# Mission Together

## Epiphany Celebration of the Word (KS2)

**Introduction for teachers:** The feast of the Epiphany is celebrated 12 days after Christmas on 6th January. It is an important Christian feast as it reveals Jesus as saviour for the world. The Wise Men represent peoples of all nations who did not know the God of Israel, but whom God invited to share in the joy of Christ's birth. God leads the Wise Men with a great light – the star – by which God reveals a new life for all. The liturgical prayer and blessing help children understand the significance of the Epiphany and of how God sent his son, Jesus, into the world. It explains how, in doing so, God let everyone, everywhere know of his great love for all his children.

### GATHER: Setting the scene

Please refer to our guide: *How to Pray with Children*
missiontogether.org.uk/prayer-resources/

### Opening carol or recorded music

Suggested Carol: *The First Nowell.*
*missiontogether.org.uk/sing-with-mission-together*

### Epiphany Introduction

Print the introduction on page 2 and ask pupils to read.

### Sign of the cross and opening prayer

Print the opening prayer on page 2 and ask a pupil to read.

### WORD: Bible reading, Matthew 2: 1-11 GNBDK.

Print the reading on page 2 and ask one pupil to read.
**Or see Gospel drama on page 5 for several readers**.

### Bible reflection

See page 3. We suggest this is delivered by a teacher / chaplain.

### RESPOND: Epiphany Blessing

Print the blessing on page 4 and ask four pupils to read.

### SENT: The Mission Together Prayer

### Sign of the cross

### Closing carol or recorded music

Suggested Carol: *We Three Kings*
Please note—the slides contain a YouTube link that may include adverts.

**Mission Together Prayer**

**M**ay all children
**I**n the world
**S**hare love
**S**hare friendship and live
**I**n the peace
**O**f God's love
**N**ow and forever. **Amen.**

## Introduction

**Reader:** Today is the Feast of the Epiphany when we remember the Wise Men's arrival at Bethlehem. Their visit to the crib was very unexpected, but so was the birth of Jesus. The Jewish people had been waiting a long time for God to send them a saviour, but Jesus was not the saviour the people expected.

**Reader:** Jesus was born in a humble stable, not a palace. And among those invited to meet Jesus first were poor shepherds and wealthy Wise Men. Their arrival was God's way of showing us that His Son had come to love and guide *all* people, whoever they were and where ever they came from.

**Reader:** In a few moments we'll hear about the visit of the Wise Men, but first let us join our hands for our opening prayer.

## Sign of the cross and opening Prayer

**Reader:** God our Father, today we remember the arrival of the Wise Men at the crib.
Through them you show us that your love reaches to all places and all people.
Help us to reach out in faith and love too,
So that others may know that we are all your children.
We make this prayer through Christ, your Son. **Amen.**

## Bible reading: A reading from the Gospel of Saint Matthew 2:1-11

**Reader:** Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea, during the time when Herod was king. Soon afterwards, some men who studied the stars came from the east to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the baby born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the east, and we have come to worship him." When King Herod heard about this, he was very upset, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and asked them, "Where will the Messiah be born?"
"In the town of Bethlehem in Judea," they answered. "For this is what the prophet wrote: *Bethlehem in the land of Judah, you are by no means the least of the leading cities of Judah; for from you will come a leader who will guide my people Israel.*" So Herod called the visitors from the east to a secret meeting and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem with these instructions: "Go and make a careful search for the child, and when you find him, let me know, so that I too may go and worship him."
And so they left, and on their way they saw the same star they had seen in the east. When they saw it, how happy they were, what joy was theirs! It went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They went into the house, and when they saw the child with his mother Mary, they knelt down and worshipped him. They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and presented them to him. Then they returned to their country by another road, since God had warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod.

The Gospel of the Lord R/ *praise to you, Lord, Jesus Christ*

## Bible reflection (We suggest this is delivered by a teacher / chaplain)

It may seem as if Christmas has already ended. Most people have taken down their trees and put away the decorations, but for Christians the season of Christmas continues. In many countries around the world it is not Christmas day when Christians gather and exchange gifts, but today, on the feast of the Epiphany. I'm going to ask you a question, I don't want an answer, but I'd like you to think about it in your head. Why do you think some Christians choose today to exchange gifts?

One reason is that on the feast of the Epiphany we remember the gifts given to Jesus by the Wise Men. We can see these gifts being presented in our painting. But there's an even better reason. Today we remember a far greater gift than gold, frankincense or myrrh. On the feast of the Epiphany we remember how God shared with the world the gift of His Son, Jesus.

The Bible reading we heard tells us that the Wise Men followed the star from the east. In the days of Jesus, most people didn't travel far, so these visitors from faraway lands were strangers to everyone. They looked different. They spoke differently. They were certainly not like any of the people in Bethlehem, or Nazareth, or Jerusalem.

By leading the Wise Men to Jesus, God showed the world that Jesus was born to share His love and mercy with all people, wherever they come from and whoever they are.

It took the Wise Men a long time to travel to Bethlehem. By the time they reached it, the Gospel of Matthew tells us that the Holy Family had found a house to stay in.

Some of you may remember from the reading that when the Wise Men entered the house and saw Jesus, they fell on their knees and worshipped Him. They did this because suddenly, it was revealed to them that Jesus was God's son!

Epiphany means a see something clearly for the first time. When the Wise Men saw the baby Jesus they experienced an epiphany because suddenly they could see that God loved the world so much that he sent his Son to show everyone, everywhere how to live as sisters and brothers.

Many years later, some Christians created an Epiphany Blessing to remember how the Wise Men, led by the star, had found Jesus in a house in Bethlehem. In this Epiphany Blessing, Christians ask God to bless their homes and all the people who enter there. Today we are going to do something similar. We are going to ask God to bless our classroom and all who enter that place too.

We advise that this blessing take place near your classroom/hall door or school entrance, either above the lintel or alongside the door frame. Use chalk to mark above the lintel or around the door as directed below, so it reads: 20+C+M+B+24.

**Reader 1:** This ancient blessing reminds us that every time we enter this place we are asking for God's blessing on us and the people who visit here. First we mark near the door the number 20.

A child / adult writes **20+** in large figures for all to see above or near the doorway.

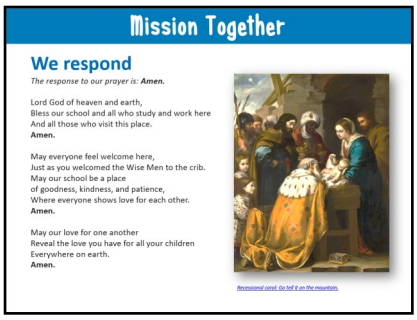
**Reader 1:** Next we add the initials of the names given to the three Wise Men. C for Caspar; M for Melchior; B for Balthasar.

A child/adult writes the initials **C+M+B+** beside the number 20 as the reader explains.

**Reader 1:** Finally we add the number 24. Our number now reads 2024, the date of our new year.

A child/adult writes the number **24.** The sign should now read 20+C+M+B+24

**Leader:** Now quietly in our heads let us think of ways we can welcome visitors to our school. *Pause.*
Let's think in our heads about the words we could say. *Pause.*
Let's think in our heads about the things we could share. *Pause.*
Let us finish with our Epiphany Prayers.




**Reader 2:** Lord God of heaven and earth,
Bless our school and all who study and work here
And all those who visit this place. Amen.

**Reader 3:** May everyone feel welcome here,
Just as you welcomed the Wise Men to the crib.
May our school be a place
of goodness, kindness, and patience,
Where everyone shows love for each other. Amen.

**Reader 4:** May our love for one another
Reflect the love you have for all your children
Everywhere on earth. Amen.

**Close with the Mission Together Prayer**

**Sign of the Cross**

**Closing Carol or recorded music:**
*We Three Kings*

**Narrator:** A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew.

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem, some Wise Men came to Jerusalem from the east. They wanted to see Jesus. They asked:

**1st Wise man:** Where is the child, the king of the Jews? We saw his star rise in the east and we have come to worship him.

**Narrator:** When King Herod heard this, he was troubled. He gathered his advisers and asked them:

**Herod** (worried): Where will the saviour be born?

**Narrator:** Herod's advisers replied:

**Advisor:** The prophet wrote long ago that that the saviour would be born in Bethlehem. He wrote, 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judea… out of you will come a leader who will guide my people, Israel.'

**Narrator:** Herod questioned the Wise Men about the star and sent them to Bethlehem. Herod said:

**Herod:** Go and find the child, and when you have found him, let me know so that I too may visit him.

**Narrator:** The Wise Men set out and followed the star to where it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were delighted. Going into the house, they saw the child with his mother, Mary. They fell on their knees and worshipped him. They offered him the gifts they had brought.

**1st Wise man**: Here is my gift of gold.

**2nd Wise man:** Here is my gift of frankincense.

**3rd Wise man:** Here is my gift of myrrh.

**Narrator:** But the Wise Men did not tell Herod where the child was because God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod. Instead they went back to their own country by a different route.

The Gospel of the Lord
**R/ praise to you, Lord, Jesus Christ**

# Fundraising Ideas

Mission Together is the children's branch of Missio – the Catholic Church's official children's charity for overseas mission. Thanks to children in England and Wales, we can provide life-changing aid around the world in whatever form it's needed. That could be a new school, feeding programme, or a generator for a children's home. Mission Together helps all children, regardless of background or beliefs. That's how we show the all-embracing nature of the Catholic Church and the true meaning of 'mission'.

Fundraising is a brilliant way to involve everyone in raising money for Mission Together. Below are a few seasonal ideas but you can find other ways to get involved throughout the year by visiting our webpage missiontogether.org.uk/fundraising-ideas/

Please ***share your fundraising events*** with us @MissioUK, adding the hashtag #missiontogether

**Ideas for Spring Term**

**Winter walks:** get sponsored to brave the elements and hold a torch-lit hike or winter walk to raise money. Make sure you have plenty of adults to supervise and assist when organising outdoor events with children. Better still, get the whole family involved!

**Winter disco:** why not donate the proceeds from your school disco to Mission Together this year? Or if that's not possible, hold a sweetie stall or prize stall at the event to raise money for children around the world.

**Family fun evenings:** in colder weather and darker evenings, indoor events rule! Why not host a beetle drive, bingo night or race night at your school? You can use old horse race videos for people to place bets on, or even use wind up toys or counters and dice to create races. You could also host a board game evening. Sell snacks and drinks to boost your fundraising.

**Valentines biscuits:** showcase your bake-off skills! Bake heart shaped cookies and sell them in pretty bags around valentines day. You could even ice on the names of the recipient and deliver them anonymously for a delivery fee!

**Pancake races:** hold a Pancake Day event with races and flipping competitions. Everyone gets to enjoy their pancakes after the fun – as long as they didn't drop them!

**Spring flower sale:** everyone loves the first signs of spring after winter! Why not pot some spring bulbs – snowdrops, mini daffodils, crocuses and hyacinths to sell to parents or as Easter gifts?

**Easter bonnet competition:** charge pupils to enter a competition for the best Easter bonnet. Prizes for the most fabulous fashionista creations! Alternatively you could get everyone involved in egg painting or Easter cake designs, and sell them after for extra fundraising!

**Mufti day or fancy dress:** charge pupils to wear their own clothes or come in themed costumes. Around the Day of Many Colours you can make this themed around the colours of the mission rosary.