



Go and search

Matthew 2.1-12

In which, wise men, following a star, come from the east with gifts for the newborn king. Initially they journey to the wrong place but King Herod's advisers direct them to Bethlehem, where they eventually find the baby Jesus and worship him, but God's guidance in a dream warns them to avoid Herod on their way home.

Now read **Matthew 2.1-12** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

The wise men are strangers to the land of Israel and outsiders to the Jewish faith. Their title 'Magi' is also the root for our word 'magic'. They were probably eastern experts in observing the stars. It seems highly unlikely that they would know and understand all about the Messiah, the ultimate Jewish king. But they travel all the same. We, like them, are travelling through life and constantly seeking understanding.



Reflect on the wise men's journey and the meaning in your own journeying this week.

WALK

The wise men set out on a journey to an unknown place. Go for a walk somewhere unfamiliar, you may wish to use The Woodland Trust 'find a wood'

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/find-woods or you could go somewhere you know well but choose unfamiliar circumstances, e.g. after dark. Pray and reflect as you walk. Ask yourself what is refreshing about an unfamiliar journey and what is challenging. Look forward to the year 2021. Ask yourself these questions: What am I most hopeful about? What am I most fearful about? In what ways might God be guiding me in the year ahead?

WATCH

The wise men undertook an epic quest to find Jesus. 'The quest' is a common theme in many stories, reflecting our human need to discover meaning, to find or create what is lacking, or to overcome evil with good. Choose a film to watch that encapsulates this theme, e.g. *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* [PG-13], *Moana* [PG] or *Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey* [U]. Watch the film with these questions in mind: What starts this quest off? Is it a lack of something, or a threat, or a sense of calling? Where are the 'threshold' moments in this story? – the moments when things really change, when there is no going back or when something suddenly releases so that the quest can go forward. Is there something in your life that is like a quest?

DAILY PRAYER

Each morning this week, take a moment to think of what lies ahead that day. You could say this prayer:

Lord, guide me today. Help me to find you as I...

BAKE

You will need: 500g puff pastry, a rolling pin, a baking tray, a bowl, a wooden spoon, 100g ground almonds, 75g sugar, 50g butter, 1 egg, a dried bean, a fork, a knife; access to an oven.

- Bake a galette des rois, or kings' cake. Traditionally, a bean called a fève is hidden inside the cake. Whoever found the fève traditionally got to be 'king' for the day.
- Divide the pastry in two and roll each part into a circle. Place one of them onto a baking tray.
- Mix the almonds, sugar, butter and egg until smooth then spread it evenly across the circle of pastry. Then place a dried bean on top.
- Lay the second circle of pastry on top and press down the edges with a fork. Use a knife to carve a criss-cross pattern on top.
- Bake for half an hour at 210°C/190°C fan/gas mark 7.
- Share your cake with others, and when someone finds the fève, talk about the joy of finding something special.

MAKE

You will need: paper and pens.

- Sometimes we can find direction for our lives by looking back at where we have been. Make a 'map' of around six important moments in your life. Allow time and creativity to write or represent them in some way on the paper, making a timeline.
- When you have some points on your 'map', think about them and

your journey so far. Are there any links between events? Do any themes emerge? Are these positive or negative experiences, or a mix? If you could add a 'next event' to your own life map, what would it be?

- If you are doing this with your household, you may like to share bits of your 'map' with each other, but be careful to honour each contribution and to respect each other's privacy. Can you make a joint 'household map' with events and memories that you share together?

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem when Herod was king in Jerusalem. One day, wise men from eastern lands came to speak to Herod, asking 'Where is the newborn King of the Jews? We have followed the Birth Star all the way here. We have come to worship him.'



Herod was frightened when he heard this and so was everyone else in Jerusalem.

He called a meeting of all the wise and religious scholars to find out where this Messiah was to be born. 'The prophet Micah wrote that it was to be Bethlehem,' they told him.

Herod met again with the wise men, in secret. He found out more about their learning and in turn told them to go and search for the newborn King in Bethlehem. Herod also asked the wise men to come back to him and tell him exactly where the baby was to be found, 'So that I too may worship him.'

So, the wise men set off again, following the same star, and it led them to Bethlehem, right to the Christ-child. When they entered the place where the child and his mother Mary were, their hearts were overwhelmed with joy.

The wise men knelt down before him and worshipped indeed. Then they offered their precious gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. But when it was time for them to leave, the wise men went home by a different route, because God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

Matthew 2.1-12

Did you know?

- Messiah means 'appointed one', someone chosen by God to save the Jewish people. It's a title for Jesus.
- Micah was a prophet who wrote down messages from God, a long time ago, about the promised Messiah.

Matthew 2.1-12 (NRSV)

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the

king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.