

Welcome to Families on Faith Adventures @ Home!

This resource has been put together for you by the United Reformed Church Children's and Youth Work team and the synod CYDOs and their equivalents.

We hope you will enjoy sharing a time of faith and fellowship together as a family through these stories, games, activities, and prayers. They are designed as a 'pick and mix' of ways to experience God's message through the Bible, exploring what it means to you and express that in words and action. They are not linked to the lectionary but can be used in any order as we explore all the different parts of the Bible.

The Walking the Way challenges are one way of continuing our walk with Jesus throughout the week.

These ideas are designed to be intergenerational - maybe even to be shared with family or friends via the internet.

The resources are based on our non-uniformed children's groups, Friends on Faith Adventures and Pilots, but have been modified to make them suitable for all families at home.

These activities are planned to be used together as a family and under adult supervision. Please be aware of your family's ages and abilities as some activities may need more adult support than others. **Stay safe and have fun!**

This week's Bible story is:

Come and See with the Wise Ones

Matthew 2 verses 1-12



With many varieties of activities and things to do to help explore the theme. Look out for this 'hands on' symbol.

From



and



Get to know your Bible

The Bible is like a library made up of 66 books written by many different people over many years.

The Old Testament books were written before Jesus was born. They are the holy stories he would have grown up hearing and reading. There are 39 of these.

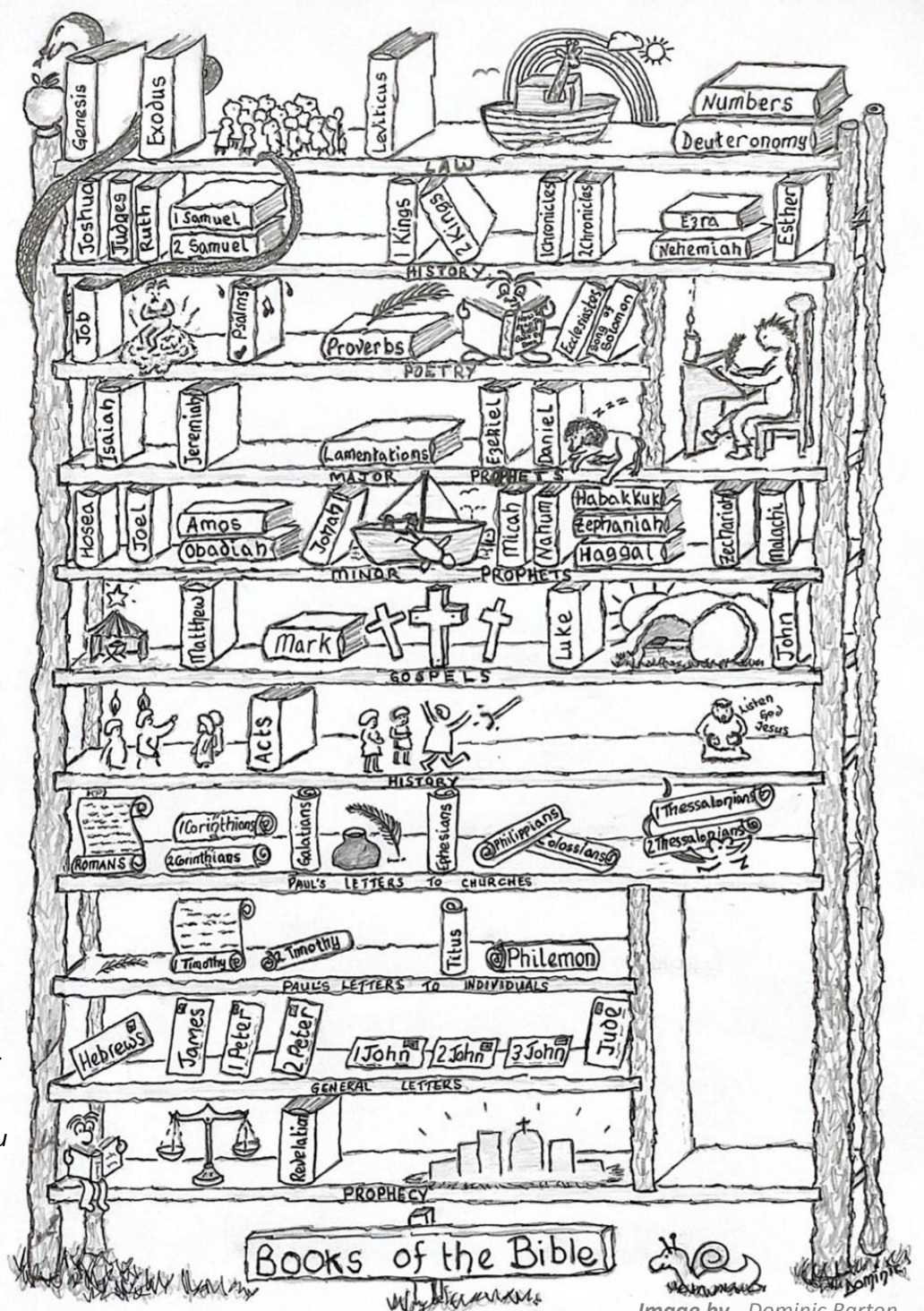
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



Can you find and colour the book on the bookshelf that this week's story is from?

If you have a Bible, see if you can find the story in there.

You could print this out once and colour each new book on the bookshelf as you read stories from it.



Bible context – Matthew

The book of Matthew was written around 60 AD by Jesus' disciple, Matthew. Matthew was a tax collector before following Jesus. Matthew was writing his book with Jews in mind, rather than Gentiles. He often refers to Old Testament stories and prophecies to show how the prophecies were being fulfilled in Jesus. This story shows how the wise scholars had seen a new star and knew it meant something important. They then begin their pilgrimage to find and worship Jesus, the new king who has been born.

Online versions of the story

Watch and Listen

The King of all Kings from the Jesus Storybook Bible read by David Suchet

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCDmNTxEUs&list=PLvEb8AA7B8J_c3BTNBukBzaA71Yy_fiJTZ&index=3

Jesus and the Wise men - animation by Saddleback Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zk1LhnqROCM&t=2s>

The story read by a child by JesusandKids.com

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvAxd0crz-c>

Jesus and his visitors - an animation for young children

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9FWTb6FG6w>

The greatest journey by Bible Society https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgFqPfbry_o

Dance and Sing

Wise man rap by BCC Kids Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oq-leDhcG6k>

Christmas is coming by Jason Gray

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbtEYUmirBE>

The Christmas star by CeCe Winans <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWnAycJAReQ>

When we seek him by Shawna Edwards and Angie Killian

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGcrMbx0K1c>

Let's follow the star by Playgroup songs <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCv9S8Nt3jE>



The Story – Matthew 2 v 1-12 (The International Children’s Bible)

Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, “Where is the baby who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east. We came to worship him.”

When King Herod heard about this new king of the Jews, he was troubled. And all the people in Jerusalem were worried too. Herod called a meeting of all the leading priests and teachers of the law. He asked them where the Christ would be born. They answered, “In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet wrote about this in the Scriptures:

*‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are important among the rulers of Judah.*

A ruler will come from you.

He will be like a shepherd for my people, the Israelites.’” Micah 5:2

Then Herod had a secret meeting with the wise men from the east. He learned from them the exact time they first saw the star. Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. He said to them, “Go and look carefully to find the child. When you find him, come tell me. Then I can go worship him too.”

The wise men heard the king and then left. They saw the same star they had seen in the east. It went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was. When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. They went to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshiped the child. They opened the gifts they brought for him. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they went home to their own country by a different way.

Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story

A New Story to Share Together

(why not have a go at writing your own?)

The wise men have seen a star in the sky. They know that it is a sign of something extraordinary that has happened. They pack their things and off they go to follow the star, as far as it takes them, no matter what, to find the one who was promised, the one who has come, the one who is the new king.

Off they go; their belongings on the backs of camels, riding high and keeping watch for the star that will lead the way. It will not be an easy or short journey.

Soon they come to the edge of a desert, hot sand as far as the eye can see. They look to the left, to the right, nothing but sand. They must cross the desert as the star leads on. It is hot, it is sweaty work. The camels are used to this landscape but even they struggle to keep their footing on the shifting sands. At night it is cold and in the day it is stifling hot. On they go, following the star to find the king.

After the desert comes a steep rocky track, rocks climbing up either side of them, rocky path straight ahead. They carefully follow the rocky path. The road is bumpy. Sometimes the wise men walk with the camels instead of enduring bouncing around on their backs. The road is steep as it climbs up high and lowers drastically again on the other side. The road is hard on the soles of their feet which grow blisters from the trek. Still, they journey, on they go, keeping the star in sight as it shows them the way.

Soon they come to a palace, a large royal palace. Surely this is where they will find a new king? But there was no baby to be found, only an old and grumpy king Herod who seemed to be very interested to hear about the new king that has been born. He welcomes the wise ones and gives them food to eat and a soft bed to sleep on for the night. Then, in the morning, he makes them promise to return to tell him where they find the baby king.

On they go, journeying on, following the star showing the way to the newborn king.

They have been travelling for many, many months now and they are tired and losing hope. How much longer will they follow a moving star?

Many months later, they realize the star has finally stopped, it points down to the place where they will be rewarded for their journey. Shining down onto the place where Jesus is found.

Not a palace, not a crib made of gold, not a baby but a young boy living with his parents in a house, a simple house of a carpenter. They wise ones bow down low and worship their king, offering him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.



They worship and spend time with the family before journeying all the way home again, over rocky paths and deserts dry; but not past the palace of the grumpy King, who they have decided to avoid.

They journey on, their hearts full of love for the king Jesus.

Table Top Discussions

Each day over a mealtime, have a quick conversation. Here are a few questions to get you going.

- *The wise ones and their camels would have carried many things with them on their long journey. I wonder what we are carrying with us in life at the moment, perhaps in our hearts and minds and not just our hands.*
- *The wise men saw a star that was a sign that Jesus had come. What signs do you see around you that show we are about to celebrate Jesus?*
- *The wise ones took gifts to give to Jesus. What would you offer Jesus this year and next?*
- *The journey to find Jesus was a long one, Jesus was a small boy by the time they arrived. Share your faith stories with each other, how did you become a friend of Jesus?*
- *The Bible tells us to look at the stars and consider our Creator God. What makes you think of God? Where do you see God in the world?*

What's in the box?

What treasures can you find to put in the box for your little ones to explore?

Perhaps older children could help find the things.



Use a box or a bag to hold the treasures and encourage any little ones to explore what's in the box/bag each week to go with the Bible story.



A happy face and sad face, maybe on opposite sides of a paper plate or spoon



Something with rainbow colours for God's promise



Some parcels to open



A sensory tray full of shiny things

A star



If you have a nativity set, use the wise men from it, alternatively use toys to present them, dressing them up like kings. Maybe you even have a camel to add!



Pray Together



Journey With the Wise Men.

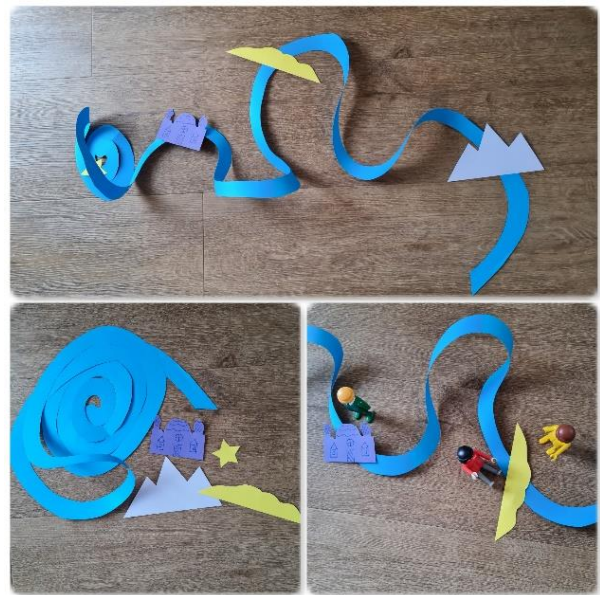
In the Christmas story, Joseph and Mary travel at least 110km (on a donkey!), from Nazareth to Bethlehem, where Mary has her baby. The wise men from the East would have travelled even further, following the guiding star all the way to Bethlehem.

Our lives are like journeys and we each have different experiences along the way.



Make a spiral from paper and spread it out on the floor or table to make a twisted path. This will create your own prayer journey. Place a star in the centre of the spiral. Think about the situations the men found themselves in in the story. With hot dry desert and steep rocky paths, then arriving in the wrong place at Herod's palace. On your path, add a picture or an object to help you think of the challenges. Using your finger or a toy figure, follow the path towards the star in the centre.

When you reach the steep rocky path, think about the challenges you have faced in the last year. As you reach the hot dry desert, think about the people that share your journey - friends and family - and remember that God is always with you. When you reach the palace, think about the things that have not gone as planned. Speak to God about each of these situations. When you reach the star just sit quietly, taking time to be still and ask God to hear your prayers.



Pray Together



Sharing Gifts

The wise men travelled with gifts that were for a king; Gold, frankincense and myrrh. We all have gifts that we can give to others... talents, skills, characteristics, things that we are good at. I wonder what your gifts are?



You will need an empty box wrapped as a parcel. Draw or write your gifts onto the Christmas parcel. You might want to talk about your gifts as a family and help each other think what gift they have. When you have completed your parcel, say thank you to God for all the gifts that you have. Place the parcel under the tree with the other gifts as a way of saying that you will try to 'give your gifts' to help other people.



Door Star Prayers



Cut out a star and thread some ribbon or string so that you can hang it up. Write a prayer on the star that you can say as you leave the house, asking God to be with you in all that you do and wherever you go.



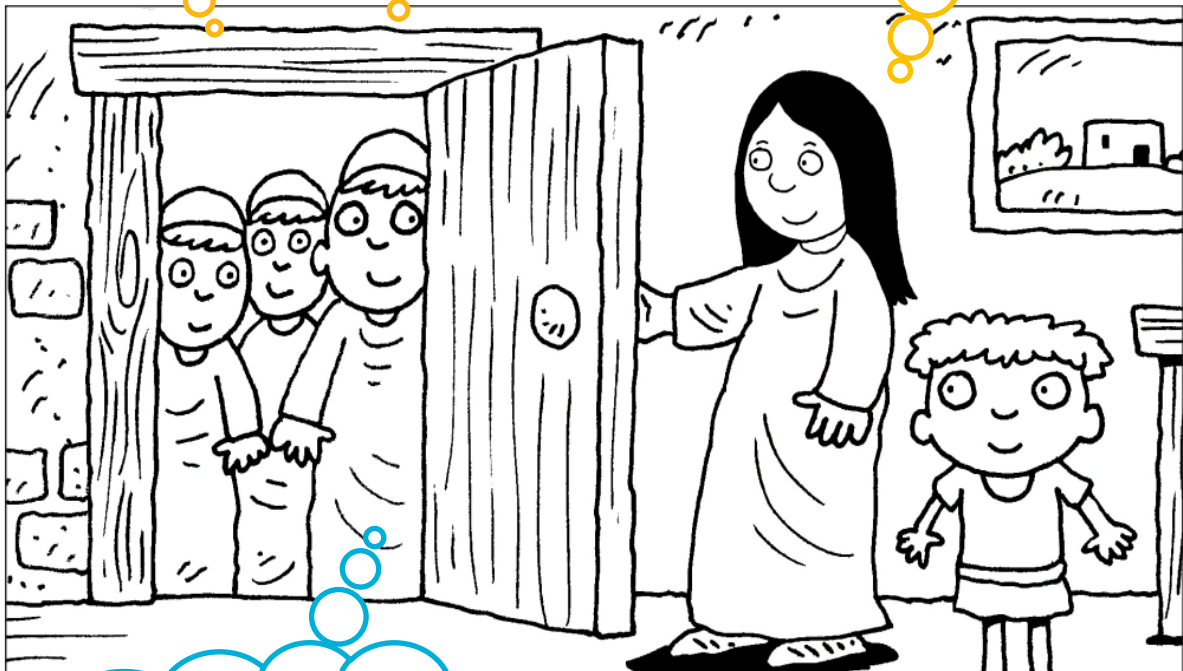
Dear God,
You sent a bright star.
The wise men were trusting and
You showed them the way.
Lord Jesus, show us the way
And be with us in all we do today.
Amen



*I wonder how long
the wise ones were
away from home?*

*I wonder what stories
the wise ones might
have told when they
returned home?*

*I wonder what Mary and
Joseph might have
thought about all the
people who wanted to
come and see their child?*



*I wonder whether you
have ever had a special
or unexpected visitor or
a visitor from far away?*

*I wonder how old Jesus
was and where he was
living when the wise
ones finally arrived at
their destination?*



To Do Together...

3D Star Journey

You will need: A long strip of card from a cereal box
A square piece of card from a cereal box

What you do

Mark out 10 folds of 5cm on the long strip of card, this will create your star shape.

Decorate 5 sections with images for the journey, e.g. camels, wise ones, stars, desserts or mountains, rivers or roads.

Decorate the other 5 sections with words about the journey e.g

- 'Wise one's set out on a journey'
- 'They journey here and there following the star'
- 'The journey is long and dangerous'
- 'Seeking the baby to worship'
- 'Witness the amazing news.'

Fold the card and create a star shape by taping the ends together.

Create a board for it to sit on with an image of the stable and the manger - you may want to draw this yourself or use an old Christmas card.





To Do Together...



Travelling Camels

The Bible does not tell us how many camels there were, but you might like to make some camel finger puppets for the story. You could take them on a journey with you! Have fun.

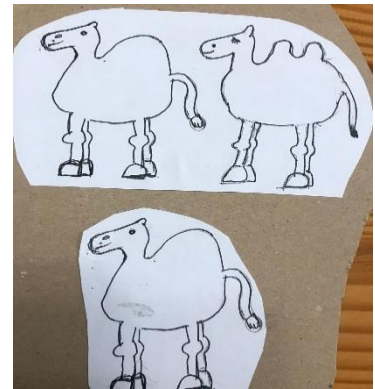
You will need: a print out or copy of the template
some scrap pieces of card
scissors
colouring materials
some glue

What you do:

Choose which camels you want to copy or draw, then colour them, cut them out and stick onto card. You might like to add a saddle or some jewels.

Use some spare card to make a ring of card to fit your finger, then stick your camel onto the card ring.

Now you can travel with your camels!





To Do Together...



Humpty Camels

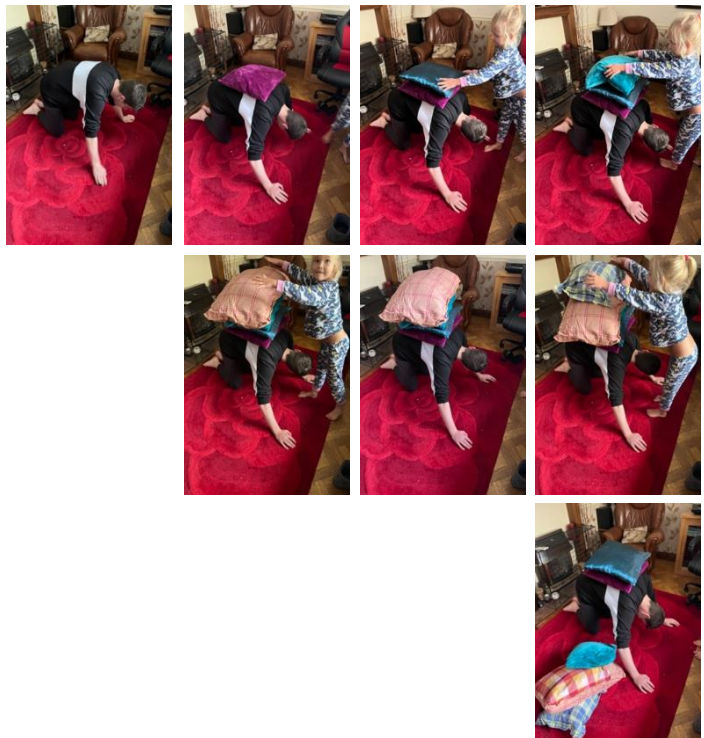
You will need: Lots of cushions or soft toys
2 people

What you do

Ask one person to kneel on all fours on the floor.

Place the cushions or the soft toys on top of their back carefully, see how many you can pile on without it all falling down.

Who can balance the most cushions? Think about all the things the camels had to carry on their long journey to see the baby. Remember the journey will have lasted about 3 years, so that's a lot of things!



Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

**Our Walking the Way Challenge
this time is...**

At Home:

This week's story is all about the start of a journey. Sometimes our journeys are rushed and we are so focused on getting where we need to be that we forget to enjoy the journey itself. Why not plan a journey together this week – go somewhere on public transport or go for a long walk or bike ride together. As you journey, talk together about your hopes and dreams this Advent time and what Christmas means to you.

Outside:

As the winter skies get dark nice and early, why not wrap up warm and go outside to see how many stars you can see in the night sky. www.timeanddate.com is a great website for identifying the stars and planets you can see in your location or there are other websites and apps you can use. This is a good opportunity for some quiet time with God, to appreciate the enormity of creation and to accept God's invitation to come and see for yourself all that God has done for you.



For Others:

Cut out a paper star and write a message in the centre, a message of hope or of joy for someone else. You could decorate the star with colours or glitter or pictures of the nativity. Then fold the five/six points into the centre. Seal with a sticker and write on the outside "A Christmas message for you". Post your star through someone's letter box or slip it inside their pocket or their bag when they're not looking.



The
United
Reformed
Church



Adventurers Go!

You've shared together, now share with us!

Why not send photos of your crafts, your treasure boxes, your Walking the Way challenges - or dress up to make a tableau of the Big Story and take a photo to send in.

*Email your photos to: lorraine.webb@urc.org.uk
with parental permission for them to be used in publicity and online URC social media.*

*Alternatively, share them on our Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/URCchildren.and.youth/>*

*Remember you can find more resources on our website:
<https://urc.org.uk/resources-for-children-and-youth>*

And if you've enjoyed these activities, why not see whether your local church runs Pilots or Friends on Faith Adventures (FOFA) when things get back to normal again.

Created for you by Nicola Grieves (Eastern Synod), Judy Harris (National Synod of Wales), Hannah Middleton (Northern Synod), Philip Ray (Wessex Synod, North), Lorraine Webb (Programme Officer for CYW), and Ruth White (Wessex Synod, South) on behalf of the CYDO+ and Children's and Youth Work team and Pilots.



The
United
Reformed
Church





at home

Templates

