

# Session 42

## Royal visit

Today's activities encourage your 8 to 11s' Christmas excitement to be directed towards the coming King Jesus. Just as the wise men journeyed to see the newborn King, encourage your group to journey towards Jesus during this session.

**To plan your session...** Choose a selection of *Starting, Into the Bible* and *Living the life* activities to make your session fun and memorable.

## Options to start your session...

### King or queen?

**Activity time:** 5–10 minutes

**Aim:** to explore the concept of royalty

- 1 Invite the children to get into pairs.
- 2 Challenge them to decide what they would do if they were king or queen for a day, and write a list.
- 3 After a few minutes, encourage the pairs to share their ideas with the rest of the group.



### Creative prayer

**Activity time:** 5–10 minutes

**Aim:** to thank God for sending Jesus

**You will need:** a large sheet of paper

- 1 Write the letters in the word 'Christmas' down one edge of a large sheet of paper.
- 2 Invite the children to suggest things beginning with any of the letters of 'Christmas' that are about the real meaning of Christmas.
- 3 Use this example, if you get stuck:  
Christ  
Holy  
Rule  
Immanuel  
Stable/Shepherds/Star/Son of God  
Treasure  
Mary  
Angels  
Saviour
- 4 Encourage each of the children to choose one of the words and turn it into a prayer of thanks to God for sending Jesus that first Christmas.

### Aim

To realise that Jesus is God's promised king

### Bible passage

Matthew 2:1–12;  
Isaiah 60:1–3

### READY TO USE activity

### Game

**Activity time:** 5 minutes

**Aim:** to think about Jesus as a king

- 1 Label one part of the room 'Agree' and another 'Disagree'. Explain that you are going to make some statements. Challenge the children to move to the appropriate area each time, depending on whether they agree or disagree with what you've said.
- 2 Make the following statements:  
A good king cares about the people he rules.  
Kings should be rich and famous.  
A good king protects his people like a shepherd.  
A good king doesn't bother with peace-making.  
A king doesn't have to be born in a big city.  
Everyone will like a good king.
- 3 Say that long before Jesus was born, God promised he would send a king to lead his people and bring peace. Ask the children what kind of king they think Jesus was going to be.

**Tip for Leaders:** Pray for group members regularly and individually. Pray for them by name if at all possible but, if not, picture them in your mind as you pray.

# Into the Bible – options to explore the Bible passage...

**READY TO USE**  
**activity**

## Bible story with drama

**Activity time:** 20–25 minutes

**Aim:** to realise that Jesus is God's promised king

**You will need:** copies of the *Xstream* sheet from page 298

### 1 Check the date

Challenge the children to work out when Jesus was born, in the big story of the Bible. Help them to look at the SU *Bible Timeline* and find the picture that shows Jesus as a baby, check the date and work out how long ago it happened. Say that today's Bible story happened some time after the shepherds visited the stable in Bethlehem.

### 2 Bible story

Read Matthew 2:1–12 to the children as dramatically as possible. Invite the children to tell you what they have learned or what they think about what they have just heard. When everyone who wants to has had a chance to share, encourage them, in turn, to talk to God about it aloud.

### 3 Xstream

Give out copies of the *Xstream* sheet from page 298. Challenge the children to put a tick beside the statements they think are true and a cross beside those that are false. (The reason for each answer is provided below.)

**1 True.** The Magi, as they are sometimes known, were probably very clever men or 'scholars'. They studied the stars. They were not 'kings' but 'wise men'.

**2 False.** The Bible does not say how many wise men there were. It only tells us that there were three gifts.

**3 False.** Jesus was no longer a newborn baby in a stable when the wise men visited him. Mary and Joseph were living in a house and Jesus was probably about 2 years old.

**4 True.** The gifts were significant. Gold was fit for a king, frankincense was sap used to make sweet-smelling perfume that was used in sacrifices and myrrh was oil often used to prepare a body for burial. These three gifts showed that Jesus was no ordinary baby – he was the Son of God.

Again, invite the children to tell you what they have learned or what they think about what they have just heard. Encourage them, in turn, to talk to God about it – aloud or silently.

### 4 Act out the story

Divide the children into three small groups of up to five. Allocate one of the following scenarios to each small group to act out. The groups should refer to Matthew 2:1–12. (There could be more than one group working on each scenario if you have a large number of children. If possible, allocate a leader to each group; otherwise circulate, offering guidance and help where necessary.)

*Group 1:* You are wise men studying the stars. What do you do when you spot a new star in the sky?

*Group 2:* You are King Herod and one day some wise men tell you another king has been born. How does that make you feel?

*Group 3:* You are Mary and Joseph. One day you have some unexpected visitors who present you with some unusual gifts for Jesus.

Remind the children that when they are preparing their drama they need to remember the real facts about the wise men's search for Jesus. When the groups have had enough time to prepare, invite them each to present their drama, in turn, in the correct order.

### 5 Response

Explain that the wise men realised that Jesus was no ordinary baby. He was the ruler that God had promised to send. Ask the children: 'How does that make you feel? What do you think about that? What difference should it make to the way you live?' This time, allow space for silent reflection and prayer, inviting the children to pray about what they have learned.

**You will find another  
Into the Bible option  
on the next page...**

# Into the Bible – options (continued)...

## Bible board game

**Activity time:** 15–20 minutes

**Aim:** to realise that Jesus is God’s promised king

**You will need:** copies of the *Xstream* sheet from page 299, cards from page 300, several dice

### 1 Find the place and read the Bible verses

Challenge the children to work out when Jesus was born, in the big story of the Bible. Help them to look at the *SU Bible Timeline* and find the picture that shows Jesus as a baby, check the date and work out how long ago it happened. Say that today’s Bible story happened some time after the shepherds visited the stable in Bethlehem.

Read Matthew 2:1–12 and Isaiah 60:1–3 out loud. Encourage the children to follow the words in their Bibles as you read.

### 2 Play the game

Divide the children into pairs. Give each pair a copy of the *Xstream* sheet from page 299 and invite them to cut out the two children. Then give each pair a copy of page 300 and ask them to cut it into 16 separate ‘cards’. (Alternatively, you could do this before the session and put the sets of cards in envelopes.) Invite the children to use a dice and the game board on the *Xstream* sheet and play the game using the following rules:

Two children are looking for the king. Each person places their child on ‘Start’. The 16 cards should be placed face down in a pile in numerical order, with 1 at the top and 16 at the bottom. (Card number 1 should be picked first, card number 2 next, and so on.) The first player to throw a 6 starts the game. The players take turns to throw the dice and move their child. If they land on a square with a crown, they must pick a card, follow the instructions and place that card on the used card pile. The winner is the first child to find the king.



### 3 Sum up

When the children have finished playing the game, invite them to sit on the floor hugging their knees. Encourage them to put their heads on their knees and shut their eyes, then ask them to imagine that they were one of the wise men. Ask: ‘How did you feel when you finally found baby Jesus? Why was he such a special baby? What did you do when you saw him?’ Invite the children to sit up and tell each other what happened and about Jesus. Challenge them to say what they (as wise men) think about Jesus. If necessary, conclude that the young Jesus is the King God promised.

## More on this theme

If you want to do a short series with your group, other sessions that work well with this one are:

- Session 41** Of royal descent, Matthew 1:18–25; Isaiah 7:14
- Session 43** Trusting Mary, Luke 1:26–38
- Session 44** The praising shepherds, Luke 2:1–20
- Session 45** Happy Christmas! Luke 2:1–20; Matthew 2:1–12

# Living the life – options to help live God’s way...

## Relay race

**Activity time:** 10 minutes

**Aim:** to remember that Jesus is the King God promised

- 1 Before the session, write out the letters of ‘Jesus is the King God promised’ on individual squares of paper. If the children in your group are quite young, make each word a different colour. You will need two sets of letters.
- 2 Divide the children into two teams and place the letters in two piles at the opposite end of the room to the children.
- 3 Challenge the children to run, in turn, collect two letters from their team’s pile and bring them back. When a team has collected all their letters, encourage them to work out the correct phrase.
- 4 The first team to collect all the letters and put them in the correct order is the winner.

## Prayer activity

**Activity time:** 5–10 minutes

**Aim:** to respond to Jesus as King

- 1 Encourage the children each to cut a crown shape out of white paper (small enough to fit in a pocket).
- 2 Challenge them to think about what they have heard today and then draw or write something on their shape about Jesus being their King.
- 3 Allow time for the children to pray about what they have drawn, either silently or aloud.
- 4 Encourage them each to fold their crown shape up and keep it in their pocket. Say that, when they find it there, it will remind them that Jesus wants to be their King in everything they do.

**READY TO USE**  
**activity**

## Chat

**Activity time:** 5–10 minutes

**Aim:** to talk about how we can respond to Jesus, our King

- 1 Invite the children to get into twos or threes and tell each other about the most unusual gift they have ever had. Ask what they were given when they were born, or if they were baptised as a baby.
- 2 Allow time for feedback from each of the small groups.
- 3 Talk about the gifts the wise men gave to Jesus, and the significance of gold, frankincense and myrrh (see ‘Bible story with drama’). Say: ‘Of course we can’t give anything to Jesus now... or can we? What could we give to Jesus, and how?’
- 4 Say that God sent Jesus to be our King. Challenge the children to tell you what that means. How can he be a ‘king’ in our lives?

## Extra ideas for the session and beyond...

If you did *Into the Bible* ‘Bible story with drama’, arrange for the children to present the sketches at one of your Christmas services.

Encourage the children to think back over any other *Xstream* sessions you have done about Christmas. Ask what they remember best and what they particularly enjoyed doing. What did they learn about God?

Sing some Christmas carols together.

# The real story

Read the statements below.  
Put a tick symbol beside the  
statements that are true and  
a cross symbol beside the  
statements that are false.

The wise men were not kings

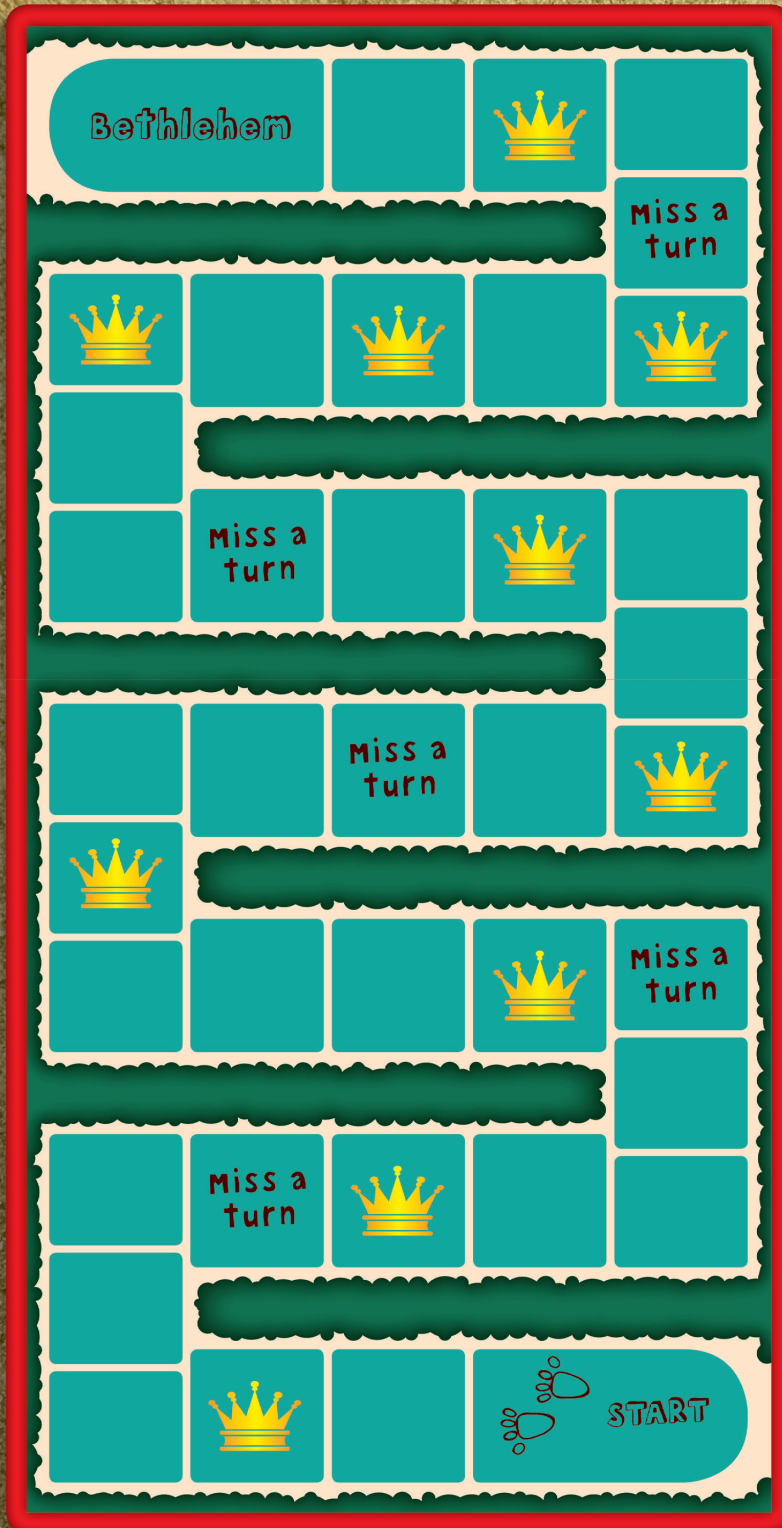
There were three wise men.

The wise men found  
Mary, Joseph and the  
baby in the stable.

They gave Jesus some unusual gifts that showed he was  
no ordinary baby.

Now check your answers with your  
group leader - you may be surprised!

# Find the King



## How to play

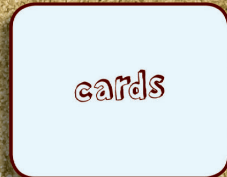
Two children are looking for the King. Place both children on start.

Put the 16 cards face down on the game board in numerical order, with 1 on the top of the pile and 16 on the bottom.

The first player to throw a six starts. Take it in turns to throw the dice and move your child icon.

If your child lands on a square with a crown, pick a card, follow the instructions and place that card on the used card pile.

The winner is the first child to find the King.



<p><b>1</b></p> <p>You believe what was written about Jesus hundreds of years before he was born. Move forward 3 spaces.</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>You spot the star the wise men saw! Move forward 3 spaces.</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Your camel goes lame. Go back 1 space.</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>You are attacked by bandits! Go back 2 spaces.</p>
<p><b>5</b></p> <p>A shepherd shows you a shortcut through the mountains. Move forward 3 spaces.</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>You swap camels. Move forward 2 spaces.</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>The weather is so bad that you have to stop. Go back 1 space.</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>You camel is fidgety and you fall off. Miss a turn.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p> <p>You give an old man a lift on your camel. It slows you down. Go back 1 space, but have an extra turn for your kindness.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>At last! You find King Herod's palace in Jerusalem. Move forward 3 spaces.</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>The baby is not there. You have to go to Bethlehem. Move forward 2 spaces.</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>You see the star guiding you there! Move forward 3 spaces.</p>
<p><b>13</b></p> <p>You listen to an angel who tells you not to go back to King Herod. Move forward 3 spaces and have an extra turn.</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>You've lost weight on the journey so your camel speeds up. Move forward 2 spaces.</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>King Herod wants to kill Jesus so you have to move fast. Move forward 4 spaces.</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>You've reached Bethlehem. Now you need to find the house. Move forward 2 spaces.</p>