

The 12 Days of Christmas
#1: Introduction: Matthew 2: 1, 2

Overall objective: to learn about God while singing a silly, fun Christmas song

Objective: to introduce the students to the tradition of the 12 days of Christmas.

Materials: a calendar, must 'wrap around' to the new year

Step 1: Introduction

We're going to learn a very popular song called "The 12 days of Christmas". Does anyone already know this song? (Were any of you students way back in 1999?) It has a very easy melody, and there is a lot of repeating. It is a song you often hear in America around Christmas. I think you will enjoy learning it.

Step 2: Background

But why is it called "The 12 days of Christmas"? What are the 12 days of Christmas? Does anyone know? (wait)

We're going to read part of the Christmas story.

Step 3: Questions

Before we read, let me give you two questions. These are our guide questions.

1. **When did the wise men come?** (after Jesus was born, in Japanese sono toki, when Jesus was born.)

2. **Why did the wise men come?** (to worship Jesus)

Step 4: Read Matthew 2: 1, 2.

Step 5: Answer the questions.

Step 6: Continue

Our main question today is "What are the 12 days of Christmas?" Does the Bible tell us (not really) No, it doesn't! Did you see the number 12? (no)

The Bible does not say when the wise men arrived. But some churches say the wise men arrived 12 days after Jesus was born. This is a tradition. It is not in the Bible.

So the first day of Christmas is the day Jesus was born. The 12th day of Christmas is the day the wise men arrived to worship him. Some churches, (like the Eastern Orthodox church) celebrate Christmas for 12 days. The song "The Twelve Days of Christmas" comes from this tradition.

Now, let's find the dates. When is Christmas day? (always Dec 25)
December 25 is also church tradition. In fact, there are many church traditions about Christmas.

Ok, here is a calendar. If the first day of Christmas is December 25th, when is the 12th day of Christmas? (let the students figure it out. January 5th, or if you start counting the day after Christmas (as some churches do) it is Jan 6th.)

Step 7: Sing the song (sing the whole thing from first to sixth day)

OK, so let's sing the song. We are only going to sing the first 6 days.

(Handouts) – (sing)

Step 8: Any questions or comments?