

## **WE THREE KINGS Worksheet**

© 2002 Beverly Schmitt, all rights reserved

### *Verse 1*

We three kings of Orient are;  
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
Following yonder star.

### *Refrain*

O star of wonder, star of light,  
Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light.

### *Verse 2*

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain  
Gold I bring to crown Him again,  
King forever, ceasing never,  
Over us all to reign.

### *Refrain*

### *Verse 3*

Frankincense to offer have I;  
Incense owns a Deity nigh;  
Prayer and praising, voices raising,  
Worshipping God on high.

### *Refrain*

### *Verse 4*

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume  
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;  
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
Sealed in the stone cold tomb.

### *Refrain*

### *Verse 5*

Glorious now behold Him arise;  
King and God and sacrifice;  
Alleluia, Alleluia,  
Sounds through the earth and skies.

### *Refrain*

**Vocabulary** In one or two words define the following terms from the poem.

*Verse 1:* Orient, Bearing, traverse, moor, yonder

*Refrain:* wonder, proceeding, thy

*Verse 2:* plain, ceasing, reign

*Verse 3:* Frankincense, Incense, Deity, nigh

*Verse 4:* Myrrh, bitter, gloom, Sorrowing, tomb

*Verse 5:* behold, sacrifice, Alleluia

**Word Pictures** Word pictures is another way of saying *imagery*. *Imagery* or *figurative language* helps us form a picture of what the author is trying to present. Discuss what these word pictures mean and, without making an image of Christ, draw your idea of the *imagery* or *figurative language* the author uses!

*Verse 1:* three kings of Orient; traverse afar; Field and fountain, moor and mountain; yonder star

*Refrain:* star of wonder ... of light ... royal beauty bright

*Verse 2:* Gold I bring to crown Him again

*Verse 3:* Frankincense to offer have I

*Verse 4:* Myrrh ... its bitter perfume; gathering gloom; stone cold tomb

*Verse 5:* Alleluia ... Sounds through the earth and skies

**Mechanics** are the nuts and bolts of a poem. Verbally discuss.

***Who is the speaker?*** (Does the speaker have a specific personality or has the author remained in the background so the message of the poem will be more clear?)

***What does the poem reveal about the speaker's character?*** (Sometimes, poems reveal nothing about the speaker's personal thoughts, feelings, or attitudes. Yet, the poem may demonstrate those character traits that are important to the author like courage, loyalty, perseverance, etc.)

***Is the speaker addressing someone in particular or is it to anyone?*** (Sometimes poems are not directed to anyone in particular, but to anyone that may read it.)

***Does the poem have a setting?*** (Does the author tell where the poem occurs? Is the poem about a specific event?)

***Is the poem about a particular event?*** (Is the event past or present? If it is about a past event, does the remembrance of the event have a particular meaning to the speaker?)

***Is the theme of the poem stated directly or indirectly?*** (Some poems are straightforward and are meant to be taken literally. In songs, the theme may be presented in the refrain or in the last few lines. Sometimes the theme is a little bit more difficult to discern as it is made with figurative language or symbols.)

***What point of view or perspective is the speaker?*** (What meaning do you think the poem has for the author?)

***How did you respond to the poem when you read it the first time?*** (Did your thoughts and feelings change after you took time to study it?)

**Comprehension Questions** Verbally discuss

*Verse 1:* Where are the kings from? Where have they traversed? Why? What were they carrying?

*Refrain:* How is the star described? What direction is the star leading?

*Verse 2:* What city is mentioned? What physical characteristic is ascribed to it (e.g., mountainous, plain, etc.) What gift is identified? How is it described? Explain and discuss: "King forever, ceasing never, Over us all to reign." Does this apply to today? How does this apply to math, history, grammar, literature, civics, employment, all things? Relate same to 2 Corinthians 10:5.

*Verse 3:* What is offered in this verse? How is it described? Explain and discuss: "Prayer and praising, voices raising, Worshipping God on high."

*Verse 4:* What is offered in this verse? How is it described? What does this gift foretell or "breathe"? Explain and discuss: "Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, Sealed in the stone cold tomb."

*Verse 5:* What event is this entire verse discussing? Explain and discuss: “Glorious now behold Him arise; King and God and sacrifice.” Why do you think the author mentions this event at Christmas and not Easter? Why do you think the author used the term “Alleluia” at this point? What is sounded through earth and skies?

Did this historical event or message become more real to you after reading this poem? Why?

After reading this poem, what character traits did you think of? What does the Bible have to say about these character traits?

### **What Does the Bible Say?**

Find Scripture proofs for each of the assertions or statements made for each of the five verses and the refrain.

Re-read the Gospel accounts of the Nativity along with Isaiah 53.

### **The Author/Poet**

Based on what you have studied about this poem so far, would you guess that the author was a Christian or a humanist? How did you arrive at your decision?

The name of the author for this poem or lyric is John Henry Hopkins, Jr. (1820-1891). He was born 28 October 1820, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and died 14 August 14, 1891, Hudson, New York. Interestingly, he is buried at Bishop’s House, Rock Point, Burlington, Vermont. Hopkins graduated from the University of Vermont (AB 1839, MA 1845). He worked as a reporter prior to entering General Theological Seminary where he graduated in 1850. He became rector of Trinity Church, Plattsburg, Pennsylvania, and Christ Church in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

### **Geography**

Locate Pennsylvania, New York and Vermont on a globe, map and atlas.

*Challenge* Locate Pittsburg (PA), Plattsburg (PA), Williamsport (PA), Hudson (NY) and Burlington (VT) on a map or in an atlas.

Compare/contrast weather from Pennsylvania, New York and/or Vermont with your own for one week. Make an American meal for your family.

### **Activities**

1) Make your own book! Without making an image of Christ, draw pictures representing each verse. (Note: that will be six different illustrations). With construction paper and other items readily available at home, make a title page with the name of the song and the author’s name which will be your book’s cover. You may want to illustrate your cover and include this poem in your book.

2) Make your own play! Re-enact with your siblings or friends the event or message discussed in this poem. Keep it lively, simple, and short. You may want to end your play with singing a rousing chorus of this poem or reading Scripture verses. Videotape your creation.

3) Radio Drama! With a handheld tape recorder, create your own radio show dramatizing the historical event or message of this poem.

4) Be a Reporter! Either with your family camcorder or with a handheld tape recorder, “interview” various individuals connected with this poem (e.g., Queen Elizabeth II, Constantine, Martin Luther, Queen Isabella, repentant sinner, etc.). In order to have the fast paced style of a reporter, watch and/or listen to the news with your parents’ permission. Keep the interviews lively, quick, and to the point.

Remain objective! Being objective means just reporting the facts and not giving your opinion of the situation.

5) What is one of the things you most enjoy? Is it literature? math? science? sports? cooking? Take that area of interest and relate that to this poem. If you enjoy dance, for example, develop a dance routine that physically expresses the sentiments of this poem. If you enjoy shop, create something out of wood that helps to clarify this poem. Do you enjoy creating stories? Write a story based on any time period you desire that expresses the sentiments of this poem. Do you enjoy creating things in the kitchen? Make an ancient meal from this time or develop your own meal that symbolizes the many different points this poem makes.

6) Poster. Create a poster illustrating the the author’s view of the impact of *We Three Kings*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about John Henry Hopkins, Jr. (1820-1891) and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.