



**WELCOMING  
CHILDREN  
in WORSHIP**

**THE CATHOLIC  
UNIVERSITY  
OF AMERICA**



# The Feast of the Epiphany

## January

# Adaptive Activities for Children



**National Catholic  
Partnership on Disability**

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# Introduction

Welcome and thank you for your ministry that serves the liturgical formation of children for their participation in the Eucharist, the “source and summit of the Christian life.” This resource is provided by the Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD). It aims to offer an adaptive catechetical opportunity for all who have a heart for disability ministry to reflect on the liturgical year. We welcome you to this virtual community and hope you find this resource beneficial.

Here you will find reflections to guide children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, or diverse learners, through the current liturgical season with adaptive catechesis to help them to participate fully. Each offering includes prayer, Scripture, activities and more that incorporate the senses and take into consideration the needs of all learners. We invite you to gather children around the table of the home or the table of the classroom as preparation for their participation at the sacred table of the Eucharist.

**Each monthly edition incorporates the following:**

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. Sacred Scripture**
- 3. Reflection**
- 4. Faith in Action**
- 5. Activities**
- 6. Saint**
- 7. Resources/Bibliography**

# Prayer for the Epiphany of the Lord

Celebrated on January 5, 2025

*Begin with the Sign of the Cross.*

**Leader:** Today we gather to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany, when the wise men followed the star to find the “king of the Jews,” and found baby Jesus lying in the manger. Just like the wise men looked for the star and followed the light, we follow the light of Christ. We know that Jesus’ words are truth and will lead us down good paths.

The wise men arrived with their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They gave Jesus the best of what they have out of love and adoration. We can do the same.

Thank you for sending Jesus to be with us. Today we remember how the wise men followed the bright star to find Jesus and bring him gifts. Help us to always follow your light, just like the star, and to give the gift of love and kindness to everyone we meet. Let us take time to pray that we can open our hearts to Jesus and share our gifts with him the way the wise men did.

We thank you for loving us and being with us every day. Please bless our families, our friends, and everyone in the world. Help us to share your love and peace wherever we go.

We pray this in Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

Note: Song Suggestion - *We Three Kings*

[https://youtu.be/SUBTERdTKUg?si=AEGyv\\_1UNAXtE86K](https://youtu.be/SUBTERdTKUg?si=AEGyv_1UNAXtE86K)



Image from Canva

## Reading of Sacred Scripture:

Matthew 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem in Judea, Herod was king. During this time some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and said, "Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard about this, he was worried, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. Herod brought together all the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses and asked them,

"Where will the Messiah be born?" They told him, "He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote, 'Bethlehem in the land of Judea, you are very important among the towns of Judea. From your town will come a leader, who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel.'"

Herod secretly called in the wise men and asked them when they had first seen the star. He told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I want to go and worship him too."

The wise men listened to what the king said and then left. And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were thrilled and excited to see the star.

When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they kneeled down and worshiped him. They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and gave them to him.

Later they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, and they went back home by another road.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**



The Magi by H. Siddons Mowbray, ca. 1915  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Waldron Faulkner

## Gospel Reflection

This is a familiar story, partly because of the song “We Three Kings.” These kings have seen a bright star in the sky, which they know is a symbol that a new king has been born. They set out on a long journey with great faith, absolutely believing that they will find a newborn king. They believe they will find a political king living in a palace.

What did they think when they met King Herod and learned there was no newborn baby in Jerusalem?

Did they think that their stargazing had failed them? Did they wonder if, perhaps, this was not as bright a star as they originally thought? Did they yell about the time wasted traveling this great distance?

Maybe they were frustrated, maybe they wondered if they were on the right path, but they continued.

Like these men, sometimes in following Christ’s light we wonder if we are on the right path. Take a breath, listen for the Holy Spirit, and then look for that light and continue. Getting to Bethlehem, seeing the star stop over where Jesus lay, the wise men knew they had followed the right path. That moment of certainty brought them excitement and joy, just as following Christ’s light will do for us.



Image from Canva

## Faith in Action

The word 'epiphany' means revelation or manifestation. The Feast of the Epiphany takes place during the Christmas season and in our Catholic Christian tradition represents the manifestation of Jesus as the Messiah and Savior of the whole world. In the United States on the Sunday between January 2 and January 8 we celebrate the visit of the wise men or "Magi" who led by a star, came to adore the newborn king, Jesus.

The Feast of the Epiphany has influenced generations of Christians around the world. Inspired by the Magi who each brought a very special gift to the Christ child we are each inspired to bring our own gifts to Jesus. The Magi's gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh were traditional gifts given to honor the birth or anointing of a king. These gifts also had significance as they related to Jesus. The gold represents Jesus as king, the frankincense represents Jesus as priest and the myrrh was said to foretell Jesus' death in the future.



Adoration of the Magi, from the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection, The New York Public Library.

There are many ways to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany with our families. Together as a family read Matthew 2:1–12. As we reflect on this Scripture passage and the journey of the Magi to honor the newborn king, we can reflect on our own Christmas journeys. During the Christmas season we have much to be thankful for and much to celebrate. The most important gift of

all was the gift of God's son, Jesus. Epiphany is a time that we can reflect on the gift of Jesus and reflect on the gifts that we want to share with him. Spend time together praying and giving thanks for the wonderful gift of Jesus. Invite each family member to share what Jesus means to them by sharing aloud, writing, or drawing.

Then begin to think: what would be the perfect gift that each of you could give to Jesus? We learn from the holy Scriptures that first and foremost Jesus wants our hearts. Following the link below, help each family member draw and cut out a heart. Bring the paper hearts to the nativity scene in your home. As you place the heart gifts for the baby Jesus have each family member communicate “I love you Jesus” in whatever way works best for them. Once all the hearts are placed and everyone has shared their love of Jesus, hold hands and pray aloud (or silently) a prayer of thanksgiving, and the *Our Father* or the *Glory Be*.



Image from Vecteezy

[How to Make a Paper Heart: 3 Easy Fun Ways to Cut Out Paper Hearts, Virtual Art Lessons for Beginners by Deana Ren](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I53sNNDijEw)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I53sNNDijEw>

Another gift for Jesus and a beautiful way we can celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany is by shining the light of Christ to everyone we meet. In Matthew’s Gospel we read,

*When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.”* (Matthew 2:1–2)

According to ancient tradition, a star would appear announcing the birth of a king. The Magi saw the star and followed it to Jesus. As Catholic Christians we are called to share the light that leads others to Jesus. As a family, using the link below, create paper stars. Read the Gospel passage from Matthew and talk about ways you can shine Jesus' light for others. Write or draw your ideas on the stars or select images that express how you and your family members would like to shine the light of Christ for others. See the links below for free images of people helping others. Look through these with your family and download the ones you would like to try. Cut them out and glue them to your stars. Place them in a bowl near your nativity set.

### Links to Images of Kids Serving Others

FREEPIK:

<https://www.freepik.com/free-photos-vectors/kids-helping>

Vector Stock

<https://www.vectorstock.com/royalty-free-vectors/helping-others-children-vectors>



Image from Freepik

Each member of the family can pick a star and carry the light of Jesus to someone else, including members of your own family. At the end of each day, come together as a family, pray together and share how you shined Jesus' light for others that day. Encourage and inspire one another as you share Jesus' light with each other.

Some ideas for sharing Jesus' light with others:

- Pray for every member of your family.
- Tell someone that Jesus loves them.
- Ask if you can pray for someone.
- Tell someone about the true meaning of Christmas.



- Give bottled water to persons who are unhoused, include a prayerful note of encouragement on the bottle.
- Collect gently worn clothes and coats and donate them to a local donation center, place a card with a Scripture passage on it in the pockets.
- Help a family member with a chore, homework, or other task and let them know that you are doing it because you love Jesus and them.
- Say hello and smile at everyone you meet on the street, in school, and in stores.
- Tell someone about the meaning of the Epiphany.
- Bake cookies and share them with your neighbors, include the story of the Epiphany.



Image from Vecteezy

[DIY One Minute Paper Star Christmas Ornaments from Auermedia Arts & Crafts](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJmyKOTQFSE>

Wishing you a blessed and beautiful Feast of the Epiphany!

## Activities with Children

The Epiphany of the Lord celebrates the arrival of the three wise men in Bethlehem who revealed Jesus to the world as the Son of God. This day is sometimes referred to as “Three Kings Day.” The three wise men, upon seeing the light shining from the “Star of Bethlehem” on Christmas Day, began their journey. It took the three wise men twelve days, from December 25th to January 6th, to find Jesus.

The authors of “The History of the Epiphany: Here’s What You Need to Know” tell us that at the Council of Tours in 567 the Catholic Church named the twelve days between Christmas and the Epiphany as the Christmas season. While the traditional date for the Epiphany is on January 6th, the feast is moved in the United States to the Sunday between January 2nd and January 8th. In 2025, it will be celebrated on Sunday, January 5th.

In recognition of the twelve [days](#) it took the three wise men to journey to Bethlehem, your family may choose to participate in twelve different activities to prepare for The Epiphany of the Lord. Here are some ideas.

1. Create and decorate crowns for family members to wear. ([https://clipart-library.com/search1/?q=crown+-+black+and+white#google\\_vignette](https://clipart-library.com/search1/?q=crown+-+black+and+white#google_vignette))
2. Sing/Listen to the song “We Three Kings.” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBwL3y-Wlms>)
3. Recite prayers for the blessing of your home. (<https://www.usccb.org/prayers/blessing-home-and-household-epiphany>)



Image from Freepik

4. Watch “Humphrey’s First Christmas.” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qs8FYj390o>)
5. Read the Gospel of Matthew 2:1-12. (<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/010525.cfm>)
6. In honor of the Baby Jesus, collect and donate baby items to your church or a local charity.
7. Decorate a star to shine over Jesus. ([https://clipart-library.com/search1/?q=star+black+and+white#google\\_vignette](https://clipart-library.com/search1/?q=star+black+and+white#google_vignette))
8. Dress up as kings and go on a journey to find Jesus (e.g., shine a flashlight on a decorated star as you wander through your home). Upon finding Jesus, recite the Alleluia from Matthew 2:2. (<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/010525.cfm>)
9. Watch “Epiphany/The Wise Men.” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONgyaq3FnJA>)
10. Recite the Responsorial Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13. (<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/010525.cfm>)
11. Listen to Pope Francis talk about the Epiphany and putting God at the center of our journey through life. (<https://www.usccb.org/resources/pope-epiphany-call-put-god-center-0>)
12. Celebrate by going to Mass as a family on the Feast of the Epiphany!



Image from Vecteezy

# Saint for January

## Saint André Bessette

Feast Day January 6

When Alfred Bessette was born in Quebec, Canada in 1845 he was so sick and weak that the doctors did not think he would live, and he was baptized in an emergency ritual. He continued to be physically weak throughout his long life, dying at age 91, but his faith was incredibly strong.

Alfred became an orphan at age 12. He attended church and developed a strong devotion to St. Joseph. Alfred was kicked out of school at age 14 because after months of instruction he had only learned to read and sign his name, and that remained difficult for him. Alfred would



Christ the King Catholic Church, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

never become a good reader. He was a hard worker and had a lot of different jobs, moving often to look for new work when he lost jobs because of his weak health.

When Alfred was 25 his pastor, knowing what a hard worker and devout Catholic Alfred was, suggested that he join religious life. The pastor sent a letter to the Congregation of the Holy Cross in Montreal recommending Alfred for acceptance and saying, "I am sending you a saint." Alfred was turned away at first, partially because of his health and because his lack of reading skills made him unlike the other men in the order who were well-educated and spent a lot of time teaching. With the Archbishop's support, Alfred was accepted and became Brother André, making his final vows on February 7, 1874.

Brother André had a different skillset from the others in the order, and he was given jobs that did not require reading, most notably doorkeeper at the Collège Notre-Dame. Brother André was an excellent listener, gentle and compassionate. He visited those who were sick, bringing them cheer and prayer. He prayed with and for all who entered the doors, trusting in the intercession of Saint Joseph.

After a time, the brothers in the order noticed that Brother André's prayers were being answered and that they were witnessing miracles: the sick being healed, problems disappearing, hearts converting. As word spread, people lined up to speak with him. He prayed for them, he spent time with them, he was merciful and compassionate with them no matter what their need. The brothers in the order attributed 10,000 miracles to Brother André's prayers, but Brother André pointed out it was Saint Joseph who worked the miracles.



Image from Freepik

Saint André did not need a strong body and he did not need to know how to read or write to do the work that God had planned for him. We can strive to be humble caregivers like Saint André.

- Draw a picture, write a letter, or make a video for someone who is sick.



Image from Vecteezy

- Look at these 8 powerful prayers to St. Joseph you've never heard of and pray at least one as a family. <https://www.ncregister.com/blog/8-prayers-to-saint-joseph>



Image from Freepik

- Individually, or in pairs, find a way to care for someone else in the family this week. Think of anything that might lighten someone else's load. Ideas include: getting out a person's bowl and spoon for cereal in the morning; leaving an encouraging note or drawing; packing a person's lunch; taking over another person's chores (i.e., vacuuming/dusting/tidying up, cleaning the bathroom); giving a person time and space to do something they like to do like read or watch a favorite show.

Saint André information from <https://mycatholic.life/saints/saints-of-the-liturgical-year/january-6-blessed-andr-bessette-religious-usa-optional-memorial/>

## January Resources

“Blessing of the Home and Household on Epiphany,” USCCB, article: <https://www.usccb.org/prayers/blessing-home-and-household-epiphany>

Clip Art: Crown - [https://clipart-library.com/search1/?q=crown+-+black+and+white#google\\_vignette](https://clipart-library.com/search1/?q=crown+-+black+and+white#google_vignette)

“Epiphany/The Wise Men,” My First Bible Storybook, video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONgyaq3FnJA>

“Humphrey’s First Christmas,” by Carol Heyer, Hearts and Heroes Read Aloud, video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qs8FYj390o>

“Pope: Epiphany is a call to put God at the center,” Catholic News Service, video, 1/6/24: <https://www.usccb.org/resources/pope-epiphany-call-put-god-center-0>

Star - [https://clipart-library.com/search1/?q=star+black+and+white#google\\_vignette](https://clipart-library.com/search1/?q=star+black+and+white#google_vignette)

“The Greatest Gift of All,” Epiphany of the Lord - CathKids, Catholic Resource Library by CathFamily, video: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Epiphany-of-the-Lord-CathKids-5105392>

“The History of the Epiphany: Here’s What You Need to Know,” by CNA staff, Catholic News Agency, 1/7/24, article: <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/35171/the-history-of-the-epiphany-heres-what-you-need-to-know>

USCCB, Daily Readings (Gospel of Matthew 2:1-12, Alleluia from Matthew 2:2, Responsorial Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13): <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/010525.cfm>

“We Three Kings,” Christmas Songs and Carols - Love to Sing, video with lyrics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBwL3y-Wlms>

“What is the Feast of the Epiphany?,” Divine Mercy, video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1zC9Kx36wA>



## January Bibliography

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“Saint André Bessette,” - My Catholic Life! <https://mycatholic.life/saints/saints-of-the-liturgical-year/january-6-blessed-andr-bessette-religious-usa-optional-memorial/>