



Wandering Wisemen! Two Ideas!

#1- Wandering Wisemen could be used instead of Elf on the Shelf for parents. You could recommend it as a way for them to have the same fun without, "Santa is watching" from Elf on the shelf. Wandering Wisemen gives a more of a spiritual connection to the fun of preparing for Christmas. You don't have to come up with ideas on your own. You can connect parents with this Facebook group that gives all kinds of ideas and notes to leave for children that increase faith formation and connection to the Christmas story.

This would be a great suggestion to model for parents on your social media page or to have in your idea box if a parent is complaining about Elf on the Shelf. Here is the Facebook group that has all the ideas for wandering Wisemen: <https://www.facebook.com/thewanderingwisemen>

#2-Epiphany is often a forgotten celebration. Epiphany is the celebration of the Magi following the star they saw the night Jesus was born for two years to bring gifts to Jesus. Epiphany begins Jan. 6, 2021 this year, but you could really use it to tie the kids to the story and into the church sanctuary with pictures. The Wandering Wisemen could start the last week of Advent. You could print out this picture or get your own Wandering Wisemen. Put them around the church and take pictures of them in multiple different locations and start with just one picture before Christmas telling them to watch for the Wandering Wisemen. After Christmas day, post the other pictures in texts and social media of how they are traveling through the church and what they are seeing. On January 3 or 10 you could teach Matthew 2:1-12.

Three teaching points with fun facts from the Magi story:

1. They were from the East. Most likely Zoroastrian (World's oldest monotheistic faith.) priests from Parthia or Persia (India). They did not study the Torah or Old Testament, but they studied the Avesta that taught there is only one God. Their studies brought them to follow the star to the Christ child. They were faithful people who knew the same God through a different faith practice.
 - What is our faith practice? United Methodist
 - What other faith practices do you know? Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Jewish...
2. The Bible states three gifts were brought not necessarily that there were just three people who traveled to see Jesus. Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh. Frankincense and Myrrh were sweet-smelling resins used for burning.
 - You can find these in oil form if you want the kids to smell them and get pretend gold coins. Put a little oil on a paper towel and put it in a snack bag labeled with the oil's name. Add a chocolate gold coin. Maybe print off their own Magi image. Place in a brown paper bag and label the Epiphany lesson. Pick up or drop off to families before the day you read the scripture. (Maybe in online Children's sermon or other recordings.) The Epiphany Bag gives them a sensory at

home piece to the scripture as you share the scripture digitally or on social media. *Be sure to alert parents of items to check for allergy issues. You may want to have a few made up with gold plastic coins.*

- <https://www.orientaltrading.com/chocolate-coins-a2-13703305.fltr?csku=/K1410&keyword=chocolate%20gold%20coins>
- Frankincense and Myrrh Essential Oil Combo Pack 100% Pure, Best Therapeutic Grade Essential Oil - 2/10ml

3.They followed what they knew to be true from God. They knew in their heart that Herod was up to no good. They did what they knew to be true and visited the baby Jesus with special gifts. They followed the good that God laid in their hearts not the orders of a fearful king.

- I wonder if all of the Wiseman had the same feeling about Herod.
- I wonder what Jesus' parents thought when the Magi arrived at their home.
- Is there a time you were told to do something and God laid it in your heart that you should not do it?



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