

## Christmas Joy Offering—“Gifts”

### Lesson Objectives—

- Recognize the gift God gives us in Jesus Christ.
- Understand that we can respond in honor to that gift by honoring the leaders of our church.
- Create a stole, and wrap the gift for our pastor.

### Supplies—

- Wrapping paper
- Bows
- Box to wrap the gift
- Fabric paint
- Scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Solid color fabric—approximately 10 feet
- 3 wrapped gifts or 3 gifts from crèche set

### Scripture—

Matthew 2:7–12

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” <sup>9</sup>When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising,[f] until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw that the star had stopped,[g] they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup>On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

### Music—

Play “We Three Kings” in background as the children arrive.

Display a crèche, preferably plastic, for imaginative play as the children arrive.

Display the three gifts in a prominent place in the classroom. (You may find these in your church crèche or sacristy.)

### Welcome





## Christmas Joy Offering—“Gifts” *(continued)*

**Pray**—Open with this prayer or one of your own.

Open Bible to Matthew 2—show children where to find the passage in Bible. Help anyone who is having trouble locating it.

Read any story book about the wise men (in advance, look in your children’s church library or classrooms).

### **Wonder, Connect, and Explore**<sup>i</sup>

**Wonder:** Imagine what it would be like to take a journey with only a star to guide you.

**Connect:** The wise men brought Jesus the best gifts they could offer. What are the best gifts that you can offer Jesus?

**Explore:** Frankincense is a gummy substance that comes from a bark of a tree and is sometimes made into an essential oil, like [example].

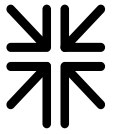
*Sweet-smelling frankincense also had a historic religious importance. It was one ingredient in the incense burned in the temple of ancient Israel and other holy sites. Today, some still think that the smoke of incense carries prayers up to God.*

*Myrrh was far more rare in the era of Jesus’ birth. Arab men drank it mixed with fragrant liquids to cure baldness. In India, the resin was thought to cure obesity and prolong life. The Chinese mixed it with mothers’ milk to cure diaper rash.*

*Because the resin from both frankincense and myrrh were used by so many ancient cultures, some scholars say the two resins were probably at their height of value around the time of Jesus’ birth. Many estimate that at that time, translated into modern money, frankincense would have cost \$500 per pound. Myrrh would have cost \$4,000 per pound.<sup>ii</sup>*

**Say:** Gifts are a way we respond to love we receive from another person. We have (a) very special person(s) in our church—a person who leads us, guides us, and loves us. OUR PASTOR(S)!

Have you ever noticed that pastors sometimes wear a stole around their neck? Do you know what that is? (It kind of looks like a scarf.) Our pastors wear this as part of their “uniform.” It shows others people that s/he has been “called” to serve as a pastor. In The Old Testament, Elijah, who was a prophet, wore a cloak on his shoulders; sometimes it was called a mantle. Our pastors carry on this tradition by wearing stoles around their necks.



## Christmas Joy Offering—“Gifts” *(continued)*

Now we are going to create a gift to give to a special person in our church—our pastor(s).

1. Lay cloth on a long table. (It would be a good idea to put down newsprint first, in case markers leak.)
2. Ask children to sit around the table.
3. Distribute ONE fabric marker to each child.
4. Instruct the children to draw a cross, heart, star, hand, tree, smiley face, or triangle.
5. Ask the children to sign their name near their drawings.
6. If you know of a person in your congregation who sews or quilts, ask them to hem around the stole.

Wrap the gift and present it on the Sunday the Christmas Joy Offering is received (or any other appropriate Sunday). This presentation would be especially meaningful to do as the children’s message that day.

Close your time together with a circle prayer and blessing.

Dismiss children to parents.

<sup>i</sup>Shine On Bible, p 171

<sup>ii</sup>Fred Horton, John T. Albritton Professor of the Bible at Wake Forest

*Written by Jennifer Whitford, Director for Children’s Ministry, Worthington Presbyterian, Worthington, Ohio*