**January 11 – 17, 2021**

**Matthew 2:1-12**

*(please note there is pretty cool coloring page on the last page of this lesson plan)*

With all that has happened lately, I wanted to focus on the fact that the Magi felt great joy when they saw the star. I thought it would be a good time for us all to think about what brings us joy.

**Focus Scripture for today:**

“When they saw the star, they were filled with joy.”

**Thinking about joy, either share together or draw a picture of your answers:**

• Five things that made you smile this week/ past week

• Four fun things you did this week/ past week

• Three people who were kind to you this week/ past week

• Two times you felt loved this week/ past week

• One wish you have for the next week

**Bible Background**

Matthew tells us that the birth of Jesus was a world event by including the story of the magi (Gentile astrologers) who had come from the East to Jerusalem looking for the “child who was born to be king of the Jews.” They had seen a great star and followed it across countless miles to locate and worship him. It is thought by many scholars that by the time the magi actually made it to where Jesus was staying (note Matthew 2:11 has them stopping at the house where the child was staying, not the stable) he would have been somewhere between a toddler and three years old.

The magi stopped at the palace to ask about the birth of the new king. (Made sense to assume a king would be born in the palace.) Their questions caused great concern for King Herod as he wanted total control and would be jealous of anyone else having any power. He would not want a rival for his throne.

Herod called on the priests who told him the child was to be born in Bethlehem in Judea to fulfill a prophecy. Herod instructed the magi to return to him once they have located the child.

The magi did find the Christ Child. They worshipped him and presented him with gifts of great value. They presented Jesus with three gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. (We often think there were only three magi because there were three gifts. However, the number of magi is not listed in the Bible.)

Frankincense is very rare. You gather the pitch from special pine trees. Then you add other ingredients to make incense to be burned in holy places. It had to be a very special recipe or it could not be used in any holy place. They brought Frankincense because they believed the baby king would be holy.

Myrrh is also a very special gift. It is a very fragrant substance gathered carefully from shrubs and trees. Myrrh is an important ingredient in perfumes and it is also used as an anointing oil when someone dies.

In a dream, the magi were told not to go back to Herod’s palace and see him. So, they went back to their homes, using another route.

**Telling the Story**

This would be a great story to draw pictures of the different scenes. Using whatever art supplies you have in your home, divide up the scenes of the story and have everyone draw and decorate one. Put the pictures together on your refrigerator, a door, wherever you are comfortable hanging them, to tell the story of the Magi.