

## **RI.C12. Christmas**

*Matthew 2:1-12, Luke 2*

### **Learning Objectives**

1. The children will be able to retell the story of the Wise Men's visit to see the baby Jesus.
2. The children will explore their own spiritual gifts and how they might use them to serve God.

**Memory Verse:**      *"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us."  
--Romans 12:6 (TNIV)*

### **Getting Started**

"My Best and Worst Gift":

See: [www.teensundayschool.com](http://www.teensundayschool.com) → lessons → "Spiritual Gifts – What is a Spiritual Gift?" → scroll down to find the activity.

You will ask the children questions about the best and worst gifts they ever received. Tell the children that in today's lesson, we will learn about the Wise men and the gifts they brought to the Baby Jesus. We will also talk about the spiritual gifts that we have been given and how we can use them to serve God.

### **Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions**

**Message:**                      ***Share your gifts.***

*(Note: Teachers may want to review the events of the Birth of Jesus, i.e. the Christmas Story – See Luke Chapter 2 as needed. Ask the children where they think the story would be found – Old or New Testament. Then find together Luke Chapter 2 and read them the story. If you do not have a Children's Bible or an NIRV translation, you may wish to print the story below and read it for the children.)*

#### **Luke 2 - Jesus Is Born**

In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a census be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. Everyone went to their own towns to be counted.

So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. He went there with Mary to be counted. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby.

While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the baby to be born. She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were looking after their sheep. An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

## Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said, "May glory be given to God in the highest heaven! And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!"

The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger. After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over. The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told.

### **Matthew 2 ~ The Wise Men Visit Jesus**

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea while Herod was the king. After Jesus was born, some Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the baby who has been born to be king of the Jews? When we were in the east, we saw his star. Now we have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard about his new king of the Jews, he was very upset. Everyone in Jerusalem was worried too. So Herod called together a meeting of all the chief priests and teachers of the law. He asked them where the Christ was going to be born.

"In the town of Bethlehem in Judea," they replied. "This is what the prophet has written about in the scriptures: 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are certainly not the least important among the towns of Judah. A ruler will come out of you. He will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'

— *(Micah 5:2)*

Then Herod called for a secret meeting with the Wise Men. He found out from them exactly when the star had appeared. He then sent the Wise Men to Bethlehem. He said, "Go and look carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, come tell me. Then I can go and worship him too."

After the Wise Men had listened to the king, they went on their way. They saw the same star they had seen when they were in the east. It was ahead of them. It finally stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. The Wise Men went to the house. There they saw the child with his mother Mary. They bowed down and worshiped the child. Then they opened their treasures. They gave him gold, incense and myrrh.

But God warned the Wise Men in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they returned to their country on a different road.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Wise men came from the east looking for Jesus. What did they follow to find him? (A Star.)
2. What did they want to do when they found Jesus? (To worship Him and bring Him gifts.)
3. What did the visitors bring with them? (Treasures or gifts of gold, incense and myrrh.)
4. Did you know Jesus is sometimes called the "Light of the World"? Why do you think he's called this? (Answers will vary. Discuss this together with the children.)
5. How can we shine like a light for Jesus and for others every day? (Discuss together.)
6. What does it mean to be wise? (Share homework with their definitions and discuss.)
7. What does our "message" statement mean when it says "wise men still seek Him?" (Discuss together.)

## **Application to Real Life**

Receiving spiritual gifts from God is like receiving a gift at Christmas in a way. Everyone gets a present and the gift is specifically designed for that person. But unlike Christmas presents, our spiritual gifts are never meant to be re-gifted. As we've seen, spiritual gifts are a little more than being able to sing, play sports, or be a good listener. Yet those things, when used to glorify God, can be Spiritual Gifts, too. God does not want us to keep our gifts to ourselves. That is not why He gave them to us. We are given our spiritual gifts to help us to serve God in our lives. We are able to use our gifts to bring blessing to others too.

## **Memory Work Suggestions**

*5 minutes*

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

## **Activity Ideas with Discussion Questions**

### **Explore the Concept of "Spiritual Gifts":**

Look up together and read the following Bible verses in class. As you read them together, make a list on your easel or white board of all the Spiritual Gifts that are mentioned in them. If a gift is mentioned more than once, put a check mark by it. At the end of the exercise, add up the number of gifts that are listed.

#### **Romans 12:6-8 (NIRV)**

<sup>6</sup> We all have gifts. They differ in keeping with the grace that God has given each of us. Do you have the gift of prophecy? Then use it in keeping with the faith you have. <sup>7</sup> Is it your gift to serve? Then serve. Is it teaching? Then teach. <sup>8</sup> Is it telling others how they should live? Then tell them. Is it giving to those who are in need? Then give freely. Is it being a leader? Then work hard at it. Is it showing mercy? Then do it cheerfully.

#### **1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (NIRV)**

<sup>7</sup> The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all. <sup>8</sup> To some people the Spirit gives the message of wisdom. To others the same Spirit gives the message of knowledge. <sup>9</sup> To others the same Spirit gives faith. To others that one Spirit gives gifts of healing. <sup>10</sup> To others he gives the power to do miracles. To others he gives the ability to prophesy. To others he gives the ability to tell the spirits apart. To others he gives the ability to speak in different kinds of languages they had not known before. And to still others he gives the ability to explain what was said in those languages. <sup>11</sup> All of the gifts are produced by one and the same Spirit. He gives them to each person, just as he decides.

## Activity Ideas with Discussion Questions – Continued

### Ephesians 4:11-13 (NIRV)

<sup>11</sup> He is the One who gave some the gift to be apostles. He gave some the gift to be prophets. He gave some the gift of preaching the good news. And he gave some the gift to be pastors and teachers. <sup>12</sup> He did it so that they might prepare God's people to serve. If they do, the body of Christ will be built up.

<sup>13</sup> That will continue until we all become one in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son. Then we will be grown up in the faith. We will receive everything that Christ has for us.

There are THREE THINGS to remember as consider Spiritual Gifts and the Bible verses you just read:

1. EVERYONE is gifted or has been given Spiritual Gifts. (Romans 12:6)
2. YOUR gifts are yours for a reason. (Romans 12:6)
3. Gifts are given to be GIVEN BACK. (1 Corinthians 12:7)

## Journal Reflection Questions

- What are some ways that you think the spiritual gifts can bless others? Write about it.
- Look over the list of spiritual gifts that you found with your class in the exercise. When you survey this list, do you see gifts you think you might have? Which ones? Think of at least one way you can use your gift to be a blessing to others. Write about it.

