

THE SEASON OF EPIPHANY

Fact File

Colour: White, revealing the purity of the true nature of Christ. White is also the colour which depicts new birth and new creation as we celebrate Jesus' baptism during the epiphany.

Duration: 4 weeks, but the season of the incarnation of Christ lasts 40 days. This parallels the great 50 days of the resurrection of Christ from Easter to Pentecost. The Candlemas Festival marks the end of our reflection upon Jesus' birth and incarnation, as we begin to turn to the cross.



Bellini, The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Special features: We witness three main events: the Visit of the Magi, the Baptism of Jesus and the revelation of the miracle at Cana. All these events reveal Jesus' true identity. So epiphany means the manifestation of Jesus, the revelation of God in Christ.

Main Characters: *The Wise Men* – probably non-Jewish astrologers who brought symbolic gifts to the infant Jesus. *Simeon* – a righteous man, possibly African, who longed for the Messiah to come. He saw Jesus in the temple and uttered the prophetic words of the Nunc Dimittis which we use in our liturgy. *Anna* – an elderly widow with prophetic insight, who alongside Simeon, saw God in the child Jesus.

Mood: Wonder, gratitude, joy and thanksgiving. We explore the key themes of incarnation, as Christ reveals himself as God to the world.

Festivals in Epiphanytide: The celebration of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple, known as Candlemas, is the climax of the Christmas/Epiphany season, and a turning point of the Christian year. Light is our focus, Jesus is the light of the world, purifying our path.

A prayer of preparation: The Nunc Dimittis – the Song of Simeon

Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace, your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people; a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel. *Luke 2: 29-32*