



GOLD, FRANKINCENSE, AND ME!
by Kristin Kaldahl
Leader Guide and Participant Worksheet

(NOTE to LEADER: Materials suggested: Gift-wrapped Mite Boxes to be given as gifts — or a large Mite Box and small, wrapped gifts of coins; Bibles; copies of the *Quarterly* and/or the attached participant worksheet.)

Opening Prayer: *The eastern sages saw from far And followed on His guiding star; And, led by light, to light they trod And by their gifts confessed their God. For this His glad epiphany All glory, Jesus, be to Thee, Whom with the Father we adore, And Holy Spirit evermore. Amen.**

What does the word *epiphany* mean to you?

(Answers will vary, but may include: celebration of the visit of the wise men; insight, inspiration, realization, revelation, aha moment.)

NOTE to LEADER: The questions of this study focus on the more familiar Western Christian view of Epiphany. Some Eastern Christians, some of whom call the celebration Theophany, focus on Jesus' baptism, seen as the manifestation of Christ as both fully human and fully divine. In many countries, Epiphany is celebrated with small gifts for children and/or with special pastries, such as the King Cake.

LEADER: Both Christmas and Epiphany are times of giving. Each of you has been given a wrapped gift. Please do not open it yet. Just hold on to it during this Bible study as we talk about bringing “gifts” to God.

The night Jesus was born God gave the world the greatest gift it would ever receive. The gift of the newborn King came in a humble beginning, showing no signs of royalty. Yet wise men went to great lengths to search for Jesus and to present Him with treasured gifts. With great faith they simply believed Him to be the Savior and worshipped Him.

The Wise Men

- What was prophesied? *(Gentle kings will honor Him with gifts.)*

Psalm 72:10 _____

Isaiah 60:6 _____

Psalm 72:10 ¹⁰May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute; may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts!

Isaiah 60:6 ⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.

- Who were these “kings”? Read **Matthew**’s description in **chapter 2, verses 1-12**. _____

(No one really knows who they were, or where they came from. Tradition has them as kings because of the gifts they presented. They may have been wealthy astrologers from Arabia. The actual term used in the Greek word “Magi” means “wise men” or “sages.”)

Matthew 2:1-12 ¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men^[a] from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose^[b] and have come to worship him.” ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is

2020 Winter *Lutheran Woman’s Quarterly*

Gold, Frankincense, and Me! Bible Study Leader Guide

written by the prophet: ⁶“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.” ⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” ⁹ After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

LEADER: The important thing to remember is that they came to worship Christ. They did not know where to find Him. But Jesus was revealed to them in signs they understood — that was the start. And they came with gifts to worship the King.

- What is the significance of the coming of the wise men? _____
(They were the first Gentiles to worship Jesus as the Messiah.)

- How does this relate to the Great Commission found in **Matthew 28:19**? _____
(The Good News is for all people. It is our task to share it throughout the world.)

Matthew 28:19 ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

The Wise Men’s Gifts

- Reread **Matthew 2:11**. What were the three gifts presented by the Magi? _____
(Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh.)

- What is the significance of these gifts? _____
(These may have been symbolic gifts to show reverence to the King.)

Matthew 2:11 ¹¹ And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Our Gifts for the Christ Child

LEADER: Over 2000 years have passed since the night Jesus was born. Yet, we still celebrate His birth. The joy we receive in knowing Christ came as our Savior is shared as we exchange gifts with each other. We also give to the poor and needy. We give to our family and friends. “Wish lists” are compiled and special gifts are selected. But what “gift” do we give to our Savior?

- What is the “gift” that God desires most from each of us?
(He wants us to love Him with all our hearts.)

- Psalm 51:17 _____
- Proverbs 23:26 _____
- Matthew 22:37 _____
- 2 Corinthians 9:7 _____

Psalm 51:17 ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Proverbs 23:26 ²⁶ My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.

Matthew 22:37 ³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

2 Corinthians 9:7 ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

- What else does God have on His "wish list?"

(Fear of Him; glory; honor our body; freely giving; steadfast love and knowledge of Him.)

Revelation 14:7 _____

1 Corinthians 6:20 _____

Matthew 10:8b _____

Hosea 6:6 _____

Revelation 14:7 ⁷ And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

1 Corinthians 6:20 ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Matthew 10:8 ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.

Hosea 6:6 ⁶ For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

- How do we give God these "gifts?" _____ *(We put God first in our lives in all things.)*

LEADER: When we examine our lives, we find that we are filled with sin and fall short of what God demands of us. His "wish list" is impossible for us to fulfill on our own. See **Isaiah 64:6a**.

Isaiah 64:6a ^{6a} We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.

- How then can we give any "gift" to God when we are filled with sin?

(We do not. Asking for and receiving the grace of God's forgiveness through Christ Jesus is the greatest treasure we could ever know.)

Psalm 51:7 _____

Acts 13:38-39 _____

Galatians 4:5-6 _____

1 Corinthians 10:31 _____

Psalm 51:7 ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Acts 13:38-39 ³⁸ Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, ³⁹ and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

Galatians 4:5-6 ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

1 Corinthians 10:31 ³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

LEADER: Now take the gift you have been holding and talk about all it might represent.

(Answers will vary, but may include:

- *God's gift of a Savior to the world.*

- *The three gifts of the Magi proclaiming Jesus as the King.*
- *The gifts we exchange with those we love.*
- *God’s wonderful gift of faith through belief in Christ.*
- *Remembrance of our Baptism and forgiveness received in The Lord’s Supper*
- *Tying into this gift the purpose of the LWML in reaching out to others with the Good News of Christ, the Savior.)*

LEADER (following discussion): Go ahead and unwrap your gift.

The Gift

- Who is the Church? _____ *(All believers everywhere — 1 Corinthians 12:12-13.)*

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 ¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

- What is the Great Commission that God has given to His church in **Matthew 28:19**? _____ *(Go tell the Good News.)*

Matthew 28:19 ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

- How are we to make this happen? _____ *(Some examples might include: working together to share His Truth, giving mites to support the work of the LWML, living our faith ...)*

LEADER: Earlier we read in Matthew 22:37 what Jesus called the first and greatest commandment. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

- According to **Matthew 22:39**, what is the second commandment stated by Jesus? _____ *(Love your neighbor.)*

Matthew 22:39 ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

- How can the LWML Mite Box be used to show love to our neighbor? _____ *(Answers will vary.)*

LEADER: By using the Mite Box we have, we can show love for our neighbor. Through our mission grants, others are learning about how Jesus came to be their Savior. God doesn’t want us to hold onto the gifts that He gives us and not share them. Rather, the gift of the Gospel is for all of the world to hear. As God’s Word reminds us in Matthew 6:21, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” When we return our offerings to God, we are giving our hearts to Him as well.

May His Epiphany inspire us to be in prayer and in The Word, that we *may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God* (Colossians 1:9-10).

[NOTE to LEADER: It would be appropriate here to deposit coins in Mite Boxes.]

2020 Winter Lutheran Woman’s Quarterly

Gold, Frankincense, and Me! Bible Study Leader Guide

Closing Hymn: Sing or say together verses 1-3 of “As with Gladness Men of Old” (*LSB* #397; *LW* #75; *TLH* #127).

Closing Prayer: Dear Lord, please fill our hearts again with Your love and grace that we may be compelled to share the news of the greatest gift of all, Your sacrifice as Savior for all, especially those who have not yet heard of Your love. Amen.

* “The Star Proclaims the King Is Here,” *LSB* #399, verses 2 and 5

Published by Lutheran Women’s Missionary League in 2005, this study is an example of the wealth of Bible study and program materials provided by the Christian Life Committee and available on-line at www.lwml.org.

NOTE to LEADER; The participant Bible study worksheet may be found on the page below.

GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND ME!

By Kristin Kaldahl
Bible Study Worksheet

The Wise Men

- What is prophesied?
Psalm 72:10
Isaiah 60:6
- Who were these “kings”?
Matthew 2:1-12
- What is the significance of the coming of the wise men?
- How does this relate to the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19?

The Wise Men’s Gifts

- What were the three gifts presented by the Magi?
Matthew 2:11
- What is the significance of these gifts?

Our Gifts for the Christ Child

- What is the “gift” that God desires most from each of us?
Psalm 51:17
Proverbs 23:26
Matthew 22:37
2 Corinthians 9:7
- What else does God have on His “wish list?”
Revelation 14:7
1 Corinthians 6:20
Matthew 10:8b
Hosea 6:6
- How do we give God these “gifts?”
Isaiah 64:6a
- How then can we give any “gift” to God when we are filled with sin?
Psalm 51:7
Galatians 4:5-6
Acts 13:38-39
1 Corinthians 10:31

The Gift

- Who is the Church?
- What is the Great Commission that God has given to His church?
Matthew 28:19
- How are we to make this happen?
- What is the second commandment stated by Jesus?
Matthew 22:39
- How can the LWML Mite Box® be used to show love to our neighbor?
Matthew 6:21

