

The Epiphany of Our Lord

Middle School · Student Edition

For the student: Read along, fill in the blanks, and write your answers on the lines. Your parent has the answers.

Step 1 Understand the Collect

Most collects follow a five-part pattern: the **address** (the One to whom we pray), the **reason** (what God has done or promised), the **petition** (what we ask), the **purpose** (what we hope will result), and the **ending** (the closing that names the Trinity).

O God, by the leading of a star You made known Your only-begotten Son to the Gentiles. Lead us, who know You by faith, to enjoy in heaven the fullness of Your divine presence; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

1. Mark each part of the collect. Are any parts missing?

2. The collect sets knowing God "by faith" now beside enjoying Him fully in heaven. How does that compare with the wise men?

3. Why do the words "to the Gentiles" matter for most of us?

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Read the Gospel on your own.

Matthew 2:1-12

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, **2** saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." **3** When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; **4** and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. **5** They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: **6** 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'"

7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. **8** And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." **9** After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. **10** When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. **11** And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. **12** And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

- 1.** Herod "was troubled" (v. 3). Why would a king be troubled by a baby?

- 2.** The chief priests knew exactly where the Christ would be born (vv. 5-6), yet they did not go. What does that show?

- 3.** Matthew does not explain the three gifts. How do they fit who Jesus is?

- 4.** How did God guide the wise men?

Step 3 Find the Collect in the Gospel

1. Find at least two places where the collect's words appear in the Gospel. Explain each one.

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2. Today's Old Testament reading says, "And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising" (Isaiah 60:3). How did the wise men fulfill it?

Step 4 The Small Catechism

The Second Petition. Thy kingdom come. **What does this mean?** The kingdom of God certainly comes by itself without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may come to us also. **How does God's kingdom come?** God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity.

Cross-reference. "This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." (Ephesians 3:6)

1. Luther says God's kingdom comes when the Father gives His Holy Spirit "so that by His grace we believe His holy Word." How did the Word work in this story?

2. Luther says the kingdom "comes by itself without our prayer." Herod tried to stop it. Did he succeed?

3. Ephesians says the Gentiles are "fellow heirs." What does that mean for you?

Think about it. God used a star to lead the wise men. Does that mean we should look to the stars for guidance? Read Deuteronomy 18:10-12 and be ready to talk about it.

Step 5 Wrap It All Up

1. Write a short collect of your own for this day. Use all five parts.

Pray today's collect together. Then answer:

2. What does Jesus do for people from every nation, including you?
