bethlehem

Look:

Act out the story: Call on 8 volunteers to act out the story. Identify areas of the room with the places in the story. Have all the children participate by asking them to direct the action by asking, "what happens next?" Direct the children to say or move to a different area as appropriate. Characters to include: King Herod, Four wise men, Joseph, Mary, baby doll (Jesus), Angel.



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