



A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Theme for Advent:	The First Christmas
Text for the Week:	Matthew 2:1-12
Message for the Week:	The First Christmas: The Magi
Theme for the Week:	The King for all people

Epiphany

Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week? Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

What part of the Christmas story do you like the best? Why?

Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

Read:

Read / Have two people in your group read [Matthew 2:1-12](#) out loud.

[Clicking this link will bring you to multiple translations.]

As you read and/or listen to the text being read, circle, take note of, highlight, or underline what words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them with those who are with you.

Respond / Reflect:

If you had to bring a baby gift to a king or queen, what would you bring?

Who would be the modern-day equivalent for the Magi (educated wise men who were advisors and counselors to kings) in the Christmas story?

I wonder what God thinking when he put a star in the sky to invite pagan advisors to come and worship his Son.

Why is important that Gentiles came and worshipped the Christ child?

How has this "First Christmas" series impacted your understanding of Jesus birth?

"Try It!"

What gifts (time, talent, treasures) could you offer the Christ child? Be as specific as possible.

Prayer:

Spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you.

Gracious God, you led the Magi by a star and brought them to Jesus. Lead us to Jesus and help us to worship you. Help us to offer you gifts of abundance and gratitude. Show us the lengths that you go to draw us close. Help us to see how your light shines in every corner of the world, leading people of every tribe, language, and nation to offer homage to the one light of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

-From the Worship Sourcebook

Missional/Spiritual Practice for the Month: Kingdom Prayers

During the month of January, pray this prayer each day, multiple times throughout your day:

Lord, we pray for an outpouring of your Holy Spirit that you would...

REVEAL Christ to us,

SHAPE us in the character of Christ, and

EQUIP us for the mission of Christ. Amen

If you would like a background photo of this prayer for the home screen of your phone, please contact the church office and we will email it to you.

Matthew 2:1-12 New International Version

² After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi^[a] from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ “‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.’”^[b]

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Matthew 2:1-12

² ¹⁻² After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory—this was during Herod’s kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, “Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We’re on pilgrimage to worship him.”

³⁻⁴ When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified—and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

⁵⁻⁶ They told him, “Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly:

It’s you, Bethlehem, in Judah’s land,
no longer bringing up the rear.
From you will come the leader
who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel.”

⁷⁻⁸ Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, “Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I’ll join you at once in your worship.”

⁹⁻¹⁰ Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!

¹¹ They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

¹² In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they worked out another route, left the territory without being seen, and returned to their own country.