

The Christian Story

- ◆ Epiphany is part of the Christmas story in that it is the celebration of the visit of the Magi to the child Jesus. The festival is often neglected in popular thinking because of the conflation of the two gospel accounts of the birth into one “Nativity story”.
- ◆ Celebrated 6th January
- ◆ The Magi, because they come a great distance, are seen as representatives of all the nations of the earth coming to Christ, and will usually be depicted in art as different nationalities and ages – they were probably Persian astronomers, and not necessarily 3 of them!

The Beliefs

- ◆ The gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh brought by the Magi point to Jesus as king, God, and one who will suffer and die a significant death.
- ◆ Jesus came to bring salvation to all the nations of the earth, not just the Jews. “Epiphany” means “manifestation” – the manifestation of Christ to the representatives of the world.

EPIPHANY

Matthew chapter 2, Mark chapter 1 verses 9-11, John chapter 2 verses 1-11

Note: although Epiphany is above all the story of the adoration Of Jesus by the Magi, two other key stories are important at this time – the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, and the wedding at Cana where Jesus turned water into wine.



The Customs

- ◆ The Magi should not be added to a crib scene until Epiphany. Often Christians will have the figures of the Magi moving around their church or home on a day to day basis over the Christmas period, gradually getting nearer to the stable. The stable should be taken down when the Magi arrive, as the Bible indicates the family were then living in a house.
- ◆ The giving of gifts is linked to the gifts of the Magi.
- ◆ Stories linked particularly with gifts include Papa Panov, Baboushka, and the Fourth Wise Man.
- ◆ Often the day for taking down Christmas decorations – really they should be up until 2nd February(**Candlemas**).

The Christian Experience

- ◆ Worldwide fellowship of Christians
- ◆ Receiving and giving gifts