

Epiphany

This Christian feast usually takes place in churches on the 6th January. Epiphany comes from a Greek word meaning 'appearance'. It is a celebration of the Baby Jesus being seen by the visitors who had travelled to see him.

The Visitors

Three men were looking at the stars and one night, they saw a new star. The men were very clever and understood the religious writings that had been written many years before. The writings said that one day there would be a great star and it would mean that a new king, the king to save all people, had been born. Packing up their things, they followed it. They are known as the Three Wise Men.

Did you know?

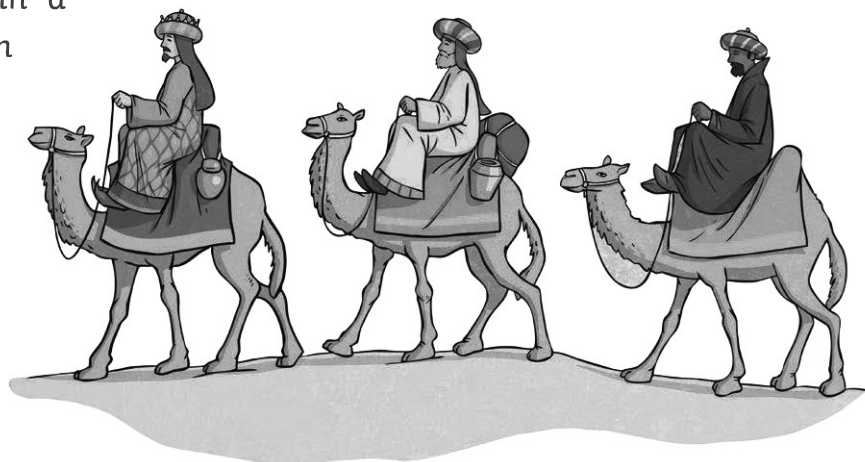
The Wise Men lived in the East so they may have been from Persia which is now called Iran.

The Bible doesn't say how many Wise Men there were, but because there were three gifts, people think that there must have been three men.

The Wise Men are often called the Three Kings.

The Journey

The journey would have been very long and tiring. The men may have travelled on camels or horses. The star led them to the town of Bethlehem in Israel. The star came to rest over the place where Jesus was. It is thought that the Wise Men visited the stable, but it is more likely that they arrived much later than the birth. They found Jesus in a house in Bethlehem with his mother and father.



The Wise Men took gifts for the new baby.

Gold

A precious metal. The Wise Men gave it as a sign of their love for Jesus as their king.



Frankincense

Giving it to Jesus shows his priesthood and that the Wise Men had faith: Jesus was no ordinary king.



Myrrh

Myrrh was less expensive than frankincense but it was still of great value. It was used in perfume, oils, medicine and burials and is a symbol of suffering and death.



Did you know?

In Spain, some children fill their shoes with straw and leave them outside for the animals belonging to the Wise Men. In Spanish speaking countries, Epiphany is known as 'Dia de los Reyes' or 'Three Kings Day'.

Epiphany Questions

1. Who celebrates Epiphany?

2. What did the Three Wise Men follow?

3. Why did the Three Wise Men follow it?

4. Give another name for the Three Wise Men.

5. Give an adjective which describes their journey.

6. List the three gifts and say which you think is the most important and why.

7. Why might Epiphany be celebrated in Spain too?
