

# Children's Newsletter

## St Mary's

Epiphany

### Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born, some wise men came from the East. They had followed a star and wanted to find the baby.

They knew that the baby was special so when they reached Jerusalem they went to King Herod's palace, thinking that the baby might be there.

The wise men asked the King about the baby. Herod called

his advisers who had also seen the star. They told Herod and the wise men that the baby could be found in Bethlehem. Herod told the wise men to tell him when they found the baby so that he could visit as well.

The wise men went to see the baby and gave him gifts of Gold, Frankincense

and Myrrh..

When they were ready to return home, the wise men were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod because he wanted to harm the baby Jesus, so they went by a different way.

### Gifts

When you were born I expect you were given presents. Ask your parents to tell you about some of them and write them here.

When you buy a present for someone you care about, you don't just buy the first thing you see, do you? You think carefully about what it should be. And so did the Wise Men, although it must have been quite a surprise to Mary and Joseph when they turned up with gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. These were not the usual presents at that time but they do help to explain who they thought Jesus was.

Gold was and still is a very valuable metal. It was given to Jesus as a sign that he was God.

Frankincense is made from the bark of a tree from the Middle East, East Africa and India. The bark is cut and the milky-white sap is collected and left to harden, then it is ground into a powder. The powder is burnt and it is sweet-smelling. Frankincense was given to Jesus to show that he was also God.

Myrrh comes from trees that grow in the Middle East. The resin (sap) is reddish in colour and dries to a yellowish colour. It can be used as a hard resin or as an oil. In the time of Jesus it was used to rub over the bodies of people who died, before they were buried. Myrrh was given to Jesus as a sign he was going to suffer and die.



## Bethlehem

Do you ever think of the real town of Bethlehem when we sing 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'? What was it like and what is it like now?

When Jesus was born there were about 300-1000 people living there. It was being ruled by the Roman Empire whose Emperor, Augustus, had called a census so that Mary and Joseph had to leave their home in Nazareth and travel to Bethlehem almost like refugees.

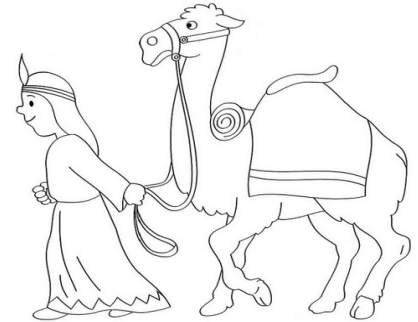
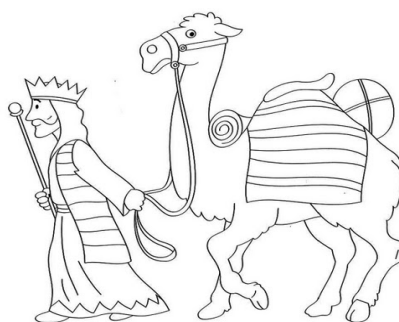
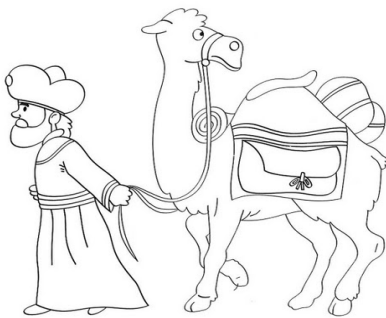
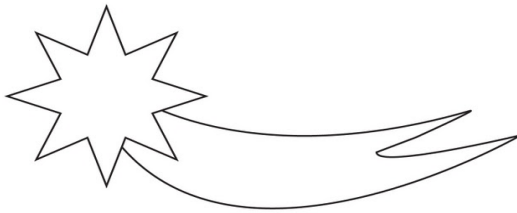
Today, Bethlehem is in Palestine about 12 miles from Jerusalem and is a busy city with 28000 people, many of them think of themselves as refugees as they lost their land when Israel was created.

Today we should remember all those families who have had to leave their homes and become refugees because of conflict and war.

## Bethlehem Today



## THE THREE WISE MEN



## Epiphany

The word Epiphany means 'showing'. But what is this feast showing us?

Of course, the first thing is that it shows us the three wise men visiting Jesus.

Then it shows us the special gifts that they brought with them.

But is that all?

In the carol 'We Three Kings' it mentions that they came from the Orient.

The Orient is used to describe anywhere in the Middle or Far East. Certainly not in what we call the Holy Land where Jesus was born and lived.

Isaiah, the prophet, had told the Jews that God would send the Messiah to them, so why were

these strangers in Bethlehem?

They followed a star—seen as a sign from God that someone special was to be born. It halted over the place where Jesus lay in the manger.

This feast is showing us that Jesus did not only come to save the Jews but was sent to save everyone on earth.