


the
Jesus 
Storybook
Bible
Curriculum

The King of all kings

The story of the wise men, from Matthew 2

☉ Please see the curriculum Introduction .pdf for more guidance on praying with your group and on Scripture memory.

☉ The total allotted time per lesson is 45 minutes. This is the minimum amount of time it would take to complete the whole lesson. The time can easily be extended to increase the lesson to as much as 1.5 hours. If you have more than the allocated 45 minutes, please use the extra time to extend the time for activities, to learn the memory verse, and to pray.

☉ The “Notes for Teachers on the Text” section is intended as explanation of the Bible text and advance preparation for you only; it is not expressed in terms or language the children could understand.

The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum
By Sally Lloyd-Jones and Sam Shammas

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Recap of the Previous Story

3 min. 

- ☉ Welcome the children and ask them to sit in a circle.
- ☉ Briefly recap the main point of the previous story: “Last time we read that when God’s Son, the Light of the World, was born, God sent shepherds to visit him. We also memorized a verse about Jesus’ birth.”

☉ Ask them to recite together the verse they learned at home about the story. “Luke 2:11 — ‘Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.’”

☉ To lead into the theme of today’s story, ask: “Have you ever been on a really long trip or journey? Maybe you went to visit family or to see a special important place. Raise your hand if you have ever been on a really long journey? Thank you, hands down.”

Activity Introducing the Story

10 min. 

Aim: To expend energy and think about journeys.

Materials: A small, beautifully wrapped gift box (since the children will be passing this around, you may also want to make it solid and hard to break); an index card for each child with the name of a place written/printed on it that ties into the story (e.g., east, west, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, desert, mountain, valley, field, palace, town, city, etc).

1. Say: “On these cards I have the names of places you could go to on a journey. Pass the pile of cards around the circle. Keep one card and read the name of the place out loud. Then pass the pile of cards to the next person who will read and keep the next card. Ready?”
2. Help anyone struggling to read their card. When everyone has a card ask: “Who wants to be the mailman?”
3. Pick a child, give them the gift, and ask them to stand in the center of the circle. The mailman needs to hold both the gift and their card.

4. Explain the game: You will call out the names of two places. For example: “The gift is going from east to west.” The children with those names jump up and swap places. The mailman will try to sit in one of the empty places while the other two are swapping. Whoever is left standing takes the gift and becomes the new mailman (or if the mailman cannot get to a place fast enough, they stay as mailman and keep holding the gift).

5. Ask everyone to hold up their card so that you can see them. Play the game, making sure everyone has a chance to swap places and expend energy.

6. Toward the end of the allocated time, ask the mailman to leave the gift in the center of the circle. Collect the cards from the children as you say: “In our story today there are some people who make a long journey to deliver a gift. Let’s find out who they are, where they went, and what the gift was. Ready?”

For larger groups: You may want to divide the group into smaller circles – each with a teacher, a gift, and a set of cards – so this game does not take too long and everyone gets more chances to swap places.

Join the children in the circle and announce the title of the story. Read aloud pages 192–199 from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* or listen to CD2 track 10.

Notes for Teachers on the Text

Legends and myths from all over the world are filled with stories of a great king who used to rule and someday may return. For example, Robin Hood is based on that idea – when the good king was present, the kingdom was fine; now everything is awful because the king is gone; but someday, the king will come again. J. R. R. Tolkien drew on that same theme when he wrote *The Return of the King*. Then there is King Arthur, whose tombstone, according to legend, read: Here lies Arthur, the once and future king.

In the late 1920s, Tolkien, who was a Christian and a professor at Oxford University, was walking with his friend C. S. Lewis, also a professor at Oxford, but at that time an atheist. Tolkien was trying to explain to Lewis the significance of the fact that he loved old tales about such kings. Lewis believed the myths and stories were just that – fairy tales and myths, and yet, he too admitted he was deeply moved by them.

Tolkien had a theory. He believed that even though the legends and stories are not true in the sense of being factually and historically true, they are actually getting at underlying realities. First, they all say that this world is under an evil spell and our problems are not going to be dealt with by our own efforts, because a sorcerer or somebody has got us under a spell. Second, these stories point to the fact that the material, physical world is not all there is. There is a supernatural and spiritual realm, not just a material realm. Third, these stories say that we need sacrificial love to save us; we are not going to be able to do it ourselves.

Tolkien said all human beings know the universe is really like that, which is the reason why – although technically you may not believe them – the legends and stories move you. Tolkien posited that when you listen to a fairy tale, it moves you, because at the very end there is a “miraculous grace,” what Tolkien called a “eucatastrophe” – victory out of the jaws of defeat, usually at infinite cost to someone else. (See J. R. R. Tolkien’s “On Fairy-Stories.”)

Lewis thought the theory interesting, but he told Tolkien that all the old myths, all the old stories are lies. Tolkien disagreed and then he asked: “How about this story? The world is under an evil spell, but God sends his Son into the world and he is born in the most unlikely place, a manger. He takes on the evil forces socially and culturally and spiritually. He takes on the oppressive powers and principalities in this world, the Romans and the Pharisees, and he takes on the demons. And finally, on the cross, when it looks like evil has defeated him, he is raised from the dead. And he is bringing together a band of people and renewing their lives, and someday, he is going to renew the whole world.”

Lewis said he had never heard the Christian story told like that, but admitted that Tolkien was right, it is just like all the other stories – it is another one of those stories that points to these underlying realities. Tolkien said, “No! Jesus Christ is the underlying reality to which all the stories point.” It is different, because Jesus’ story is not just a story. This story became historical; this story became a fact. Jesus Christ was born.

Understanding the Story

15 min. 

Aim: To understand that the wise men treated Jesus as King and so should we.

Materials: 2 large cards that have “Answer 1” written on them and 2 large cards that have “Answer 2” written on them; crayons; copies of the handout (the last page of this document).

1. At the end of the story, say: “At the end of their long journey, the wise men finally meet the King they have been searching for.”
2. Announce that you are going to play a game about the story. Assign half the circle as team 1 and the other half as team 2. Give each team a card that says “Answer 1” on it and one that says “Answer 2” on it.
3. Explain the game (you have played this game before, but it is always good to repeat the rules): You will call out a question and then two possible answers. Each team must decide together which is the right answer. You will give them 3 seconds to decide; then you will say “Go!” One person from each team should run with the answer to the center of the circle (they should take turns doing this).
4. Read aloud the following questions and answers; e.g., “‘Wise men’ comes from the Greek word *magi* and means ... Is it Answer 1 — people who studied the stars or Answer 2 — people who studied magic?” Then give the teams 3 seconds to decide on the answer before saying “Go!” This allows you to read both answers before the teams start to talk or run. Comment on their choice before moving on to the next question.

QUESTION	ANSWER 1	ANSWER 2
‘Wise men’ comes from the Greek word <i>magi</i> and means ...	People who studied the stars	People who studied magic
The wise men lived a long way from Jesus; they lived in the ...	East	West
Where was Jesus? *	Jerusalem	Bethlehem
Who was king at that time? *	Pharaoh	Herod
How did the wise men know that a baby king had been born?	God put a star in the sky	God sent them a letter
Why did the wise men make a very long journey?	To babysit Jesus	To worship Jesus

QUESTION	ANSWER 1	ANSWER 2
The wise men first arrived at Jerusalem and went to see King Herod because . . . *	They thought Herod would know where Jesus was	They thought Herod would want to come and babysit too
Was King Herod happy to hear about Jesus? *	No—he didn’t want anyone to be king except him	Yes—he too wanted to worship Jesus
What did the wise men do when they found Jesus?	They looked at him for a little while and then forgot about Jesus	They knelt down and worshiped Jesus
What gifts did the wise men bring for King Jesus?	Gold, frankincense, and myrrh	Gold, pomegranates, and fur
Why did they worship and bring gifts?	Because they loved Jesus	Because they wanted Jesus to help make them kings

NOTE: * Indicates questions to skip if you are running out of time.

5. At the end of the activity, put the cards away. Go to the center of the circle and pick up the gift. Say: “The wise men knew Jesus was King, so they gave him gifts and worshiped him. What do we do today to show that we know Jesus is King? If you have an answer, raise your hand and I will call on you. When I call on you, come to the center of the circle, pick up the gift, and tell us. I’ll start.”

6. Still holding the gift in the center of the circle, say: “To show that we know Jesus is King, we obey Jesus.”

7. Put the gift down, move out of the circle, and encourage the children to come up with some other answers; e.g., love him, do what he says, etc.

8. After a few answers, give each child a copy of the handout and a crayon. Say: “You can see on your paper a picture of the gifts the wise men brought to Jesus because he is King. What can you do this week to show that you know Jesus is King? How can you love Jesus and do what Jesus says? Think of one thing you will do and write or draw that one thing on your paper.”

9. Give them a minute to do this; then ask a few children to share their answer, commenting appropriately.

For larger groups: You may want to divide up the circle into more teams so they can discuss the answers in smaller groups. In this case, you will need to make a set of “Answer 1”/“Answer 2” cards for each team.

Drawing the Story to a Close

1 min. 

Say: "In our story today the wise men found the King they had been searching for, and they gave Jesus gifts and worshiped him."

Say: "Like the wise men, we too should worship Jesus and treat Jesus as King."

Jesus in the Story

2 min. 

Ask: "What did we discover about Jesus from today's story?"

Get a few children to share their answers aloud, commenting appropriately; then ask everyone to write an answer in the space on their handout.

Praying about the Story

5 min. 

Pray aloud, thanking God that Jesus the King has come.

Ask the children to look at what they wrote on their handout that they will do this week to show that Jesus is King. Encourage them to pray (either silently or out loud), asking God to help them do it.

A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

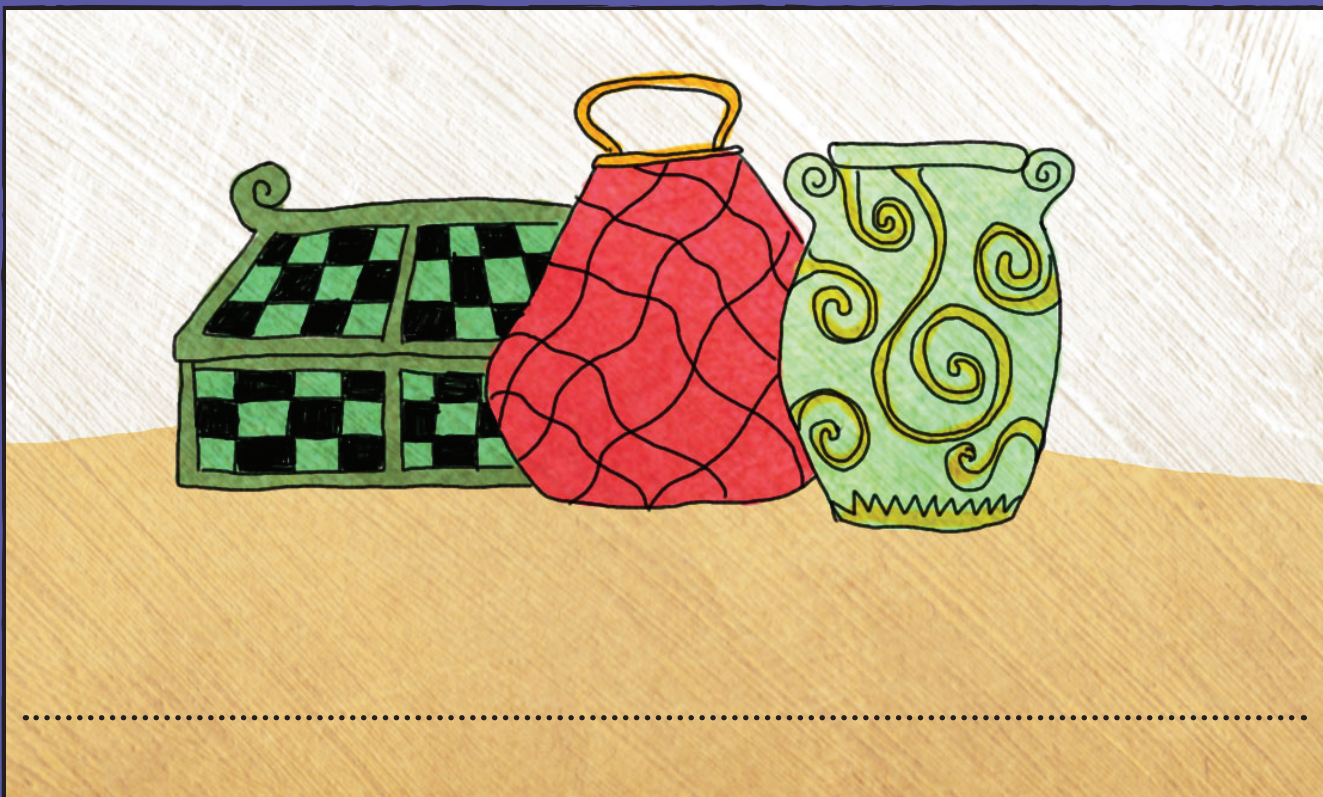
2 min. 

☉ Introduce the verse: "The verse we memorized is helpful with this story too, so we are going to memorize it one last time to make sure we all know it."

☉ Announce the verse: "So, your verse to practice at home is Luke 2:11 — 'Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.'"

☉ Read the verse out loud together as a group.

☉ Remind the children to give the handout to their parents and to memorize the verse for next time.



☺ Jesus in the Story



What did you discover about Jesus from this story?



Jesus

☺ A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you;
he is the Messiah, the Lord. (Luke 2:11)



Notes for parents: From the story we learned that the wise men knew Jesus was King so they gave him gifts and worshiped him. We also must treat Jesus as King and live with Jesus as our King. Please help your child to memorize the verse and the Scripture reference for next time. Please review with them the place of the book of Luke, using the diagram above. www.jesusstorybookbible.com

