



PREVIEW ONLY

Herod and the Gift:
A Tale of Tyranny and Christmas Presents
by Paul Ellis

What In Jerusalem, a wicked king hears bad news; a new king has been born. He decides to remove the rival, but God has other plans. Meanwhile, in Bethlehem, a young couple receives unexpected visitors and are forced to go on a long and dangerous trip.

Themes: Christmas, parenting, wisdom, worship, obedience

Message Jesus is the greatest Gift of all

Who Minimum 4 characters with doubling; 8+ characters without

NARRATOR (for table readings; otherwise replace with lines for direction)

HEROD, the king

BALTHAZAR, a wise man from the east

CASPAR, a wise man from the east

MELKIOR, a wise man from the east

JOSEPH, Mary's husband

MARY, the mother of Jesus

ANGEL, a heavenly herald

Props Gift-wrapped presents

Time 6 minutes

Ages 8+

Source Matthew 2:1-23

Bonus Free leader's guide with fun facts, discussion questions, and illustrations.

Narrator A long time ago there was a greedy and ruthless ruler called Herod. Herod was a schemer. He stole from people and built grand monuments to himself. Herod like to call himself the king of the Jews...

Herod grins, hands on hips as he stands in front of a crowd.

Herod *(Boasting)* I'm king of the Jews!

Narrator But he wasn't a true king at all. He wasn't even Jewish.

The angry crowd boos and insults Herod.

All *(Jeering)* You're a phony, Herod. Boo!

Herod *(Scornful)* Pipe down you pock-faced peasants, or I will raise your taxes!

Narrator One day, a caravan of camels bearing treasure came to Herod's court, and with it some wise men from the east.

Three men enter the court and stand in front of Herod.

Balthazar We have come seeking the king of the Jews.

Herod sits straighter and tries to look important.

Herod You have found him. Did you bring me gifts?

Caspar We seek the Messiah foretold by the prophets, the true king of Israel.

Herod looks suddenly nervous.

Herod *(To himself)* Oh-oh. This could be trouble.

Melkior We have seen his star rising in the sky and have come to worship him.

Herod *(To himself)* This doesn't sound good for ol' Herod.

Narrator The Messiah was the promised gift from God who would bring salvation to Israel. Herod gathered the chief priests to learn more about him.

Herod summons his chief priests who stand before him.

Herod *(Steeple fingers)* This Messiah you've been waiting for – any idea where he will be born?

All The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem, as it is written in the prophets.

Narrator The Jews had been waiting a long time for the Messiah, and Herod should have been happy to hear that he had finally come. But he was deeply troubled by the news.

Herod *(Agitated)* This is terrible news! There's only room for one king in this town. What can I do?

Narrator Then Herod had a cunning plan.

Herod smiles.

Herod I have a cunning plan. *(Laughs maniacally)* Mwahahaha!

Balthazar Why are you laughing like that?

Herod Er, no reason. Just remembering a funny story. Okay wise men, listen up.

Herod pulls the wise men into a conspiratorial huddle

Herod Here's what you do. Go to Bethlehem and search for the child. When you find him, bring me word, so that I may come and slay the little... er, I mean, come and worship him.

Narrator But it was a trick. Herod did not plan to worship the newborn king; he wanted to kill him.

The crowd boos him again.

All *(Booing)* Boo! You're a wicked man, Herod. Boo!

Herod Hold your tongues you hedge-born harpies, or I will seize your houses!

The Wise Men nod and leave the court.

Narrator The wise men left Herod and travelled to Bethlehem.

Caspar *(Pointing)* Look, the star we have seen goes before us!

Melkior And now it shines over the town. Our search has come to end.

Wise Men Hooray!

Narrator The star they had been following came to rest over the place where the child was. The child, of course, was Jesus, the newborn king of the Jews.

The wise men approach a rough wooden door.

Balthazar *(Knocking)* Hello? Anybody home?

Joseph partially opens the door and peers out at the strange men.

Joseph Can I help you?

Balthazar We are wise men, from the east.

Joseph *(Skeptical)* Uh-huh.

Caspar We have followed a star that brought us to your home.

Joseph A star, huh? I'm sorry, but we're not interested. Thank you.

Joseph closes door.

Melkior We bring gifts, expensive gifts.

Joseph opens door wide and greets the Wise Men with a beaming smile.

Joseph Come on in! Make yourself at home. Can I get you some tea?

Narrator The wise men entered and finding Mary with the child they fell down and worshiped him.

Wise Men *(Bowing)* It is him, the One given by God to save the world!

Narrator The wise men opened their treasures and brought out extravagant gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

All Ooooooh! Aaaah!

Narrator These were extraordinary gifts to give to a baby, but this was no mere baby. This was Jesus, the king of the Jews and the Savior of the world.

Mary These gifts are lovely, but they're too much. We can't accept them.

Joseph Hush, woman.

Joseph collects the gifts while the Wise Men worship baby Jesus.

Narrator After worshipping the newborn king, the wise men said goodbye to Mary and Joseph...

Wise Men Goodbye, Mary and Joseph.

Joseph and Mary Bye-eeee!

The wise men leave.

Narrator *(Cont'd)* ...before returning to their home in the east. They did not tell King Herod they had found the child, because they were wise men, not dumb men. When Herod heard about this, he was furious.

Herod stomps around, angry.

Herod I'm furious! Those wise guys tricked me. Now how will I know which baby to kill?

Narrator But Herod had a cunning plan.

You have reached the end of the preview.
To purchase the entire script, please click:

PURCHASE