



Setting up a focus table

A coloured cloth: this could be white or gold if you are part of a church that uses different liturgical colours, or you could have a colour associated with Christmas like green.

A clear bowl, water and a white or gold floating candle for the prayer activity. (If this table is left out, use an unbreakable bowl).

You will also need to have available a Nativity set. It is better if this is unbreakable so that the children can be free to touch the figures. For this part of the story, you will need the figures of Mary, Joseph, Jesus and the manger, and the Wise Men.

Additional ideas to include:

pictures with different styles of artwork that depict the visit of the Wise Men. Old Christmas cards can be very helpful;

artefacts to represent the gifts;

a bold star on the background.

The story

Way in

Prepare a storybag (simple drawstring bag); in it, put, a star, a crown, and a gift-wrapped box for a present; the Wise Men from the Nativity Set. You could also have a small cloth on which to lay down the items that you bring out of the storybag.

Begin by bringing out the story bag. I wonder what our story will be today? Is there something in here that will give us some clues? Bring out the items one at a time, talking about each one. As you bring out the items and talk about them, build up a playful sense of mystery.

Star: you could talk to the children about their experiences of looking at the stars in the sky. Did they know that stars have names? Some people use stars to help show them the right way to go.

Crown: talk about who wears a crown. I wonder if there is a king in our story?

Present: you could talk about presents that made them happy, presents that made them surprised.

So... I wonder how these are part of our story.

Telling the story

Begin by telling the children that this story comes from the Bible.

See [My First Bible](#), pages 148-151 ('Wise Men see a new star' and 'Following the star'; also pages 154-155 ('Gifts for the baby').

When you have finished telling the story, take out the figures of the Wise Men and place them with Mary, Joseph and Jesus on the focus table.

Talking together about the story

I wonder...

... which part of the story you like best?

... where you are in the story?



... what presents you might give to a new baby?
... how Mary and Joseph felt when they knew they had to get away?

Songs and rhymes

The song of the Wise Men in [Nursery Rhyme Nativities](#), page 35 (Tune: *Twinkle, twinkle, little star*)

The song of the Wise Men in [Nursery Rhyme Nativities](#), page 42 (Tune: *Three Blind Mice*)

The song of the star in [Nursery Rhyme Nativities](#), page 48 (Tune: *This Old Man*)

The song of the wise men in [Nursery Rhyme Nativities](#), page 48 (Tune: *Kum ba yah*)

A prayer activity

You will need:

A clear bowl containing water. Be aware of safety if you use a glass bowl.

One white or gold floating candle - have them ready on the water.

Encourage the children to be still and quiet, as you get ready for the prayer time.

When everyone is ready, light the candle.

The prayer: Dear God, the Wise Men knew that Jesus was special. Help us to make Jesus special in our lives, too. Amen.

Leave a moment of quiet before blowing out the candles and moving on to the next part of the session.

(Safety note: be particularly careful when using lighted candles when young children are present. Never leave children unattended near candles that are lit or have recently been lit.)

A craft activity

Make a hanging star.

For each child you will need:

a star shape cut from yellow A4 card, with a hole punched at the top of one of the points;

A hanging thread

You will also need:

PVA glue in dishes

Glue spreaders

Glitter on trays

1. Make a pattern of trails of glue on the star by dipping a spreader in the glue and letting the glue 'drizzle' over the star.



2. Using fingers, sprinkle glitter on the glue, taking care to keep fingers free of glue.
3. Allow the glue to dry and then shake off the spare glitter.
4. Fasten on the hanging thread.