

## LESSON 31: Preparing for Christmas

### AIM

To give the children an experience that captures the spirit of the Advent season. (5.1.8)

### OUTCOME

Learners understand the significance of the Advent season.

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Preparation:** You will be moving around the classroom to "feel" the journey of the wise men, or you could make it a longer journey around the school grounds. Each star in the lesson requires the whole class to follow the wise men and the star to a different spot. Three children are dressed up as the wise men before the lesson, and a star covered with glitter is placed on top of a long stick..
- Following the Star:** As the procession moves, verses of the well-known carol, *We Three Kings*, is sung.

We three Kings of Orient are;  
bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
following yonder star.

#### CHORUS

*O Star of wonder, star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us to thy perfect light.*

**LEADER:** There was a special star in the sky. Wise men who lived in the East knew it was a sign. A baby king had been born. They packed and travelled a long way, always following the star.

Born a King on Bethlehem plain,  
gold I bring, to crown him again,  
King for ever, ceasing never,  
over us all to reign.

#### CHORUS

#### (Move)

**LEADER:** The wise men went to King Herod in Jerusalem. When the wise men told him about the baby king, he was worried. "Go and find the baby king and come back to tell me where he is." The wise men continued to follow the star.



### WHAT YOU NEED

- \* Wise men costumes, star (1)
- \* 🎵 *We Three Kings* (2)
- \* Illustrations of the three gifts (if available) (3)
- \* Advent wreath (4)
- \* 📖 Copies of the worksheet (6) ⇨
- \* Materials for the advent wreath (7)
- \* 🎵 *Light the Advent Candle One* (8)
- \* *The Story of the Other Wise Man* (10)

Frankincense to offer have I,  
Incense owns a Deity nigh.  
Prayer and praising, all men raising,  
worship him, God most high.

CHORUS

**(Move)**

LEADER: The star took them to Bethlehem. They found Jesus. The wise men gave Him gifts and bowed before Him. The wise men had a dream sent by God. He warned them not to tell King Herod where the baby king was. They went home a different way.



Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume  
breathes a life of gathering gloom;  
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

CHORUS

Glorious now behold him arise,  
King and God and sacrifice;  
alleluia, alleluia,  
earth to heaven replies.

CHORUS

**(Move back to the start)**

- 3 **The Three Gifts:** Help the learners to understand the gifts that the song mentions - gold, frankincense and myrrh. Jesus is offered gold which is fit for a king; frankincense as a symbol of prayer offered to God, and myrrh a spice associated with burial foreshadowing Jesus' suffering and death. Note that the song's final verse sings of Jesus' resurrection.
- 4 **Advent** is a special time of the year during which we wait and prepare for the coming of Jesus. We remember the love that God has for us. The greatest gift of all was God giving us his only Son. As we journey through the next four weeks, we light candles on the advent wreath. Each one of us must take the light of Jesus and give it to others, through love, peace and joy.
- 5 **Prayer:** The following could be written on a poster –  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
We have seen his star  
and have come to worship Him.  
Alleluia!
- 6 Give the children a copy of the **worksheet** to take home to complete.  

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## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 7 Make an **advent wreath**. Use stockings filled with paper. Tie in a circle. Cover with tinsel. Place four small candles on the wreath and tie a purple ribbon in the front. Three of the candles are purple, and the fourth is rose pink. Decorate with evergreens as you wish.  
  
The evergreens symbolise God's enduring love for us which is made manifest in the gift of Jesus. The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. One is lit each Sunday. The

## GRADE 3

purple colour is a reminder of John the Baptist's message, "Repent, the kingdom of God is at hand." The pink candle is used on the Third Sunday, which has the theme of rejoicing.

- 8 **Sing:** *Light the Advent Candle One* while lighting the four candles as the verses begin.
- 9 The children can write how they will be **stars shining for Jesus** so that others can find him.
- 10 If you have time, there is *The Story of the Other Wise Man* by Henry van Dyke. It is well worth reading. It would need to be abridged for children in this grade.
- 11 **Carol of the Brown King**

Of the three Wise Men  
Who came to the King,  
One was a brown man,  
So they sing.

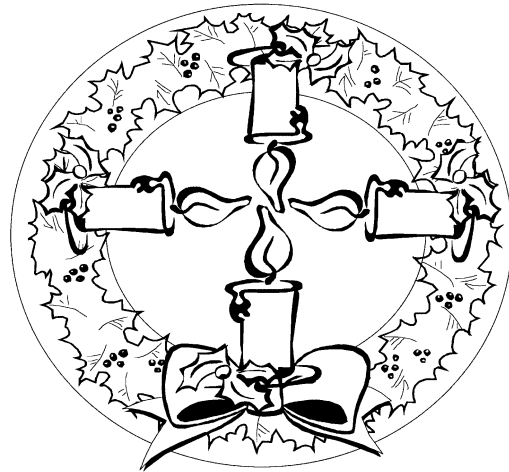
Of the three Wise Men  
Who followed the Star,  
One was a brown king  
From afar.

They brought fine gifts  
Of spices and gold  
In jewelled boxes  
Of beauty untold.

Unto His humble  
Manger they came  
And bowed their heads  
In Jesus' name.

Three Wise Men,  
One dark like me -  
Part of His  
Nativity.

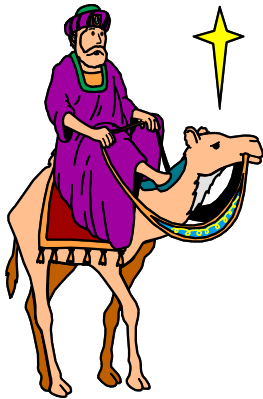
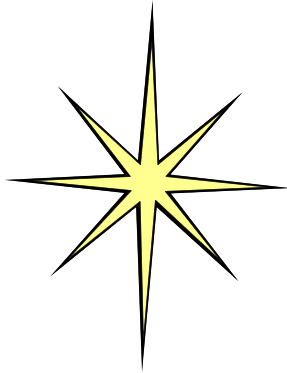
(Langston Hughes)



Colour three candles purple and one pink.  
Colour the flames red, yellow and orange.  
Colour the wreath green.  
Cut each candle to the base and fold up.



# Follow That Star!



Go outside tonight. Look at the stars. Draw what you see:

You see the star! Tell a friend the story of the wise men. Your friend's name is

.....

The wise men were told not to tell King ..... about the baby.



If you were to visit a king, what would you take with you:

.....

.....

.....

.....

## LESSON 32: Celebrating Christmas

### AIM

To give the children an experience of a simple Christmas paraliturgy. (5.4.5)

### OUTCOME

Learners understand the meaning of the Christmas season.

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 All the children sit **around the crib**. Switch on the Christmas lights or light the candles. Have a box wrapped in beautiful paper next to the crib.

Ask the children how they celebrate Christmas. Give them time to share. Take the box and play "pass the parcel". The gift is wrapped in 4 layers. Play Christmas music and then stop it. The person holding the box at the time unwraps one layer. Continue until all the layers are gone and just the box remains. The person holding the unwrapped box lifts the lid, takes out the message, and reads:

Alleluia, Alleluia;  
 Today a Saviour has been born to us,  
 Jesus, our Lord.  
 Alleluia.

God is not living in heaven far away from us.

God is born.  
 He is living with us.  
 His name is Jesus.  
 Alleluia

- 2 **Reading** by a learner previously prepared:

READER: A reading from the Good News given to us by Luke

ALL: Glory to You, Lord.

READER: The authorities were making a census, and everyone had to return to the town that the family belonged to. Joseph set out from Nazareth for Bethlehem with Mary. While they were there, the time came for Mary's baby to be born. She gave birth to a son. She had to lay him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn.

There were shepherds on the hillside, looking after their sheep. An angel appeared to them and told them: "A Saviour has been born for you. You will find Him lying in a manger." Suddenly there was a great crowd of angels, praising God and singing.

ALL: Sing *Angels We Have Heard On High* (or any other appropriate Christmas song)



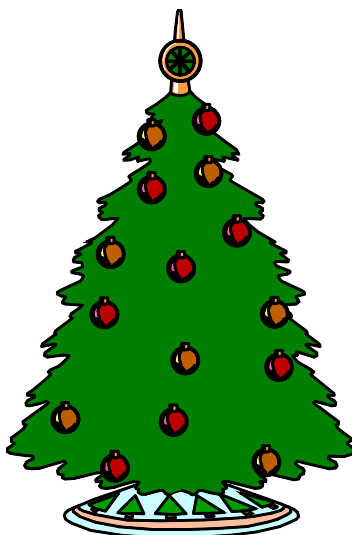
### WHAT YOU NEED

- \* Crib, Christmas lights or candles (1)
- \* Gift wrapped box with message inside (1)
- \* Christmas music (1)
- \* 🎵 *Angels We Have Heard On High* (2)
- \* Personal photographs, Christmas tree (2)
- \* Gifts (4)
- \* 🎵 *We Three Kings* (5)
- \* Dough ingredients, oven, poster paints, varnish, brushes (6)



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- 3 The children tie a ribbon through a **photograph** or picture of themselves. The children take the photographs and hang them on the Christmas tree.
- 4 In response to the Christmas gift God gives us in Jesus, the learners bring up **gifts already wrapped** that will go to poor or handicapped children. These are the ones that Jesus identifies with. Explain that giving to them is therefore, giving him a gift in return.



- 5 Conclude with another **Christmas carol** - perhaps *We Three Kings*. This could be sung while the children, one at a time, make their way to the crib to place their gift.

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## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 6 Make **Christmas decorations** out of dough:
  - 300g salt
  - 300g plain flour
  - 1 tablespoon oil.Mix together. Add a little water to form a big ball of dough. Put the dough on a floured surface and knead with your hands until it is smooth and elastic. Make all sorts of shapes with pastry cutters. Put in the oven for 1½ hours at 180C. Paint with poster paints and varnish.
- 7 Share the **festivities of other religions** that occur about this time, for example Diwali (Hindu) and Chanukah (Jewish)