

# Adventures with GOD!

## VISITORS FROM FAR AWAY (C.1.WINTER.8)

Biblical Reference	Isaiah 9:6, Matthew 2:1-12
Key Verse	Isaiah 9:6
Key Concept	Jesus is God's greatest gift.
Educational Objectives	At the end of the class today, the children will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the gifts the magi brought to Jesus and what they symbolize</li> <li>2. Explain the reaction that Herod had when he found out about the prophecy regarding the Messiah</li> <li>3. Tell what they think is the best gift to give Jesus</li> </ol>

### Life Application

Throughout history, people have reacted in different ways to the news of the birth of Jesus. The King Herod wanted to kill him, while the magi wanted to bring him gifts. Talk about the hope that the birth of Jesus brought to the world. It's a hope where there is an eternal future. Jesus is God's greatest gift to us. The children can decide how they will respond to Jesus' birth and life. As they make the decision to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior they will be giving their lives as living gifts to Jesus.

### Possible Activities and Class Plan

Activity	Materials	Time
My GROW Adventure	GROW Adventure materials	5 minutes
Opening Prayer	Candle	1 minute
Bible Reading	Bible	5 minutes
Work sheet	Work sheets, pens	5 minutes
Game	Stars, wise men, Bible	10 minutes
Bible Story	Illustrations, Bible	15 minutes
Hidden Picture		10 minutes
Craft		20 minutes
My GROW Adventure	Review	5 minutes
Closing Prayer	Candle	1 minute

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## INSTRUCTIONS

**My GROW Adventure with God Weekly Review:** As children enter take time to have them reflect on their adventure with God booklets and either discuss or use art materials to express their journey during the past week. You may wish to add any art work, written poems, prayers or songs to a GROW wall in the room. You can find my GROW Adventure with God materials on the Covchurch.org website in the same place as the Adventures with God sessions.

**Work sheet:** While the children are arriving, have them each work on the magi maze work sheet found in the following pages.

**Opening Prayer:** Gather children around a candle. Light the candle and explain that we are entering into a special time with God. Encourage the children to hold their hands out in front of them palms up as a sign they are ready to receive what God has for them today.

**Prayer Example:** Lord God, thank you for making us, for loving us, for forgiving us, and guiding us. We know you are here with us right now. As we enter into your word, the Bible, help us draw close to you, to understand and to listen to what you have to say to us. Amen

(For safety sake, you may wish to extinguish the candle after the prayer)

**Bible Reading:** Explain that as we read the Bible we do that first to spend time with God. Children can remain with hands out stretched palms up to receive the word as it's being read. Alternatively they can be invited to draw what they hear. Read the key verse Bible passage for the day two times and ask children to respond.

**Question examples:** What did you notice in this passage? How does it make you feel? Was there anything you would ask God about that you didn't understand or was confusing? Is God saying anything to you though the passage?

**Game:** In last week's lesson you should have made game pieces for the "Magi of Christmas". It would be good to play the game this week and talk about the Biblical truths versus human tradition when it comes to Jesus' birth. There are 10 stars and you can write one phrase on each of the stars (try to write Biblical truths on half of them and human traditions on the other half). The children can match the stars to the correct magi. They can play on teams competing against each other or work on it as a group.

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**Bible story:** The focus of the story today is that as humans we all react differently to the news of Jesus' birth and life on earth. The reaction of King Herod was prophesied about 400 years before Jesus' coming. We also know the reaction that the magi had. They lived far away, but they studied the scriptures and knew that the Messiah was coming (according to Daniel) in Bethlehem (Micah). So, they knew something special was happening when they saw the special and unique star appear in the night sky.

Talk about how difficult their trip must have been. They had so many expectations of what it would be like to meet the Messiah. Herod didn't understand the loyalty that the Jews had and he wanted to use the magi to find Jesus. But the magi took heed of what God told them in a dream.

Read Matthew 2:1-12 and talk about the experience of the magi. We don't know how many traveled to see Jesus, but we know they brought 3 important gifts for Jesus and his family. It's because of these gifts that tradition tells us there were three visitors. We also know that they didn't arrive in Bethlehem the night Jesus was born. It was more like a year to 18 months after he was born. The family was living in a house and it's possible that Joseph was working as a carpenter in Bethlehem. Divide the board or a large sheet of paper into three parts. Discuss the contrast between the wise men's response to God's coming and Herod's response, putting the wise men responses on one part and Herod's in another part. Ask: what is your response, God has given you himself. He came as a child then showed us how to love, died for our sin, and rose from the dead – offering us eternal life. Let's make a list of gifts we can give to Jesus (mention that these can be things we do). Use the last section to list the children's responses.

**Hidden picture:** Spend time reviewing the verses they've learned this trimester. Then, find the verses for today. Take them off and put them on the corresponding sides of the picture.

**Craft:** The craft is made in two parts. The instructions are found in the following pages.

## Today's GROW Adventure with God Review:

G: God's Word: What is the story? (give children an opportunity to express their understanding of the story).

R: Relationships: Is there anything in today's bible story that shows us how we should or shouldn't share God's love with others? (Remind children that sometimes God uses the stories

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of the bible to show us how we shouldn't act toward God or others and give them a chance to consider how we might show God's love instead).

**O: Outward Action:** Is there anything in the bible story that shows us how we should help or serve God or others? (Explore concrete ways the children could live this out in the coming week).

**W: Worship:** Is there anything in the bible story that shows us how we should accept God's love for us and others? Ask: How do you feel about God? How would you like to respond to God? What would you like to say to God?

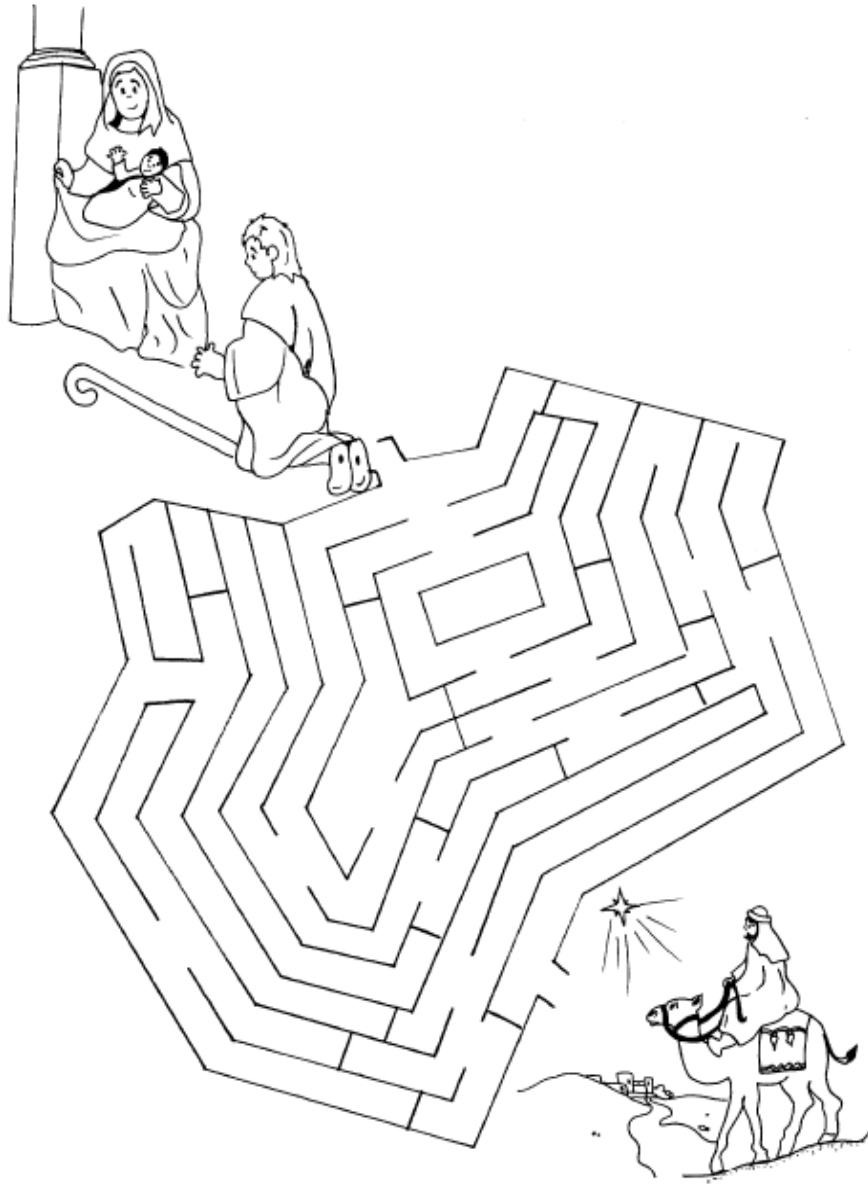
**Closing Prayer:** Gather children around the candle again. As you light the candle explain that the flame is something that is present in the light and the darkness. In the same way, it reminds us that God is always with us. Is there anything anyone wishes to say to God? After children have responded, close the prayer time.

**Prayer Example:** Lord God, we thank you that you are always with us, and always love us. It's good to be with you. Thank you for what we have learned today. Thank you for being with us and for teaching us through the Bible. Help us to remember what you have taught us today and to live it out when we leave. Amen

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## WORK SHEET

Help the magi find their way to baby Jesus



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## CRAFT

### Christmas gifts

The first part of this craft represents the gift that God gives each one of us – Jesus (see the example below). The second part of the craft reminds us of our response, our gift to Jesus – our lives.

Materials – paper plate, ½ tube of toilet paper, piece of fabric, tissue paper, light colored card stock ( 5 x 10 cm), card board or poster board (6 x 6 cm), aluminum foil (8 x 8 cm), piece of yarn (30 cm long), 12 popsicle sticks or small straws, thread, straw, markers, glue, scissors.

#### Instructions:

##### 1<sup>st</sup> part

1. Put the paper plate face down on the table.
2. Cut the popsicle sticks or straws in half. Using thread unite the two parts to make an X, which will be the legs of the manger. Make 4 holes or slits in the plate which the ends of the X can slide into.
3. Glue straw in the middle of ½ a tube of toilet paper (manger). Glue the fabric on top of the straw (blanket). Make a ball out of tissue paper and glue it to the fabric (head of baby Jesus). Glue the tube above the X, to make the manger.
4. Fold the strip of card stock the long way. In the part above write “God’s gift for \_\_\_\_\_(your name)\_\_\_\_\_”. Glue it on the plate above the manger.

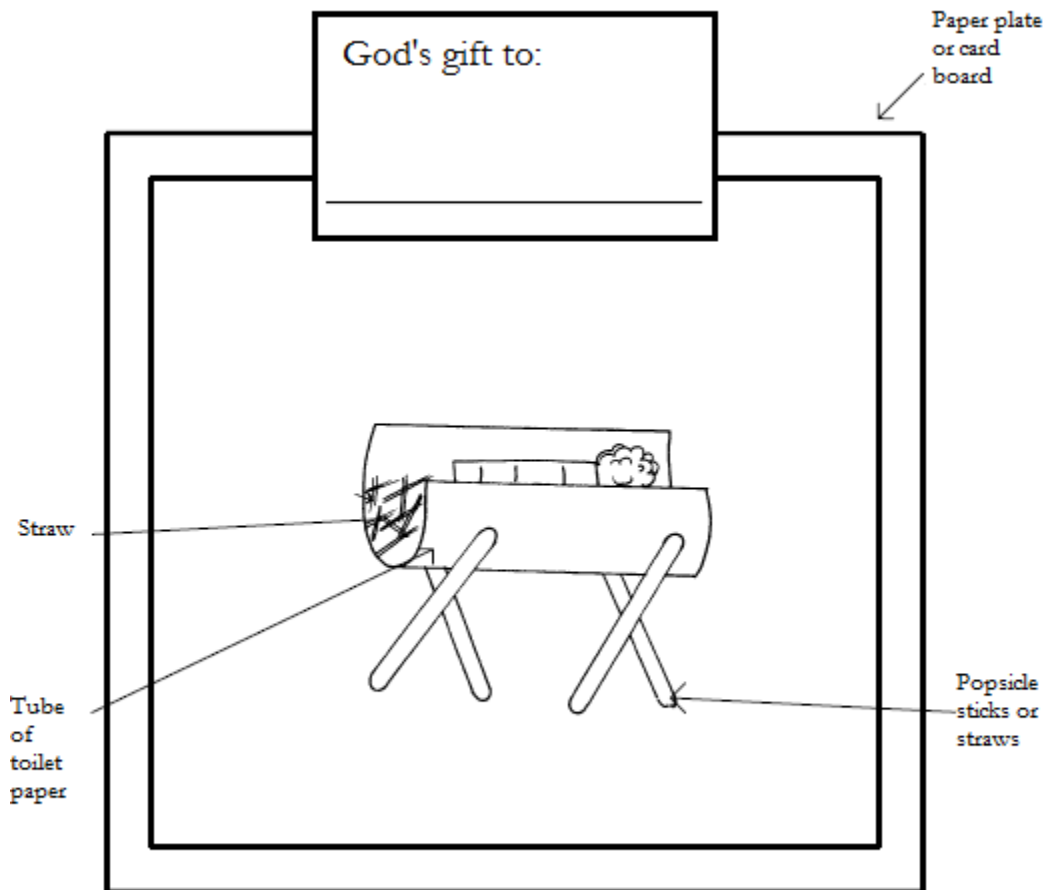
##### 2nd Part

1. Wrap the card board/poster board in the aluminum foil. Use glue to make sure it stays on.
2. Glue the card stock (both strips of 6 x 15 cm) to the back of the foil covered card board/poster board (as seen in the illustration – folding it).
3. On the front write “My gift to God”
4. With yarn make a bow, as if it were a gift. When you open the gift you will see your reflection in the aluminum foil – representing the best gift you can give Jesus – you!

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## ILLUSTRATION

### Part 1



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## ILLUSTRATION

### 2<sup>ND</sup> Part

