

January 14 – 20

Matthew 2; Luke 2

Wise Men from the East (Matt 2:1):

When the Jews returned to Judea from Babylon after the Babylonian captivity, most stayed behind under Persian rule. Babylon continued to be the main location for Jewish scholars for hundreds of years, so there were many Jewish wise men who lived east of Jerusalem. These wise men (we don't know how many there were) could very well have been Jewish, then. They could have been looking for signs from the scriptures or from their "oral law," traditions that had been handed down orally. They could also have been Zoroastrians, a religion that was founded anciently in Iraq which has many similarities to our own faith.

Priests and Scribes knew of Christ? (Matt 2:4):

Herod called together the chief priests and scribes of the Jews to demand of them where Christ should be born. The Jews were not expecting Christ by name or even by definition. They were watching for Messiah, and they had already lost the knowledge that the Messiah would be the Son of God or spiritual Savior. They expected a king like unto David of old who would restore their kingdom and make them free.

Mary and Joseph were in a house (Matt 2:11):

Some people expect that Christ was a toddler when the wise men arrived, but this does not need to be the case. Mary and Joseph were still in Bethlehem, so they had not returned to their home in Nazareth in Galilee yet, and they could have moved to a house a day after Jesus' birth. Likely, they planned to stay near Jerusalem until they presented Jesus at the temple 30 days after His birth.

Frankincense and Myrrh (Matt 2:11):

Both Frankincense and Myrrh are fragrant saps from trees used in perfumes and oils. The droplets of sap harden into pebbles. They are precious and expensive and can be burned as incense.

Flee unto Egypt (Matt 2:13):

There were many Jews living in Egypt. At the time of Christ there were about 1 million Jews living in Alexandria, Egypt, on the Mediterranean coast. But there was also a colony on the island of Elephantine in the Nile River across from Aswan. This was a military colony, but they had gotten permission to build a temple there. There are some traditions that say Mary and Joseph may have gone there to protect the Christ child.

Herod died (Matt 2:20):

Herod died in the year 4 B.C. according to our current reckoning, so most scholars place Christ's birth in 5 B.C. In the spring of 5 B.C. there was a comet that was recorded by Chinese astronomers and could have been the Star of Bethlehem. Herod died of some disease that caused him to essentially rot. He died in Jericho, just north of the Dead Sea. He was so afraid that no one would mourn him, that he ordered many popular leaders to be executed upon his death, so that there would be great mourning in the land. This order was not carried out, however.

LUKE 2**The world should be taxed (Luke 2:1):**

Passover season was a good time for the Romans to get a count of how many Jews there were in their kingdom. It was the main pilgrimage high holy holiday of the year, where Jews would come from far and wide to the temple. The Romans would count how many lambs were sacrificed at the temple and multiply by 10. Jewish law considered 10 people to be a quorum, the number needed to make a group decision and the number of people who should share a lamb at Passover dinner.

Born in a stable (Luke 2:7):

Wood is very precious in Israel and is rarely used to build houses or stables. However, it is very possible to gather sheep into a sheepfold hollowed out of the limestone that is so plentiful. Mangers, too, were usually hollowed-out blocks of stone.

Jesus was probably born on Passover, and we know He died on Passover. All the imagery of this Jewish feast points to the fact that He is the Passover offering. A good discussion would be to talk about how Christ is the Lamb of God. Harkening back to the first Passover of the Exodus and forward to the crucifixion is something adults can do in their study of Christ as the Lamb of God.

Present Him to the Lord (Luke 2:22, 23):

The Lord works through His firstborn things. Israel is the firstborn of the world, so they belong to the Lord and are dedicated to do His work. The Levites are the firstborn of Israel and so are dedicated to work in the temple. The firstborn male of each family is dedicated to the service of God, but there was in ancient Israel an ordinance called *pidyon haben*. This ordinance released the firstborn son from service in the temple. This is the ordinance Joseph and Mary were enacting.

His parents went to the Feast of the Passover (Luke 2:41):

Women and children were not required to make pilgrimage to the temple for the holy feasts (Passover, Feast of Weeks, Feast of Tabernacles). Women were considered too busy with their important duties at home and were absolved of the duty. Yet, Mary went, and took her children. In fact, the entire extended family made the pilgrimage south to the temple. This shows us how enthusiastically faithful the family of Christ actually was.

After 3 days (Luke 2:46):

Three days! How angry would you be with a son if he disappeared purposefully for 3 days without thinking to let you know where he was! And yet, Christ was sinless. This was not a sin. We so often charge people with having sinned for committing acts like these. Perhaps we should rethink that.

Sitting in the temple in the midst of the doctors (Luke 2:46):

Christ was in his 12th year, which is *bar mitzvah* age. He was old enough to begin to read from and to analyze the scriptures in the synagogue. Had He not been, He would likely have been ignored by these sages in the temple. He astounded them with His answers and His understanding.

Come Follow Me

NEW TESTAMENT 2019

“FATHER’S BUSINESS” JAR ACTIVITY

Week 3: Luke 2; Matthew 2

This activity comes from the *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* resource book.

Luke 2:49 reads “And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”

What is the “Father’s business” that Jesus talks about? What can we learn about the “Father’s business” from this story? What else can we learn about this from Christ’s life, actions, and teachings?

Write some ideas on slips of paper about how you and your family can participate in the Father’s business. Place these slips of paper in a jar. Throughout the week, everyone can pick these ideas from the jar and find a time to do them during the day.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

Share a scripture or quote on social media.

Make an effort to smile at everyone you encounter.

Write a thank you note to someone who did something for you.

Make dinner for someone in your neighborhood who needs it.

Fast for someone who needs it.

Invite someone who could use a friend to do an activity with you.

Say a prayer of gratitude.

Sit by someone new at church.

Cook a meal for your family.

Do a chore for someone else who usually does it.

Send a card or text to someone who could use some love and encouragement.

Donate some old items or clothes you don’t use anymore.

Invite a friend to a church activity.

Put an anonymous encouraging note in a library book or other public place.

Give a genuine compliment to someone.

Let someone else pick what to eat or watch.

Call a family member you haven’t seen in a while.

Leave a quarter in a vending machine for someone else to use.

Hand out some water bottles to homeless people you come across.

Donate blood.

Invite someone over for dinner.

Shovel snow from someone else’s driveway.

Pick up litter you see as you walk around.

Sincerely apologize to someone you need to say sorry to.

Promote someone else’s ideas or thoughts.

Talk with someone who looks nervous or alone at a gathering.

Come Follow Me

NEW TESTAMENT 2019

GOLD, FRANKINCENSE, AND MYRRH MATCHING ACTIVITY

Week 3: Luke 2; Matthew 2

It is generally well-known that the Wise Men gave baby Jesus three gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But how many of us actually know what frankincense and myrrh are? And what is the significance behind each gift? This matching activity is a good way to learn about why each of the three gifts given to the Savior are important.

First, there are several great resources on lds.org to learn and teach about the wise men's gifts:

- [“Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh”](#) - explains what each item is and what we can learn from them
 - How can we make our gifts to the Savior “useful,” “precious,” and “respectful and worshipful” just like the Wise Men’s gifts?
- [“Thoughtful Gifts”](#) - briefly outlines the practical uses and symbolic meanings behind each gift
 - How could Mary and Joseph have used each gift?
- [“Gifts for a Newborn King”](#) - a fun article that takes you back to the time of Jesus and imagines what the people would have told you about these gifts

After everyone is a little more familiar with these three gifts, print and cut out the 12 cards found below. Test your memories by trying to place the cards into the three correct groups. Each group should contain the gift's name, what it is, its common uses, and what it symbolizes.

GOLD	FRANKINCENSE	MYRRH
A precious metal that is valued for its beauty, shine, and malleability	A dried tree resin that burns as a sweet incense or perfume	A bitter dried tree resin
Used for decoration and trading	Used in religious ordinances, burnt offerings, and oil for anointing priests	Used for embalming and medicines
Symbolizes kingship and royalty	Symbolizes the priesthood and Christ's sacrifice	Symbolizes Christ's role as Master Healer and the “bitter cup” He had to drink

Come Follow Me

NEW TESTAMENT 2019

NATIVITY SCAVENGER HUNT

Week 3: Luke 2; Matthew 2

Credit for this idea goes to Allison McDonald at No Time for Flash Cards.

Sometimes it's hard for young children to focus on gospel lessons and really understand who is doing what. This interactive nativity scavenger hunt is a good way to get them involved in the story. And hopefully, it will help them better remember everyone involved.

Materials: nativity scene you would be comfortable with your kids handling, slips of paper with clues (found below the instructions), and a nativity book or scriptures

- Set up the nativity scene.
- Read the nativity story from a children's book or the scriptures (Luke 2 and Matthew 2) with your family. As you go, make sure you point out the individual people in the scene as they come up in the story.
- Have the children go into a separate room while you hide the nativity pieces around the house.
- Have the children come back out and let them pick one slip of paper. Each slip of paper will describe someone in the nativity and give your kids a clue as to where they can be found in the house (a printable version of these can be found below or you can make your own if you wish).
- Once the kids have found the nativity piece, briefly discuss who that person is and place them back where they belong in the nativity scene.
- Continue until all of the nativity pieces have been found and returned to the nativity scene.

*You can change the clues or process according to your children's ages and learning levels.

I am the mother of Jesus. I was told by the angel Gabriel that I would give birth to the Son of God. Who am I? I can be found in the kitchen.
I am Mary's husband. I work as a carpenter. Who am I? I can be found in the dining room.
I am the Son of God who was born in a manger. Who am I? I can be found in the living room.
I am an angel of the Lord. I came to Mary and told her that she would be the mother of Jesus. Who am I? I can be found in the pantry.
I watch over sheep in my field. I came to visit Jesus after an angel told me he had been born. Who am I? I can be found in the bathroom.
We were sent here by Herod to find Jesus. We followed the star and brought baby Jesus gifts. Who are we? We can be found in the laundry room.