Preschool–Grade 6

The Wise Men

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: The wise men searched for Jesus until they found Him, and then they worshiped Him with great joy and gave Him their gifts. We can seek Jesus with all our heart and worship Him too.
Bible passage: Matthew 2:1–12. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." *Matthew 2:10 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Clue Search (5–10 minutes)

Before class, hide a paper star somewhere in the room. Give the class one clue at a time ("It is higher than a chair." "It is near something blue."). After each clue, kids may make one guess. When they find it, ask: *What helped you find it?* Say: "The wise men had a clue too: they saw a star. And God's Word told where the King would be born. Today we'll see how they found Jesus."

2. Bible story: The Wise Men Seek the King (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Matthew 2. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Visitors from the east. Look up Matthew 2:1. Jesus was born in Bethlehem of **Judaea** (the southern part of the land of Israel) while Herod was king. **Behold** means "look!" Wise men came from the east to Jerusalem. The Bible doesn't say how many there were. **Look up Matthew 2:2.** They had seen His star, and they came for one reason: to **worship** Him.

A troubled king. When King Herod heard this, he was **troubled**, upset and worried, and all Jerusalem with him (2:3). Herod gathered the **chief priests** (the leaders of the priests) and the **scribes** (men who studied and copied God's Word), and he **demanded** of them, or asked strongly, where **Christ**, the promised King God would send, should be born (2:4). They answered, "In Bethlehem of Judaea," because a prophet had written it long before (2:5). **Look up Matthew 2:6.** A **Governor** is a ruler. Then **look up Micah 5:2**, the prophet's words, written hundreds of years before Jesus was born. God had named little Bethlehem!

Herod's secret plan. Herod called the wise men **privily**, which means secretly. He **enquired of them diligently**, asking them carefully, what time the star appeared (2:7). He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also" (2:8). But Herod didn't mean it. Later an angel told Joseph that Herod would seek the young child to destroy Him (2:13).

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The star goes before them. Look up Matthew 2:9. Lo means "look!" The star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it came and stood over where the young child was. **Look up Matthew 2:10. Rejoiced with exceeding great joy** means they were filled with very, very great joy.

Into the house. Look up Matthew 2:11. Matthew says they came into the **house**, not to a manger, and saw the **young child**. They **fell down**, which means they bowed low to the ground, and worshiped Him. Then they opened their **treasures**, the valuable things they had brought, and **presented**, or gave, Him gifts: gold, **frankincense** and **myrrh**. Frankincense and myrrh are costly gums from trees that smell sweet. Frankincense was part of the holy incense God told Moses to make (Exodus 30:34).

Another way home. Look up Matthew 2:12. God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod, so they **departed**, or left, for their own country another way. God was protecting Jesus.

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. The wise men came to worship (2:2). What does it mean to worship Jesus? How can we do it at church and at home?
2. Herod said he wanted to worship Jesus, but he didn't mean it (2:8, 2:13). Why does God care what is really in our hearts, not just what we say?
3. The chief priests knew exactly where Christ would be born (2:5–6), but the Bible doesn't say they went to find Him. Why isn't it enough just to know about Jesus?
4. The wise men were filled with joy when they saw the star (2:10). When have you felt that kind of joy about God?
5. The wise men gave their treasures to Jesus (2:11). What can you give Jesus? (Think about your time, your obedience, your worship.)

Recall questions

1. Who was king when Jesus was born? *(Herod, Matthew 2:1)*
2. Where did the star stop? *(Over where the young child was, 2:9)*
3. How did the wise men know not to go back to Herod? *(God warned them in a dream, 2:12)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **rejoiced** means they were very glad, and **exceeding great joy** means very, very great joy. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "The wise men fell down and worshiped the young child. The Bible says to worship God only (Matthew 4:10), so why did they worship Jesus? Because Jesus is God! God was manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. When Jesus grew up, Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: seek Jesus every day. Read one Bible story and pray before school, and give Him your best, like the wise men did.

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6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Matthew 2:1: Where did the wise men come from? *(From the east)*
2. Matthew 2:2: Why did the wise men come? *(To worship Him)*
3. Matthew 2:3: How did Herod feel when he heard about the new King? *(He was troubled)*
4. Matthew 2:4: Who did Herod gather together? *(All the chief priests and scribes of the people)*
5. Matthew 2:6: What would come out of Bethlehem? *(A Governor, that shall rule my people Israel)*
6. Matthew 2:7: What did Herod ask the wise men? *(What time the star appeared)*
7. Matthew 2:11: Who was with the young child? *(Mary his mother)*
8. Matthew 2:12: How did the wise men go home? *(Another way)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for coming to us in Jesus. Help us seek You with all our heart, worship You with great joy and give You our very best. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks what Herod did next: this lesson stops at Matthew 2:12 and leaves out 2:13–18. Read it yourself before class. Answer simply and gently: Herod was angry and wanted to hurt Jesus (Matthew 2:13, 2:16), but God warned Joseph in a dream, and Joseph took Mary and young Jesus safely to Egypt (Matthew 2:13–14). God kept Jesus safe.
If a child asks how many wise men there were or about camels: the Bible doesn't give a number or mention camels. It names three gifts (Matthew 2:11). We tell the story the way the Bible tells it.

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