

## Lessons from the Magi

On the January 6 feast of the Epiphany, we celebrate the visit of the magi, or wise men, to the newborn Savior. There are two lessons families can learn from this visit:

**Look for a sign.** Through study and investigation, the magi figured out that something big was going to happen and waited for a sign to tell them which direction to take. God often gives us signs to point us to the right path. Help youngsters weigh options and pray for direction



when facing big decisions.

**Travel in faith.** Once the magi started their journey, they asked for help when they got stumped and believed it would come.

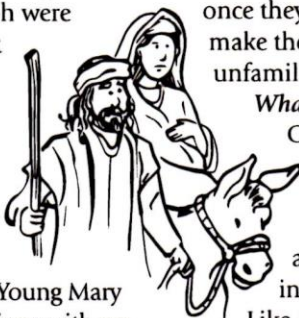
*"Behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage'"* (Matthew 2:1-2).

Teach your child to follow his "star" and rely on God for help. The key is to be like the magi and have faith that something marvelous will happen.

### Scripture LESSON

**Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23, God chooses each of us in a special way.**

We often think of Jesus' birth as an idyllic scene. The reality was quite different. Mary and Joseph were forced to travel in the last stages of her pregnancy from Nazareth to Bethlehem. On foot or donkey, it was a dirty and exhausting journey. Once there, they had no option for decent housing and had to stay with animals. Young Mary gave birth in crude conditions with no friend or family to help.



After a short time, they fled to Egypt with their newborn to escape threats from the government, and stayed there

for several years. There were no friendly faces to greet the family once they arrived and they had to make their own way in an unfamiliar land.

*What can a parent do?*

Catholics have a special charge to protect those who are vulnerable: children, elderly, the poor and those fleeing violence in their home countries.

Like Mary's and Joseph's, God has a special place for each of us in his plan of salvation. Prayerfully ask God what he wants you to do for him and his kingdom.

### Parent TALK

Our family Christmas last year was awkward. For no real reason, my youngest brother drifted from the Church, saying he doesn't feel



"connected" to God.

Now that he coaches his daughter's soccer team on Sundays, Mass is out of the question. So

Christmas for his family is no longer about Christ.

When our family met at my parents' house for Christmas dinner, David's kids were grumpy. In contrast to the rest of the happy cousins, David's three had long faces and moped. "Santa didn't come through for them," David apologized. He said each child only got a few items off long Christmas lists and were disappointed. In my opinion, without Christ as the focus, Christmas will always disappoint.

This year, I have invited David and his family to Christmas Eve socially-distanced caroling at our parish followed by the Vigil Mass. That will give his family's Christmas the best start.

### Feasts & Celebrations

**Dec. 6 - St. Nicholas (350).** St. Nicholas had a generous heart and gave away most of his fortune. He is credited with saving three girls from being sold into slavery to pay their father's debt. His anonymous acts of generosity helped him become the patron of children.

**Dec. 9 - St. Juan Diego (1548).** A simple, humble Native American who became a faithful Christian, St. Juan Diego was visited by the Blessed Virgin at Tepeyac Hill in Mexico. She asked him to have the bishop of Mexico

build a chapel for her, and had him carry roses to the bishop as a sign. When the roses fell from his tilma (cape) before the bishop, it retained the Blessed Mother's image.

**Dec. 12th - Our Lady of Guadalupe (1531).** The Blessed Mother appeared as a young Native American maiden to St. Juan Diego, also Native American. By choosing to appear in that image, she was identifying with the poor and down-trodden of the land to give them hope.



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