

What Can I Bring?

1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

6 "'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'"

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

The Gift of Character

Match each trait of a wise giver shown in the gift boxes with an underlined portion of Scripture (see down below). Write the portion of Scripture on the line under the correct box. Wise givers:

recognize the value of the one to whom they give.

1. _____

take note of important times.

2. _____

can follow directions.

3. _____

observe closely and patiently.

4. _____

ask important questions.

5. _____

give appropriate gifts.

6. _____

dare to move out of familiar surroundings.

7. _____

remain sensitive to the Spirit's leading.

8. _____

investigate thoroughly.

9. _____

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⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Matthew 2:1, 2, 7-12



What Are You Building?

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told the contractor for whom he worked of his plans. He wanted to leave the house-building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife.

The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter agreed, but his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. The house looked all right on the outside, but he knew it would not last.

When the carpenter finished his work, the employer came to inspect the house. He handed the front door key to the carpenter. "This is your house," he said. "It's my gift to you."

The carpenter was shocked! What a shame! If only he had known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently.

Now evaluate the carpenter's attitude by the example of the Magi:

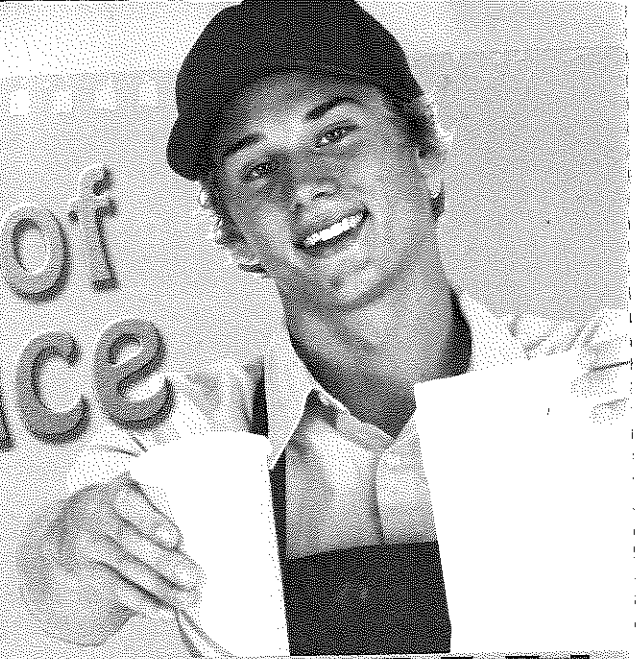
The Magi were willing to give even when it was inconvenient. Did the carpenter follow that standard? Explain.

The Magi were willing to listen to God's direction. What direction do you think God would have given this carpenter when he started to build? How might the story of the carpenter have been different if he had applied the attitude seen in Matthew 7:9-12?

The Magi recognized the value of the child and gave valuable gifts. Did the carpenter consider the value of the person who would be living in the house? Explain.

Write a moral for this story. How might your life be different if you applied that moral to your life today?

Gifts of Service



You may have just spent the last month coming up with material gifts to show your loved ones that you care. But now you can show people you care by giving a gift that goes beyond material things—the gift of service. Here's how to do it:

1. Evaluate your talents and hobbies. Make a list of them here:
2. Ask God to reveal people to you whose needs you could fulfill by using your talents or hobbies. List the ones who come to mind here:
3. What would doing this act of service cost you? (Think of time, money, etc.) List the costs here:
4. Choose a few people and the gifts of service you'd like to provide. When and where will you do these things? How will you let the people know you are doing these things because you value them?