



# The King Is Adored

Matthew 2:1–12



## LESSON GOAL

Students will learn from the wise men how to adore the King of kings.

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Describe the events that followed Christ's birth.
- Explain who the magi were and why they came.
- Recount the responses to Christ, and identify the right one.
- Tell why it was important that Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

## KEY VERSE

"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:2).

## APPLICATION

- Thank God that Jesus humbly came to earth for sinners.
- Worship Christ, unlike Herod, who really worshiped himself.
- Adore Jesus, as the wise men did, by giving Him your best with "exceeding joy" and lowly reverence.
- Obey Jesus as King, unlike the Jewish leaders, who knew the truth but did not obey it.

## NEXT WEEK

The King Is Preserved  
Read Matthew 2:13–23.

### Symbol Key



Craft



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level

# Teacher Planning Sheet

## PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Application

*As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

*Three ways students need to apply this passage are*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Materials Needed

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## POINT

*Choose from various ideas to point students to the coming Bible lesson.*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## PROCLAIM

*Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.*

### Presentation Ideas

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Praise/Music Ideas

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## PRACTICE

*Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.*

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

*“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).*

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

### Bible Background

#### Big Picture

The primary focus of the Gospels is the adult life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Only two of the Gospels mention His birth and childhood, and then only briefly. But Christ’s entrance into the world was important. The King of kings came as a tiny baby, not in a royal palace or even in a normal house, but among cattle in the cold. God could not have come to earth in a more humble, unsanitary, or unpleasant way. He didn’t come to the aroma of a clean hospital room, but to the stench of manure and livestock in a stable on a cold evening. He went from the presence of angels to that of animals, from heaven to hay, from a throne to a trough.

The circumstances surrounding our Lord’s birth point not just to His astonishingly lowly condescension (Phil. 2:6–8), but also to His purpose to live and die as a sacrifice. The first people the angels told of Christ’s birth were shepherds in a nearby field, some of whose sheep were likely being raised for Passover sacrifice in the temple. The only glimpse we have of Christ’s earliest years is when He and His family went to the Passover in Jerusalem (Luke 2:40–52) to have the priest slaughter a lamb as a sacrifice. When Christ first appears in John’s Gospel, John the Baptist introduces Him by saying, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). In continuing this idea, the details of Christ’s Passion Week entry into Jerusalem, the Lord’s Supper, and the exact time He died all were marvelously orchestrated around Old Testament Passover sacrifice rituals, which He fulfilled in every way (1 Cor. 5:7) as our sacrificial substitutionary lamb (Isa. 53).

Luke gives by far the most details about events surrounding the birth of Christ (Luke 1:5–80), as well as about the actual birth and manger scene (2:1–20) and about His newborn days (2:21–38). Reading both Luke’s and Matthew’s account may help form a composite picture of these earliest earthly days of our Lord. The importance of the incarnation (the Word becoming flesh) cannot be overstated. Christmas is our planet’s most universally celebrated holiday, and world history is dated by Christ’s birth (B.C. and A.D.). Both John’s and Mark’s Gospels go immediately to Christ’s adult life, but Matthew fills in a few additional details that are important for his purpose.

#### Bethlehem

Bethlehem was a small village on the outskirts of Jerusalem. It was home to Ruth and Boaz and was the birthplace of King David. It was many miles from where Mary and Joseph were living. However, God sovereignly used the decree of the pagan Caesar Augustus to force Mary and Joseph to make the difficult trip, which no woman normally would attempt when nine months pregnant. That was no coincidence, of course, but was for the fulfillment of prophecy. In verse 6, Herod’s scholars loosely quoted Micah 5:2, which, in its original text, contained the

### Additional Reference Materials

*God in a Manger* by John MacArthur

*Matthew: MacArthur New Testament Commentary*

important phrase “His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.” John 7:42 indicates the Jews understood this as Messianic prophecy.

### **King Herod**

Herod the Great was of Edomite descent and was appointed to govern the area of Galilee, which he ruled from 37 to 34 B.C. Historians record him as a cruel and evil man who executed his wives, relatives, and even his own children, apparently because he was paranoid of competition. That helps explain why he would be greatly troubled when he heard that “the King of the Jews” had been born in one of his villages (Matt. 2:3).

### **The Wise Men**

Of all the people in the story, the wise men are perhaps the most misrepresented and misunderstood in traditional Christmas songs and nativity scenes. Matthew explains that when the wise men visited, Mary and Joseph were already in a “house” (Matt. 2:11), not in the original stable where the shepherds visited. Jesus was not a newborn, but a “child” (Matt. 2:8–9; a different Greek word than in Luke 2:12) who evidently was many months old though still under two years in age (Matt. 2:16). There were not necessarily three of these men; the number has traditionally been assumed because of their three gifts. And there is no evidence that they were kings from the Orient. The term “magi” referred to priestly astrologers or astronomers, magicians, or religious wise men, especially in the areas of Persia and Babylon. Geographically, such a journey may have been hundreds of miles, depending on which region(s) they were from. The book of Daniel gives some historical background on the magi.

### **The Star**

It is possible that these men were familiar with the Jewish Scripture that says, “A star will come out of Jacob, a scepter shall rise out of Israel” (Num. 24:17; see also Revelation 22:16, where Christ calls Himself “the bright and morning star”). Some have suggested that what the wise men saw was a comet, meteor, supernova, or one or more planets, but the way it moved, stopped, reappeared, and then moved and settled over a certain house causes problems with such views. Rather than try to find a natural phenomenon, it may be best to understand it as a miraculous star-like manifestation that may or may not have been seen by people other than the magi. It could have been something like the Shekinah glory in the wilderness or an angel. (Angels are called “stars” in the Bible and similarly guided Israel in the Old Testament; Ex. 14:19.) The focus, however, is not on these things but on the greatest event in the universe. The King of the Jews was here at last, and God’s long-promised plan was about to unfold!

### **Various Responses to Jesus**

When Herod heard that the magi were seeking the King of the Jews, he saw Him as a threat to his own ambitions, pride, and rule. Like many people today, Herod pretended to want to worship Jesus, but in reality, he hated the very thought and wanted nothing to do with this King but to eliminate Him. He was willing to sin greatly and go to any wicked extreme to suppress and extinguish the truth.

A second response, indifference, characterized the religious leaders Herod consulted. They knew the right answers intellectually and theologically, but they were spiritually unmoved when the arrival of the wise men from the East proclaimed the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures.

The third response, and the only right one, was that of the wise men: worship.

They may not have known as much as the Jews, but they “rejoiced exceedingly with great joy” (Matt. 2:10), sought to worship the young King (2:2), and knew enough to fall down on their faces in His presence (2:11). No human or angel deserves worship, but Christ accepted worship many times in His life, demonstrating His full deity. The gifts were equally appropriate to who He was. Gold symbolizes value, nobility, and royalty; the magi were giving royal gifts to the King of kings. Frankincense was expensive, sweet-smelling incense used for only the most special occasions. Perhaps more importantly, it was the traditional incense of deity. In Old Testament times, the Jews stored it in a special chamber in front of the temple for sprinkling on offerings. Myrrh was a valuable perfume that some interpreters say represented the gift for a mortal. It may have underscored Christ’s humanity. Myrrh would later be used with spices to prepare Christ’s body for burial (John 19:39–40).

Not all unbelievers will oppose Christ as violently and viciously as Herod did, but indifference or anything short of the magi’s response is unacceptable. Whoever is not fully with Him is against Him. The only proper response is to worship Christ the King as fully God and fully man.

## POINT TO THE TRUTH

*“Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth” (Psalm 78:1).*

This section includes questions to review last week’s lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week’s lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



### Review Questions

*Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.*

Why did Matthew write his Gospel?

*Matthew wrote his Gospel to prove that Jesus was the promised Messiah and King, the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures.*

What were the Jews looking for in a king?

*They thought the Messiah would come deliver them physically and politically. They believed that He would be a royal ruler over Jerusalem, not a lowly carpenter.*

What was unique about Jesus’ birth?

*Jesus was born of Mary, so He was fully man, but God was His Father, so He was fully God.*

What was special about Jesus’ name?

*Jesus means “Yahweh saves.”*



### Pin the Star on Bethlehem

Bring a large world map to class, and place it on the wall. Give each student a star and have him place it on the map where he thinks Bethlehem is. Then talk about the Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah being born in Bethlehem. Show

the students where Bethlehem actually is. Note how small and insignificant it is. Yet God chose it as the exact place where the Messiah would be born, and He told us about it in the Old Testament.



### Where Were you Born?

Ask the students about when they were born. Do their parents have pictures or a scrapbook? Were they born in a hospital? Did they have blankets, booties, diapers, and cradles? Then discuss Jesus' humble birth.



### The Magi's Worship

Discuss with the students what it meant to worship Christ with "exceeding joy" and in lowly reverence, as the magi did.



### Look for the Star

Paste stars up all over the classroom. Each star should have a Messianic prophecy written on it. As each student arrives, give him a Scripture reference and ask him to search for the star with that verse on it. Once he has found the star, he should bring it to you.



### Star Light

Bring a lighted star to class (perhaps a Christmas tree topper), and plug it in. Spend a few minutes discussing what the star the wise men saw might have been and what it might have looked like. Explain to the students that in today's lesson, they will learn more about the wise men's search for and discovery of Jesus.

## PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

*"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done" (Psalm 78:4).*

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

### Bible Lesson

#### Reading of the Text

Read Matthew 2:1–12.

#### Introduction

In the book of Matthew, there is a story about some unknown people who came to Jerusalem one day, a long time ago. They were searching for something very important, something that they were excited about. But for some reason, very few other people were as excited as they were. Some were even upset about the person the wise men were looking for.



### Leadoff Questions (LOQs)

**LOQ:** What important people arrived in Jerusalem?

**Answer:** People called wise men arrived in Jerusalem.

**LOQ:** When did the wise men arrive in Jerusalem?

**Answer:** The wise men arrived in Jerusalem after Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in the days of Herod the Great, the king.

**LOQ:** What did the wise men ask when they arrived in Jerusalem?

**Answer:** "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?" (Matt. 2:2). The wise men had followed a star and had come to worship Him.

**LOQ:** How did King Herod feel when he heard what the wise men asked?

**Answer:** He was troubled.

**LOQ:** Why do you think King Herod was troubled?

**Answer:** King Herod was the Rome-appointed "king of the Jews." He ruled over the people at the time the wise men came. But the wise men were not asking about him. They were asking about someone else. They wanted to find the real "King of the Jews." Since King Herod did not want another king to take his place, he was very bothered by what the wise men were saying.

**LOQ:** What question did King Herod ask the chief priests and scribes of the people?

**Answer:** King Herod asked them where the Christ (Messiah) was to be born.

**LOQ:** Where did the chief priests and scribes say the Christ would be born?

**Answer:** They said that the Christ would be born "in Bethlehem of Judea" (Matt. 2:5).

**LOQ:** How did they know?

**Answer:** They knew because it had been written by a prophet. The place where the Christ would be born was prophesied in the Old Testament.

**LOQ:** What did the prophet write?

**Answer:** Matthew 2:6 is a quote from the Old Testament (Micah 5:2): "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler, who will shepherd My people Israel." Even though Bethlehem was a small town, and still is, it would be famous because a Ruler would come from it and lead, or shepherd, the people of God. That special person was Jesus Christ.

**LOQ:** How did the wise men know where in Bethlehem to find Jesus?

**Answer:** The star reappeared and stood over the house where the Child lived. When the wise men saw the star again, they were very happy and filled with joy.

**LOQ:** List four things that happened when the wise men found the house.

**Answer:** (1) The wise men came into the house, (2) they saw the Child with Mary His mother, (3) they fell down and worshiped Him, and (4) they presented Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

**LOQ:** How did Herod respond when the wise men did not come back to Jerusalem?

**Answer:** He ordered that all of the male children two years and under in Bethlehem and the surrounding region be killed.

**LOQ:** What did God tell Joseph in a dream?

**Answer:** God told Joseph to flee to Egypt to protect Jesus.

### Summary

A long time ago, an important event happened in Jerusalem. Some wise men arrived in the city looking for the King of the Jews, who was the Christ. They asked the people in the city where to find Him. When King Herod heard what they were saying, he was troubled. He found out what the Scriptures said about the Christ: He would be born in Bethlehem, would be a ruler, and would shepherd His people. The Christ would be very special. When the wise men finally found the Child, unlike Herod, they rejoiced, gave Him gifts, and worshiped Him.

### Application

The wise men were earnestly seeking the real King of the Jews, who was also the Christ, the Messiah. Herod was troubled. The chief priests and scribes (the religious leaders) did not seem to care, but the wise men did care. They honored Jesus when He was a child by giving Him gifts and worshiping Him. Christians should respond like the wise men, not like Herod and the others. We should honor Jesus Christ and give Him praise and worship because He is not only the King of the Jews, but also the King of all who love Him and follow Him.

## Presentation Ideas



### A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



### Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



### The Gifts

Bring in objects resembling gold, frankincense, and myrrh for the students to see, hold, and smell. Talk about what each was used for and what each symbolized.



### Different Responses

Help the students to start thinking about the various ways in which people responded to Jesus by making note of them as you teach. At the end of the lesson, ask the students how they will respond to Him.



### Promises Kept

Make a promise to the students, and fulfill it sometime before lesson time starts. When a person keeps a promise he has made, you are more likely to believe that he will keep promises in the future. God made a promise through a prophet that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. God worked out all the details for Jesus' birth to occur in Bethlehem so that that His promise would be fulfilled, as it was.



## Praise and Worship

*Come, Let Us Worship and Bow Down*

*God Is So Good*

*O Come, Let Us Adore Him*

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

*O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E*

*The Little Drummer Boy*

*Trust and Obey*

*We Three Kings*

## PRACTICE THE TRUTH

*“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Psalm 78:7).*

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



### Star of Wonder, Version 1

Give each student several gold pipe cleaners to create a star. He can twist several pipe cleaners together to make a spiky star, or he can make a traditional star shape. Use one pipe cleaner to make a hook for the star.



### Star of Wonder, Version 2

Materials: copies of the star craft pages, scissors, glitter, glue, crayons

Directions: Give the students each a copy of the craft page, and have them cut out the stars and decorate them on both sides. Then they should cut the stars along the slit and slip them together, creating a three-dimensional star. Review the lesson with the students while they work on their craft.



### What's It Worth?

Bring to class a variety of items with differing values. Place them on a table where the students can see them, and discuss the value of each one. Choose items that are age-appropriate. You could use photos or magazine pictures. Include several items that are difficult to assign a dollar value to—for instance, someone's life, the earth, or memories. Discuss with the students the priceless nature of God's gift.



### Worship Hindered

Ask the students what hinders pure worship and adoration of God. How was worship of Jesus hindered (or absent) for the religious leaders? For King Herod?



### Arrival of the Magi

Have three or four adults come to class, pretending to be the wise men telling the news of what they found in Bethlehem. Their excitement and reverence over what they have seen, who was there, and how God spoke to them in a dream should be evident to the class. They could talk about meeting with King Herod in Jerusalem before traveling to Bethlehem, and then deciding not to return there after God spoke to them. They truly were wise men! You could invite them to stay and help the students with their work sheets.



## Christmas Card Box

Materials: Christmas cards, scissors, tape

Directions: Give the students each a Christmas card, and have them cut off and set aside the back side. Then have them use the front (the picture side) to create a box top, following these steps:

- Fold the card in half vertically, creating a seam down the middle.
- Open the card and fold each side in toward the middle seam.
- Open the card again. Now it should have three vertical seams.
- Repeat steps 1–3 horizontally.
- Open the card. It should now be divided into 16 small squares.
- Hold the card vertically, and at the bottom, use scissors to snip up one square's length along the first and third vertical seams.
- Rotate the card 180 degrees and do the same thing on the opposite end.
- Turn the card face-down. Bend along the first and third vertical seams so that the edges stand straight up at 90 degrees.
- Fold in the side and top flaps, and tape them closed to form a box top.

Repeat this process with the back half of the card to form the box's bottom. Then glue the memory verse on the top or bottom of the box.



## "The King Is Adored"

Use this work sheet to reinforce the key truths of today's lesson. The work sheet is located at the back of the lesson.



## Journal Page: "Worshiping Christ"

Give each student a copy of the journal page at the back of this lesson. The students can complete the page individually, in small groups, or at home.

## Coloring Pages

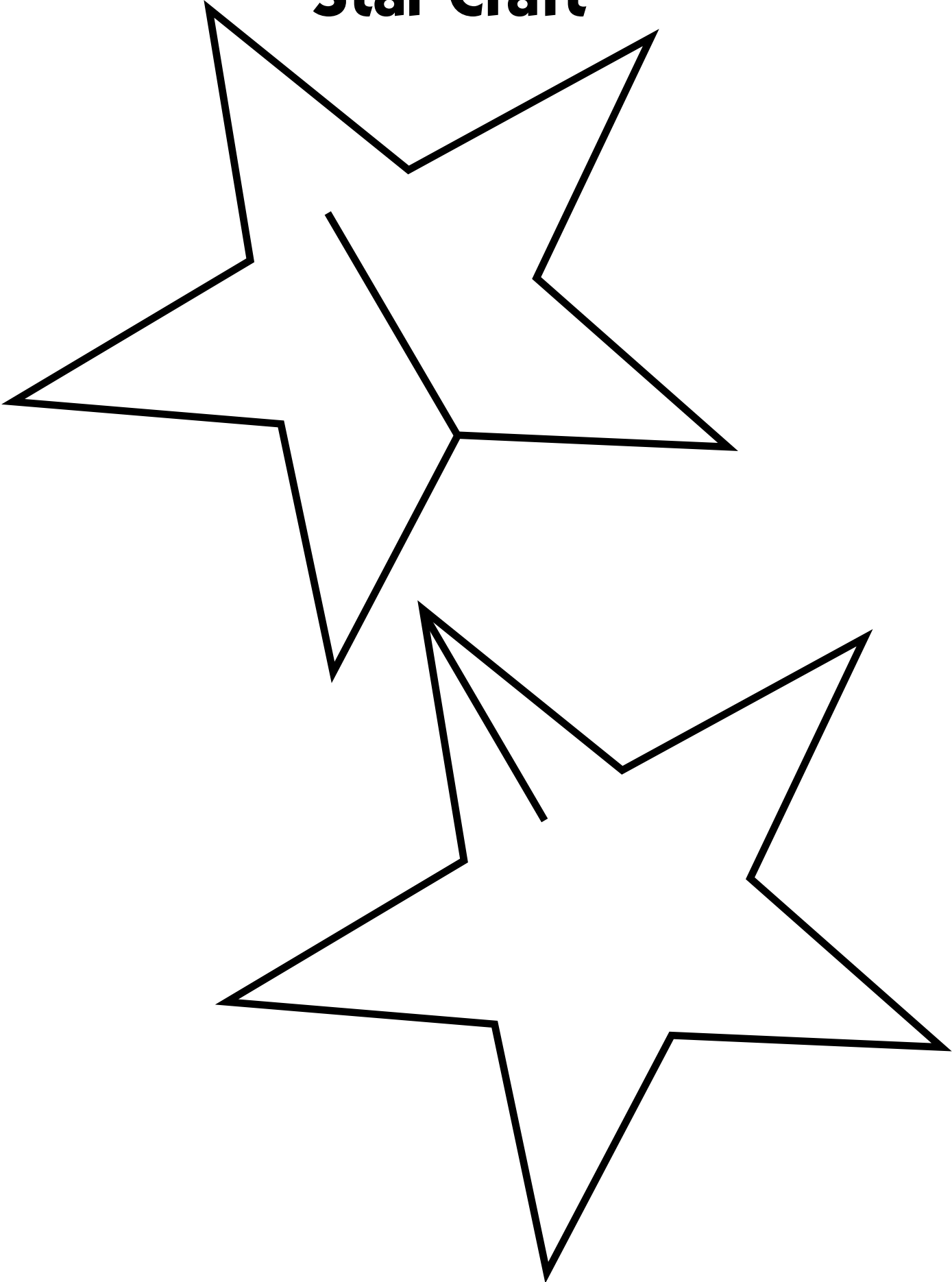
Give each student the coloring sheets from the back of the lesson. Students can color the pages in class or at home.



## MEMORY VERSE

"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:2).

# Star Craft





# The King Is Adored



Matthew 2:1-12

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. According to Matthew 2:1, when did the wise men arrive in Jerusalem?

After \_\_\_\_\_

in the days of \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Whom were the wise men looking for? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What did the wise men see that made them go to Jerusalem? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How did King Herod respond to the wise men's search? (Circle the correct answer.)

He was very happy.

He was troubled.

5. What did the wise men do when they saw Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What three gifts did the wise men give to Jesus?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. After seeing Jesus, did the wise men return to Herod? \_\_\_\_\_



## Worshipping Christ

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“Where is He, who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him” (Matthew 2:2).

Before you were born, your parents probably told all their friends and relatives that you were going to be born, and when your birth day finally came, they must have been very happy. But what if someone, after hearing the news of your birth, said to your parents, “That’s not your baby!”? How do you think your parents would have responded? They probably would have thought that person was very confused, especially since your parents had your birth certificate and hospital records to prove otherwise. When Christ was born, He didn’t have a birth certificate or hospital record to prove that He was God’s Son and the King of the Jews, but He did have something even better—He had God’s Word. God spoke His word through the prophet Micah, who said, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, through you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old from everlasting” (Micah 5:2). Yet when Jesus was born, there were different reactions by different people.

Matthew 2:3 states that Herod and all Jerusalem were troubled when they heard this. Why do you think they were troubled by such good news? Write your thoughts in the space below.

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## Worshipping Christ

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In Luke 19:23, when Christ makes His triumphal entry on a donkey, men, women, and children rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!" You can believe that Jesus is the King and praise Him with a heart of worship.

I believe that Christ is

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because God's Word says so in \_\_\_\_\_.

I can worship Christ as King by

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I believe that Christ is

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I can worship Christ as King by

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**PRAYER**

In the space below, write a prayer of worship to God.

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**PRAYER**

In the space below, write a prayer of worship to God.

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**“Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared” (Matthew 2:7).**





**“And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him” (Matthew 2:11a).**

