



WELCOME THE KING

THE BIRTH OF JESUS



ROOTED
IPHC KIDS' CURRICULUM
- EST. 2020 -

WELCOME THE KING

UNIT 12-WELCOME THE KING: THE BIRTH OF JESUS

WRITER - TIFFANY CRISP
MANAGING EDITOR - KRISTI CAIN
PRE-K EDITOR - JENNIFER MCGHEE
DESIGNER - EMMALEE BELL



WELCOME THE KING

MONTHLY PREPARATION GUIDE

UNIT 12- ELEMENTARY

“Blessed is the king of Israel.” (John 12:13) Each year Christmas offers us the chance to return our distracted gaze to Christ and worship the promised King. As you explore the stories of those who physically experienced the arrival of Christ, consider what it must have been like to worship Jesus in those moments. Then, help your children ponder, honor and celebrate Jesus’ birth – the King has come. Merry Christmas!

John 12:13b (NIV), “Blessed is the king of Israel.”

WEEK 1

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece, Game Cards, Timer, Cardstock (Christmas Colors or White), *Christmas Phrases* Handout, Markers, Scissors, Glue Sticks, Items for Decorating (ribbon, stickers, old Christmas cards, glitter glue, Christmas clipart, etc.)

WEEK 2

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece, Inflated Balloon, Stopwatch, *The Shepherds Worship* Page, Candy Canes, Clear Tape, Markers or Crayons

WEEK 3

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece, Chopsticks, Skittles Candy, Napkins, Paper Plate, *Welcome Baby Jesus/ Thank You Jesus* Banner Cutouts, Tape

WEEK 4

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece, Wrapping Paper, Boxes of Noodles, Toys, Pasta Sauce, Paint Tubes, Seasoning Containers, Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh Props (optional), *Wise Men* Page, Wrapping Paper Squares (2.5" x 2.5"), Glue Sticks, Crayons

MARY SINGS FOR JOY

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 1:39-58

BIG IDEA

Welcome the newborn King.

FOCUS VERSE

“Blessed is the king of Israel.” John 12:13b (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Game Cards | Timer | Cardstock (Christmas Colors or White) | *Christmas Phrases* Handout | Markers | Scissors | Glue Sticks | Items for decorating (ribbon, stickers, old Christmas cards, glitter glue, Christmas clipart, etc.)

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What is your favorite ice cream flavor?
- What is your favorite part of the worship service (singing, praying, listening, etc.)?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Try something different today. If your kids are used to singing with music, try singing a hymn or chorus without accompaniment (a cappella). If they usually sing a cappella, invite a musician to help with a song or two.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Pray with your class. Ask them to raise their hands if they have a request.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *“Father God, we love You! Thank You for inviting us to worship You—and for helping us do it! Please help us to learn more about what it means to welcome Your Son into our lives. In His name we pray, amen.”*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “For the last few months, we have been making our way through the Old Testament. We’ve learned a lot about God! We learned that God created how many things? (All things). We learned

that God is kind, even when we sin. We learned that God always provides—sometimes in ways we don't expect! We learned that God makes ordinary people extraordinary. And one of the most important things we learned is that God hears our prayers.

“Now we're jumping into the New Testament, where all of God's promises begin to come true because of one Person—Jesus, the True King. He saved the world, and our new series is all about how He came into the world and how we can *Welcome the King*.”

Now, who would like to put up the first puzzle piece for this month?”

TRANSITION: Say, “Let's play a game together before we read our story!”

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Game Cards* | Timer |

Say, “Today's game is a race to see which team can think of the most words to describe the items on these cards. Are you ready to play?”

GAME GOAL: To be the team that wins the most rounds by describing the words on the *Game Cards*.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Divide students into two teams of equal size. Choose one person from each group to be the “contestant.”
2. Both contestants will stand facing each other at the front of the room. A leader will have a timer/stopwatch.
3. Put 15 seconds on the clock when the game begins and call out the word on the first card.
4. Each contestant will take turns saying one word that describes the item on the card until one contestant can no longer describe the word or time is up. For example, if you call out “trash,” one contestant would say, “smelly” and the other would say “gross,” etc.
5. The winner of each round will be the contestant who calls out the most words to describe the item on the card before time is up. *Descriptive words must not be duplicated for the same card.*
6. The winning contestant from each round will add one point to his or her team.
7. Then, choose two more contestants and begin the next round.
8. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins!

TRANSITION: Say, “As we played that game, some of you sounded like you might explode as you were coming up with answers – you really wanted your team to win! Have you ever felt so happy that you thought you might burst? What made you feel that way? Well, today's story describes a time when someone was so happy that she burst into song. She just couldn't hold her joy in any longer. Let's get out our Bibles so we can find out more about this happy person.”

LEARN — 10 MINUTES

Say, “When Mary was expecting the baby Jesus, her cousin was also expecting a baby. When she visits, the baby in Elizabeth's belly jumps for joy! Then Elizabeth blesses Mary for believing God's promises, and Mary

sings a song about how God keeps His promises.” Read Luke 1:39-42, 46-48 (ICB).

³⁹ Mary got up and went quickly to...Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the unborn baby inside Elizabeth jumped. Then Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² She cried out in a loud voice, “God has blessed you more than any other woman. And God has blessed the baby which you will give birth to... ⁴⁶ Then Mary said, “My soul praises the Lord; ⁴⁷ my heart is happy because God is my Savior. ⁴⁸ I am not important, but God has shown his care for me, his servant girl. From now on, all people will say that I am blessed, ⁴⁹ because the Powerful One has done great things for me. His name is holy. ⁵⁰ God will always give mercy to those who worship him. ⁵¹ God’s arm is strong. He scatters the people who are proud and think great things about themselves. ⁵² God brings down rulers from their thrones, and he raises up the humble. ⁵³ God fills the hungry with good things, but he sends the rich away with nothing. ⁵⁴ God has helped his people Israel who serve him. He gave them his mercy. ⁵⁵ God has done what he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his children forever.”

Say, “What a song! See how Mary praises God because of what He has done and for what He’s doing now. She knows that He is sending Jesus the King, who will be strong and kind, to keep His promises to His people.”

Ask, “*What did Mary do to welcome the King?* She sang a song of praise! This story shows us one way we can worship. Mary knew that Jesus was the King that God had promised for thousands of years, and she makes up a song on the spot. If Mary can do that, I wonder if we could, too? Can you sing “thank you” to God for His love and **welcome the newborn King?**”



IF YOU’RE NOT SURE HOW TO START, TRY THIS SIMPLE SONG OF PRAISE TO THE ABC TUNE: “PRAISE YOU, FATHER, FOR YOUR SON! YOU’VE BEEN KIND TO EVERYONE! JESUS CAME FROM UP ABOVE. HE’S THE ONE WHO SHOWS YOUR LOVE. THANK YOU, LORD, FOR OUR GREAT KING! THANK YOU, LORD, FOR EVERYTHING!”

TRANSITION: Say, “Aren’t you glad we can **welcome the newborn King** with songs of praise?”

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Discuss the story: Say, “Let’s talk a little more about our story and what it means.”

1. Why do you think Mary felt like singing?

Response: Mary felt joy about the coming King, Jesus. She knew God was keeping His promise to send a godly King to His people. She also praises God because God has blessed her and shown that He cares for her.

2. What makes you so happy you want to sing? Do you ever make up songs yourself?

Response: Answers will vary, and remember, not everyone likes to sing. Remind children that God invites us to sing praises to Him as best we can.

3. Do you ever sing when you’re sad or afraid?

Response: Maybe we should! Mary’s song praises God because He is strong. Songs like “Jesus Loves Me” remind us that God is strong even when we are not.

4. We can also sing songs we know to welcome the King. What are some of your favorite Christmas songs about Jesus?

Response: If they are slower to answer, suggest *Away in a Manger*, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, *Joy to the World*. Songs like *Jesus Loves Me* are also appropriate answers.

5. Do you have to wait until you're in church to sing to God?

Response: No! We can sing praises to God—songs that thank Him, tell Him how wonderful He is, and more—anytime. In fact, the Holy Spirit helps us praise God in every situation.

6. What do we learn about God from this story?

Response: God sent His Son and made Him King. God loves us. God gives us joy. God is worthy of our worship, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great discussion! Let's do an activity to help us remember our story!"

RESPOND — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Cardstock (Christmas Colors or White) | *Christmas Phrases* Handout | Markers | Scissors | Glue Sticks | Items for decorating (ribbon, stickers, old Christmas cards, glitter glue, Christmas clipart, etc.)

Say, "Do you remember how happy Mary was as she told her cousin, Elizabeth, that God was about to send His people a Savior? Mary was so full of joy that she started singing! Well, today, we're going to make "Christmas Praise Posters" that will remind us that God gave us the greatest gift ever when He gave us Jesus."

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each child a piece of cardstock (or let them choose a color).
2. Give each child or group of children a copy of the *Christmas Phrases* Handout.
3. Have each person choose their favorite Christmas phrase from the handout and write the words on the cardstock.
4. Finally, have them decorate their poster. Encourage the kids to make their creations look joyful and beautiful. (Instead of sending them home, you could use the posters to decorate your classroom or encourage the children to give their poster to someone who needs a little joy.)

TRANSITION: Say, "As you enjoy this Christmas season, whisper little prayers to God, thanking Him for giving us our Savior, Jesus."



BE AWARE THAT SOME CHILDREN MAY NEED HELP WRITING (OR WRITING NEATLY). DISCREETLY HELP THOSE WHO NEED ASSISTANCE.

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "It's time to learn our verse to welcome King Jesus! This short verse is easy to remember. I'll read it first, and then we'll try it together!" Read the verse yourself, read it with them two or three times, then have them lead you.

"Blessed (praying hands) is the king (lifting of crown action) of Israel (point to everyone)." John 12:13 (NIV) (hold your hands out like a book)

CHALLENGE: If children struggle to repeat the verse, you might make this memory verse into a chant or song—or challenge your students to do it!

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, “God invites us to welcome Jesus as King, just like Mary did. She knew that Jesus was God’s only Son (John 3:16) and that God made Jesus King to make the world right. Share our song about Jesus with your family, and ask them their favorite song to **welcome the newborn King**. Let’s pray!”

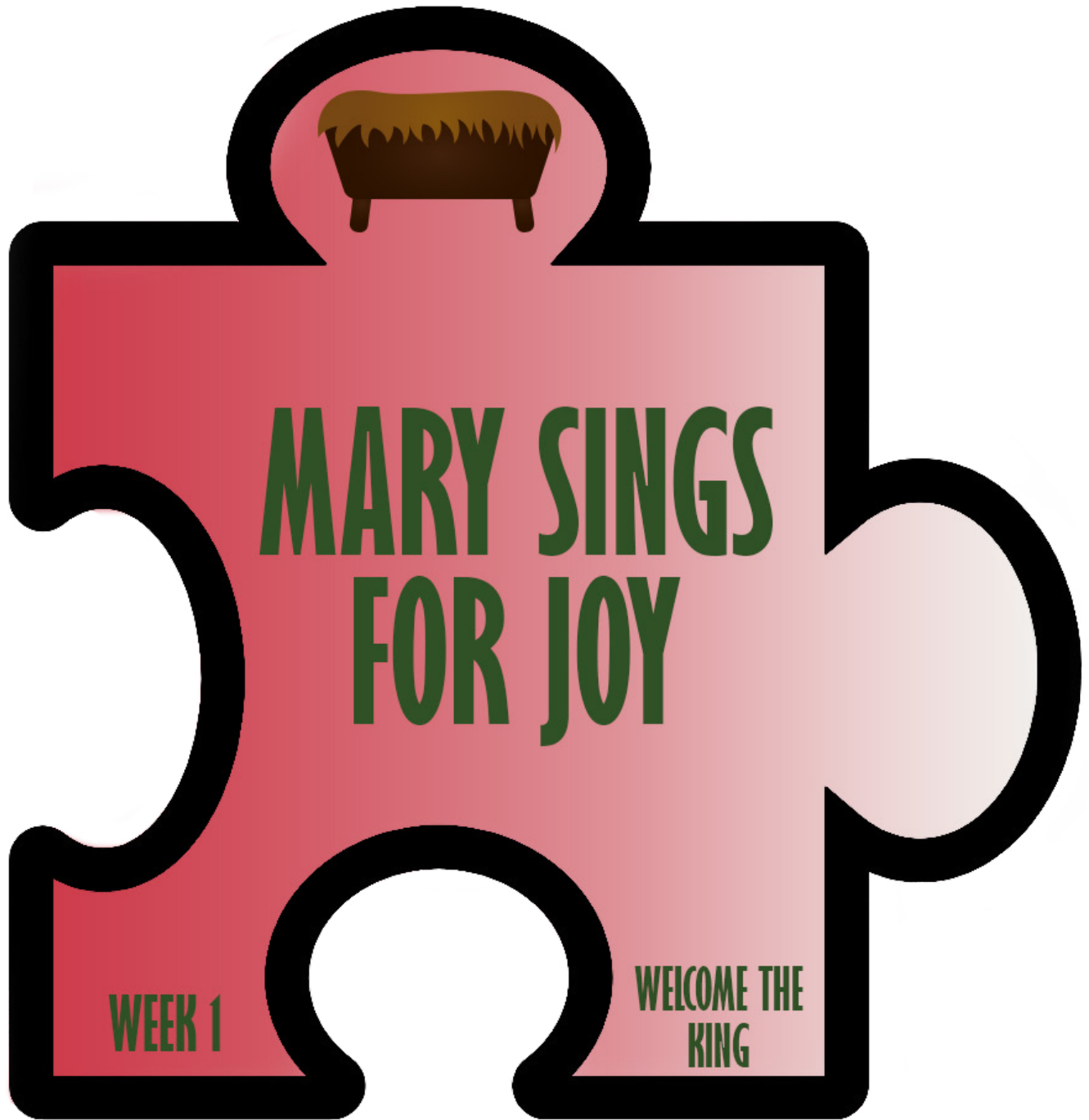
SAMPLE PRAYER: *“God, thank You for this Christmas season. Thank You for reminding us that Jesus came to be our King, show us what You are like, and make wrong things right. Make us happy enough to sing, like Mary did.”*

RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

If you have extra time before parents arrive, retell the story of Mary’s visit to Elizabeth. Allow the children to ask questions or play group games to encourage cooperation and deepen relationships. When parents arrive to pick up their children, please give them a copy of the monthly Parent Guide (downloadable).

PARENT GUIDE EXPLANATION:

1. Provides engaging questions and activities for family discipleship.
2. Reviews what the children are learning each week.



Shoes	Sheep	Elephant	Kitten
Umbrella	Book	Tree	Candy
Fireworks	Airplane	Video Games	Christmas
Sunglasses	House	Mountain	Zoo
Birthday	Snow	Church	Swimming Pool

**Jesus is the
Reason for the
Season!**



**Joy to the
World! The
Lord has
Come!**



**A Savior
is Born!**



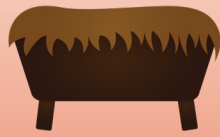
**Oh, Come
Let us Adore
Him!**



**Happy
Birthday,
Jesus!**



**Glory to God
in the
Highest!**



**Jesus is the
Light of the
World!**



THE SHEPHERDS WORSHIP

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 2: 8-12, 15-20 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

Welcome the newborn King.

FOCUS VERSE

"Blessed is the king of Israel." John 12:13 (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Inflated balloon | Stopwatch | *The Shepherds Worship* Page | Candy Canes | Clear Tape | Markers or Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What pancake topping do you like the most?
- If you could have any dog, what kind of dog would you want?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Since this month's unit is focused on Jesus' birth, sing songs about welcoming and worshipping our King!

Here are some great options:

- "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"
- "Joy to the World"
- "Silent Night"
- "O Come Let Us Adore Him"

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Pray together with your class.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Jesus, we love You! We worship You because of everything You've sacrificed for us. Thank You for coming to earth to save us. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, "This is the second week in our series called, *Welcome the King*. Last week, we read about how John, the baby, jumped for joy inside His mother when Jesus entered the room. Did you know that John was the first person to **welcome the newborn King**? What a great story! This week, we are talking about another way to welcome Jesus, our King, but first, let's place our new puzzle piece on the wall."

TRANSITION: Say, "Who is ready for game time?"

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Inflated balloon (1 per class) | Stopwatch |

Say, "The game we will play today is about working together to get a balloon from one side of the room to the other. Can you do that?"



SOMETIMES A CHILD WILL NOT WANT TO PLAY THE GAME. DON'T FORCE THEM TO PLAY, BUT LEAVE THE INVITATION OPEN FOR THEM TO JUMP IN AT ANY POINT. KIDS WILL OFTEN JOIN THE GAMES WHEN THEY SEE EVERYONE ELSE HAVING FUN.

GAME GOAL: To work together to move a balloon from one side of the room to the other.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Space everyone arms-length apart so they fill the room from one side to the other.
2. Starting at one end of the room, give the person closest to the wall the balloon. Explain that the students must work together to move the balloon from one end of the room to the other without the balloon touching the floor.
3. Additionally, the students may not take more than one step in any direction during the gameplay. If the balloon touches the floor, or if a child takes more than one step, the group must restart.
4. Use the stopwatch to time how quickly the group completes the challenge.
5. Once the group has completed the challenge, have them repeat the process to beat their previous time.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job moving the balloon from one side of the room to the other. You worked together so well! In today's story, we will hear how a group of shepherds moved themselves across their fields to Bethlehem—from one side to another. Let's read from God's Word to find out more!"

LEARN — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Last week, we learned about how an unborn baby, named John, welcomed our King, Jesus, by jumping for joy inside his mother! This week, we are fast-forwarding a few months to the night when Jesus was born! Listen to how some ordinary shepherds **welcomed the newborn King**." Read Luke 2:8-12, 15-20 (ICB).

⁸ That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. ⁹ An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and suddenly they became very frightened. ¹⁰ The angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. ¹¹ Today your Savior was born in David’s town. He is Christ, the Lord. ¹² This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding box.”

¹⁵ ...The shepherds said to each other, “Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord told us about. ¹⁶ So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph. ¹⁷ And the shepherds saw the baby lying in a feeding box. Then they told what the angels had said about this child. ¹⁸ Everyone was amazed when they heard what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them. ²⁰ Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.

Say, “What an amazing story of how the shepherds welcomed Jesus, the newborn King!”

Ask, “*How did the shepherds welcome the newborn King?* The shepherds welcomed Jesus by praising Him and thanking Him. Another way to say this is they worshiped. This story teaches us another lesson on how we can **welcome the newborn King**. Something you need to know about Jesus is that God’s people had been waiting for Him to come for hundreds of years. They were waiting SO long for a King. So, when a king you’ve waited for your whole life is born, do you think you would respond like the shepherds? Yes! Did you notice how they praised Jesus? If the shepherds can welcome Jesus, we can also **welcome the newborn King** with worship. Let’s practice now!”



PAUSE AND GIVE EVERYONE AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORSHIP AND TELL GOD WHY THEY ARE THANKFUL FOR JESUS.

TRANSITION: Say, “I am so grateful we can **welcome the newborn King** by worshiping like the shepherds.”

DISCUSS – 10 MINUTES

Say, “Let’s talk about this worshipful story together.”

1. Who should we welcome with worship?

Response: We **welcome the newborn King**, Jesus, with worship!

2. Have you ever worshiped like the shepherds? Tell me about that time.

Response: Answers will vary.

3. How did the shepherds know how to find Jesus?

Response: The angels told them to look for a baby in a manger, wrapped in cloths, and lying in a feeding box.

4. What do the shepherds teach us about how we should welcome Jesus?

Response: Answers will vary.

5. When can you welcome Jesus with worship?

Response: We can always tell God how thankful we are for Jesus! We can worship Him at church, when we are in the car, when we are listening to music about Him, when we are cleaning our rooms, when we are at a park, etc. We can welcome Jesus with worship anywhere!

6. How was the shepherd's worship different from baby John's? (Review the lesson from last week if needed.)

Response: The shepherds spoke prayers of thankfulness to God, while John jumped for joy. Both reactions were out of love and excitement for Jesus.

7. What do we learn about God from this story?

Response: God shared the good news with the shepherds, God gave us His Son, God made Jesus King, God loves His Son and us, God used angels to tell the good news, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great discussion! Let's do an activity to help us remember how the shepherds **welcomed Jesus as King.**"

RESPOND – 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *The Shepherds Worship* Page (1 per child) | Candy Canes (2 per child) | Clear Tape | Markers or Crayons |

Say, "Remember how the shepherds welcomed Jesus? Well, today, we are going to color a picture of the shepherds worshipping. We will put a staff in their hands to show that they are shepherds! Who is ready to get started?"

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each child a *The Shepherds Worship* Page and two candy canes.
2. Next, have the kids color the remainder of *The Shepherds Worship* Page.
3. As they are finishing, pass out two strips of tape per child and have the kids tape a candy cane to each shepherd's hand.
 - Do not allow any child to eat the candy canes until they go home. You may not know about food allergies or if parents allow their kids to eat candy canes.

TRANSITION: Say, "The most important thing to remember from our story is that the shepherds **welcomed the newborn King**, and we have the opportunity to do the same thing. Jesus is worthy of being welcomed through worship."

MEMORIZE – 5 MINUTES

Say, "You may remember our memory verse from last week. It was pretty short and east to remember. Let's continue to practice the verse about our King—Jesus! Who's ready to try it again?" Read the verse one time through with the actions and invite everyone else to join you the second time.

"Blessed (praying hands) is the king (lifting of crown action) of Israel (point to everyone)." John 12:13 (NIV) (hold your hands out like a book)

CHALLENGE: Recite the verse by shouting the first word and then slowly decreasing your volume with each word until you are silent.

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "It is our joy and honor to **welcome the newborn King**. When Jesus came to earth, everything changed for the better! This is one of the reasons we welcome Jesus at Christmas time. You don't have to jump for joy (like baby John) or sing in worship (like the shepherds), but you can welcome Him in your own way. Does anyone have other ideas on how YOU can welcome Jesus?"

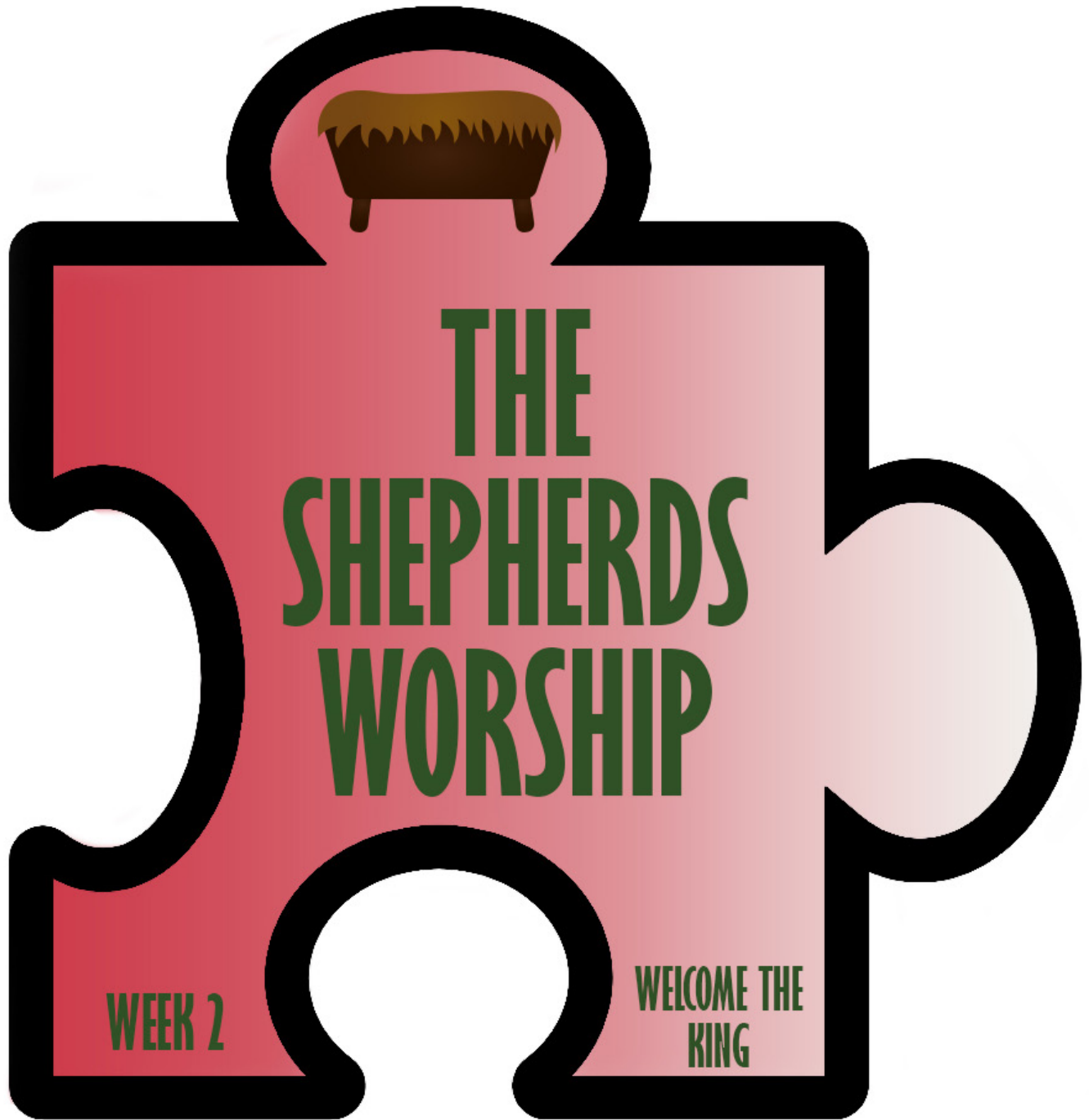
SAMPLE PRAYER: *"God, thank You for giving us Your Son. He is so amazing, and we want to get better at welcoming Him with our worship. Speak to our hearts and teach us how we can welcome and honor Jesus! We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen."*



**DON'T PUSH OFF OR IGNORE THIS PRAYER TIME AT THE END.
THE BEST WAY TO START AND END YOUR LESSON IS THROUGH
CONVERSATION WITH OUR GREAT GOD.**

RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

If there is extra time before parents arrive, retell or act out the story, replay the engagement game, or sing more worship songs to close your time together. Any of these options would be great activities to end your time together.



THE SHEPHERDS WORSHIP



AND WELCOME THE
NEWBORN KING

SIMEON THANKS GOD

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 2:25-33 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

Welcome the newborn King.

FOCUS VERSE

“Blessed is the king of Israel.” John 12:13 (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | | Chopsticks | Skittles Candy | Napkins | Paper Plate | Chopsticks | *Welcome Baby Jesus/Thank You Jesus Banner Cutouts* (1 set per student)| Tape |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What game do you like best?
- If you could ride in one vehicle forever, would it be a train, a car, or a plane?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

One way that children learn is by repetition, so repeat a few carefully chosen songs each week. Rotate among several that connect with the unit’s theme. The more you sing together, the more your students will retain and understand what you’re teaching.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Pray with your class. Encourage them to participate in prayer, but don’t force them. Even if they say only a few words, they can learn to talk to God in prayer.



ENCOURAGE (BUT DON'T FORCE) KIDS TO PARTICIPATE IN PRAYER. EVEN IF THEY ONLY SAY A COUPLE OF WORDS, IT'S IMPORTANT TO TEACH KIDS HOW TO TALK TO GOD.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *“Father God, thank You for inviting us to give You thanks—and for helping us do it! Help us learn all You will teach us, and bless us as we continue to welcome the Lord Jesus into our class and lives. We pray in His name, Amen.”*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, "In our lessons this month, we are learning how we can welcome the newborn King. Do you remember how Mary welcomed the King? [with a song] And how about the shepherds? How did they welcome the baby Jesus? [with praise] Today, we meet another person who welcomes the newborn King. Who will place this week's puzzle piece and introduce us to this week's worshiper?"

TRANSITION: Say, "Now, let's play a game together before we read about Simeon!"

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Chopsticks (1 per student-these will also be used during the craft) | Skittles Candy (1 bag per class) | Napkins (1 per student) | Paper Plate (1 per class) |



TODAY'S ACTIVITY ENDS WITH A CANDY TREAT. PLEASE CHECK WITH PARENTS BEFORE CLASS BEGINS TO VERIFY THAT NONE OF THE CHILDREN HAVE ALLERGIES TO ANYTHING IN THE CANDY.

Say, "Today we're going to play the *Thankful Game!* Who's thankful for candy? I know I am. This game will use Skittles to remind us to be thankful for many different things, and we'll also sharpen our chopstick skills."

GAME GOAL: To pick up a Skittle using chopsticks and to name different things for which you're thankful.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Allow the students to practice using their chopsticks.
2. Pour the Skittles on the paper plate.
3. Allow the first student to pick up a piece of candy using their chopsticks. (This is harder than it looks.)
4. Have the student tell the class something they are thankful for based on the color of the Skittle they choose.
 - a. RED: Name a Person you are thankful for
 - b. ORANGE: Name a Place you are thankful for
 - c. YELLOW: Name a Food you are thankful for
 - d. GREEN: Name an item that starts with the first letter of your name that you are thankful for
 - e. BLUE: Name anything of your choice
5. Allow each student a turn and repeat as time allows.
6. Allow the students to enjoy the candy at the end.



HAVE A CLOTHESPIN OR JUMBO TWEEZERS HANDY FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS OR THOSE HAVING TROUBLE USING CHOPSTICKS. STUDENTS CAN ALSO USE THEIR FINGERS.

TRANSITION: Say, "That was pretty sweet. Do you know what else is pretty sweet? Reading God's Word and learning about Him. Let's dive into the story of Simeon in the book of Luke."

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

Say, "The story we'll read today happened just a week after Jesus was born. Let's see what happened when Simeon met the baby Jesus and learn another way that we can welcome the newborn King." Luke 2:25-33.

²⁵ A man named Simeon lived in Jerusalem. He was a good man and very religious (or faithful to God). He was waiting for the time when God would help Israel [by sending Jesus]. The Holy Spirit was in him. ²⁶ The Holy Spirit told Simeon that he would not die before he saw the Christ [Jesus] promised by the Lord. ²⁷ The Spirit led Simeon to the Temple. Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the Temple to do what the law said they must do. ²⁸ Then Simeon took the baby [up] in his arms and thanked God:

³⁰ “I have seen your Salvation with my own eyes.

³¹ You prepared him before all people.

³² He is a light for the non-Jewish people to see.
He will bring honor to your people.”

³³ Jesus’ father and mother were amazed at what Simeon had said about him.

Say, “How does Simeon welcome the King? He thanks God (verse 28)! He knows that God has kept his promise. Simeon says, ‘I have seen your Salvation with my own eyes.’ Simeon believes that Jesus is the King who will help God’s people! So Simeon thanks God for keeping His promises—to Simeon *and* all of His people, even us! Simeon gave thanks. Can you? When do you say thank you?”



ALLOW STUDENTS TO SHARE ABOUT A TIME WHEN THEY USUALLY GIVE THANKS. THEY MIGHT MENTION CHRISTMAS, BIRTHDAY PRESENTS, OR THANKSGIVING. GUIDE THEM TO THINK OF GIFTS, OF HOME, FAMILY, CREATION, AND MORE. AND IF THEY HAVEN’T MENTIONED IT BY THE END, SUGGEST GIVING THANKS FOR JESUS!

TRANSITION: Say, “This is another way we worship God—to simply say thank You to God for all His good gifts to us.”

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, “Now, let’s take one more look at Simeon to see what else we can learn.”

1. Who do we welcome?

Response: We **welcome the newborn King**, Jesus!

2. The Bible says Simeon was good and religious. What do you think that means?

Response: The Bible tells us that ‘the Holy Spirit is in [Simeon].’ That means Simeon has a very close friendship with God and that God is right there with him. And we can also see that when God talks, Simeon listens! He trusts God’s promise, and he goes where the Holy Spirit leads him—to the Temple. So someone who is good and religious trusts God and obeys Him, just like Simeon.

3. Do you always remember to say thank you? Why do you forget?

Response: Answers will vary. We don’t always feel thankful. We may think we deserve good things, but the Bible says all good things are gifts from God (James 1:17).

4. Simeon listens to what God says. Can we hear God’s voice?

Response: Yes! Simeon trusts God’s promises—we have those in the Bible. One of the most important ways we hear God’s voice is by reading His Word. Simeon also feels God has

promised him something, and he patiently waits for God to keep that promise. We can pray that God will fill us with the Holy Spirit too. The Bible says that's like asking our Father for what we need, and it's a prayer He's glad to answer.

5. Why do you think Mary and Joseph were “amazed” by what Simeon said?

Response: They had seen and heard some amazing things about Jesus—angels and dreams and shepherds—but Simeon says they can expect more, that both Jews and people who aren't Jews (like us!) will see the light of God in Jesus. They were probably feeling pretty thankful for Jesus, too!

6. What are some things you will give thanks for this week?

Response: Answers will vary. Guide them to thanking God for gathering His people in worship too.

7. What do we learn about God from our story?

Response: We learn that God keeps His promises, that the Holy Spirit fills and guides us, and that we should give thanks because Jesus is King for everyone who believes.

TRANSITION: Say, “Great discussion! Let's do an activity to help us remember how Simeon teaches us to **welcome the newborn King, Jesus!**”

RESPOND — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Chopsticks (1 per student) | *Welcome Baby Jesus Banner Cutouts* (1 set per student) | Tape (pieces per student) |

Say, “Let's celebrate and show Jesus how thankful we are for Him! And what better way to celebrate than to eat cake! Well, we're not able to eat cake today, but we are going to create a cake topper to **Welcome the Newborn King**. You can take it home and add it to the next cake you eat with your family.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each student a *Welcome Baby Jesus Banner Cutout*.
2. The students will color the banners.
3. Using scissors, the students will cut out the banner.
4. Next, help the students attach the banner to their chopsticks. Use a small piece of tape to secure the end of the banner to the top of one chopstick.
5. Then, roll the paper around the chopstick. Stop at the halfway point of the banners.
6. Repeat this process with the other end of the banners using the second chopstick.
7. Once you have completed the craft, have the students roll out the banners and pretend to through a party to celebrate the arrival of baby Jesus.

TRANSITION: Say, “Great job, everyone! You guys know how to celebrate! Be sure to celebrate with your family at home and make Jesus welcome in your home.”

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, “It's time to say our verse to welcome the newborn King! This short verse is easy to remember. I'll read it first, and then we'll try it together!” Read the verse yourself, read it with the students two or three times, then have them lead you.

“Blessed (praying hands) is the king (lifting of crown action) of Israel (point to everyone).” John 12:13 (NIV) (hold your hands out like a book)

CHALLENGE: Have the students say the words as you perform the motions. Mix things up after a few correct performances and use the wrong actions and let the students correct you. Finish by completing it correctly together.

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, “God invites us to welcome Jesus as King, just like Simeon did. Simeon knew Jesus was the King God had promised, so he welcomed Him with open arms and a big thanks! You can do that too. Jesus came to be *everyone’s* King, and He can be yours too. Let’s pray!”

SAMPLE PRAYER: *“God, we thank You for Jesus. He’s the King You promised Your people—and You even made a way for us to be Your people! Help us to be like Simeon, trusting and obeying You. Help us remember to thank You for the love You showed us by sending Jesus. Remind us of that love, and make us thankful, like Simeon. Amen.”*

RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

If you have extra time before parents arrive, help students imagine what Simeon must have felt when he met Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. How would Mary and Joseph tell the story? Allow the children to ask questions or play group games to encourage cooperation and deepen relationships.



YOUR CLASS MAY HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT AFTER THIS LESSON. ANSWER THEM TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY, BUT BE HONEST ABOUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE. ENCOURAGE THEM TO TALK WITH THEIR PARENTS AND THE PASTOR TO FIND OUT MORE.



WELCOME BABY JESUS!



THE WISE MEN GIVE GIFTS

BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11

BIG IDEA

Welcome the newborn King.

FOCUS VERSE

"Blessed is the king of Israel." John 12:13 (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Gift Wrap | Boxes of Noodles | Toys | Jars of Pasta Sauce | Paint Tubes | Seasoning Containers | Gold Prop (Optional) | Frankincense Prop (Optional) | Myrrh Prop (Optional) | *Wise Men* Page | Wrapping Paper Squares | Glue Sticks | Markers or Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Did you travel anywhere for Christmas break? If so, where did you go?
- Of all the gifts you have ever received, which one is your favorite?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Worship is a practice of the heart. Sometimes we go through the motions of singing, but we do not mean the words, or we are not thinking about what we are saying. Have a short discussion with the kids about paying attention to the worship songs and letting the words impact how they respond. Ask, "What do you think it means to sing 'from your heart'? That's a strange phrase, isn't it? The Bible talks about the 'heart' not just as the organ that pumps blood around your body, but as something inside your spirit that affects how you think and feel. So, when we 'sing from the heart,' we are singing words we believe out of love. We sing as if Jesus is standing right beside us."

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Pray with your class before beginning the lesson.



DEVELOPING A VIBRANT PRAYER LIFE IS CRUCIAL TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF EACH CHILD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. PRACTICE PRAYING WITH THE KIDS.

SAMPLE PRAYER: "God, You are so great! Thank You for loving us enough to give us your Son, Jesus. Help us see how wonderful You are! Open our eyes to see Your loving kindness. In Jesus' name, Amen."

REVIEW – 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “This is the last lesson in our series, *Welcome the King*. The entire month, we have discussed how we can **welcome the newborn King**, Jesus. The first week, we talked about the baby John who welcomed Jesus by jumping for joy! Then, we read about how the shepherds worshiped Jesus. Finally, last week we discovered that Simeon lifted up Jesus in the temple to **welcome the newborn King**. This week, we will talk about one more way we can **welcome the newborn King!** Who is curious what the last way will be? Me too! Before we get to that, let’s put up this week’s puzzle piece.”

TRANSITION: Say, “You know what time it is! It is time to play a game that will get us ready for our story! Are you ready?”

ENGAGE – 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Gift Wrap | Box of Noodles (1 per team) | Toy (1 per team) | Jar of Pasta Sauce (1 per team) | Paint Tube (1 per team) | Seasoning Container (1 per team) |



WRAP THE ITEMS LIKE PRESENTS BEFORE CLASS BEGINS.

Say, “Today’s game is called *Secret Gifts*. I am going to divide everyone into teams, and each team will try to guess what is inside their team’s gift. Let’s play!”

GAME GOAL: To be the first team to correctly guess what’s inside each wrapped gift.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Divide everyone into teams of eight or fewer children. Have them sit in circles with their group. Spread the teams out around the room.
2. Place one set of 5 wrapped gifts in front of each team (in other words, each team should have five wrapped gifts in front of them).
3. When you say “go,” each team will select one gift from their set and bring it back to the group.
4. As a team, they may gently shake, feel, and observe the gift to determine what is inside. They may not unwrap the gift yet.
5. Once the team decides what they think the gift is, they should raise their hands and whisper their guess to the leader. If they are correct, that team should turn the gift into the leader and select a new present. If the answer is wrong, the team must return the unwrapped gift to the pile and choose another gift. (They will come back to that gift at the end after they have attempted to guess all the other wrapped gifts.)
6. The team to correctly guess every gift first, wins.

MODIFICATION: If the game is too challenging, do not break up into teams. Instead, do the game as a large group, working together to come up with the correct answers.

TRANSITION: Say, “Great job playing *Secret Gifts*! Today’s story will be about gifts too, but our story’s gifts are extraordinary because they were given to welcome a VERY special person. Let’s read about it!”

LEARN — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Gold Prop (Optional) | Frankincense Prop (Optional) | Myrrh Prop (Optional) |

Say, "This week's story took place about a year after Jesus was born. God sent some wise men to **welcome the newborn King**, Jesus! We do not know much about the wise men except that they were from the East and studied the stars. Let's discover how these wise men welcomed Jesus." Read Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11 (ICB).

¹ Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem.

² They asked, "Where is the baby who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east. We came to worship him."

⁹ The wise men heard the king and then left. They saw the same star they had seen in the east. It went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹ They went to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshiped the child. They opened the gifts they brought for him. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Say, "What a fantastic story of how to **welcome the newborn King!**"

Ask, "What did the wise men give to Jesus to welcome Him as King? The wise men welcomed Jesus with gifts! The wise men **welcomed the newborn King** by bowing down and giving Jesus precious (expensive or valuable) gifts! This story has something to teach us about how we can **welcome the newborn King**. One of the best ways to worship Jesus is by giving Him gifts!"



SAY, "WE CAN'T PHYSICALLY GIVE JESUS A WRAPPED GIFT, BUT WE CAN GIVE HIM SOMETHING BETTER. THE BEST GIFT WE CAN GIVE JESUS IS OUR HEARTS. WHAT DO YOU THINK WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY WE ARE GIVING JESUS 'OUR HEARTS'? WELL, WE CAN GIVE JESUS OUR HEARTS BY LOVING HIM AND DOING WHAT HE COMMANDS. WE CAN GET TO KNOW HIM BY READING OUR BIBLE, PRAYING, WORSHIPPING, AND SPENDING TIME WITH HIM."

TRANSITION: Say, "I am so grateful that we can **welcome the newborn King** by giving God the gift of our hearts!"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's talk about this great story together."

1. What can we learn from the wise men about how to welcome Jesus?

Response: We can worship Jesus and welcome Him with gifts.

2. Have you ever given Jesus the gift of your heart? Why or why not?

Response: Answers will vary.

3. How does a person give Jesus their heart?

Response: We give Jesus our heart when we trust Him with our life that first time (become a Christian) and when we trust Him with our life every day (obey Him, pray, go to church, love others, etc.).

4. What did the wise men follow to find Jesus?

Response: The wise men followed the star God put in the sky.

5. Why do you think we played Secret Gifts to get us ready to hear our story?

Response: We played *Secret Gifts* because the wise men gave gifts to Jesus to welcome Him.

6. What did we learn about God today?

Response: God gave us His Son, God brought men from far away to worship Jesus, God made Jesus King, God loves His Son and us, God used a star to guide the wise men to Jesus, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great discussion! Let's do an activity to help us remember how the wise men taught us to **welcome the newborn King**, Jesus!"

RESPOND – 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Wise Men* Page (1 per child) | Wrapping Paper Squares (3 per child) | Glue Sticks | Markers or Crayons |



BEFORE CLASS BEGINS, CUT SMALL SQUARES (APPROXIMATELY 1.5" BY 1.5") OUT OF WRAPPING PAPER.

Say, "Do you remember how the wise men welcomed Jesus? Yes, they gave Him gifts! Well, we're going to make a gift for Jesus that will help us remember this week's story!"

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each child a *Wise Men* Page, three wrapping paper squares, and a glue stick.
2. Explain that the kids will place one wrapping paper square in each of the wise men's hands (as a gift) and glue it down.
3. The kids will finish the craft by coloring the wise men.

TRANSITION: Say, "The most important thing to remember is that we can **welcome the newborn King** like the wise men did: with a gift - the gift of our hearts! I am so grateful Jesus is our King, and that we get to welcome Him."

MEMORIZE – 5 MINUTES

Say, "This is the last day we will practice this month's verse, reminding us to **welcome the newborn King!** Who thinks they can say it all by themselves?"

"Blessed (praying hands) is the king (lifting of crown action) of Israel (point to everyone)." John 12:13 (NIV) (hold your hands out like a book)

CHALLENGE: Stand up and recite this verse like you are announcing it to the world.

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "We get to **welcome the newborn King**, just like the wise men did, by offering Him a gift! Although we cannot give Jesus a wrapped gift like the wise men, we can give Him the best gift of all—our heart! Church is not the only place we can **welcome the newborn King**. Try 'welcoming' Jesus at home using what you learned this month. You can jump for joy, worship with thankfulness and praise, lift up the name of Jesus with your words, and give Him the gift of your heart."

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Jesus, You are amazing! Help us learn how to welcome You into our own lives. We want to love You more and more every day. Would You help us do that? Thank You for loving us. Amen."*

RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

If there is extra time before parents arrive, review the story, practice the memory verse again, or act out the story. Don't waste any of the time you have with the children in your class.

THE WISE MEN GIVE GIFTS



