



LESSON 3 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

We all worship something, whether we realize it or not. People must order their lives around something. Maybe it's the God revealed in Scripture, or maybe it's one of the many counterfeit gods vying for our attention. The god of comfort. The god of success. The god of wealth. Who do you worship? What do you give your allegiance to?

Read [Matthew 2:1-12](#). In the story of the magi, the wise men are faced with a choice: to obey Herod or listen to God. God had led them to Jesus, who had come not only as the king of the Jews, but also as the everlasting King who would bring salvation to the ends of the earth. After these travelers from a foreign land found Jesus, they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they listened to God and returned home without yielding to Herod's request. They made their choice.

Every day, we too have choices to make. The rightful King of all creation has been revealed to us, and every other kingdom will someday give way to His Kingdom. Jesus is the King we worship, but counterfeits desperately jostle for our attention. So, what do you give your attention to? Does it point you to Jesus or obscure your vision? Every day is an opportunity to follow Jesus with your whole heart. Come, let us worship the King.

—**Michael Rade**

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DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The magi, or wise men, were astrologers who interpreted the appearance of stars and other astronomical objects. These men played an important part in the court life of various Mesopotamian kingdoms, served as advisers to kings, and were believed by some in the early church to be royalty themselves.

WHAT?

After Jesus' birth, magi from the east came to worship Jesus and bring Him gifts. They followed a star that had risen in the sky. King Herod tried to trick the magi into telling him the location of Jesus. God warned them not to return to Herod.

WHERE?

The magi traveled from Mesopotamia, from what is most likely present-day Iraq. Depending on their route, they may have traversed up to 900 miles. It would have taken several months. They arrived in Jerusalem and then traveled to Bethlehem, which was about five miles south of Jerusalem.

WHEN?

Jesus was born before King Herod died in 4 BC. The magi arrived at least several months after Jesus was born. Herod was still alive at this point. Shortly after the magi's visit, Jesus' family had to relocate to Egypt until Herod's death.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

The visit of the magi foreshadows the inclusion of Gentiles in God's kingdom and makes sense of Daniel's vision in which people of all nations worship the everlasting King. The kingdom of God is made up of persons from every tribe, language, people, and nation.



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

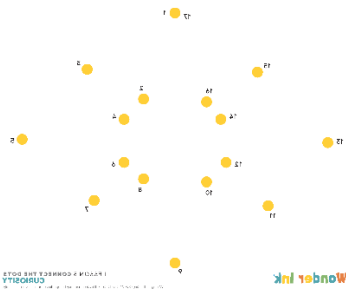
Identity

LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Activity: Connect the Stars

SUPPLIES: yellow star on a dowel rod, doll house (already in the classroom)

Play Station: Connect the Stars



Set-up: Print a [Connecting Dots Sheet](#) for each kid. Set out coloring utensils.

Play: Encourage the kids to begin at 1 on the [Connecting Dots Sheets](#) and follow the numbers with coloring utensils. It will create a star. They can color the star when they finish.

Play Station: The Magi Coloring Sheet

Set-up: Print one copy per kid of [The Magi Coloring Sheet](#). Set out the [Coloring Sheets](#) and coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of a favorite gift they have received.



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Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for being here with us! Please show us more about You and Your love for us as we explore Your big story today. Thank You for being our joy. Help us to live joyful lives that point others to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? ***The Bible***

Ask: Why is the Bible special? ***Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.***

Tell the Bible story

The Beginner's Bible, pages 286-290

The Bright Star and Three Visitors

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.

— Isaiah 9:6



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LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Craft: Wise Men

SUPPLIES: navy cardstock, star, kings and manger pieces, Q-Tips, yellow paint, bowls, glue sticks



Pass out cardstock to each. Allow them to glue on the kings, manger and star. Pour a small amount of paint into bowls and give each kid a Q-tip. Assist them while they dip their Q-tip into the paint and then onto their paper to look like stars.



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Game: Reach for the Stars

The magi were full of joy and excitement when they saw the star. In this game, you'll get to be excited too. Everyone will start down by the floor. When I say, "Reach for the stars!" you'll raise your hands over your head, reach as high as you can, and jump like you're reaching for the stars! The last person to jump will be my special helper and can help me watch for the last person in the next rounds.

At the beginning of each round, encourage the kids to be still and listen carefully for the phrase, "Reach for the stars." You may want to pretend you're about to say the words and then make them wait longer a few times. Kids who are "out" (the last one to jump) can stand to the side and help watch for the next round.

Prayer and Blessing

Let's talk to God.

God, thank You for sending Jesus to be our King. We worship You and praise You. You're amazing! We love You so much. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May Jesus, the King you worship, hold you close, shape your heart, and guide you. Know you are loved by your King and He loves when you praise and worship Him!