

Christmas Assembly 2024 – *Reaching The Goal*; based on The Wise Men (Matt. 2): How a worthwhile goal can motivate us on our journey toward it.

Story of the Wise Men's Journey to visit Jesus

Cosmic Journey - From Heaven to Earth - Philippians 2

Christmas Assembly 2024 - Reaching The Goal.pptx

(RE/Collective Worship cluster covered: commitment & contemplation. Disposition covered: Being Silent and Attentive to, and Cultivating a Sense for, the Sacred and Transcendence; Being Hopeful and Visionary).
(U) We should all seek to better not just ourselves but also the lives of others and our world at large.
(T) God created us all as spiritual beings – he made everyone to know Him & serve others, and He has placed within us all a desire to find meaning, purpose and ultimate fulfilment in Him.
(FS) Christians believe that God the Father gave to our broken world the gift of The Son, Jesus to save people from their sins, offering all who trust in Him an unending friendship with God and a future with Him to look forward to – this is a goal that is truly worthwhile.

Script with accompanying Powerpoint

PART A – Delivered by Presenter

(When students are entering the hall Display (title) **Slide 1 (Quotes)**).

(When/before teacher is handing over to you **Display Title Slide**).

P1

(NAME) (**Click X2**) from Birmingham City Mission, a local Christian charity that serves people in need. And we do this alongside (**Slide**) local church partners across Birmingham.

[NB. If Local Church partner is co-delivering say: 'including (NAME OF PERSON) from (NAME OF CHURCH)]

[NB. If church is delivering solo they briefly mention BCM before mentioning their church in particular]

(Slide) So, we're approaching Christmas and another year has nearly gone! We are in the season of advent when followers of Jesus, such as myself, prepare to celebrate his birth that first Christmas some 2,000 years ago. During this season, many people also reflect on the past 12 months.

P2

(Slide - concert venue) This year has seen some *big concerts* whether it be Travis Scott or Taylor Swift. Fans would spend hours in online queues to purchase costly tickets – because they were determined to *be there*, to see their favourite act perform live.

(Slide – sporting events) We've also seen some *big sporting events* this past year such as Wimbledon, the Euros, boxing, Test cricket and the Olympic & Paralympic games. The athletes would have gone on a strict diet & training programme for years leading up to the Olympics.

What would have driven them on was a determination to *reach their Goal (slide)*, to *make it* to the games and to win that medal.

And, maybe by the end, they'll have found that it was *worth* the effort.

(Slide) In some ways, we're all on a journey in life as **we search for meaning, true fulfilment and a sense of purpose.**

The people we are looking at today also sought to do this. Let's see more in this **video**. (**Slide & click** to play):

PART B [approx. 7 min 30 in total – nearer to 8 mins if church shares]

B.1 – VIDEO (1) – the story of the Wise Men (Rich) – (04.05):

Transcript of video B1:

In the Bible, Matthew writes in the book named after him:

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Wise Men (or Magi) from the east came to Jerusalem & asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose & have come to worship him.”

Wise men or ‘magi’ were clever people, the scientists of their day. Being astronomers they would have studied the stars. They came from ‘the East’, most likely ancient Persia which is modern day Iran or Iraq, some 1,000 miles away from Jesus’ birthplace. These Magi would have studied the stars closely night after night for years looking for God to speak through them. And, then perhaps suddenly this bright, unique star would have appeared. They believed this was God giving them a sign, a message announcing the great news that their long-awaited King had been born. That this King, or Messiah figure, who they had read about in the ancient writings - who would one day rescue & rule the world with peace & justice – had finally arrived. The amazed Wise Men knew they had to visit this new King.

Although the journey would be long & dangerous they were prepared to step out because they knew they *had to* (be there to witness history being made), they had **to accomplish their goal**. So like runners running a race they began this epic journey, but this journey was about the equivalent of 40 marathons! They were motivated not by personal gain but by a desire to give to and honour this special King.

After months or even years of travelling - not via plane or uber – but via camel-back over rough terrain, the Wise Men had finally reached their destination. They crossed the finish line.

The narrative says that: the same star they had initially seen guided them to precisely *‘the place where the child was’*. That’s precision! Better than GPS or google maps!

They had made it! Now, Matthew’s gospel tells us that they: ‘Came to *the house*’ and ‘*saw the child*’... ‘*with his mother Mary, and bowed down and worshiped him*’. That child of course was Jesus.

Imagine the scene.... these rich, powerful, respected professors in their expensive clothes kneeling on the ground to worship & honour this little boy! It seems strange, but they must have realised this is no ordinary little child - this child is a special gift from God, in fact, it’s God himself ‘with us’.

Upon seeing the child, they would have instantly known that their long journey had all been worth it – Jesus, a prize greater than any medal. And now they wanted to give God a thank you present in return. It says they presented the child with three symbolic gifts: Gold, Frankincense & Myrrh. But these men gave more than special, material gifts – they gave Him their hearts, their worship, their love.

Shorter/30 Second SUMMARY of B1:

In the Bible, Matthew writes:

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Wise Men (or Magi) from the east came to Jerusalem & asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose & have come to worship him.”

Wise men or 'magi' were the scientists of their day. They came from 'the East', most likely ancient Persia modern day Iran, 1,000 miles away from Jesus' birthplace. Being astronomers the Magi would have studied the stars closely. And, then perhaps suddenly this bright, unique star would have appeared. They believed this was God giving them a sign, a message announcing the great news that their long-awaited King & Rescuer had been born. The amazed Wise Men knew they had to visit this new King.

Although the journey would be long & dangerous they were prepared to step out because they knew they had to accomplish their *goal*. The narrative says that: the same star they had initially seen guided them to precisely '*the place where the child was*'. Matthew's gospel tells us that they: 'Came to *the house*' and '*saw the child*'... '*with his mother Mary, and bowed down and worshiped him*'. That child of course was Jesus.

Imagine this: these rich, powerful, respected professors kneeling on the ground to worship & honour this little boy! They must have realised this child is a unique child, a special gift from God the Father.

They would have instantly known that their long journey had all been worth it.

It says they presented the child with three symbolic gifts: Gold, Frankincense & Myrrh. But these men gave Him their hearts, their worship, their love.

B.2 – Delivered by Presenter

P1

(Click). As the Wise Men looked at Jesus, they may have realised that the long journey they had taken was nothing compared to the journey *he* had taken to be with them. Persia to Judea is far enough, but *heaven to earth* is *infinitely* further.

(Slide) This past year marked the 55th anniversary of the 1969 Apollo 11 mission to the moon. Colonel James Irwin, who later visited the moon, said **(slide)**: '*Jesus walking on the earth is more important than man walking on the moon.*'

Christians like Colonel Irwin believe that Jesus **(Slide)** is also 'God the Son', 'God with us', as the Bible describes him; and before He came into this world, He had always been in heaven, a perfect place, with God the Father. But he willingly came *down* from heaven to *this* broken and troubled world. The Bible also teaches that He took on human form and became a baby through the power of The Holy Spirit. He would grow up to experience our human pains and emotions, and would live a life of love to his neighbour and to his enemies. Let's see more through this **video**: **(Slide & click** to play):

B.3 – VIDEO (2)– Jesus' coming, identity & mission (Rianne) (02:00):

Transcript of video:

The Bible also says that Jesus' great love led him on this cosmic journey because he *knew he had to fulfil his goal*. His goal wasn't personal gain, it was about giving. The Bible says that:

He 'being in very nature God did not consider equality with God (the Father) something to be used to his own advantage, rather he made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant and was made in human form... And being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself by becoming obedient unto death, even death on a cross'

Christians believe that Jesus did all this for a reason - to rescue people who had turned their back on a good & loving God and lived selfishly and done wrong to others – this had caused their connection with God the Father, Son & Holy Spirit to become broken.

But Jesus would repair this, the Bible says - he would accomplish a wonderful rescue some 30 years later... when he would lay down his life on a cross and rise again, and in doing so would make it possible for all who

trust in Him to be forgiven of their wrongs and be made friends with God.

The Bible promises they can be guaranteed a place in heaven and ultimately, in a future perfect new creation that Jesus is preparing for all who follow Him, the Bible says.

Now, for me as a follower of Jesus, all of this is why I celebrate His coming to earth at Christmas time. And, as with the wise men, Christians want the main goal of their life to be to worship Jesus, a goal that's worthwhile.

B.4 – Delivered by Presenter

P1

(Click) One of the ways that Christians show their worship and thanks to Jesus – for all He has done - is to love the people he made – to serve people regardless of where they come from or what they believe. That's why we at Birmingham City Mission serve: **(Slide)** the homeless through our Care Centre, **(Slide)** older people through visiting them in their homes & care homes; **(Slide)** those struggling to make ends meet through our resource centre, food bank and charity shop; and **(Slide)** children through our Christmas present project, Toylink.

We are able to give gifts to people in need because hundreds of people, schools and businesses have given to us.

Our goal at BCM is to bring joy, comfort and hope.

P2

[Optional: Church partner to share about any of their projects that serve their local community bringing hope = 20/30 secs]

PART C [about 2 min 30 sec in length. Nearer to 3 min with reflection]

P2

So, we've seen how for:

(Slide) Jesus, his goal in rescuing people motivated him to make *his great journey*;

(Slide) how for the *Magi*, their *goal of seeing Jesus* motivated them to make *their epic journey*;

(Slide) And when we have a worthwhile goal it can motivate us to *journey* towards it as well.

(Slide) I'm going to end with three questions for you to think about and reflect on:

Firstly, (slide) I wonder, **what are your goals in life?** And **are they worthwhile?**

Celebrities and Influencers often tell us that we need to aim at this or that in order to 'make it'. But here are some goals that are definitely worthwhile: - finding the answers to the big questions in life or doing something good for your family, friends or those in need. Maybe it's learning new skills or even just getting that little bit better at a game, hobby, or sport.

Secondly, (click) I wonder, **have you already tried reaching a goal but you've found it so hard that you've given up?** Well, the Wise Men could easily have turned back, but they would have missed out on seeing Jesus!....You may not reach your goal straightaway but through perseverance you can get there.

P1

Thirdly, (click) I wonder, **do you ever stop to look up?** The Wise men took time to *look up* at the stars and *explore* the bigger, spiritual side of life; and it inspired them to go on a journey of discovery.

I wonder if *you* ever *pause* amid the fast-paced nature of life? To disconnect from screens, *to look up* and see the beauty around you? To see nature, sunsets, and stars. To be silent, to refresh yourself mentally & physically - that's a worthwhile goal!

(Slide) So, you've heard how for Christians, Christmas is primarily about Jesus, this great gift to the world. But, whether you share my Christian faith or not, may you *all* this season and always do what the Wise Men did:- *look up* and make your journeys toward worthwhile goals.

[NB. Reflection - either a short or longer reflection:

Short reflection: 'I will leave these three questions up (**slide**) for you to reflect on as I hand back over to your teacher now. Thank you.'

Slightly longer reflection (for where there's time) - hold a moment (10-15 sec) of silence for quiet reflection, thus): 'We're now going to have a few moments of quiet reflection. To consider these 3 questions again which are on the screen, and how we might put them into practice.

(Optional addition, where you feel comfortable): 'Those of you of faith *may* want to silently ask God to help you in doing these things. But others here may wish to reflect on what you've heard today.... Thank you.]

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