

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

CHRISTMAS JOURNEY

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Reflecting on the Gospel

Epiphany (Matthew 2: 1-12)

Matthew's Gospel completes the Christmas story with the tradition of the visitors from the East. This is a rich tradition which contains many important images. One of these images is the Christmas journey. According to the tradition, the magi (the wise men) undertook a long and arduous journey in order to find the infant Christ. The journey brought them face to face with King Herod, with the chief priests, and with scribes of the people.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this passage is *Christmas journey*.

Extracts from the Gospel passage (Matthew 2: 8-9)

Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem, saying,
'Go and search diligently for the child;
and when you have found him,
bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.'
When they had heard the king, they set out;
and there, ahead of them,
went the star that they had seen at its rising,
until it stopped over the place where the child was.

Gospel prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
you led the wise men to search for you.
Guide our journey,
so we too may be led to find you;
for you are our God.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Matthew 2: 1-12

The Visit of the Wise Men

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.” ’

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

THE EPIPHANY (YEAR B) SUNDAY 3 JANUARY 2021

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME AT HOME

Reflecting and meditating

Reflect on Matthew's account of the journey undertaken by the magi (the wise men) from the East (Matthew 2: 1-12):

- what details in the passage catch your attention?
- what big ideas does the passage spark in your mind?
- what most touches your heart in the passage?
- what most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage?

Thinking and talking

- what do you make of the idea of the wise men undertaking such a journey?
- what do you understand by the influence of the star on the wise men?
- how do you interpret their decision to seek advice in Jerusalem?
- what do you make of their return journey by another road?
- how can we best understand the narrative for today?

Using your Bible

Explore passages in the Old Testament that shape Matthew's account of the journey of the wise men:

- Isaiah 60: 3
- Micah 5: 2
- Ezekiel 34: 23
- Psalm 72: 10
- Numbers 24: 17

Exploring online

- explore the journey of the magi in art
- explore interpretations of Matthew 2: 1-12
- explore TS Eliot's journey of the magi

Drawing on experience

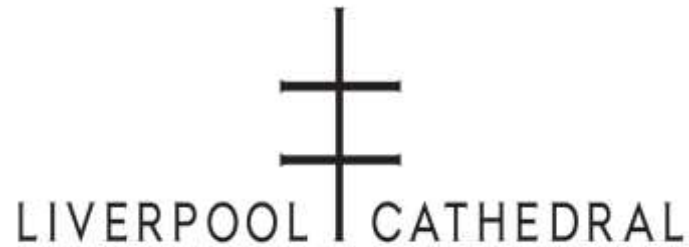
- reflect on your experiences of Christmas journeys
- reflect on your experiences of travelling to discover something special, but not knowing where to look
- reflect on your experiences of encountering the story of the magi

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Creating and making

- create a poster illustrating the journey of the magi
- create a nativity scene with the magi arriving there at the end of their journey
- create a collage of ideas stimulated by TS Eliot's poem
- create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the Christmas journey

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EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

Our invitation then is for you to share your reflections, prayers and photos of your creative work with the Cathedral by emailing them to Nelson.Pike@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales and the St Christopher's College Trust.



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