



faith FORMATION

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Epiphany
Of The Lord

In the Beginning...

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The Christmas season will be wrapping up soon. Friday, January 6 is the Epiphany, also known as Three Kings Day. January 6 is the traditional date, but as a Church we celebrate it on the Sunday after January 1.

As you may know, my wife is from Mexico, where celebrating Three Kings Day is right up there with Christmas. Luckily for our kids, we've kept that tradition alive in our family and as a result, they get more presents.

For us, especially when the kids were younger, it was difficult to celebrate it "properly" because American culture doesn't embrace it as much as Christmas. Christmas (or "winter") vacation doesn't last until the Epiphany, so they're back in school by the time Epiphany rolls around, which means opening presents occurs pretty early in the morning so they can get to school on time.

Then there's the tradition of the Rosca or Kings Cake, which is a bread with little figurines of baby Jesus hidden inside. Each person takes a turn cutting the bread. If they find Jesus they have to host a party. In a strange twist of religious tradition, this is a time when most people are hoping *not* to find Jesus.

But it makes me think. How many times do we avoid finding Jesus in everyday life? We want our cake, but we don't want our Jesus. St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa) is a good model for doing the opposite of what we tend to do. She sought Jesus everywhere in everyone: *"I see Jesus in every human being. I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus, I must feed him. This is sick Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash him and tend to him. I serve because I love Jesus."*

This Three Kings Day, I'm going to try to be a little more like St. Teresa and actually try to find Jesus instead of avoiding Him.

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Confession

Saturday: 2:00 - 3:30PM
Also, by appointment

Daily Mass

Tuesday: 8:30AM
Thursday: 8:30AM
Friday: 8:30AM

Weekend Mass

Saturday: 4:00PM
Sunday: 8:30AM, 10:30AM

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION & RECONCILIATION PREP

Scott lets us know that God has an endless supply of batteries! (And why Rules Aren't Bad.) Check it out:

[You Are Forgiven: Episode 2](#)

We have our schedule for parent meetings and other events leading up to First Holy Communion. Please see below.

The parent meetings will include a screening of the series "Presence: The Mystery of the Eucharist," discussion, tips for preparing your children at home, Q&A and community fellowship.



SAINT JUDE

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION / RECONCILIATION DATES TO REMEMBER

PARENT MEETINGS

Sunday, January 15, 2023 5:30-7 PM

Sunday, February 19, 2023 5:20-7PM

Previous Signs of Grace

Episodes of

"You Are Loved"

(about the Eucharist)

[Episode 1](#)

[Episode 2](#)

[Episode 3](#)

[Episode 4](#)

[Episode 5](#)

[Episode 6](#)

[Episode 7](#)

Previous Signs of Grace

Episodes of

"You Are Forgiven"

(about Reconciliation)

[Episode 1](#)

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church: "The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute" (CCC 2221).

Although the parish helps to form our children in the faith, no one can take the place of the parents' role in forming holy individuals. As parents, we should be well equipped to answer questions and to act, not only as the first teachers, but as the first witnesses of faith. This page is intended to help you in the journey as we work together to prepare your children for this special moment in their lives!

SUNDAY GOSPEL REFLECTION

By Scott Hahn



Readings:

[Isaiah 60:1-6](#)

[Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13](#)

[Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6](#)

[Matthew 2:1-12](#)

[LISTEN HERE](#)

An “epiphany” is an appearance. In today’s readings, with their rising stars, splendorous lights, and mysteries revealed, the face of the Child born on Christmas day appears.

Herod, in today’s Gospel, asks the chief priests and scribes where the Messiah is to be born. The answer Matthew puts on their lips says much more, combining two strands of Old Testament promise—one revealing the Messiah to be from the line of David (see 2 Samuel 2:5), the other predicting “a ruler of Israel” who will “shepherd his flock” and whose “greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth” (see Micah 5:1-3).

Those promises of Israel’s king ruling the nations resound also in today’s Psalm. The psalm celebrates David’s son, Solomon. His kingdom, we sing, will stretch “to the ends of the earth,” and the world’s kings will pay him homage. That’s the scene too in today’s First Reading, as nations stream from the East, bearing “gold and frankincense” for Israel’s king.

The Magi’s pilgrimage in today’s Gospel marks the fulfillment of God’s promises. The Magi, probably Persian astrologers, are following the star that Balaam predicted would rise along with the ruler’s staff over the house of Jacob (see Numbers 24:17).

Laden with gold and spices, their journey evokes those made to Solomon by the Queen of Sheba and the “kings of the earth” (see 1 Kings 10:2, 25; 2 Chronicles 9:24). Interestingly, the only other places where frankincense and myrrh are mentioned together are in songs about Solomon (see Song of Songs 3:6; 4:6, 14).

One greater than Solomon is here (see Luke 11:31). He has come to reveal that all peoples are “co-heirs” of the royal family of Israel, as today’s Epistle teaches.

His manifestation forces us to choose: will we follow the signs that lead to Him as the wise Magi did? Or will we be like those priests and scribes who let God’s words of promise become dead letters on an ancient page?

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

MATTHEW 2:1-4

The Gospel at Home

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Gospel Reading:

Matthew 2:1-12

The Magi seek out Jesus and do him homage.

Background on the Gospel Reading

The visit of the Magi occurs directly before the story of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt. Matthew's Gospel tells a version of Jesus' birth that is different than the one in Luke. Of the actual birth of Jesus, Matthew tells us little more than, "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod" The story of the census is found only in Luke's Gospel, but we hear about the visit of the Magi only in Matthew's Gospel.

We know little about the Magi. They come from the East and journey to Bethlehem, following an astrological sign, so we believe them to be astrologers. We assume that there were three Magi based upon the naming of their three gifts. The Gospel does not say how many Magi paid homage to Jesus. In Matthew's Gospel, they represent the Gentiles' search for a savior. Because the Magi represent the entire world, they also represent our search for Jesus.

We have come to consider the gifts they bring as a foreshadowing of Jesus' role in salvation. We believe the meaning of the gifts to be Christological. Gold is presented as representative of Jesus' kingship. Frankincense is a symbol of his divinity because priests burned the substance in the Temple. Myrrh, which was used to prepare the dead for burial, is offered in anticipation of Jesus' death.

The word Epiphany means "manifestation" or "showing forth." Historically several moments in Christ's early life and ministry have been celebrated as "epiphanies," including his birth in Bethlehem, the visit of the Magi, his baptism by John, and his first miracle at Cana.

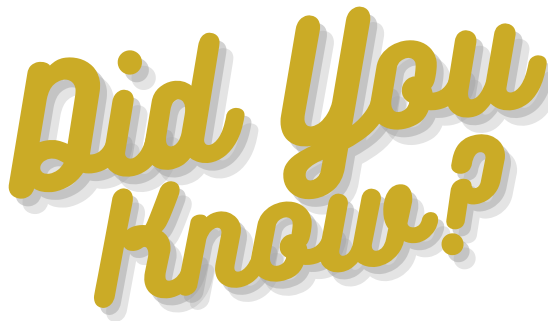
Family Connection

The tradition of giving gifts at Christmas is thought by some to be rooted in the gift giving of the Magi. In many cultures, gifts are not exchanged at Christmas, but rather on the feast of the Epiphany. Whenever you exchange your Christmas gifts, take some time to reflect on this tradition of gift giving at Christmas. Think of the best gift you have received. What was it? What made it special? Was it the gift itself, the thought that went into it, or the person who gave it to you?

Read today's Gospel, Matthew 2:1-12. The gifts of the Magi—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—have come to be understood as symbols of Christ's royalty, divinity, and eventual suffering and death. They are special because in giving them, the Magi acknowledge who Jesus was to be: our Savior. We pray that we will acknowledge Jesus as Savior in all that we do and say. Conclude by singing together "We Three Kings."

"When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; 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. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way."

MATTHEW 2:10-12



The Epiphany is also known as Three Kings Day in some cultures

January 6th is Three Kings Day in Mexico, known in Spanish as el Día de los Reyes Magos or El Día de Reyes. This is Epiphany on the church calendar, the 12th day after Christmas (sometimes referred to as Twelfth Night), when Christians commemorate the arrival of the Magi or "Wise Men" who arrived bearing gifts for the Christ Child. The word Epiphany means revelation or manifestation and the holiday celebrates the revelation of the baby Jesus to the world (represented by the Magi).

Like many celebrations, this holiday was introduced in Mexico by Catholic friars during the colonial period, and has in many cases taken on a local flair. In Mexico, children receive gifts on this day, brought by the three kings, known in Spanish as los Reyes Magos, whose names are Melchor, Gaspar, and Baltazar. Some children receive gifts from both Santa Claus on December 24 or 25 and from the Kings on January 6, but Santa is seen as an imported custom, and the traditional day for Mexican children to receive gifts is January 6.

In the days preceding Three Kings Day, Mexican children write letters to the three kings requesting a toy or gift that they would like to receive. Sometimes the letters are placed in helium-filled balloons and released, so the requests reach the kings through the air. You may see men dressed up as the three kings posing for photos with children in Mexican town squares, parks, and shopping centers. On the night of January 5th, the figures of the Wise Men are placed in the Nacimiento or nativity scene. Traditionally children would leave out their shoes with a bit of hay in them to feed the animals of the Magi (they are often shown with a camel and sometimes also with an elephant). When the children would wake up in the morning, their gifts appeared in place of the hay. Nowadays, like Santa Claus, the Kings tend to place their gifts under the Christmas tree if the family has one up, or near the nativity scene.

If you're traveling in Mexico at this time of year, you may find special markets selling toys set up in the days between New Year's and January 6. These will usually stay open all night on January 5 for those parents who are looking for a last minute gift for their children.

On Kings Day it is customary for families and friends to gather to drink hot chocolate or atole (a warm, thick, usually corn-based drink) and eat Rosca de Reyes, a sweet bread shaped like a wreath, with candied fruit on top, and a figurine of a baby Jesus baked inside. The person who finds the figurine is expected to host a party on Día de la Candelaria (Candlemas), celebrated on February 2nd, when tamales are customarily served.

There are many campaigns to bring toys to underprivileged children in Mexico for Three Kings Day. If you will be visiting Mexico at this time of year and would like to participate, pack a few books or toys that don't need batteries in your suitcase to donate. Your hotel or resort can likely direct you to a local organization doing a toy drive to see if they have any drop-off centers in the area you will be visiting.

In Mexico, the Christmas holiday usually lasts until January 6, and depending on the day of the week that it falls, schools go back in session on January 7 or 8. The Christmas season in the traditional church calendar lasts until February 2nd (Candlemas), so some Mexicans will leave their Christmas decorations up until that date.

THE GIFTS

The gifts of the Magi have important significance:

Gold: a symbol of royalty, represents his kingship;

Frankincense: used in worship, points to his divinity.

Myrrh: used in anointing bodies for burial represents his humanity, particularly in his passion and death.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Opportunities to Grow in Faith

Sunday, January 8:

11:30am - Epiphany Party in the Brophy Center. Join us as we celebrate all who have donated their time and talent to St. Jude and we will share ways to get involved. We will have a light meal, a brief program, and an opportunity to assist in a service project for our local community. We hope to see you there!

Monday, January 9:

6:30pm - Baptismal Class in the Kelly Conference Room. Anyone who is planning to have a child baptized is required to attend a class, which you can attend before the birth of the child if it is more convenient. Please call the Parish Office (616-363-6885) to register for the class.

7:00pm - Rosary Scripture Study in the Brophy Center. Join our Formed.org based study on the Joyful Mysteries with Dr. Ben Akers and professors from the Augustine Institute Graduate School as they walk through the Biblical mysteries and seek to grow in understanding and love for Christ through them. The study begins on January 9 at 7pm. We'll meet in person to watch the presentation, then discuss and pray afterwards. Contact Marty Smith for more details at msmith@stjudes.net.

Tuesday, January 10:

7:00pm - Men of Emmaus in the Millennium Conference Room.

7:30pm - Book Club. We're starting some new books in 2023! Join us for weekly discussions on some of C.S. Lewis's greatest works. We begin with "The Great Divorce", which examines the choice for Heaven over Hell in a narrative of one man's bus ride from Purgatory into Heaven. After this, we will read the short book "Abolition of Man", full of fascinating philosophical arguments for the importance of objective values, the necessity of natural law, and an objection against scientism in education. [More info here!](#)

Wednesday, January 11:

8:30am - Senior Men's Group in the Thaddeus Center. Do you like to play cards? We are a group of senior men who play cards at St. Jude in the Thaddeus Center. We meet every Wednesday at 8:30am. If you are interested or have any questions, call Denny Biggins at 616-365-1371.

Thursday, January 12:

7:00pm - The Sacraments with Marie Cirenza. This week's Sacrament is Anointing of the Sick. Have you ever wondered what the sacraments are all about and why we have them? Do you know the basics about the sacraments and would like to know more? Come join us in the Kelly Conference Room to discover why the sacraments are an essential part of the Catholic faith!

"Jesus replied,
'The first is
this: 'Hear, O
Israel! The Lord
our God is Lord
alone! You shall
love the Lord
your God with
all your heart,
with all your
soul, with all
your mind, and
with all your
strength.'"

MARK 12:29-30

Confession

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THE EPIPHANY AND BAPTISM OF JESUS

This week we celebrate both the Epiphany of our Lord and His baptism in the Jordan river. Today (Sunday) is the Epiphany, which is the day that we remember the wise men from far away in the East coming to worship the newborn baby Jesus. God let them know that His Son was coming and gave them a special star in the sky to follow to find Him. When they found Jesus with His mother Mary they knelt down and gave Him their precious treasures of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Tomorrow (Monday) we celebrate the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan river. Jesus went to Saint John the Baptist, who was baptizing people and helping them repent from their sins. John knew that Jesus hadn't sinned but Jesus asked him to baptize Him anyway. This was the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Until this time He had been living a life hidden from the rest of the world.

Like the wise men, we can give Jesus our best treasure: ourselves! If we decide to live our lives for Jesus then we will show the love of Jesus by our love for others.



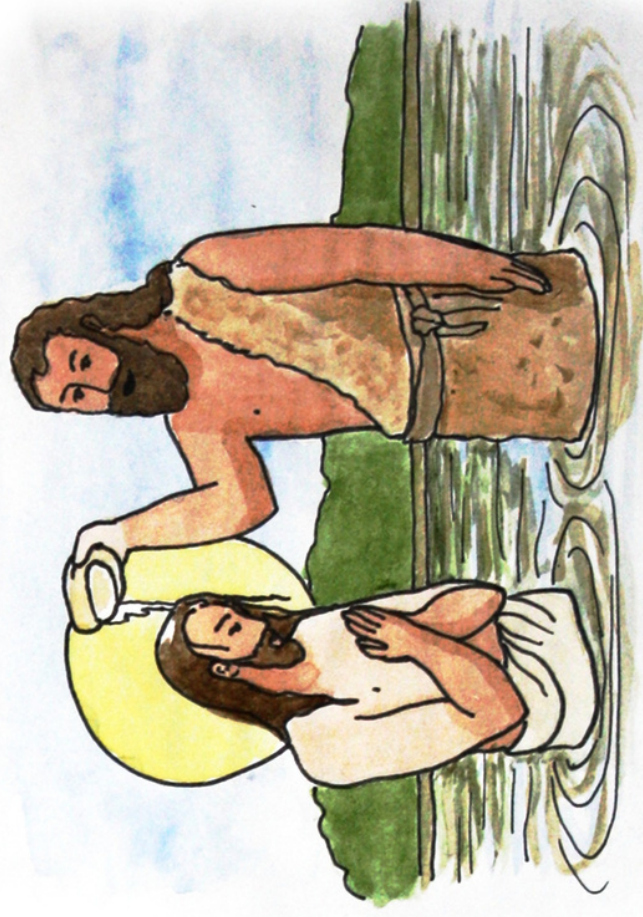
Answers to True or False: 1.false 2.false 3.true 4.true 5.true 6.true 7.false

www.thekidsbulletin.com

The Kids' Bulletin

Epiphany Sunday January 8th, 2023

Baptism of the Lord January 9th, 2023



What did Saint John the Baptist see that showed him that Jesus was the Son of God? Connect the dots to find out!

Saint Hilary of Poitiers

January 13



SAINT HILARY DIED AROUND THE YEAR 368. WE CAN LEARN FROM HIM THAT IT IS GOOD TO STUDY THE FAITH AND LEARN ABOUT GOD IN HARD TIMES. WE CAN ALSO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE BY SPEAKING THE TRUTH EVEN WHEN PEOPLE BOTHER OR PERSECUTE US BECAUSE OF IT.

Epiphany: True or False?

*How well do you know the story of the wise men?
Which of these are true and which are false?*

1. Wise men came from the West to find the Baby Jesus. True or false?
2. The wise men went and asked King Caesar where the Messiah would be born. True or false?
3. The king told them to come back and tell him where the Baby was once they had found Him so that he could go and worship Him. True or false?
4. When the wise men found the Child and His mother they bowed down and gave Him gifts. True or false?
5. The gifts they gave were gold, frankincense and myrrh. True or false?
6. When they were going to go back and tell the king where the Baby was, they had a dream that told them not to. True or false?
7. The wise men went back to their land by the same road that they had come on. True or false?

