

Christian Education Bulletin Insert

January, 2002

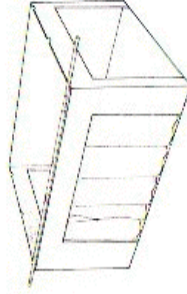
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January 6, Epiphany In ancient Iran, which used to be known as Persia, a priest was called a magus. The plural of the word is magi. The magi were experts in the study of the stars - astronomy - and they used their studies to determine such things as the end of winter and the start of the planting season. The appearance of a new star was an exciting event, and led them to Jerusalem to talk to those who knew the Hebrew scriptures better than they did, so that they might find the new King they believed was to be born. The Feast of the Epiphany is the day we celebrate how they found and worshipped the child Jesus.

Their visit to Jesus showed that his birth was important for everyone in the world and not just for the people of Israel. Read St Matthew's account of the visit of the magi (Mt 2:1-12) Make a theatre out of a cardboard box, as in the diagram, and act out the story.

If you cut some small grooves at the top of the sides, you can put a piece of dowel across as shown, and hang a curtain from it. The same thing may be done further back and scenery, which has been drawn and painted or coloured on paper, hung from another dowel. The story might be divided into three scenes:

1. The journey of the magi to Jerusalem following the star.
2. Herod's palace in Jerusalem.
3. The house where Mary, Joseph and Jesus were staying in Bethlehem. Puppets might be made by drawing the characters on Bristol board, colouring them and cutting them out. Make sure their size fits the stage! Tape or glue the back of each character to a thin stick and push them onto the stage from the sides. If you prefer, the sticks may be attached vertically, and the characters worked from the top of the stage. If you want to be really fancy, light your stage with flashlights and play some Epiphany music at the beginning and the end, and maybe as the magi make their journey.



An Epiphany Family Tradition

Either ask your priest to bless some sidewalk chalk, or say your own prayer asking God to bless it, and to help you to welcome strangers to your home this new year. With the chalk, print this over your door frame.

2 O C M B O 2

The numbers at either end are the current year. The letters represent the names we commonly call the three magi, Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar.

January 17, Saint Antony

St. Antony is considered to be one of the first Christian monks. He was born in Egypt around 250 A.D., where his father was a peasant farmer. When he was 20, Antony read Matthew 19:21, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven." He decided to do exactly what it said, and moved away from home to the mountains in the desert. In 305, Antony formed a community of hermits who lived a very simple, solitary life.

Antony was once asked what one had to do to please God. He said, "Always have God before your eyes; whatever you do, do it

according to the testimony of Holy Scriptures; in whatever place you live, do not easily leave it." To have God before their eyes,

children might make a cross to have in their rooms. It could be drawn on paper or card and put on the wall, or made out of salt dough that can be hardened in the oven. St. Antony's cross is called a Tau cross

and is shaped like a letter **†** (The type of cross we most often use is

the Latin cross **†**) To do things in accordance with the scriptures,

it is important to read them regularly. Children might keep a Bible

picture book or Children's Bible by their beds, and read it every day.

Talk about **holy places**. Your church is a holy place, or maybe there is a retreat centre near you which you could visit. Children might also make a special holy place in their home, such as a corner of their bedroom) where they read God's word and talk with him.

For Fun

Who was the smartest wise man?

SENSE