

Christmas:

Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

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Preparation

Background for Scripture Readings

First Reading

- The reading from Isaiah refers to a time of great hope in ancient Israel.
- Jerusalem, which had been destroyed by the Babylonians, was about to be rebuilt.
- In today's passage, Isaiah associates light with the glory of God's presence.

Second Reading

- In the second reading, we glimpse a beginning of God's Kingdom in time.
- Paul stresses that God's promise to Israel is fulfilled in Jesus.
- All people, both Gentiles and Jews share in salvation in Christ.

Gospel

- The Gospel reading today links Jesus to God's promise to Israel.
- The royal title given by the Magi to Jesus points to his role as Messiah.
- In ancient times, the birth of a great person was often associated with astrological events.

Breaking Open the Word

Leader Instruction

Catechist Reflection Guide for the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6—The glory of the Lord shines on you.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13—All nations adore and serve the Lord.

Second Reading: Letter of Paul to the Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6—All to whom God reveals are part of the Body of Christ.

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12—The Visit of the Magi.

Invitation to prayer (30 seconds)

Ask the children to quiet themselves and sit comfortably. Have them take three deep breaths while you prompt them to relax as they breathe in God, our Father who loves us, Jesus Christ, his Son, our brother, and God's Holy Spirit who lovingly guides us.

Listening for a word or phrase to speak to your heart (3-4 minutes)

Ages 5-6: read Matthew 2:1-12 from a children's lectionary or Bible or tell the story in your own words. Call children's attention to the illustration and help them sound out the words.

Ages 7-8: Read aloud the Gospel reading from the handout.

Ages 9-11 and Ages 12-14: Read the Gospel passage. Ask young people to listen for a word or phrase that seems to be God's word for them today. Spend about 30 seconds as they choose a word or phrase. Ask them to silently repeat that word or phrase and to write it on their heart.

Loving God through his word (3-5 minutes)

Ages 5-6 Talk about why the three Wise Men brought gifts to Jesus. (It was what people did when a new king was born) List concrete gifts children can give Jesus. Have them complete their drawings and share them. Pray the closing prayer.

Ages 7-8 Do a guided meditation with the children. Use the questions on the handout. At the end of the meditation have children talk about what their responses were. Pray the closing prayer.

Ages 9-11 Have young people share their word or phrase. Direct young people to write their answers to the questions on the handout. Have volunteers share their responses and discuss responses. Pray the closing prayer.

Ages 12-14 Have young people share their word or phrase. Direct young people to use the bulleted questions on the handout for a quiet personal reflection. Use the final question as a conversation starter for the large group. Pray the closing prayer.

Living the Gospel words through the week (3-5 minutes)

The handouts describe one or two ways children and young people can live this reflection on the Gospel through the week at home, school, or play. If appropriate, have them add one or two more personal choices to act on this week.