

**Focus:** Following Jesus

**Materials:**

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth  
Nativity  
CD: Seeds  
Bible: The Beginner's Bible  
Book: Clem the Clumsy Camel  
Star cut-out

**Gathering** (children sit on carpet/floor-“Criss-Cross Applesauce”)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Last week was the story of the Holy Family. Jesus and his parents, Mary and Joseph were a very special family. Just like our families our special to us. We learn to love and play and learn with our families just like Jesus did. We have good times and bad times, but we share them together. This week we are going to hear about some special visitors to the baby Jesus.*

**Opening Prayer**

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

Say: *Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.*

*Let us pray.*

*Dear God, thank you for the gift of Jesus, who lights up our lives with your love. Help us all to live together as members of your family. We pray this through your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

**Song/Movement**

*Follow Me*, track: 10, from Seed CD

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc.

*Follow me-Follow me-Jesus says  
“come follow me”  
Follow me-Follow me -Come and  
follow me*

*March-March-March March-  
March-March-Jesus says come  
follow me*

*March-March-March March-  
March-March –Come and follow  
me.*

*Hop-Hop-Hop, Hop-Hop-Hop  
Jump-Jump-Jump, Jump-Jump-Jump  
Run-Run-Run, Run-Run-Run  
End with falling down-Come and  
follow me*

**Memory Verse**

Say: *Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.*

*Jesus is the king of heaven and earth.*

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: *Jesus isn't like a king we see on TV. He doesn't live a castle, separated from everyone. He lives with us, in our hearts, everyday. He came to show everyone that no matter how many things you have or how much money you have God's love most important of all.*

**Gospel Story**

Say: *Today we are reading from the Gospel of Matthew.*

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *“Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it.”*

**Read:** The Beginner's Bible, pp. 288-293, *Visitors from the East*

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

**Discussion Starters:**

- *Where did the wise men come from? (The east of Israel is the Middle East and Syria (not Middlebury or Rhode Island-their east, not ours)*
- *Why were they following a star?*
- *Who were they looking for?*
- *Where did the star lead the wise men?*
- *Why were they filled with joy?*
- *Why did the wise men bow down before baby Jesus?*
- *Why did they bring gifts? To honor him and show him their love; we also honor people and show them our love with presents. Our tradition started with the Magi.*
- *Why does the angel tell the Magi to not go back to King Herod?*

**Reflection on Reading:**

*On the Feast of the Epiphany we celebrate how God led the Magi to Jesus through the guidance of a star. The Magi represent all those who don't live in Jesus' homeland. God's saving love is for all people.*

*In today's gospel the Magi come from different lands in search of the Savior. They are led to the Savior by the light of a star. A light helped them to find their way. We can say the same for a lamp or street light. Sometimes we feel afraid of the dark because we don't know what's there. Light helps us to see where it's safe to walk and what it is safe to do.*

*We call Jesus—the Light of the World—because he showed us how to live in a way that leads us to true happiness forever.*

*The gifts the wise men brought were gold—because he is the leader of his people, frankincense—used during prayer, the smoke shows the prayers rising to God in heaven.*

**Gospel Activity**Activity 1:

**Read the Story:** Clem the Clumsy Camel- See discussion outline below and last page of book.

*Being a clumsy camel must have been very hard for Clem. He would be very afraid that he would become a blanket or rug in someone's tent.*

*All of us are clumsy in one particular way. Sometimes we make bad choices and God recognized that we mess up sometimes and created a heavenly plan to make us grace-full, instead of clumsy.*

*God sent his son, Jesus to show us how to make good decisions and be filled with God's grace. Jesus gave his life so that we could stumble and fall, but we because of God's gift to us of his Son, we can get back up and try again, as many times as we need.*

*Jesus came so that everyone everywhere could have the chance to get rid of their clumsy bad choices and start fresh and make good choices like Jesus taught us.*

*Have you ever been sad because you did something wrong? If you are sad, remember that Jesus came so we can try again. God loves us so much that he keeps giving us chances to get it right. He even helps us do better next time.*

### Activity 2:

#### **Follow the Star:**

This game is played like Simons Says, but you raise the star instead of saying “Simon Says”

The gospels tell us what we should be doing as we wait for Jesus. We should pray, listen to and learn from the stories of Jesus, love and serve God and each other. Wouldn't it be wonderful if, when Jesus comes in glory, he found everyone doing what was right and good and just? Wouldn't it be wonderful if he found us all caring for each other lovingly because he told us to?

Let's practice what Jesus has taught us to do.

Sample Actions-pick a couple actions ahead of time where you won't raise the star. Children who are out-can help you catch others that don't follow the star:

- Hug your neighbor
- Close your hands in prayer
- Go to Church-(March in place)
- Say peace be with you to your neighbor
- Say Alleluia
- Clap your hands
- Jump one time
- Shake hands with your neighbor
- Praise God-Raise your hands up high
- Listen to Jesus (cup hand around ear)

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

### **Closing Prayer**

(Children respond: “I Believe!”)

Ask: *Do you believe in God, who shines a star, Jesus, we can all follow?  
Do you believe in Jesus, who is the shining light of God for all people?  
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us follow the light of Jesus?*

### **Sending Forth**

*Say: Remember that God has given us the gifts of his love, in his Son Jesus. When we show love for others we show our love for Jesus, this is how we show the light of Jesus in the world. Show Jesus how much you love him every day!*

### **Lining Up/Closing Song**

Play “Like Jesus” track 6 from Seeds CD while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.