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Celebrate the Epiphany

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Notes and Ordering Information

This worship service for Epiphany uses the words of the song “We Three Kings” to draw our attention to the Savior and the reason for his birth among us. The wise men brought rich gifts to the holy Child, and those gifts point to Jesus as our King, our God and the Sacrifice for our sins.

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Newsletter/Bulletin Notices

Newsletter Notice

In the familiar song, “We Three Kings,” the wise men describe the gifts that they bring to the Christ Child. While Scripture does not tell us the reason for these particular gifts, the rich treasures—and the song—remind us of just who our Lord is and the reason that he was born among us. Join us in our Epiphany worship as we give praise to the Lord Jesus, who is our “King and God and Sacrifice.”

Bulletin Notice

In today’s Epiphany worship we will bring honor and praise to our Lord Jesus, who as a child received the worship and rich gifts of the wise men. Their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh remind us that Jesus is our King and God, who came to offer himself up as the perfect Sacrifice for the sins of the world.

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Complete Script For Worship Leaders

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** is shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

<https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/the-three-kings-following-the-star-gm868833430-144952151>

- The **Theme Verse** is spoken aloud by the pastor to begin the service or is read silently by the congregation before the start of the service:

Opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew 2:11

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Dix 77 77 77, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright;
So, most gracious Lord, may we evermore be led by thee.

As with joyful steps they sped, Savior, to thy lowly bed,
There to bend the knee before thee, whom heav'n and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet ever seek thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare at thy cradle, rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'nly King.

- The **Invocation** (from Psalm 22:27-28) is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD,

C And all the families of the nations shall worship before you.

P For kingship belongs to the LORD,

C And he rules over nations.

P The **Confession and Absolution** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P Let us confess our sins to God, our Savior and King.

C Almighty God, we have sinned against you in our thoughts, words and actions. We have turned away from your Word and will to follow our own sinful desires and the temptations of the world around us. God our King, have mercy on us and forgive us.

P God has had mercy on us. He sent his Son, born in Bethlehem, to be our Savior. Jesus offered up his life as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world, for our sins. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C Kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over nations!

- The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken by the pastor:

P Heavenly Father, out of grace, your undeserved love for sinners, you sent your Son into the world to be our Savior. You placed the star in the sky to announce his birth and to lead the wise men to find and worship the newborn King. Help us by your Spirit to seek our Savior in his Word and to offer to him our worship and praise. Hear our prayer in the name of Jesus, our King, our God and our Sacrifice. Amen.

- **The Apostles' Creed** is read in unison by the congregation:

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune *Wo Gott Zum Haus LM*, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

The star proclaims the King is here;
But Herod, why this senseless fear?
For he who offers heav'nly birth
Seeks not the kingdoms of this earth.

- The **Children's Message** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

Needed: examples of baby gifts, such as socks, toys or stuffed animals

- P** If you were going to buy a gift for a newborn baby, what kinds of things would you choose? (*Let children suggest gifts.*) You might choose something like the gifts I brought today. Which of these things would make the best gift for a baby? (*Let children respond.*)

Today we are celebrating Epiphany. On this day we remember the wise men who followed the star to find and worship Jesus in Bethlehem. The wise men came from far away, but they knew Jesus was their King and so they brought expensive gifts to him. But the wise men did not bring baby gifts like toys, stuffed animals or baby clothes. The wise men brought very unusual gifts. They brought to King Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Gold is a very rich gift, a good gift for a king. Frankincense is a hardened tree sap that smells sweet when it is burned. In Bible times, frankincense was burned as an offering to God. Myrrh is a kind of perfumed oil, and it is a strange gift for a baby! Myrrh was often poured on the body of someone who died.

We don't know why the wise men brought those special gifts to the King. But the gifts are reminders of who Jesus is and what he did for us. Gold reminds us that Jesus is our King. Frankincense reminds us that Jesus is the Son of God. Myrrh reminds us that Jesus came to

die on the cross for our sins. These three gifts were just the right gifts for Jesus! Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, the wise men came to worship you and we worship you too. They gave you gifts, and we give our love to you. You are our King, our God and the Savior who died for us. Amen.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune *Wo Gott Zum Haus LM*, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

The eastern sages saw from far
And followed on his guiding star;
And, led by light, to light they trod
And by their gifts confessed their God.

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Isaiah 60:1-6, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:
 - Ⓟ Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.
- The **Epistle Reading**, Hebrews 2:1-2, 7-9, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:
 - Ⓟ Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world ... Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire." But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."

- The **Gospel Reading**, Matthew 2:1-12, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ 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, 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.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ‘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.’” Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. 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.” 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. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 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. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Kings of Orient 88 44 6 with refrain:

We three kings of Orient are
 Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
 Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
 Following yonder star.
 O star of wonder, star of night,
 Star with royal beauty bright,
 Westward leading, still proceeding,
 Guide us to thy perfect Light.

- The **Gold for a King** section of the service begins.
- The **Meditation** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ The words of the well-known song “We Three Kings” are not necessarily accurate in every way. The wise men were most likely not kings, but scholars who studied the stars and sought wisdom in ancient writings. There may have been three wise men who searched for the Christ Child, but perhaps there were only two, or maybe far more than three. Very likely they did not come from the Orient, or Asia, but from a region of the middle east known as Persia or

Chaldea. The song, however, accurately describes the three gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. We do not know why the wise men chose these three gifts, but they were searching for a newborn king, and these were rich gifts for a king, for our Lord and theirs, Jesus the King. The three gifts serve to remind us of just who Jesus is and why he was born among us.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Kings of Orient 88 44 6 with refrain:

Born a king on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown Him again,
King forever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign.
O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect Light.

- The **Scripture Reading**, 1 Kings 10:14-15, 21, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold, besides that which came from the explorers and from the business of the merchants, and from all the kings of the west and from the governors of the land ... All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. None were of silver; silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon.

- The **Meditation** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ Solomon, the son of King David, was Israel's wisest and wealthiest king. What do you choose as a gift for the king who has everything? Apparently, you give him gold, more than 40,000 pounds of gold. That's how much gold came to Solomon each year. There was so much gold in Jerusalem that silver was considered nearly worthless. In fact, Scripture comments that Solomon "made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone" (1 Kings 10:27).

Generations after Solomon, the wise men followed a star, searching for a new king in Israel. After a wrong turn through Jerusalem, they followed the star to Bethlehem and found and worshiped the holy Child Jesus. The wise men offered him a gift that would have pleased Jesus' ancestor Solomon—a gift of gold. It was a fitting gift for King, a gift for the newborn Son of David. Yet this King would not wear an earthly crown of gold or sit on a golden throne. Jesus would be crowned with thorns and lifted up, not on a throne, but on a cross. Jesus our King offered up his life for us, taking onto himself the penalty of death that we deserved for our sins. We have been redeemed, "not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18-19). Amen.

Tune..... Dix 77 77 77

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- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Dix 77 77 77, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright;
So, most gracious Lord, may we evermore be led by thee.

As with joyful steps they sped, Savior, to thy lowly bed,
There to bend the knee before thee, whom heav'n and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet ever seek thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare at thy cradle, rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'nly King.

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Contemporary Music Song Suggestions

- The following song suggestions can be used for a more contemporary worship service in place of the more traditional hymns included in this kit. Rights to use these songs in the service must be purchased by your parish through CCLI or other copyright licensing agencies.

“King of Heaven” by Jason Ingram and Paul Baloche

“King of My Heart” by John Mark McMillian and Sarah McMillian

“Wise Men Still Seek Him Today” by Shirley Hutchins

“Lord, Reign in Me” by Benton Brown

“Build Your Kingdom Here” by Rend Collective

“Let Your Kingdom Come” by Bob Kauflin

“More Precious Than Silver” by Lynn DeShazo

“All to Us” by Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, Matt Maher and Matt Redman

“Lord We Bring Our Gifts and Treasures” by Leonard E. Smith Jr.