



What's coming up in middle school @NCC:

- **Tuesday, December 17 • It's our annual Vertical Edge Christmas Party!!!** Food, food, food! What a great way to celebrate Christmas in our VE community! There will also be an Ugly/Tacky Christmas Sweater competition. Pastor Dan will be wrapping up 2019 by jumping into Part 1 of our Big Word series: Incarnation Cost is \$5. **Special time! 6:00-8:00pm.**



LAST CLASS BEFORE CHRISTMAS!!

december 14/15 lesson

Series: The Messiah

Lesson: Messianic Signs

Scripture: *Matthew 2:1-12*

Key Concept: People respond to Jesus' birth in a variety of ways; how do I respond to the birth of Jesus Christ?

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1) Thru the Door: Mad Lib:

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the (noun _____),
 not a creature was stirring, not even a/an (noun _____).
 The (plural noun _____) were tucked, all snug in their (plural noun _____),
 while visions of (adjective _____) plums danced in their heads. Then up on the
 (noun _____) there arose such a clatter. I sprang from my (noun _____)
 to see what was the matter. It was St. Nicholas with his little (adjective _____) belly,
 that shook when he laughed like a bowl full of (plural noun _____). He spoke not a
 word, but went straight to his work And filled all the (plural noun _____), then turned
 with a jerk. And laying his (noun _____) aside of his nose And giving a nod, up the
 (noun _____) he rose.
 I heard him exclaim as he (past tense verb _____) out of sight,
 "(adjective _____) Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"

Stepping up:

In **Matthew 2:1-12** we find the story of the wise men searching out “the king of the Jews” to worship him. Along the way they stopped and asked for directions. King Herod heard of their inquiry and became disturbed, thinking that this new king was going to take over his kingdom. Herod tried to deceive the wise men, but God had other plans.

This lesson looks at the various responses to the birth of Christ.

1. A _____ Response (Mt. 2:1-2)
2. A _____ Response (Mt.2:3-8)
3. A _____ Response (Mt.2:9-11)
4. A _____ Response (Mt.2:12)

► Read the whole Matthew 2:1-12 passage



1. A DEDICATED Response (read Matthew 2:1-2 again)

- ▷ **2:1.** Bethlehem is a small town about five miles south of Jerusalem. It was the birthplace of David. Herod the Great ruled the area at the time of Christ’s birth. He had been appointed by Rome to rule over the entire area of Judea. The NIV translation uses the term “_____” to name what we traditionally call the wise men. These men were educated individuals who were dedicated to the study of the _____ as well as religion. They undoubtedly had prepared for many years, watching the skies every night and waiting for this new star to show. The text reveals only that they came from the east. It is not certain if that meant _____ or _____. Regardless, what we see here is a group of individuals who had dedicated themselves completely to this task, with years of training, preparing, and waiting, before they made the lengthy journey from their homeland to wherever the star took them and back.
- ▷ **2:2.** They made their way to Jerusalem and inquired as to where the child was. It would appear that the wise men were going about from person to person seeking an answer to their question. It is interesting to note that many could not give them an answer. We must be careful to _____ ourselves as the wise men did to search out the truth as revealed by God and be prepared to answer the questions of those seeking the truth.

The wise men expressed that they were searching for the child so they could “_____.” Whether they were seeking to pay homage to him as a political or divine king is of little consequence at this point. The emphasis is on the fact that they had seen the star revealing the birth of the new king and were seeking him out to honor him. This again promotes the idea that these men had dedicated themselves for many years to studying prophecy from the _____. They most likely had been exposed to these teachings through the influence of Jews who had been scattered abroad.

Make it Real: Wordsearch

WORSHIPVBZVV
UXMYRRHEQVZE
QPKAECTTQQYV
WRAJAHJGOLDU
MTAALHGNUUPM
AAZEEATUBRCL

RAHRNWBRQVHT
YEINCENSERJ
MDLRBGJDUPIU
SZAIGAMOSSSW
WTFFTDWJDPTD
SXSLSVFJCRXY

2. A DECEPTIVE Response (Read Matthew 2:3-8 again)

- ▷ **2:3.** For Herod, the thought that the “_____” had been born was a direct slap in the face to his authority. As mentioned earlier, he was given power over all of _____, which included the Jews. This question by the wise men caused Herod to feel threatened by the baby. We also see from the text that Herod's fear spread to others. Most of us are very reluctant to change our situation in life, and the people of this day were no different. The news of a potential new king had to evoke some troubling emotions and questions in the hearts and minds of the people as well. They may not have been happy with what they had, but they at least knew what they already had. There is always a fear in change that things are going to be worse rather than better. Herod determined that this was not going to happen, and so he devised a deceitful plan.
- ▷ **2:4.** Herod called in the religious leaders of the people to get some more detailed information about this “king of the Jews.” The chief _____ would have included not only the high priest and those under him but also other leading priests. These were the men who were in charge of the religious activities of the Jews in that day. The “_____” were those individuals who had been educated in the Jewish law.
- ▷ **2:5-6.** Needless to say, these men were the ones who would know the answer that Herod needed. They immediately answered Herod, citing the prophecy found in _____. The prophecy provides the place of the Messiah's birth as well as the nature of his leadership. Of course, all Herod was interested in was the place.
- ▷ **2:7.** Now that Herod had his answer, he called the wise men in and inquired of them when the star first appeared. The text states that Herod did this in _____. The secrecy is significant. Herod was developing his plan to remove this threat to his throne, and he had to be sure that the Jews did not find out about what he was plotting. There might have been an uprising against him if they had found out about his plan to kill this new “king of the Jews.”
- ▷ **2:8.** This verse reveals the deceit in the heart of Herod. The wise men and the Jewish leaders were still unaware. Herod deceived the wise men into thinking that he wanted to know where the child was so he too could worship him. Later this chapter of Matthew reveals that Herod's real plan was to kill Jesus. We may be able to fool those around us by our outward appearance and fake words and attitudes, but God sees the heart. Our heart holds our true _____.

Make it real

Write down as many synonyms for the word “**Deception**” that you can think of:

3. A DECISIVE Response (Read Matthew 2:9-11 again)

- ▷ **2:9-10.** Once the wise men had received instructions from the king, they continued on their _____. They followed the star until it “stopped over the place where the child was.” It appears that the star was temporarily removed from their vision while in Jerusalem. But as the wise men resumed their journey with more details, the star _____ and came to rest above the exact place where Jesus and his family were staying. Obviously, this was no ordinary star. What it really was, no one can be sure. The reality, though, is that God created it for a divine purpose. It was so awe inspiring that the wise men rejoiced when it reappeared. The text seems to imply that words cannot express the joy that overcame them when they saw it come to rest.
- ▷ **2:11.** The wise men entered the house, found the child with his mother, bowed down, and _____ him. The wise men were now able to complete what they had set out to do. They were in the presence of the future king whom they had dedicated themselves to find regardless of the hardships or the costs. As a part of their worship they had brought gifts to present to the child— _____, _____ (highly valuable perfume used in sacrificial offerings), and _____ (another valuable perfume used in ointments). It was the customary ritual of the culture to give gifts when meeting a dignitary. In any case, the gifts were not a last minute thought. These men had made a decision a long time before to be prepared to worship this king. Little did they know that he was the true gift given to them.

4. A DISCERNING Response (Read Matthew 2:12 again)

- ▷ **2:12.** These men had prepared their hearts and their lives to be in the _____ to worship Christ. They were able to _____ and _____ a message from God. It must have come as a surprise to the wise men for God to tell them to avoid Herod on their journey home. They had the great news of the new king’s birth and where he was. They had to be bursting to tell everyone they could about it. They discerned, however, that the voice of God was telling them to return “by another way,” and they _____. Their obedience gave Jesus and his family the time to leave before the king could enact his murderous plan.

We are overwhelmed with a message of selfishness during this time of the year. It is important that we see the selflessness of this Scripture passage in Christ and the wise men. We need to see that what the world is trying to sell is not the “reason for the season.” We need to know what pride and deceit can do to our lives as well as to the lives of others.

If you struggle with keeping Christmas about Christ, spend some time in prayer asking God to help you discern how to make this Christmas truly about Christ. Christmas will be more relaxing and enjoyable if you do.

Make it Real

As a class write down a top ten list of actions and/or attitudes that we can do to worship Christ more robustly this season.
