



You will need...

- Big present
- ribbons
- cover
- crown
- Man outline
- Life ring
- Manger and baby
- Narrator
- Angel
- Joseph
- Shepherd

The story

Character/Actions	Lines
	Good morning, it is great to be here for this Assembly. My name is X, I'm here from X Church
	It's now December, so we've started to open the doors on advent calendars. We're practising for the Christmas concert, play or musical. We're nagging Dad to buy a Christmas tree, and we've started to wonder about what presents we'll get for Christmas. We lie awake at night, dreaming, about the first time we pick up that present, how lumpy will it be? How rattly will it be? How BIG will it be?



<p>Take over cover sheet to reveal huge present.</p> <p>Bring out manger and baby</p>	<p>Christmas is coming, and so presents are never far away. And to celebrate Christmas, I've brought along a big present.</p> <p>This morning I want to tell you what the greatest present ever given was.</p> <p>I want to explain why a certain baby who was born in the Middle East, about 2000 years ago is the greatest gift of all. He looked like a normal baby, his parents looked normal, his birth was a little basic; being born in a stable and being laid in an animal's feeding trough.</p> <p>But to look at that baby, I'm certain that no one would have guessed that 2000 years after his birth, billions of people all around the world would still be going to so much fuss to celebrate his birth.</p> <p>Because of the birth of a baby, we're putting up trees, practising productions, giving presents, spending so much pocket money, and enjoying the finest meal of the year.</p>
	<p>Why?</p> <p>Why are we all still celebrating a baby's birth?</p> <p>Inside my enormous present I've got three clues to help us answer that question.</p>
	<p>We're going to go back to the eyewitness accounts of what really happened that first Christmas. We can find out the facts from Luke and Matthew's Gospels in the Bible. We're going to see if the clues help us understand why this baby is the greatest gift of all.</p>
<p>Angel comes out of giant present dressed as a soldier.</p> <p>Narrator -</p>	<p>Here's the first piece of evidence.</p> <p>Here's Gabriel, the angel who appeared to Mary. An angel is like one of God's soldiers, who delivers messages for Him. Here is what he said to Mary about the baby boy that she would give birth to.</p>
<p>Angel -</p>	<p>"The Lord God will make him King, and he will reign forever and his Kingdom will never end."</p>



Narrator -	But Gabriel, what does that mean?
Angel - (Narrator holds up crown)	This baby that Mary would give birth to, would grow up to be a King. The King. The King of God's world. And unlike every other King who has ever lived, this King would rule forever. He would grow up to be the forever King.
Narrator -	This baby is a King. What's next? Let's see our second piece of evidence.
Joseph comes out of the giant present dressed as a common man Narrator -	This is Joseph. He was engaged to be married to Mary. He was only a teenager, perhaps 16 years old. He found out that Mary was going to have a baby. He knew that he wasn't the Father. But he still loved Mary, so he decided he would quietly break off the engagement. Just as he was working all this out, an angel spoke to Joseph in a dream. Here is what Gabriel said:
Angel -	"Joseph, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. Young Mary will give birth to a son. People will call him "Immanuel" which means "God with us".
Narrator -	What does that mean?
Joseph - (Narrator holds up man outline)	Well, I guess it means that the baby that Mary would give birth to will be a normal baby boy, and he will grow up to be a normal man. But somehow, as well as being a normal person, he will also be God himself. As he grows up; people will be seeing God himself walking and talking and eating and laughing. His friends at school will get the chance to play football with God. There's a thought.



<p>Narrator -</p>	<p>The baby is the King. The baby is God with us. He is God, come to earth as a baby. And what's next? Here's our third piece of evidence</p>
<p>A shepherd comes out of the giant present dressed as a working man Narrator -</p>	<p>This is one of the shepherds, who worked in the hills outside Bethlehem. The angel appeared to him, after the baby had been born. Here is what Gabriel said.</p>
<p>Angel -</p>	<p>"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of Bethlehem, a Saviour has been born; he is Christ the Lord."</p>
<p>Narrator -</p>	<p>What does that mean?</p>
<p>Shepherd - (Narrator holds up life ring)</p>	<p>This baby lying in a manger in a stable that looked so helpless, and feeble. He would grow up to be a Saviour. He would save others. He would rescue people, so that they could be friends with God. (pause) But that's the Easter story, so you'll have to wait to hear about that. For the moment you just need to know that a baby boy who needed his parents to do everything for him, would one day grow up to be our Saviour.</p>
<p>Narrator -</p>	<p>So, Christmas is a lot to do with presents. Isn't that terrific! And you know that presents are given freely, you can't earn a present, and you can't demand a present. You're given a present out of love, undeserved. And the greatest gift of all time has been given to us. We didn't deserve for Jesus to come to be born. No one did. But God gave us this gift anyway. God gave us the baby, who would be the King forever, who is God with us, who came to be a rescuer. For Christians that is the best news ever, and that's why we're still celebrating Christmas.</p>



That's why we laugh, and eat, and have parties and of course... give presents.
This Christmas give freely, without wondering what you'll be given back. Love freely. Forgive freely. Because God gave us the best gift ever- freely.

I'm going to say a short prayer. I pray by putting my hands together and closing my eyes to stop me fiddling or being distracted. If you don't want to pray, can you just sit quietly.
Dear Father
Thank you that you invented Christmas. Thank you that you have given us the best gift of all. Thank you for Jesus, who is the King forever, who is God with us, who is the rescuer of the world. Thank you for Jesus' birth.
Please help us to give freely this Christmas, because you have given freely to us. Amen