

## **The First Christmas**

taken from Matthew 2

*Performance Notes*

4 Readers

Reader 1: This is a story of those who made  
Reader 2: the first Christmas a time to remember.  
Reader 3: Three wise men coming to worship the child-King.  
Reader 2: Herod wanting to destroy the child-King.  
Reader 4: Bethlehem mothers weeping over their slain babies.  
Reader 3: Priest and scribes interpreting Scripture.  
Reader 2: Angels warning about the evil designs of Herod.  
Reader 4: Mary giving birth to the Son of God in a stable.  
Reader 2: Joseph taking Mary and son to Egypt and then to Nazareth.  
Reader 1: It all began when the three wise men arrived in Jerusalem asking,  
Reader 4: Where is the child, King of the Jews,  
Reader 2: that we may worship Him.  
Reader 3: These words troubled Jerusalemites and  
Reader 4: and it troubled Herod the Roman King!  
Reader 2: Herod was desperate to know where and when the child-king was to born.  
Reader 1: The priests told him the place—Bethlehem.  
Reader 4: He was awaiting the return of the three wise men  
Reader 2: and then he would have the exact location.  
Reader 1: Herod cunningly said,  
Reader 4: I took want to worship Him.  
Reader 3: Mary did give birth to a baby in a stable  
Reader 4: and the wise men did worship him bringing Him gifts  
Reader 1: of gold,  
Reader 2: of frankincense  
Reader 4: of myrrh.  
Reader 1: However Herod did not get to worship the baby-king!  
Reader 3: An angel appeared to the wise men  
Reader 4: telling them not to return to Herod  
Reader 2: and take another way home.  
Reader 1: And they did and in so doing made a fool of Herod,  
Reader 4: which by the way which he is,  
Reader 3: and which by the way mad him very angry.  
Reader 1: The Bethlehem mothers bitterly wept  
Reader 2: since Herod in his bitter anger  
Reader 3: and fear of a baby,  
Reader 4: ruthlessly slaughter the Bethlehem babies.  
Reader 1: That was after an angel appeared to Joseph  
Reader 3: telling him to take Mary and the child  
Reader 4: and go to Egypt until . . .  
Reader 2: until Herod was dead.  
Reader 1: So it was that the baby-king did outlive the Roman king  
Reader 3: and even today lives.

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*Performance Notes*

3 Readers: Narrator 1,2; Herod (audience)

Narrator 1: Jesus was born in Bethlehem  
Narrator 2: in the days of Herod the king.  
Narrator 1: There came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,  
Narrator 2: Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews?  
Narrator 1: We have seen his star in the east,  
Narrator 2: and are come to worship him.  
Narrator 1: These words troubled all of Jerusalem  
Narrator 2: and especially Herod,  
**Herod: King of the Jews? I am the king!**  
Narrator 1: Herod brought all the chief priests  
Narrator 2: and scribes of the people together,  
Narrator 1: he demanded of them,  
**Herod: Where is the Christ to be born?**  
Narrator 2: Out of Bethlehem shall come a Governor,  
Narrator 1: that shall rule Israel.  
Narrator 2: Angrily Herod said to himself,  
**Herod: I am the Governor, I am the king!**  
Narrator 1: Then Herod called the wise men to meet with him, Narrator 2:  
asking diligently,  
**Herod: What time did the star appear?**  
Narrator 2: And he sent them to Bethlehem,  
**Herod: Go and search diligently for the young child.**  
Narrator 1: Then,  
**Herod: Come back and tell me,**  
Narrator 2: That . . .  
**Herod: I may come and worship him.**  
Narrator 1: When they had heard the king,  
Narrator 2: they followed the star  
Narrator 1: until it rested over where the young child was.  
Narrator 2: They rejoiced with exceeding great joy.  
Narrator 1: They fell down, and worshipped him  
Narrator 2: and presented the child-king gifts;  
Narrator 1: gold,  
Narrator 2: and frankincense and myrrh.  
Narrator 1: God in a dream told the three wise men  
Narrator 2: not return to Herod,  
Narrator 1: so they went another way home.  
Narrator 2: Then God in a dream told Joseph,  
Narrator 1: Take the young child and his mother to Egypt,  
Narrator 2: until the death of Herod  
Narrator 1: because he will seek the young child to destroy him.

Narrator 2: Joseph took the young child and his mother by night,  
Narrator 1:           and departed into Egypt:  
Narrator 2: Then Herod was exceeding angry  
**Herod:           The wise men have mocked me,**  
Narrator 1: So he made a decree:  
**Herod:           Kill all the children in Bethlehem.**  
Narrator 1:           and in all the coasts thereof,  
**Herod:           From two years old and under.**  
Narrator 1: That was according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the  
wise men.  
**Herod:           Because, I am the king!**  
Narrator 2: So for a while he was the king,  
Narrator 1:           but kings don't live forever  
Narrator 2:           and when Herod was dead,  
Narrator 1:           an angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph in Egypt,  
Narrator 2: Take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for  
they are dead which sought the young child's life.  
Narrator 1: And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the  
land of Israel and lived in a city called Nazareth.  
Narrator 2: For then and for now and for ever Israel had a King,  
Narrator 1:           who at one time lived in Egypt and Nazareth.

*Echo Reading*

**Jesus Is Visited by the Magi**

from Matthew 2

*Performance Notes*

2 Readers: Narrator, Voice Leader (represents the Magi and Herod)

Narrator: To welcome the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem.

**Voice Leader: We are three Kings of Orient.**

Narrator: They wanted to know where the one who has been born king of the Jews.

**Voice Leader: His star is in the east.  
We have come to worship him.**

Narrator: When King Herod heard these words he was upset and said to himself,

**Voice Leader: *Make mean look on the face.* Worship him!**

Narrator: Secretly, Herod invited the Magi to find the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said,

**Voice Leader: *Smile on face.* Look everywhere for the child.  
As soon as you find him,  
report to me,  
so I too may worship him.**

Narrator: The Magi continued to follow the star until it stopped over the place where the child lived. Approaching the barn, they saw Jesus with his mother Mary. They spoke to Mary,

**Voice Leader: We have come to worship him.**

Narrator: Then they presented him gifts, very valuable gifts.

**Voice Leader: Put out left hand. Gold.  
Put out right hand. Incense.  
Put out both hands. Myrrh.  
We have found the King.**

Narrator: God spoke to them in a dream saying, Do not go back to wicked Herod.

**Voice Leader: *Pause.* We will go another way home.**

Narrator: So they did go another way home. They returned to their country and did not talk with Herod. Later the evil Herod had all babies fewer than two years old killed. Fortunately the baby Jesus was already in Egypt or he would have been killed as well.