

CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM

"BE LIKE THE WISE MEN"

Sunday School Lesson/Activities –

Help kids understand that giving to those in great need is giving to Jesus.

Modify as necessary to be age appropriate.

Game: Hot Potato Gift

Get everyone into a circle and play a traditional game of "Hot Potato" with a twist. The "Potato" is a gift, well-wrapped in Christmas paper. The item is passed while music plays. When the music stops, or when a bell is rung the person holding the gift is eliminated. The process repeats until only one person is left. The final participant "wins" the gift.

Lesson:

When you kept the gift, you lost.
But the person who gave the gift away, was the winner.

Lesson Intro

What are some of the things we look forward to at Christmas time?

- Christmas vacation from school
- Decorating a Christmas tree
- How about watching Christmas movies with your family?
Which one is your favorite?
- What about special Christmas foods? What is your favorite?
- But what's something everyone looks forward to at Christmas time? Presents!

Yes, we all like to get and give Christmas presents. But do you know why we give at Christmas time? You may not realize that Christmas gifts started with Jesus. One of the things we often hear at Christmas time is the story of the Magi or "Wisemen" who traveled from the East, following the star to bring gifts to the Christ child. Let's read this story together.

Read: Matthew 2:1-12

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." ... They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:

*'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah;
For out of you shall come forth a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people Israel.'"*

... After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. After coming into the house, they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. did for me.'

When we give gifts at Christmas, what are we remembering?

We are remembering the gifts that the wise men gave to Jesus. To celebrate and worship him.

Yet that isn't always easy. When you go to the Mall, or Target, or watch a TV commercial for toys or games they aren't saying, "Come buy this and remember Jesus!" No, they are appealing to that part of us that wants more and more. The part of us that thinks happiness can be found in the things we have.

Can things make us happy?

Let me ask, name something you got LAST Christmas? (let them answer). It's hard to remember isn't it? Yet last year you probably asked for it over and over. You probably thought that thing would make you SO happy, right? But if that gift made you happy, then why do you want something else this year? Wasn't that thing good enough?

This is how we know that the things we get can't truly make us happy. The lie that the things we own will satisfy us is called materialism. And while there is nothing wrong with having the things we need and even some of the things we want, we can't look for our happiness in those things.

Be like the Wisemen

So why did the wisemen give gifts to the baby Jesus? Do you think they were trying to make him happy? No, they believed he was God in the flesh. They came to worship him, to praise God.

Let's read what Jesus says about giving: Matthew 25: 34-40

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the

kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

According to these verses, how can we be like the Wisemen and give a gift to Jesus?

- We can focus on giving gifts, not just receiving them
- We can give gifts as an act of worship to God
- We can give to those in need.

What are some practical ways we can do this?

(ask the kids)

- We can help our family this Christmas instead of just asking for things
- We can ask for less
- We can donate old toys and clothes
- We can pray and ask God to help us not be greedy or materialistic.
- We can thank God for the gift of his son Jesus.
- We can give to those in need

Response

This Christmas our church is providing an opportunity to help children and families living in some of the world's poorest communities. You might be asking for video games or amazon gift cards but in other parts of the world children are hoping for things like a goat, some chickens or clean water. These gifts can change their lives by providing

ongoing income for their family, nutrition and help these people lift their community out of poverty. Many of these people don't yet know Jesus, and these gifts are a way we can share God's love with them. (As appropriate)

Take this guide home and ask your family to give a gift to a family in need this Christmas.

- Or -

Let's look at the guide and select a gift that we can give as a class.

- Or -

We are going to be giving together as a church by ...

Why is giving a gift like this, giving to Jesus?

Because Jesus said that when we do something for the "least of these" we do it for him.

Prayer

"Dear Father in heaven.

Thank you for sending Jesus to the earth to be our savior. Help us to be like the wisemen, to watch for you and to worship with our gifts and our lives. We pray for those in need in our schools, our neighborhoods and in the poor places around the world. Lord be with them this Christmas and help us to find ways to show your love by giving to them this Christmas.

In Jesus name, Amen."

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