

# LITURGICAL FORMATION & FOOTPRINTS OF GOD

## Why is it called Epiphany?

The word Epiphany means (manifestation/appearance), which has become an occasion a part of the birth of Jesus Christ, the visit of the three magi (Kings) and a time when the good news is shared with the Gentiles.

### **The symbolic meaning of the three gifts.**

The gold signifies Christ's kingship; Frankincense, a sweet-smelling resin used in worship, his priesthood; and myrrh, an ointment used in burial, foreshadows his death; Myrrh is also closely related to the passion of Jesus, who was offered it as he hung upon the cross, "And they offered him wine mingled with myrrh, but he did not take it" (Mark 15:23). This interpretation of the three gifts has been passed down since the first few centuries of Christianity and is held up as the primary meaning behind the gifts, even though the Magi themselves may not have fully understood the impact of their Christmas presents.

The Christian teaching has viewed the visit of the Magi finding Jesus through the leading of a star) as a fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah 60: 1-3

*Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples, but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.*

The season of Epiphany is a feast Day celebrated on January 6 every year. It is a season of joyful celebration, with each Sunday as Epiphany, and ends with the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas) on the 2nd of February. (40 days inclusive after Christmas when, according to Leviticus 12:1-8, Mary would have to be ritually purified after childbirth).

When Jesus is brought to the Temple as the custom and Law of Israel require, Simeon and Anna are recognised as people destined to transform the world. The baby Jesus is "a light to lighten the Gentiles and "the glory of God's people Israel.

The Redemption, as Simeon prophesied, must be won through suffering: the Incarnation is directed to the Passion, and now our attention is taken away from the celebration of Christmas towards the mysteries of Easter

During this season of Epiphany, the church celebrates several events that reveal how the message will be proclaimed. It began with the celebration of Christ's baptism at the hands of John the Baptist when the heavens opened, and a voice declared Jesus to be God's beloved Son. Within our province, the Church will celebrate the Indian Harvest festival (Pongal), the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles and the miracle of Cana in Galilee, where Jesus performs his first miracle.

During Epiphany, the Church focuses on its mission to reach all peoples on earth and the gift of God in revealing the truth and light of the world. It reminds me of a hymn

All people that on earth do dwell,  
sing to the LORD with cheerful voice;  
Him serve with mirth, His praise forth-tell; come  
ye before Him and rejoice!

### **What are some common practices during Epiphany?**

**Twelfth Night** celebrations are relatively common to mark the conclusion of the 12 Days of Christmas. This is the time to sing Christmas carols, have one's house blessed, or have congregation prayer meetings in some homes and Christmas decorations taken down.

Within the Indian community, the celebration of Harvest brings not only the church members

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to a festive mood of games, cooking and thanking God for the fruits of the earth.

In the Western world, special cakes called King Cakes are shared. The women would bake the cake with symbols inside it, and this would go through till the end of Epiphany.

Each Church can come up with some activities that can draw the people who do not know the good news.

### Epiphany (tide) Collects

In the Anglican teaching, each week of the church year has a special prayer called “collect,” the congregation says it before the readings of the Word in the Eucharistic liturgy.

#### *The Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles*

*O God, by the leading of a star, you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

#### *The second to the last Sunday of Epiphany- World Mission Sunday*

*Almighty God, through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, you revealed the way of eternal life to every race and nation: Pour out this gift anew, that by the preaching of the Gospel your salvation may reach to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

### Did I leave anything out?

If there’s something I didn’t mention that you think should be in this introduction/guide to

Epiphany, please let me know in the comments below!

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Written by  
Bishop Charles Samuel.

### Reference:

1. <https://anglicancompass.com/epiphany-and-epiphanytide-a-rookie-anglican-guide/>
2. <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/churchs-year/times-and-seasons-1>

### Other Epiphany resources:

We do not have many books written on Epiphany. However, check out the following external resources to learn more about Epiphany and how to celebrate it:

1. The Week of Epiphany | The Homely Hours
2. Songs for Epiphany – Cardiphonia
3. Wikipedia’s Epiphany page is informative, as is the page about the Epiphany season.
4. Epiphany Resource Guide, by the Calvin Institute of Worship.
5. Epiphany Links and Resources, by The Text This Week

### THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF THE 3 GIFTS

