

Epiphany – Beyond the Stable

Outline One (for Eucharist)

Readings: Isaiah 60:1-6

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

We gather

We may approach God

In Jesus and through Jesus

We approach God with confidence

In Jesus and through Jesus

We approach God with freedom

In Jesus and through Jesus

(Ephesians 3:12)

We come to worship,

we come to worship.

we kneel before Jesus,

We kneel before Jesus.

We bring our gifts,

we bring our gifts.

We bow to adore

we bow to adore.

Introduction – The visitors

The wise men, often described as Kings, followed the light of the star. They took their gifts to Jesus, recognizing the new king born on earth. What gifts would we take to Jesus? What gifts do we have that we can use to help others, and to serve God's world?

Preparation

You will need pens, a small picture of a wrapped gift for each person, and a small piece of map for each person.

We say sorry

It is easy for us to come here,

forgive us when we choose another way.

It is easy for us to give to Jesus,

forgive us when we choose another way.

It is easy for us to share Jesus with others,

forgive us when we choose another way.

It is easy for us to follow,

forgive us when we choose another way.

May we worship in truth, and give up the lies in our hearts.

May we worship in love, and give up the hate we hold.

May we worship in peace, and give up the anger we feel.

May we worship in generosity, and give up the selfishness we keep.

May we worship in forgiveness, and give up the guilt we carry.

May we worship in joy, and give up the sorrow we hide.

Kneel down for this prayer. Spend a few moments with your eyes closed in silence, imagining that you are one of the Wise Men who have travelled so far to see Jesus.

We are here to meet with Jesus

and we kneel before him.

We are here to hear from Jesus,

and we kneel before him.

We are here to learn from Jesus,

and we kneel before him.

We are here to give to Jesus

and we kneel before him.

We are here to know Jesus,

and we kneel before him.

We are here to 'be' Jesus in giving to others

And we kneel before him.

As the Wise Men followed the star,

we follow God's lead on our journey.

As the Wise Men discovered Jesus,

We follow God's lead on our journey.

As the Wise Men travelled as changed people,

We follow God's lead on our journey.

We listen

Talk: 'Arise, Shine' (Based on Isaiah 60:1-6)

If appropriate develop basic signs or actions for 'Arise' and 'shine' and as those words are repeated during the talk, everyone takes part in those actions.

1. Arise, shine, and see (v1)

The first words of this passage from Isaiah say 'arise, shine'....so we're going to use those words quite a bit! The journey taken by the Wise Men was part of something much bigger. The passage from, Isaiah reminds us that this was part of God's plan. Isaiah was written up to 800 years before Jesus, the light of the world, was born. The light of the world was born, and so all people were called to see that light shine, and know the hope that the light of Jesus brings. In this new year, and after all the fun of Christmas, I wonder whether we are all turning to the light of Jesus?

2. Arise, shine, and come (v2-3)

Just as house plants grow facing the light that comes in from the window, so people turn to where the light comes from. This is especially the case when the world is full of the darkness of sin and failure. We are reminded that all people, including whole nations, should turn from the darkness and focus on the light that has come. Even kings will turn to the light – it is the light for everyone to come to. Are we willing to come to Jesus, recognising that he is the light, and worship just as those Wise Men did?

3. Arise, shine, and give (v5-6)

This prophecy talks of herds of camel and other animals heading to the light that has come to the world, and the riches of the nations being given to Jesus, the light. In verse 6 there is even a mention of gold and incense, mirroring two of the tree gifts that were brought by the Wise Men to Jesus. I wonder what gifts we might give to Jesus if we could?

4. Arise, shine, and give out

The Wise Man gave to Jesus, and we can give too. Our giving is to others in our lives, homes, schools, work-places and communities. God has given us all gifts and abilities. I wonder if we are willing to think of ways to use those gifts to serve others?

We respond

Give each person a small picture of a wrapped gift, and have pens available. On the small picture invite everyone to write or draw as gift or ability they have that they could offer to Jesus and use to help others.

As this is a Eucharistic service place a bowl or basket at the front for people to put their piece of paper when they come up to receive the elements or have a blessing.

This prayer of blessing could be used:

God and Father of all creation, we thank you that you made us and gave us all gifts to use in your service and to help others. Bless these gifts and the people who are offering them, as we continue to seek to give what we have to others, and use our gifts generously.

We celebrate

Preface before the Eucharist

Now we give you thanks that your son is a gift to the world that was worshipped by the Wise Men, and is worshipped by us. As we come here to remember your great gift, may we also become gifts that bless others.

We go out into the world

Arise, shine, and see the light of the star.

Arise, shine, and see the new king worshipped in the stable.

Arise, shine, and see your gifts changing the lives of others.

Arise, shine, for God is with us.

Closing Prayer

May we travel on our journeys to find the light of Jesus,
and may we all shine for Him.

And the blessing....

We have worshipped God's great gift,
we have worshipped Jesus.

We will go with Jesus in our hearts,
we will worship Jesus.

Ending

Every family receives a fridge magnet as a gift, and hold it in their hands. This is to remind us all of God being with us on our journey, and helping us to give and use our gifts. Once every family has the magnet in their hands ask them to repeat the simple prayer that is on the magnet:

Loving God, help me be a gift for others today

Source: Revd Canon Dr Sandra Millar Head of Life Events Church of England Evangelism and Discipleship Team

<https://churchsupporthub.org/download/service-outline-for-post-christmas-services/>