

mini REVOLUTIONS

Epiphany Lesson



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Mini Revolutions is an intergenerational, monthly, digital curriculum based on the Revised Common Lectionary. Churches and families will practice the rhythms and experience the seasons of the church year through the revolutions of the liturgical calendar.

The Christian Church follows the circular nature of the liturgical year in a revolution like the earth orbits the sun. At the beginning of each revolution, we anticipate and celebrate the birth of Christ through Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany. The season after Epiphany is a season of growth as we prepare for Jesus' death and resurrection through Lent and Easter. We celebrate God's promise and the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, and the season after Pentecost is another period of growth for the life of the church. We begin the revolution again with Advent.

We often think of time linearly, with starting and endpoints. And yet, we display time in a circular fashion on our analog clocks. Our days, weeks, and years are structured by the earth's rotations on its axis and revolutions around the sun. Creation—life itself—also follows a revolution through the cycles of new life and death. From ash to ash, dust to dust, creation repeats endless revolutions. As we embrace this cyclical way of observing time and moving through the seasons, we experience sacredness and rhythm. Every cycle can feel like a fresh start filled with hope and new opportunities for growth.

Why Mini?

With the ever-changing model of Sunday School, Illustrated Ministry strives to support churches no matter their size, attendance, or format. We designed our Mini Revolutions curriculum to help churches and families welcome the small revolutions each week brings. The weekly leader's guide is two pages (one page front and back, if printed double-sided), can be used in various ministry settings, and can be easily shared with and prepared by volunteers—even on short notice. Each week, we select one scripture from that week's liturgical readings from the Revised Common Lectionary and provide discussion questions to help your group enter into the story. The activity, micropractice, and prayer help each person embrace their own mini revolutions each week.

Why Revolutions?

Revolution—in the sense of great change—doesn't happen overnight, even if it appears suddenly. Great change begins with small movements, like the act of noticing. After noticing something, we might implement small practices. Then, we might reflect on the impact of those small practices. We then begin the cycle again: noticing, implementing, and reflecting. We hope the Mini Revolutions curriculum helps you and your church grow in faith as you notice, implement, reflect, and begin mini revolutions in your lives.

How does it work?

Subscribe or Purchase Individual Months as Needed: Mini Revolutions is a digital, monthly curriculum. You can purchase it for individual months or purchase a monthly subscription to the curriculum. With the subscription, new content is released at the beginning of each month. When you subscribe, you'll receive the content for the following month. For example, if you subscribe anytime in the month of January, you will receive the content for February. If you need the curriculum for the current month, you can purchase it individually.

Liturgical Calendar: We recognize there are many different liturgical traditions within various denominations and parts of the world. Therefore, we designed the liturgical calendar featured in the Mini Revolutions leader's guide to be as open-ended as possible so you can fill in your church's specific traditions and special feasts.

Intergenerational: Mini Revolutions is an intergenerational curriculum. We provide options and adaptations for wide accessibility for the young and young at heart alike. Each selected scripture is chosen with young children in mind. As a result, you can feel confident about a variety of ages using this curriculum together.

Simple but Meaningful: Each week of the curriculum consists of two pages (one page front and back, if printed double-sided) of leader content, one coloring page, and one Bible story booklet that contains a paraphrase of the selected scripture passage and illustrations.

We designed Mini Revolutions so you might have the freedom to use it in whatever context you find yourself. For example, you can use it as your traditional Sunday School curriculum, in a one-room Sunday School model with mixed ages, or in an intergenerational setting. You could also take the content and adapt it for youth ministry and other ministry programs and settings.

Mini Revolutions can be implemented as a completely virtual, hybrid, or in-person experience—endless options are available to suit your needs. Lead as much or as little of the content as you like. Each section of Mini Revolutions is simple and requires just a little prep to have a meaningful experience with your group.

What You Can Expect From This Curriculum

Whether you lead Mini Revolutions virtually, use a hybrid format, or meet in person, you can use all of the components below. Of course, depending on your format, the curriculum may require some adaptations, but we have designed each week of Mini Revolutions with different formats and contexts in mind.

Scripture: One selected scripture from the Revised Common Lectionary that the rest of the components are based on.

Questions: Imagining and wondering questions that are open-ended and connect more deeply with the scripture.

Note: It's okay for leaders and participants not to have answers for each question. Some of the best relational time can be shared working to find answers together. If you ever feel stuck in the discussion, consider saying, "I don't know, and that's okay. Let's look it up together and ask our pastor about it."

Look It Up: We highlight a moment in history, an interesting fact, or a person who made an impact that connects with the scripture's theme. This activity allows participants to explore and connect with the world around them and see how scripture can be lived out.

Activity: We provide a fun mix of activities that help participants think creatively about the scripture through building and design, earth care, social justice, self-care and compassion, social/emotional learning, science, technology, and art.

Micropractice: A simple practice/ritual anchored in daily activities to help form healthy, spiritual, and mindful habits. For each micropractice, we will also include a shareable graphic that you can use in your church's newsletter, on your website, or to share with your community on social media. There will be a link to the graphic in each week's lesson.

Prayer: Use this prayer to close your time together. This short ritual creates a sense of community and preparation as participants go out into the world.

Coloring Page: It includes an illustration of a short phrase from the selected scripture that invites reflection on the scripture. Use the coloring page and discussion questions together for an even deeper connection with the scripture and each other.

Bible Story Booklet: A child-friendly paraphrase of the scripture, accessible for all ages, with colorable illustrations that help tell the story.

Mini Revolutions Media Kit: The Media Kit includes variations of the Mini Revolutions logo, as well as some promotional images you can use in newsletters, social media, and your website. You can download the Mini Revolutions Media Kit here: illstrdm.in/minirevMediaKit

Feedback Always Appreciated

We are excited to see the many ways churches, communities, and families will use Mini Revolutions! As with all of our products, we encourage people to think big and to get creative. A great way to share your experiences is to post photos on social media using the hashtag #illustratedministry. We can't wait to see glimpses of your creativity!

As you use these resources, we would love to hear what was helpful and meaningful and any suggestions and comments you have for us. We want to continue to create quality faith formation materials, and we appreciate your feedback.

You can reach us at info@illustratedministry.com or find us on the following social networks:

Facebook: fb.com/illustratedmin

Instagram: instagram.com/illustratedmin

Twitter: twitter.com/illustratedmin

Pinterest: pinterest.com/illustratedmin

YouTube: youtube.com/illustratedmin

Our Facebook Group is a growing community. If you're looking for ideas and suggestions for using this resource, you can request to join here:

fb.com/groups/illustratedmin

Peace,

Illustrated Ministry

Best Practices for Sharing Illustrated Ministry's Resources

We make our products available digitally because our customers find this to be the most efficient way to receive them. In order for Illustrated Ministry to continue producing the quality products you know and love, we ask for your care and respect when sharing your digital purchases. *Detailed information about your license can be found on the copyright page.*

We've found there are three good ways to share our files with your community:

Email: Depending on the size of your congregation, we encourage you to email files to those who want to use the resource. Another option is to put an announcement in your bulletin, asking those interested in receiving the files to email the person with access to the resource.

Note: Please do not include attachments or links to download our files in any emails/newsletters that are posted publicly online with services like Mailchimp, Constant Contact, etc. Links of this nature are searchable by Google, and the files can quickly become accessible to the general public.

Posting Online: We do not want the general public to have access to our products free of charge. We discourage posting our files online because they become easily accessible through Google searches. However, one option is to put the files on a password-protected page of your website, or use a private Facebook Group. Please remember to take the files down after you've finished using them.

Note: Please do not post the password in a bulletin or newsletter that is posted publicly online.

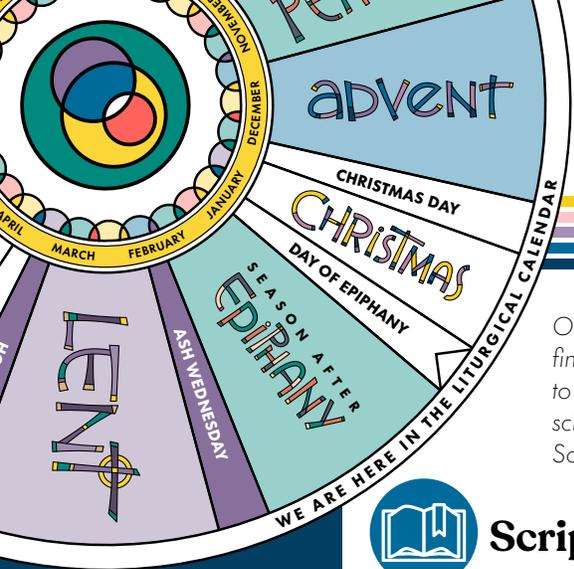
Print: Most congregations who purchase our digital files choose to print out the materials. Printing the materials is probably the easiest way to share the resources with your community.

Thanks for understanding, and we appreciate your support!

Illustrated Ministry

Matthew 2:1-12

Epiphany of the Lord, January 6 or first Sunday in January



On the Day of Epiphany, we remember the three wise ones who followed the light of the star to find Jesus. Epiphany means “showing forth,” and Epiphany begins a season where we are called to look for how God makes Godself known throughout the world. In his poem, *Epiphany*, Biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann wrote the following: “We are—we could be—people of your light. So we pray for the light of your glorious presence as we wait for your appearing.”



Scripture

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, Magi from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

Then Herod secretly called for the Magi and

learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage.

Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.



Questions

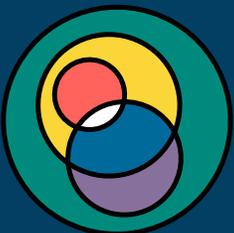
- In this story, the Magi discover the new king is baby Jesus. What did you discover as you listened to this story?
- The Magi and Herod react differently to the news of the new Messiah-King. What feelings do they share? What feelings are different?
- The Magi noticed something in nature (the star) that led them to Jesus. What beautiful or amazing parts of nature make you think of God?
- Today is the holy feast day of Epiphany! On this day, we celebrate how the star led the Magi to Jesus, and they worshipped him. Who or what in your life has led you to Jesus?
- The Magi were open and curious about Jesus. They didn’t know what he would be like, but they were eager to learn instead of nervous. What steps can you take to be open and curious about new things in your life?

Look it Up!

Look up a star app that helps identify stars! Sometimes, what appear to be the brightest ‘stars’ are actually planets, such as Jupiter or Saturn. What can looking at the stars remind us about God?



mini
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Activity

Materials:

Blank paper Coloring utensils

The wise ones encountered many unexpected twists and turns on their journey following the star in the sky. They didn't know the new king they came to worship was born into a humble Jewish family, and they did not expect to take a different route home to avoid King Herod's trap.

Sometimes the journey of following Jesus can be filled with twists and turns that, in the moment, seem like they're leading nowhere. But, eventually, you may catch a glimpse of the big picture and see how it all comes together to create something beautiful!

As we remember the story of the wise ones twisting and turning on their star journey, let's make our own stars filled with different colors, patterns, and shapes. Give each participant a blank piece of paper and coloring utensils. Have them draw an outline of a star.

Note: A star can be drawn or printed beforehand. If you'd like a star that we created, you can download a free Epiphany Star here: illstrtdm.in/EpiphanyStar

Draw lines connecting points inside the star to create different sections within the shape. Then color each section with different designs and patterns (the twistier, the better!) until the entire star is filled in.

As participants are coloring, try some of these prayerful practices:

- Pray for or think about someone as you color each new section.
- Every time you grab a new color, say, "Thank you God for _____."
- How are you feeling today? Use shapes and colors that express how you feel. You can even use the different sections to express more than one feeling!
- Can you incorporate names, words, or pictures into your star patterns? Think about the people you love and the words you want to say as you color.

When you're done, look at the entire picture and take a deep breath. Where do you see God in your colors, patterns, and shapes?

Alternate Activity

Materials:

Chalk Black construction paper

On the day of Epiphany, some church traditions use chalk on door frames to bless their homes and churches as a way of remembering when the wise ones visited Jesus' home.

The chalking is written as the current calendar year split in half by the letters C+M+B written in between. The letters stand for "Christus mansionem benedicat," which is Latin for, "May Christ bless this home." For example, it will look like this for 2022: **20 + C + M + B + 22**

Practice this tradition as a group and encourage participants to do this with their loved ones in their own spaces. Begin by using this chalk blessing together, or create your own!

*O God of the universe,
Bless this chalk made from the earth,
A favored tool we use to play, learn, and create.*

Give each participant a piece of chalk and black construction paper. Write 20 + C + M + B + 22 (replacing the 22 if you are in a different calendar year) in chalk on the paper as you read this blessing aloud.

*Peace be to this space and all who live, play, and visit here.
May all who come and go from this space,
Find welcome, kindness, gentleness, and love,
Because you, God, live here with us.*



Micropractice

The constellations we see today are almost identical to those the wise ones saw thousands of years ago. But not everyone takes time to notice them. When you see stars in the sky, pause and notice their beauty and placement.



Download a graphic to share with your community and on social media. You can download it here: illstrtdm.in/minirevCEpiphany



Prayer

O God who painted the stars in the sky, your light shines brightly all around us. May we, like the wise ones, follow the warmth of your world-changing love as it leads us into humble and unexpected places. Amen.



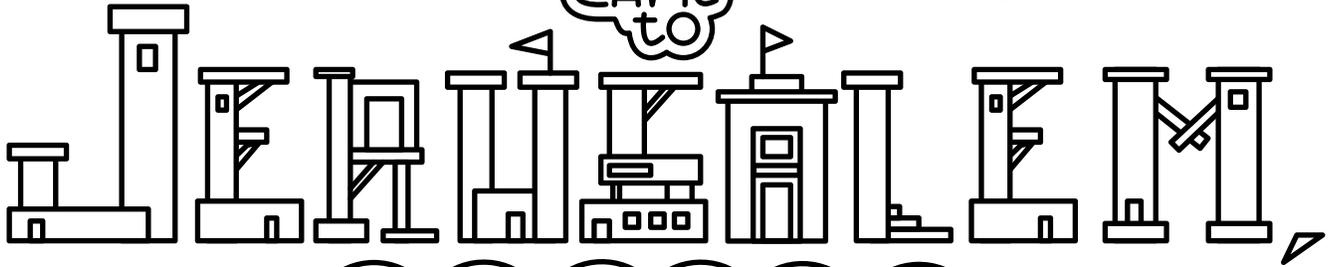
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from the

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CAME TO



ASKING

WHERE IS THE CHILD

WHO HAS BEEN BORN

KING OF THE JEWS?

FOR WE HAVE OBSERVED HIS

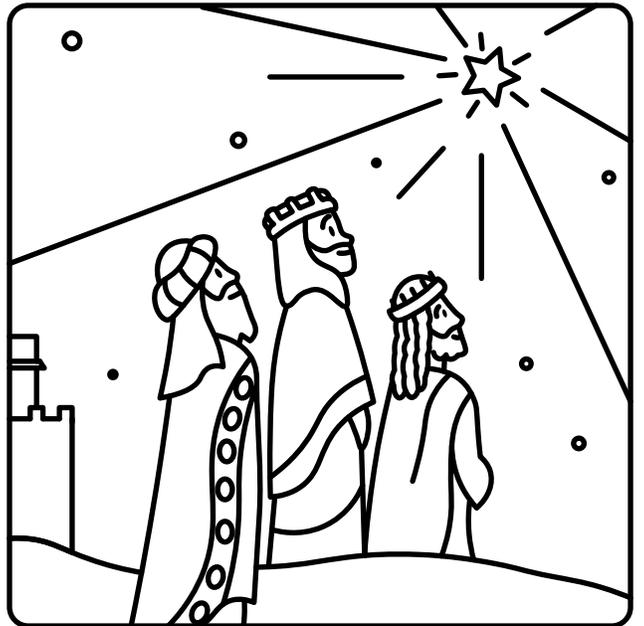
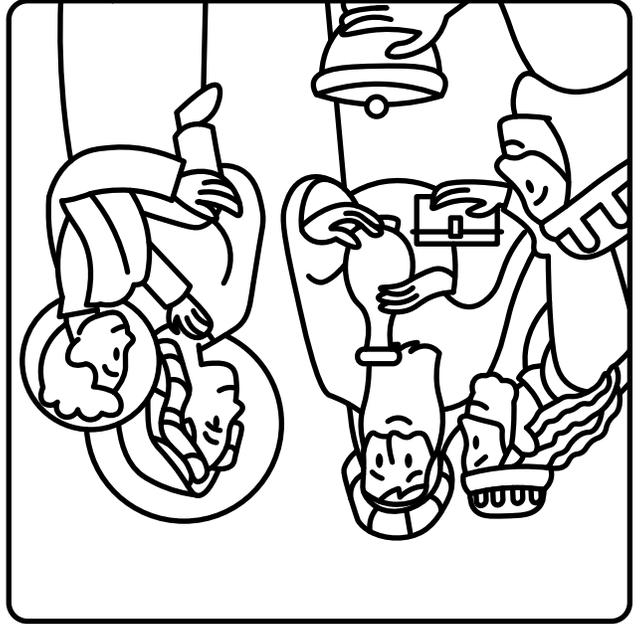
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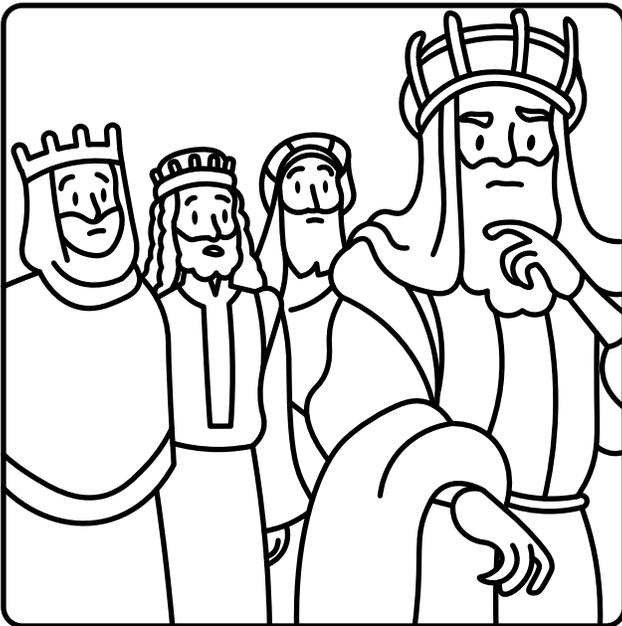
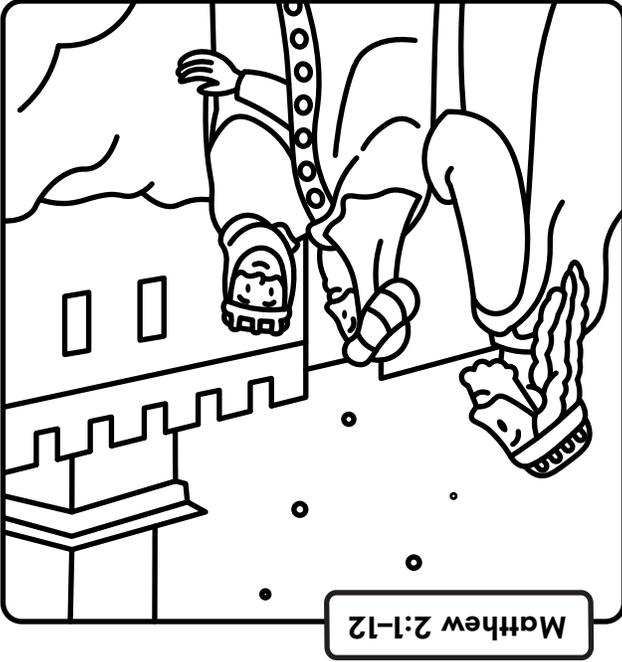
COME to PAY HIM HOMAGE."

4. When they arrived, they saw Jesus and Mary. They knelt before Jesus and gave gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Before they left, they had a dream warning them not to tell Herod about Jesus, so they returned home another way.



3. Herod figured out the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, and he sent the Magi there to look for him. When they began, the star went ahead of them, leading them to the child Jesus!

1. The Magi in the East saw a star and knew it meant a new king was born. They followed the star, and the first place they looked for the new king was the royal palace in Jerusalem.



2. At this time, Herod was the king, but he didn't know about Jesus. He was worried in hearing there was a new king born not from his family. Would this king try to take his throne?

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