Epiphany is the feast which celebrates the manifestation of Christ as Savior of the world (CCC Glossary). The coming of the magi means that pagans, made worthy of the heritage of the Israelites, can discover Jesus and worship the Savior of the world (CCC #528).

**RCIA team notes**
Each catechumen’s gradual change is made manifest in social consequences (RCIA #75.2). Take note of attitude changes and actions for justice each catechumen begins to display.

**Items to prepare**
- check-in sheet and nametags
- Bibles
- poster paper or white board, erasers, and erasable markers
- Sharing Faith questions
- copies of “Faith at Home”
- white cloth on table or counter space for prayer
- Bible set to Matthew 2
- candle, matches
- gold jewelry, lotion
- incense charcoal in heat-proof holder and incense
- recycled large paper bags or cardboard, rulers, scissors, crayons, markers, glitter glue, craft glue, or cool-touch glue gun, heavy tape, rods
- (optional) star and cross stickers, simple costumes and props

**Planning ahead**
For the Crossing the Ages Activity for the Baptism of the Lord session, make arrangements to visit the baptismal font and to show the vestments and garments. Option: Arrange for the group to witness a baptism.
DISMISSAL SESSION

GATHERING (15 MINUTES)

If using incense charcoal, light it in a heat proof container and have an assistant watch it. Catechumens, having heard the proclamation of the word for the Epiphany of the Lord, are dismissed from the Mass before the Creed. Greet them as they arrive, and have them check in and put on nametags. Offer each new member materials and have a catechumen assist in making a nametag.

GATHERING PRAYER RITUAL

All stand around prayer focal point. Sprinkle incense on the coals, or light quick-start incense. Light the candle. Pause for a moment of silence.

Pick up the incense container, and waft the incense towards the candle, saying:

May your light, O Christ, show us the way.

Waft the incense towards the Bible, saying:

Teach us, O God, the words of everlasting life.

Waft the incense around the space, saying:

Come, Holy Spirit, and bless this holy ground on which we gather.

Waft the incense towards the catechumens, saying:

God who is among us, open the ears, open the lips, and open the hearts of these catechumens as they share here today.

All: Amen.

Place the incense holder near the Bible. Invite the members when you lift a hand to respond with “All nations shall come with gifts of peace.” Prayerfully say each of the following verses inspired by Psalm 72, and call for the response by lifting a hand:

(†) Justice shall flower with peace forever. (response)

O God, guide leaders in the way of justice. (response)

And rescue, O God, the poor who cry out. (response)

Song Suggestion: A Christmas carol sung in liturgy.

Extinguish the candle flame. Snuff the incense.
CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER

Invite everyone to sit in a circle. Introduce anyone new. Invite sharing about their experiences with the “Faith at Home” page from the previous session.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Explain to everyone:

This week we are holding tryouts for Team Magi. Reflect for a moment what it would be like to be on a team focused on Jesus. Choose a sport. Decide how the position you want helps Team Magi.

Give the catechumens an example such as, “On hockey Team Magi I would be the goalie to block the devil from scoring.”

RECALLING THE WORD (10 MINUTES)

Have everyone sit in a circle with Bibles. Use the following guide. For information, refer to “Insight for the Catechist” (p. 5) and the reflection on the “Faith At Home” page.

The prophet who wrote the book of the Isaiah advises looking through troubled times. Look beyond problems to see the wonderful things that are of God.

⇒ What words in the reading help us see the glory of God? (See Isaiah 60:1-6.)

⇒ “Rise up” means, “Come worship.” What makes you want to come and worship God?

⇒ How would you feel if your grandparents gave you a wonderful gift, something you always wanted, and just when you were beginning to enjoy it, you were told you had to share it with the whole world?

For hundreds of years the Jewish people told their children and their children’s children about a special savior who would come just for them. Paul helped the Jewish Christians realized that Jesus came for everyone. (See Ephesians 3:2-6.)

⇒ How does it feel to be invited by God to inherit the benefits of faith in Christ Jesus?

The gospel story this week is about the manifestation of Christ as Savior of the world. We call this celebration the feast of the Epiphany. (See Matthew 2:1-12.)

⇒ What are your feelings about the gospel story about the magi who found Jesus?

Affirm the catechumens’ comments and insights.
**Praying Intercessions**  

(5 MINUTES)

We believe that God knows our concerns and hears our prayers, so let us petition God in prayer.

When I lift my hand please respond, “God of all people, hear our prayer.”

- May catechumens be inspired by people who rise up and worship. *(Lift a hand for the response.)*

- For all who come to worship Christ, may they feel welcomed. *(Lift a hand for the response.)*

- Help us manifest your love, God of all. *(Lift a hand for the response.)*

Invite the members to contribute their own intercessions. Then conclude:

God of all,  
hear the prayers we have spoken  
and those we hold in our hearts  
so that everyone in the world may know your goodness.  
We pray in unity with the Holy Spirit  
and through Christ Jesus who shows us the way to you,  
one God of all, for ever and ever.

**All:** Amen.

Option: Break for a snack and social time.
The Catechetical Session follows the Dismissal Session either immediately or at another time during the week. The Catechetical Session is designed for catechumens and parents or sponsors to grow in faith together. The status of the catechumens never is to be confused with that of baptized children preparing for confirmation or Eucharist, who may join in this catechesis as supportive companions (RCIA, Appendix III, #19).

GATHERING FOR CATECHESIS (5 MINUTES)
Welcome the catechumens, parents, sponsors, and any baptized children arriving from liturgy. If this Catechetical Session does not take place immediately following the Dismissal Session, plan an additional ten minutes and begin with the Gathering and Connecting segments in the Dismissal Session.

PRAYING
Invite everyone to stand around the prayer focal point. Use the (†) prayer from the Gathering Prayer Ritual in the Dismissal Session, another prayer, or sing a Christmas carol or a gathering song from liturgy.

ENGAGING THE WORD (15 MINUTES)
For younger groups, dramatically tell the story of God’s goodness triumphing over evil. For older children, give them copies to do a dramatic enactment. (Option: Instead of the “Sharing Faith” activity, have the members present their practiced dramatization to a preschool. Provide simple costumes and props.)

Once upon a time, right after Jesus was born in Bethlehem, King Herod ruled in the land of Judea. King Herod was an evil and selfish ruler.

Behold! A caravan of visitors arrived in Jerusalem. These travelers were magi. They were wise people who studied the skies. The magi had noticed a bright star and followed it from the east.

The magi asked around the city, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We have come to pay him homage.”

Herod was immediately jealous. A new king! This could not be. He talked with his priests. “Tell me! What do the scriptures tell? Where is the savior, the Christ, to be born?”

The Epiphany of the Lord
Year A, B, C

Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13
Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6
Matthew 2:1-12

Insight for the Catechist
The story of the magi foreshadows Jesus’ ultimate triumph over evil. There is great intrigue, a villainous king and a good king, a guiding star, gifts, and a dream warning. The king’s counselors, who should be the believers, do not see the truth. The wise strangers, who are the most unlikely of believers, are overcome with joy when finding Jesus. They pay homage with kingly gifts.

Herod, wanting to snuff out this child, this rising star, is foiled by divine intervention when the magi have a dream. After their epiphany, the magi go another way. We, too, are never the same after coming to know Jesus.

The magi represent Gentiles who joined early Christian communities. For Paul it is a mystery of revelation—two groups who had been at odds for millennia become copartners in the one body of Christ.

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The priests consulted their scriptures and told the king, “In Bethlehem of Judea! The prophet says God will send a ruler who will be kind and just. This savior will rule God’s people Israel like a shepherd.”

The wicked Herod sent them away and secretly called the magi. He tried to trick the magi into helping him get rid of this child king.

Faking affection, Herod said, “Go to Bethlehem. Search high and low. When you find this child, return to me so I too may go and do him homage.”

The magi set out for Bethlehem with the star still guiding them. Suddenly, the star stopped moving. They were overcome with joy! Their long search was over. The magi entered the house where the child Jesus clung to his mother Mary.

The strangers bowed down to him. They opened treasure chests! They offered gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These were expensive gifts. These were gifts fit for a king!

That night, the wise people who sought out and found Jesus, fell asleep. The magi were warned in a dream about Herod’s evil heart. Would they be deceived? No! They returned to their home by another way.

**SHARING FAITH**

Form groups of four to six mixed-age groups with Bibles. (If there are only a few participants, lead the discussion as a whole group.) Print the questions on large paper or marker board or distribute questions on cards for an adult to lead. Circulate to offer support.

**CONVERSING ABOUT MATTHEW 2:1-12**

- In what ways are you like the magi, a wise person seeking Jesus?
- What or who has been your guiding star along the way?
- What gifts or good actions do you offer Jesus?

After eight minutes, ask a volunteer from each group to report one major insight. Conclude:

**We Christians celebrate Christ’s Epiphany as Savior of the world. The magi’s visit means that anyone can discover Jesus and that Jesus is for everyone. It does not matter what country someone is from or what kind of clothes they wear.**

**CARRYING OUT THE WORD**

**SUMMING UP**

Invite everyone to stand around the prayer focal point. Encourage them to offer insights from this week’s session. Conclude with the following:

**This week we have reflected on how all people can come to know Jesus. As we show Christ to the world, others will come to know Jesus by seeing us.**
CLOSING PRAYER

Ask the members to hold their hands palm up as a way of praying.

Thank you, Christ our savior, for coming to the whole world. Send your Holy Spirit to remind us to be your gift to others.

(Hold up gold jewelry.) When we see something gold, let us remember that people who are hungry are more important than valuable objects.

(Hold up the burning incense.) When we smell something unusual, let us remember to pray for people whose ways differ from ours.

(Dab lotion on each person’s hands. Rub your hands together to indicate they rub in the lotion.) When we feel a soothing touch, let us remember to speak out for those in need of a gentle touch.

Let us go forth (make the Sign of the Cross on yourself as a model for everyone) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Distribute the “Faith At Home” page. Collect the nametags.

Crossing the Ages Activity

(Optional activity: 20 minutes)

1. Show how to cut elongated triangle shapes, six inches at the base and nine inches long.

2. Shade the triangle background using crayon. Then, print “Team Magi” in block letters using a dark crayon or marker.

3. On the backside the members write a way they can join the magi in seeking Jesus (pray nightly, take care of my clothes to pass on when I grow).

4. Decorate the pennant using glitter glue or stickers.

5. Glue the pennant to a rod.

6. Those who finish first may make up “Team Magi” cheers.
At a convenient time for the family, gather around the dining table or in the living room. Place a Bible opened to Matthew 2 in the center. Silence all electronics. Begin with a moment of quiet.

**Reflecting on Isaiah 60:1-6**

The poet writing in the book of Isaiah was certainly a visionary. The writer looked beyond the gloom and kept focused on God’s glory shining through the destruction that had occurred. This image reminds us that God shines through our bad times.

⇒ Parents, share with your children about a difficult time. How did God’s love shine through the problems and help you look above the problems?

⇒ What is one difficulty our family is currently having, either something little or something seemingly overwhelming? Pray about this problem using the following guide. Pause for a moment of silence. Then, someone reads the following pausing after each sentence while everyone reflects.

**Your light has come!**

Imagine the glory of God shining through this troubled time. (pause)

See a time in the future when the trouble is gone. (pause)

Envision your family shining in a new way once the difficulty is behind you. (pause)

Ask God to be with your family as you work through this problem. (Each person says a prayer.)
Reflecting on Ephesians 3:2-3A, 5-6

The vision of the prophets becomes a reality in Christ Jesus who comes bearing salvation for every nation on earth. When the Jewish and gentle Christians are able to reconcile their differences and worship as one Body of Christ, Paul sees the mystery of God at work within humanity.

⇒ Identify two groups of people who in our time conflict with each other.
⇒ What needs to happen between these two groups so that the mystery of God’s love may be known?

Reflecting on Matthew 2:1-12

The magi represent all the wise people who seek Jesus. “Epiphany” means the manifestation that Jesus is the Savior of the world. The gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh symbolize Jesus’s divine nature as king, priest, and prophet. Gold, a possession of kings, represents the reign of God’s love. Frankincense, offered by priests in prayer, foreshadows Jesus offering of himself on the cross. Myrrh is the basic ingredient in anointing balms. The gift shows that Jesus is God’s “Anointed One” who prophetically proclaims what is right and just even to the point of death.

⇒ $ How do we use the family’s income to support the reign of God’s love?
⇒ ☪ What type of prayers does our family offer for other people?
⇒ ☘ When have we, as a family, taken a prophetic stand by declaring to others something we think is right and just?