

LIFE GROUP GUIDE wb 11th December 2023

Key passage Matthew 2:1-12

This Week's BIG IDEA:

'Frankincense to offer have I, Incense owns a Deity nigh, Prayer and praising, All men raising, Worship Him, God most high.' (We Three Kings lyrics.) This week we're looking at the second gift of the Magi in Matthew 2: Frankincense. One of the many themes that Frankincense represents in the Bible is worship and, praising Immanuel, God-With-Us. Let's delve deeper into this theme and allow the Holy Spirit to enrich our worshipful response to God's greatest and most generous Gift: Jesus.

Fixing our eyes on God.

As cheesy as it sounds, let's remember that Jesus is the 'reason for the season'- and is often the forgotten guest of honour at His own 'birthday party.' Let's spend some time worshipping Him now. Fetch paper and different coloured pens and watch the [lyric video](#) for Hillsong's 'Arrival'- ask the Holy Spirit to highlight a phrase(s) from this song for you and write them down on your piece of paper. When the song is finished, invite members of your life group to call out worship and adoration to Jesus inspired by these phrases. (**Leaders' note:** remember to praise God for who He is, not thank Him for what He's done- this is trickier than it sounds- challenge accepted!)

Opening God's word.

- 1) Please read Isaiah 60:1-6 (**Leaders' note:** as this week's theme is frankincense, please use either ESV or NLT translation rather than NIV, as these translations specifically mention frankincense in v 6.)
 - Scholars believe that Matthew might have had this prophetic passage in Isaiah in mind when writing about the visit of the Magi in Matt 2. What is the response of the nations at being invited into the light of God's salvation plan?
 - Describe what it means to you, as a Gentile, to be generously invited out of darkness and into relationship with Jesus, our Light of Lights?
 - How can you personally magnify the magnetizing light of Jesus to those around you still in darkness this Christmas?
- 2) Please read Matthew 2:1-12.
 - This passage is often described as 'The Gospel in miniature'- why do you think this is?
 - Worship is mentioned three times in this passage (v 2, v 8 and v 11), how would you describe worship to a non-believer?
 - What lessons can we learn about worship from the different reactions in this passage?
 - Notice that in verse 11, the wise men worship before they present their gifts to Jesus- why do you think they choose this order of priorities? How can we re-align our priorities this Christmas to copy this example?
 - The gifts of the three wise men were very costly. What is the most precious gift that you could give Jesus this Christmas? Spend some time thinking about this individually, write it down on a piece of paper/a post-it note and then go round the group sharing what gift you can give in response to God's generous Gift of Immanuel, 'God-with-us'.

Time to pray.

Swap your piece of paper with someone else's in the group and then spend some time in prayer in your pairs. When you get home, place your partner's piece of paper somewhere where you will see it every day e.g. on your fridge, stuck to your laptop etc. Pray for that individual throughout Christmas- and check in with one another to hold each other accountable. Let's see how the Holy Spirit inspires and grows us this season!