

BRINGING HOME THE GOSPEL

January 3, 2021 • Epiphany of the Lord • Matthew 2:1-12

Paying Homage

Mary, the baby Jesus and Joseph are still in Bethlehem, but they have left the stable and are resting in someone's home. While they are there three men from the East arrive. The strangers have followed a star and are seeking a newly born king. When they see Jesus they know their search has ended.

Imagine Mary and Joseph's surprise when the Magi turn up at their door. The Holy Family lets them in, and the strangers kneel on the floor saying all sorts of wonderful things about their newborn. Before leaving they give them gifts fit for the grandest of kings.

Imagine Mary and Joseph's conversation when the Magi left—first, the shepherds, then Simeon and Anna and now these exotic-looking travelers. They began their Bethlehem visit with only a stable for shelter, and now they carried gold, frankincense and myrrh. Having Jesus in their life was certainly going to be interesting. But they were open to challenges and surprises, hardships and blessings.

The same is true when we accept Jesus in our lives. With Jesus as our center we are expected to be like Mary and Joseph—open to all that life offers. We are expected to open our hearts and our lives to the poor as well as the wealthy, to the uneducated as well as those who are wise. God calls us to accept the unexpected guest in whatever travel-weary appearance they come.

Life is filled with challenges and hardships, benefits and surprise whether you believe in Jesus or not. However, those of us who believe are given a treasure even more precious than gold, frankincense or myrrh. When we say yes to Jesus, the good and not so good parts of life are shared with him, and all that is and is to be becomes a gift.

FAMILY RESPONSE

Have each family member talk about how they think Mary and Joseph reacted to the visit of the Magi. Ask each person what was one of the biggest surprises they have ever experienced.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

Having a child in the house offers surprises every day. What still surprises you about being a parent? What do you want to remember from last week? What are you looking forward to next week? What are your concerns?