Overview
The Gospel of Matthew (2:1-12) reminds us that Jesus came for the whole world. We are called to follow the light of His message and share it with others. We are called to live fully in and for Christ and to be His missionary by sharing the gift of the Gospel.

Materials and Preparation Needed
- Bible
- Markers or crayons
- Mission story, “Celebrating, Sharing Faith,” found in the Epiphany Resources. (Read the story in advance; retell it in an age appropriate manner.)
- Go to http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/templates.htm for a variety of free star templates. Print out one star for each student.

Session Steps
1. Begin by sharing the Gospel of Matthew 2:1-12; and then the following:
Twelve days after Christmas, the Church celebrates the Feast of Epiphany.
An “epiphany” is a moment of sudden revelation or meaning.
On this day, we remember the Three Wise Men who went to visit the baby Jesus.
They found Him by following a star. The moment they saw Him, Jesus Christ was, in effect, revealed to the whole world.
Like the Wise Men, we need to share this Good News with all people.

2. Using your own words retell the story “Celebrating, Sharing Faith” found in the Epiphany Resources. Ask the students what the story and the Gospel reading have in common. Allow for a few responses.

3. Provide each student with a star template and a few markers or crayons. Explain to the students that they will be making stars and then drawing (or writing) on them to depict ways in which they can share Jesus’ love with the world around them. Encourage them to think about specific actions – including prayer – that show their commitment to answer Christ’s call to be His missionaries.

4. Ask students to share their completed star and message/picture. Invite students to hang them around the classroom or parish (perhaps the church vestibule). If you have a large group, you may divide them into smaller groups to do this activity at various times.

Lesson Extensions

Jesus Visit
Take the students to the church or a school location where the nativity is on display.

My Gift to Jesus
Discuss with the students what they would bring to Jesus had they been able to visit him along with the Magi (Three Kings). Provide them with construction paper and markers or crayons, and invite them to draw a picture of the gift. Then ask them to share their drawings and explain why they chose the gift they drew.

The Little Drummer Boy
This child-friendly classic by Rankin Bass Productions portrays the story of a young Jewish boy named Aaron who finds his life forever changed when he is
pressed into the service of the Magi who are en route to Bethlehem to pay homage to Jesus. These Wise Men lead Aaron to Jesus’ birthplace where he finds hope, healing and peace. This movie is available for viewing on several websites free of charge and can be rented from most video rental companies/services. Free streaming sites include http://www.solarmovie.so/watch-the-little-drummer-boy-1968.html. After the movie, lead a brief discussion with the following questions:

- How did the Magi actually help Aaron by taking his camel?
- How do you think Aaron felt when he played his drum for the baby Jesus?
- What gift would you offer to the baby Jesus?
- How did seeing the baby Jesus restore Aaron’s faith in people?

**Grades 2-3**

**Overview**

The Gospel of Matthew (2:1-12) reminds us that Jesus came for the whole world. We are called to follow the light of His message and share it with others. We are called to live fully in and for Christ and to be His missionary by sharing the gift of the Gospel.

**Materials and Preparation Needed**

- Heavy, white card stock paper
- Glue sticks and white craft glue
- Silver glitter
- Clear fishing line (one roll)
- Scissors
- Bible
- Markers or crayons
- Mission story, “Celebrating, Sharing Faith,” found in the Epiphany Resources.(Read the story in advance; retell it in an age appropriate manner.)
- Cut the cardstock into 1-inch wide strips. These strips should then be cut some into pieces that are 4 inches long and others that are 3 inches long. You will need a minimum of 6 pieces for each student (see website below for further instructions)
- Students will create a paper star ornament. Go to http://hinzpired.wordpress.com/2007/11/06/how-to-make-paper-star-
ornaments/ for step-by-step instructions. Practice creating an ornament prior to working with the students.

- Computer and Internet access (optional). The above website provides step-by-step photo images of the creation of the ornaments. You might consider using the photos as a visual while students are working on their projects.

**Session Steps**

1. Begin by sharing the Gospel of Matthew 2:1-12, and then the following:
   - Twelve days after Christmas, the Church celebrates the Feast of Epiphany.
   - An “epiphany” is a moment of sudden revelation or meaning.
   - On this day, we remember the Three Wise Men who went to visit the baby Jesus.
   - They found Him by following a star. The moment they saw Him, Jesus was, in effect, revealed to the whole world.
   - Like the Wise Men, we need to share this Good News with all people.

2. Using your own words retell the story “Celebrating, Sharing Faith” found in the Epiphany Resources. Ask the students what the story and the Gospel reading have in common. Allow for a few responses.

3. Provide each student with the supplies needed to create their star ornaments. Walk them through the process as noted on the above-mentioned website. Make sure all students have completed each step before moving onto the next.

4. On each paper strip, ask students to write one way they can reveal Christ to others during this New Year (for example, helping more around the house, donating clothes or toys to those in need, not gossiping about others, etc.). Encourage them to think about specific actions – including prayer – that show their commitment to answer Christ’s call to be His missionaries.

5. Invite students to share their completed star and message /picture, and then to hang them around the classroom or parish (perhaps the church vestibule). If you have a large group, you may divide them into smaller groups to do this activity at various times.
Lesson Extensions

Jesus Visit
Take the students to the church or a school location where the nativity is on display.

My Gift to Jesus
Discuss with the students what they would bring to Jesus had they been able to visit him along with the Magi (Three Kings). Provide them with construction paper and markers or crayons, and invite them to draw a picture of the gift. Then ask them to share their drawings and explain why they chose the gift they drew.

The Little Drummer Boy
This child-friendly classic by Rankin Bass Productions portrays the story of a young Jewish boy named Aaron who finds his life forever changed when he is pressed into the service of the Magi who are en route to Bethlehem to pay homage to Jesus. These Wise Men lead Aaron to Jesus’ birthplace where he finds hope, healing and peace. This movie is available for viewing on several websites free of charge and can be rented from most video rental companies/services. Free streaming sites include http://www.solarmovie.so/watch-the-little-drummer-boy-1968.html. After the movie, lead a brief discussion with the following questions:

- How did the Magi actually help Aaron by taking his camel?
- How do you think Aaron felt when he played his drum for the baby Jesus?
- What gift would you offer to the baby Jesus?
- How did seeing the baby Jesus restore Aaron’s faith in people?

Grades 4-5

Overview
The Gospel of Matthew (2:1-12) reminds us that Jesus came for the whole world. We are called to follow the light of His message and share it with others. We are called to live fully in and for Christ and to be His missionary by sharing the gift of the Gospel.
Materials and Preparation Needed

- Various magazines and newspapers depicting missionary actions. Use publications such as MISSION Magazine (published by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, a Pontifical Mission Society like the Missionary Childhood Association) or similar publications from missionary religious orders and organizations.
- Mural paper
- Glue sticks/glue
- Scissors
- Markers
- Bible
- Mission story, “Celebrating, Sharing Faith,” found in the Epiphany Resources. (Read the story in advance; retell it in an age appropriate manner.)

Session Steps

1. Begin by reading Matthew 2:1-12. Allow a few moments of quiet, and then lead a group discussion using the following questions (answers are noted in parentheses, except for the concluding two questions which are meant as discussion starters):
   - What feast day do we celebrate this week? (*We celebrate the Feast of Epiphany, which reminds all Catholics that we are called to reveal Jesus as the Savior of all people.*)
   - What are names given to the Three Wise Men? (*While the Bible does not specify, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar are the names traditionally given to the Magi.*)
   - Where did the Magi come from? (*The Bible only tells us they are from the “East.” However, Venerable Bede [672-735] considered them representatives of the three continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa.*)
   - What were the three gifts they brought to the baby Jesus? (*Gold, frankincense [incense] and myrrh [a scent often used in perfume]. The gold is symbolic for the royalty of Jesus; the frankincense stands for His divinity; the myrrh, often used to scent the oils used to anoint a body for burial, points to His passion and death.*)
   - What was the role of the Magi? (*Through the Magi, Jesus – Lord and King – was made known to the wide world beyond Jesus’ homeland.*)
• Why is it important to remember the story of the Magi each year? (*Their story reminds us that Jesus came not only for the Jewish people, but for the whole world.*)

• What are some ways that our parish or school reaches out to our community to bring the Good News of Jesus?

• What are some ways that we as a group can reach out to other young people?

2. Using your own words share the story “Celebrating, Sharing Faith” found on page x. Ask the students what the story and the Gospel reading have in common. Allow for a few responses.

3. Divide the students into small groups and explain that each group will make murals depicting people and situations that need the message of Jesus, using pictures from magazines and newspapers. Provide each group with mural paper, markers, scissors, glue sticks, and a few magazines. Allow ample time for them to complete the assignment.

4. Invite groups to post their murals on the walls around the room and allow time for everyone to view them.

5. Gather the students together and lead a discussion using the following questions:
• Do you think there are enough missionaries bringing the message and love of Jesus in the world? Why or why not?
• Do you see yourself as a missionary? Why or why not?
• What can you do to bring the Good News of Jesus love and salvation to all?

**Lesson Extensions**

*I Would Bring Jesus…*

Have students sit on the floor in a circle. Ask them to think about what they would bring Jesus if they had traveled with the Magi. Allow them a few minutes to choose something. Then go around the circle and have each student share what they would bring Jesus by saying, “I’m following the star and I bring Jesus … (whatever the gift would be).” The next student will then say what he or she is bringing in addition to the first person’s gift. Keep going around the circle with each new gift being added to the list. Continue until everyone has shared something they would bring Jesus.
The Little Drummer Boy
This child-friendly classic by Rankin Bass Productions portrays the story of a young Jewish boy named Aaron who finds his life forever changed when he is pressed into the service of the Magi who are en route to Bethlehem to pay homage to Jesus. These Wise Men lead Aaron to Jesus’ birthplace where he finds hope, healing and peace. This movie is available for viewing on several websites free of charge and can be rented from most video rental companies/services. Free streaming sites include http://www.solarmovie.so/watch-the-little-drummer-boy-1968.html. After the movie, lead a brief discussion with the following questions:
- How did the Magi actually help Aaron by taking his camel?
- How do you think Aaron felt when he played his drum for the baby Jesus?
- What gift would you offer to the baby Jesus?
- How did seeing the baby Jesus restore Aaron’s faith in people?

Grades 6-8

Overview
The Gospel of Matthew (2:1-12) reminds us that Jesus came for the whole world. We are called to follow the light of His message and share it with others. We are called to live fully in and for Christ and to be His missionary by sharing the gift of the Gospel.

Materials and Preparation Needed
- Recent daily newspapers or weekly news magazines.
- Bible
- Mission story, “Celebrating, Sharing Faith,” found in the Epiphany Resources.. (Read the story in advance; retell it in an age appropriate manner.)

Session Steps

1. Begin by reading Matthew 2:1-12. Allow a few moments of quiet, and then lead a group discussion using the following questions (answers are noted in parentheses, except for the concluding two questions which are meant as discussion starters):
• What feast day do we celebrate this week? (We celebrate the Feast of Epiphany, which reminds all Catholics that we are called to reveal Jesus as the Savior of all people.)

• What are names given to the Three Wise Men? (While the Bible does not specify, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar are the names traditionally given to the Magi.)

• Where did the Magi come from? (The Bible only tells us they are from the “East.” However, Venerable Bede [672-735] considered them representatives of the three continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa.)

• What were the three gifts they brought to the baby Jesus? (Gold, frankincense [incense] and myrrh [a scent often used in perfume]. The gold is symbolic for the royalty of Jesus; the frankincense stands for His divinity; the myrrh, often used to scent the oils used to anoint a body for burial, points to His passion and death.)

• What was the role of the Magi? (Through the Magi, Jesus – Lord and King – was made known to the wide world beyond Jesus’ homeland.)

• Why is it important to remember the story of the Magi each year? (Their story reminds us that Jesus came not only for the Jewish people, but for the whole world.)

• What are some ways that our parish or school reaches out to our community to bring the Good News of Jesus?

• What are some ways that we as a group can reach out to other young people?

2. Using your own words share the story “Celebrating, Sharing Faith” found in the Epiphany Resources. Ask the students what the story and the Gospel reading have in common. Allow for a few responses.

3. Bring out the newspapers / magazines and ask volunteers to read major national and local headlines aloud. Look at the headlines and connect them to God’s presence in our world. Use as many of the following questions with the group as is feasible in the time allowed.

• Where is God in these headlines?
• What is God making known to us in these headlines?
• How are you able to recognize that this is God made manifest today?
• How is God – Father, Son, and Spirit – present in these stories?
• Does it make a difference when you look at these headlines to know that God is always present?
• In your family, among your friends, in your school, what signs do you have that God is revealing Himself to you? How have you responded? What risk did you have to take?

4. Finish with the following message: *The important thing to notice is where signs (like the Star of Bethlehem) lead us. Then we can take the next step with the assurance that we are not alone when we follow the God Whom we trust.*

**Lesson Extensions**

*I Would Bring Jesus…*
Have students sit on the floor in a circle. Ask them to think about what they would bring Jesus if they had traveled with the Magi. Allow them a few minutes for to choose something. Then go around the circle and **have each student** share what they would bring Jesus by saying, “I’m following the star and bring Jesus … (whatever the gift would be).” The next student will then say what he or she is bringing in addition to the first person’s gift. Keep going around the circle with each new gift being added to the list. Continue until everyone has shared something they would bring Jesus.

*Christmas Card*
Tell the students that they are going to create a unique Christmas card. This will be a talking card. Assign each student a role from the Gospel story of the Magi’s visit. Invite each student-actor to describe who they are portraying and what they are experiencing (seeing, feeling, etc.) during the Magi’s visit.

*The Little Drummer Boy*
This child-friendly classic by Rankin Bass Productions portrays the story of a young Jewish boy named Aaron who finds his life forever changed when he is pressed into the service of the Magi who are en route to Bethlehem to pay homage to Jesus. These Wise Men lead Aaron to Jesus’ birthplace where he finds hope, healing and peace. This movie is available for viewing on several websites free of charge and can be rented from most video rental companies/services. Free streaming sites include [http://www.solarmovie.so/watch-the-little-drummer-boy-1968.html](http://www.solarmovie.so/watch-the-little-drummer-boy-1968.html). After the movie, lead a brief discussion with the following questions:
• How did the Magi actually help Aaron by taking his camel?
• How do you think Aaron felt when he played his drum for the baby Jesus?
• What gift would you offer to the baby Jesus?
• How did seeing the baby Jesus restore Aaron’s faith in people?
A Blessing of Homes

Sometime this week gather with your family to offer the following New Year’s blessing.

Leader: Peace be to this house.
All: And to all who live here.

Leader: Three wise men came from Bethlehem to honor the Lord, and opening their treasure offered precious gifts: gold to the great king, incense to the true God, and myrrh for Christ’s body which would suffer and die like our own.

Let us pray. O God, You used the light of a star to show all nations and peoples Your only-begotten Son. Allow us also, who know You by faith, to recognize You in the epiphanies of our life experiences.

Be enlightened and shine forth, O Jerusalem, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ born of Mary shines upon you.

All: All nations will walk in your light and kings in the brilliance of your splendor.

Leader: And the glory of the Lord is risen on you.

Bless, O Lord, this household and family and allow all of us who live here to find in it a shelter of peace and health. Inspire all of us in this family to develop our individual talents and to contribute wisdom and good works for the benefit of the whole. Make our house a haven for us all and a place of warmth and caring for all our friends who come and visit us. Enlighten us with the brilliance of your Epiphany star so that, as we leave our house and family to go out into the world, we might clearly see our way to You and discover You in our work and play.

This we ask to Your glory and in the power of Your kingship.

All: For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory now and forever. Amen.

The home and family are blessed with holy water or with the sign of the cross. After the blessing, the initials of the names of the Magi, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar are written with chalk on or over the main doors of the house and frame by the numbers of the New Year in this way:

20  C + M+ B+ 14
The settings couldn't be more different.

One, Mukuru, a slum in the Kenyan capital city of Nairobi, home to some 10,000 living in wood and corrugated metal shacks, crowded together, with no running water, electricity or sewage systems. The other, Mutunguru, a place in the country, 60 miles north of Nairobi, an agricultural community of 2,000 families, spread out and surrounded by the beauty of nature, with pineapples and tea growing in abundance.

And yet every Sunday the similarities between the two places become evident as music, dance, singing and joy characterize the celebration of faith in Jesus and a commitment to carry His "Good News" to others.

During the two-hour-plus Mass at St. Mary's Church in Mukuru, for example, the 50-member choir — which meets for rehearsal three times a week — sings and claps, raising their hands in praise. The joy, noted one visitor to the parish, was "palpable and uplifting." At the Offertory procession, with the gifts of bread and wine are baskets of vegetables, flour, rice, bread and other necessities for the less fortunate members of the parish.

And then, at the end of Mass, the words of dismissal — "go to love and serve the Lord" — come to life immediately as the missionary priest navigates narrow dirt paths filled with ruts and trash to visit the sick and those who are suffering in any way. Lay people in the community have identified those in need, and the missionary enters their humble dwellings to offer prayers and help — and, above all, to be a presence of the Lord who never abandons us.

"Keep God in your hearts," Father Moses Kago tells the parishioners of St. Joseph's Church in Mutunguru, during one particular Sunday homily. That rural community nurtured his own vocation to the priesthood. "The Spirit can help you do extraordinary things when bad things happen," he adds.
Joy too characterizes the celebration of Mass at St. Joseph's. And Father Kago, who serves as Pontifical Mission Societies director for the Archdiocese of Nairobi, emphasizes the missionary dimension of our faith. "We do not only receive, we also give," he explained.

The call to Catholics in Kenya to be missionaries is one stressed often in parishes, wherever they happen to be.

"We encourage our Christians to live up to what we have received because of our dear missionaries," explains Cardinal John Njue of Nairobi. Missionaries arrived in various places in Kenya just a little more than a century ago.

"The seed has been planted, and we need to make sure it is watered to grow properly," the cardinal added. "We understand the importance of the missionary vocation of all."

All peoples — in Kenya, here at home and throughout the world — celebrating and sharing their faith. That's very "good news"!