

JANUARY 6, 2021
EPIPHANY OF
OUR LORD



Jesus' birth brings fear and joy.

EPIPHANY BIBLE READINGS

Take time to read and reflect on these Bible passages as part of your Epiphany celebration.

Wednesday	Isaiah 60:1-6	Crowds coming to Jerusalem
	Ephesians 3:1-12	Paul's mission to the Gentiles
	Psalms 72:1-7, 10-14	Prayer to guide the king
	Matthew 2:1-12	The visit of the wise men

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR EPIPHANY

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." Matthew 2:1-2 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for Epiphany:

Come, Lord Jesus, come into our world and into our lives that fear may be overcome with joy and peace shall rule the earth. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

For life and health and daily food, we give you thanks, O Lord. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May our Lord Jesus Christ shine brightly in your life and grant you peace.



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HYMN FOR EPIPHANY

The First Noel



EPIPHANY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Describe a local, national, or international leader that you admire. Explain why.
- What are the challenges of being a good leader?
- Jesus comes to rule all nations with God's reign of justice and mercy. How does that impact how you live as a follower of Jesus?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Matthew 2:1-12.

The Christmas story, especially as told in Matthew, contains a clear note of danger as well as delight. King Herod's response as a person of authority is fear, the fear of losing his power. The people of Jerusalem also express fear, especially for those privileged by a religious, political and economic system that rewards those loyal to Herod and the empire that stands behind him. Even today some of the world's leaders fear losing their status and privileges. Their reactions, like that of Herod, sometimes result in violence and the threat of violence. This is the world Jesus has entered to bring peace, love, mercy, and hope. It will cost Jesus his life at the hands of those who fear God's reign that promises to "defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor" (Psalm 72:4). It is the reign of the just and faithful king described in Psalm 72. It is those from afar, described as "wise men from the East," who follow a star and who have come to find the one that the world is searching to find. It is the babe born in Bethlehem that will leave people "overwhelmed with joy." How does God's reign bring hope to the world? How does it bring fear?

Pray: God of heaven and earth, bring your reign of justice, mercy, and hope to us so that fear may cease and joy may find its home on earth through Christ Jesus. Amen.

SERVICE

What simple gesture can you do to show you are a trusted person and care about others? List ways you can foster joy in the lives of others such as extending a smile, opening a door, carrying groceries, or taking time to listen. What action will you choose to do from your list this week?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The wise men were guided by a star to find Jesus, the newborn King. As Christians, we are "stars" that God uses to point other people to Jesus. Cut out some star shapes. Write on them the different ways you can "shine" for Jesus before others. Hang the stars on the wall or attach them to the ceiling. After gazing at the stars for a moment, give this blessing:

Say: May God use you to draw others to know and worship Jesus as their King.

