

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 2:1-12

THEME: Follow the Star

Before dinner, mark the scriptures in your Bible. When you gather for Bible Study, choose readers for the Gospel lesson.

family 'round the table



Decorations: Place the wise men from your family nativity in the center of the table and cut out yellow paper stars to scatter on the table around them.

MENU

Chicken with Stuffing, Green Beans, Star Fruit, and Star-shaped Brownies

RECIPE

Chicken with Stuffing

- 4 chicken boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 can cream of chicken soup 1/2 can milk
- 1 cup herb stuffing mix 1/4 cup melted butter
- 4 slices American or Swiss cheese

Place chicken in greased 9x13 pan, top with cheese. Mix soup and milk together and spoon over cheese. Sprinkle with stuffing. Pour melted butter on top. Cover with foil. Bake at 350 for 1/2 hour covered, then uncover and bake another 1/2 hour.

Star Fruit

Purchase star fruit that is yellow with light brown edges. Slice across to get star shaped slices.

Brownies

Bake favorite brownie recipe. Cut brownies into stars with cookie cutters. Frost the brownies with yellow frosting.

Blessing:

[Sung to the tune Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star]

*Come Lord Jesus, be our guest,
Let this food to us be blest.
By your gracious hand we're fed,*

*Give us Lord our daily bread.
Come Lord Jesus, be our guest,
Let this food to us be blest.*



PLAYING TOGETHER

Activity One: Searching for Jesus

Materials:

Baby doll, Crowns (cut from construction paper or obtain Burger Kingtm crowns), Star (cut from shiny gold paper or yellow construction paper), Flashlight

Directions:

1. Explain that this game is like “Hide and Seek”.
2. Show the doll and suggest that in the game the doll will be Baby Jesus. One person in the family will take the doll to a room in the house and stay there while the rest of the family pretends to be the Kings searching for Jesus.
3. Once the person with the doll has had time to settle into their chosen room, the others can put on the crowns. Have one person carry the star ahead of the group as you search.
4. If you know where the person has taken the doll, do not go there first. Make the search a journey through the house, going from room to room, knocking and looking inside.
5. When you find the room, go in and kneel and say a prayer to honor the baby Jesus.

Activity Two: In the Spotlight

Materials:

Flashlight

Directions:

1. Turn out the lights.
2. Choose one person to start this game. In turn, they choose anyone at the table and ask them a question. Questions may include:
 - What was the best thing that happened to you today?
 - How did you let Jesus light shine through you today?
 - Tell us about something you learned today.
3. The first player hands the flashlight to the person they questioned, who holds it under their chin while they answer the question.
4. The second person then chooses another person and asks them a question. The game continues until all have asked and answered a question.



STUDYING GOD’S WORD TOGETHER

- Open the Bible to Matthew 2:1-12.

- Reading the story can be done in several ways:

1. One family member can read while the others move the Nativity figures as directed in the narration, which are part of the centerpiece for the next portion of the session.
 2. Family members take roles and act out the story as it is read.
 3. If children are fluent readers, they might each read certain verses and an adult can act as narrator.
- When the passage has been read or enacted, read the following or tell in your own words:

During the twelve days after Christmas day, we tell the story of the journey of the Wise Men and tonight we celebrate their arrival.

We know there was a very bright star that led the Wise Men [or Magi] to baby Jesus. These men might have been astrologers who knew there was something special and important about

this star. We are not certain how long it took for them to travel to Jerusalem and then on to Bethlehem. It might have taken as much as two years!

When the Wise Men arrived in Jerusalem, they asked where the baby was so they could take their gifts to honor him. King Herod heard about the Wise Men and asked them about the star they were following and about the child they were seeking. They did not answer King Herod. Instead, they continued to follow the star to Bethlehem and they found Jesus and his mother, Mary. They got on their knees, praised God and the baby, and offered gifts from their treasure chests. They brought gold, frankincense and myrrh. These were very special gifts usually given only to kings.

Reflection Questions for the Family:

1. What does the star tell us about how important this baby was to the Wise Men?
2. What do the gifts they brought tell you about how important this baby was to them?
3. If you were taking gifts to a new baby, what would you bring?
4. If you were in this story, would you have been willing to leave your home to follow the special star?
5. Take time to talk about the figures in the Nativity set, naming each one and describing what part they played in the story of Jesus' birth.
6. How long would you be willing to look for Jesus?
7. If we were to offer special gifts to Jesus, what would they be? What would be the very best gifts we could offer?



PRAYING TOGETHER

- Place a white Christ Candle on a white piece of cloth, additional white candles [one for each family member], the Nativity set and an open Bible to create a worship center.
- Begin the candle lighting by lighting the Christ Candle as you read or say the following in your own words: or saying the following: time of prayer with these words:

The color for Epiphany is white. The cloth under our Christ candle is white. Tonight we add more candles as we think about the bright star the Wise Men followed to find the baby Jesus. We remember that Jesus is the Light of the World. [Invite family members to light a candle by touching their unlit candle to the flame of the Christ Candle.]

- When the candles are lit, sing We Three Kings and other songs you may know about the Star and the Holy Family.
- Invite family members to share about what it means to follow the Light of Jesus.
- Give family members the opportunity to talk about their concerns and joys.
- Build a prayer on the shared joys and concerns and end the prayer time with the following:

Dear God, we thank you for the birth of your son, Jesus. We are thankful Jesus came into our world to teach us about your love. We want to be followers of Jesus and give him the best we have. Thank you for being the guiding star in our lives today. In the name of your son Jesus, we all say "Amen".

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