

FOLLOWING THE STAR

Follow the Star

We are beginning a new year.

A new leg in our spiritual journey...

All things are NEW AGAIN!

We are all on a journey...seeking, looking,
finding, watching, waiting, hoping...growing.

TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES...

Be willing to leave your comfort zone tonight.

Open your heart, your mind,
your emotions to what God
has in store for you...

USE THE PRAYER STATIONS,

THE ART STATION,

THE OASIS ALONG THE PATH

Like the Wise Men of old...

pay attention to the signs...

Follow the Star...Seek the King

BE OPEN TO WHAT THE LIGHT

MAY SHOW YOU...

WELCOME TO THE JOURNEY.

Come Follow the Star!

Matthew 2:1-12

The Magi Visit the Messiah

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: " '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.' "

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

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. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 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. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Station 1 Signs

The Quest of the Magi

Consider existence as a magi (a wiseman/a
wisewoman/counselor)

You are extremely smart...in fact you are in the top 5
in your class. A scholar.

You are interested in everything, in learning all you
can.

You spend hours reading and in searching the
Internet for information on a variety of subjects.

Friends and even teachers come and ask you for
advice and for help on projects.

You want to know things...

You are interested

You are inquisitive

YOU are always aware and available for new stuff to
come along

YOU aren't afraid to search for new things

YOU aren't afraid to go wherever you need to go to
get the info you need!

After months of searching and reading

You notice on the Internet that stuff starts coming
together.

Many things seem to be pointing to a special event
getting ready to happen in a distant city.

You get so excited that you tell your friends

And they start watching for the signs, too.
Finally when the evidence for this special event is so great that you just can't miss it...
You tell your family you have to go
You don't know how long you'll be gone
You don't know when you will be back

You pack your bags with gifts
You and your friends leave to look for this new king who has been announced in all the signs...
You leave your home, your family, all that is familiar to
Follow the Star... To seek the King of Kings...Are you ready

ACTION

Stamp your hand with a STAR
as a symbol of your willingness to seek
after JESUS and follow his star.
This might be your first step on the journey.
Are you willing to stamp your hand with a STAR
as a first step?

Talk to Jesus about this

Matthew 2

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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.' "

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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.

13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, 15 where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. 17 Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

18 "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

The Return to Nazareth

19 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt 20 and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

21 So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been

warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, 23 and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

Station 2 Signs

What keeps you from the journey?

What keeps you from following the star?

SIT DOWN IN THE CHAIR

What keeps you “stuck at home”...

not willing to leave the comfort

of the palace to follow the STAR,

to go on the adventure with God?

What are you afraid of?

What keeps you from going to Bethlehem to worship Jesus?

Herod was afraid...

He didn't want to lose power or position to the newborn KING.

What things keep you from the journey,

what things keep you from worshipping?

Ask God to show you these things...

Be honest; be real...

God loves you and wants you to be with him.

God wants you to be REAL with him.

Write down those things that you are of afraid of on a piece of duct tape...

the things that keep you stuck...

keep you from the journey, from following

the STAR and worshipping the King...

from really going to Jesus?

Let Jesus have your fears, your

burdens, your blocks...

Thank him for taking away your fears

(See Matthew 2:1-12 from Station 1)

1 John 1:8-10

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive

us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

Station 3 Signs

Light of the World Matthew 4:16

“The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”

JESUS (John 8:12)

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Optional Sign:

(This sign could also be used at the beginning/ introduction to the prayer experience as a definition if used during Epiphany.)

Epiphany is the celebration of the Magi—the Gentiles—receiving the Gift of the King of Kings and experiencing his love.

Epiphany means “to make known, to reveal.”

Our world needs to experience more and more of God's love.

Our world needs to experience the light of Jesus in its darkness

Take a few moments to pray for our world.

Pick a country or two and pray specifically for the light of Jesus to shine there.

Pray for missionaries around the world.

Pray also for your enemies that they may be touched by God's love.

ADD your own names and places to pray for on the Map.

Place stars on the map as you pray for these countries, missionaries, and even enemies.

Isaiah 9:2

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

Matthew 5:43-45

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Station 4 Signs

Following the STAR, following Jesus

What would compel me follow the Star in (choose your year)?

What makes me stay at home?

Herod wasn't curious; he wasn't looking.

The scribes in Herod's court could look up information, but they didn't do anything with it... they didn't take action.

Think about the Magi. They were looking for something; they were expecting something BIG!

They were trained to read the stars and they chose to PAY ATTENTION.

Where are you today?

What would it take for you to follow the STAR?

Like the wise men, are you willing to go on an adventure to find the King?

Even if no one else goes along?

Are you willing to leave your comfort zone to find the King?

Are you willing to risk?

What is God's STAR calling you to?

Are you willing to take your treasure to the King?

Even when things don't look like you expect them to?

What two things do you need to do less of so you can follow the Star in the New Year?

(Less TV, less video games, less shopping, less anger, less comparison, less wasted time, less judgment of others, less prejudice, etc.)

Write both obstacles on two stars and put them in the manger scene.

What two things do you need to do more of...in order to follow the Light of Jesus this year?

(More compassion, more serving the poor, more honesty, more prayer, more trust, more love, more rest/Sabbath, more _____?)

Write both of these wishes for better things on two stars and put them in the manger scene, too.

Write down what you wrote on the stars and take it home.

Ask Jesus to help you follow him in (choose your year)...tell him where you are on your journey...he's not afraid of how you feel or where you've been.

Jesus just wants to be with you NOW and ALWAYS!

Take a star home to remind you to follow Jesus and shine his light in (choose your year).

Hebrews 12:1-2

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Psalms 32:8

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

Station 5 Signs

Look at the ladder...

It's like a journey to the star...to Jesus...

Where are you on your journey with Jesus right now?

Really close? Really far away...or somewhere in the middle?

Take some time and talk to God about this. Then put your star on the ladder.

James 4:7-8

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Jeremiah 29:13-14

13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity.

I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

Deuteronomy 31:6

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.

Matthew 28:20

"and teaching them to obey everything I

have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Station 6 Signs

How bright is your LIGHT to the world...

Matthew 5:1-15

Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them. He said: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness,
for they will be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because
of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed are you when people insult you,
persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against
you
because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great
is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they
persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

13 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses
its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no
longer good for anything, except to be thrown out
and trampled underfoot.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill
cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp
and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its
stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

Are you like a light in a lighthouse
or is your light more like a flashlight
that has dying batteries?

Or maybe you don’t even have
batteries at all!

Are you bright like the lights
on a football scoreboard?

Or more like a dreary neon sign in
a dirty store window?

Jesus calls us to be lights for him...
flashlights of his love...

Don’t hide your light under a basket.

How can you be a brighter light
for Jesus in this New Year?

What does that look like in your life?

Do you have to choose to follow Jesus first?

Do you need to be brave and ask Jesus for
the faith and courage to be his follower
no matter where you are...not just at
church or at youth group?

With all of your friends not just some of them?

What would it look like to
share Jesus' light...

his love...

in your group of friends?

Is it scary to be a bright flashlight...a beacon...
a lantern...for your friends?

Tell Jesus about this...

He already knows your fears...

He already knows your heart...your hopes...and
desires...

But also the junk that stops you from telling others
about him.

He already knows how hard it is to be his follower
24/7.

TALK TO HIM....

Tell God what you're thinking.

ASK GOD to show you how much HE LOVES
YOU

and just how you can share this love with others.

ACTION

TASTE THE SALT to remind you to be salty...

To bring flavor to everyone you meet...

To bring the flavor of JESUS to everyone in
your life...at home, at work, at school...

ACTION

LIGHT a candle...to remind you that you are a light

As you look at the candles pray for yourself...

Ask God to help you be Jesus' light in the darkness.

Pray also for a friend or two who need to know

Jesus and his love

ACTION

WRITE on a flashlight the name(s) of
the person or persons for whom you prayed
and take it home with you to remind you to
pray and be a light.

Matthew 5:13-15 (TNIV)

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt
loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?
It is no longer good for anything, except to be
thrown out and trampled underfoot."

14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a
hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people
light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead
they put it on its stand, and it gives light to
everyone in the house."

Matthew 5:13-15 (The Message)

13"Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to
be
salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this
earth.

If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste
godliness?

You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the
garbage.

14-16”Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives.

By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

John 12:44-46

44 Then Jesus cried out, “Those who believe in me do not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. 45 When they look at me, they see the one who sent me. 46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

John 1:1-12

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John.

7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

John 8:12

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Station 7 Signs

THE OASIS...

Take a break...talk to God...tell God where you are on the journey...

Tell God where you’d like to go....

Listen to God...rest...

Ask Jesus to show you new things he has for you on the adventure as you follow his star.

Psalms 46:10

“Be still, and know that I am God;

I will be exalted among the nations,

I will be exalted in the earth.”

Matthew 11:28

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Station 8 Signs

Create your prayers in ART!

What is the Spirit showing you?

What did you hear?

Create something...

Write something....

Express your gifts, your dreams...your journey.

Where does God want to take you this year and how do you want to follow his Star?

James 1:16-18

16 Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

Exodus 31:1-5

1 Then the LORD said to Moses, 2 “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— 4 to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, 5 to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts.”

Station 9 Signs

Gold, Frankincense, Myrrh

The Gift of Grace

Read and Breathe

The Sense of Breathing

Just as the three magi journeyed to see the infant Jesus, we, too, are on a journey to discover God.

Wondering what gifts you bring?

Like the Magi we bring:

Gold as a symbol of honoring Christ

Gold to represent our being “from the earth”

And as valuable to God as gold

Frankincense to worship in the midst of our joys and sorrows

Frankincense to remind us of the sweetness and grace of God

Myrrh to recognize our pain and sorrow

Myrrh to remind us of the suffering of Christ

Who offers us eternal grace in God

Now take a moment to breathe

The aroma of God all around you

Step closer to the candles and take a slow deep breath

Feel the warmth and aroma in your head

Now slowly exhale.

Did you feel the breath of God moving in you?

When God created humans, life began.

God INSPIRED life into humans

By breathing into lifeless clay.

That's what inspiration is...

To affect, guide, or arouse by divine influence

To stimulate to action.

Now breathe in again, this time more slowly.

Allow yourself to be filled

with the sweet scent of God's breath in you.

As you exhale slowly,

Feel the grace of God flowing from you

Out into the air and filling the world

with the sweet scent of God's grace love and inspiration
Remember as you breathe in difficult times
In joyful times,
At all times.
It is God's grace that fills you
And in sent into the world by you.
Breathe with God
Breathe Grace.

loved children 2 and walk in the way of love,
just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for
us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Genesis 2:4-7

4 This is the account of the heavens and the earth
when they were created, when the LORD God made
the earth and the heavens. Now no shrub had yet
appeared on the earth
and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God
had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one
to work the ground, 6 but streams came up from the
earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.
7 Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust
of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the
breath
of life, and the man became a living being.

John 20:21-22

21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As
the Father has sent me, I am sending you."
22 And with that he breathed on them and
said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For it is by grace you have been saved,
through faith—and this is not from yourselves,
it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that
no one can boast.

Ephesians 5:1-2

1 Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly