

# 21

## 5-minute Children's Messages for Sunday Morning!

### CHRISTMAS GIFT: The Magi

#### PROPS

A wrapped Christmas gift

#### KEY SCRIPTURE

Matthew 2

Does anyone remember what gifts were given at the very first Christmas? There were three gifts presented to the baby Jesus—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—and the gifts came from the men we call the three kings, or the Magi.

Have any of you ever wondered who the Magi were or where they came from? The book of Matthew describes them as traveling from the East. According to tradition, they arrived two years after the birth of Christ. Mary and Joseph were still in Bethlehem, but they were probably living in a house or inn by the time the Magi arrived.

The birth of Christ had been prophesied for centuries, but their prophecies were only spoken to and for the Jews. The Magi were not Jewish. They came from Persia. They were scientists, mathematicians, and astronomers. So how did they come to know about the birth of Jesus?

They knew because of the prophet Daniel.

Yes, this is the same Daniel who was thrown into a den of lions. Daniel was a Jew, and as a boy, he was taken prisoner by King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was raised and trained to be a Magi who served as an advisor to the king in addition to all his scientific studies. When Daniel grew up, he became one of the Magi. He served as advisor to the kings of both Babylon and Persia. He was one of the most powerful men in the world, and he was the leader of the Magi.

It was Daniel who introduced the Magi to the writings of Moses and the prophets. It was Daniel who taught them about God and God's promise to redeem the world through the Messiah. Daniel shared with them the prophecies about the Messiah. When the star appeared over Bethlehem, the Magi saw and recognized it as the sign that the Messiah had been born.

The Magi came to worship God and also to confirm for themselves the truth of what their forefather Daniel had taught them. They were ready and waiting, and when the Messiah was born, they were ready.

How sad that the people who were originally given the prophecies—the Jews—were not ready. In fact, the king of the Jews, Herod, attempted to kill the baby Jesus when he learned about the Magi and their quest to find the Messiah!

The Magi are a reminder that the gift of Christmas—Jesus—is for all people. They also remind us that we all need to keep watch. Jesus is going to come back. Will we recognize the signs when he does? Or is there a chance that we, like Herod, might stand against him?