

**Playstage
Junior**

www.schoolplaysandpantos.com

ARTEBAN'S DILEMMA



**A nativity story about a fourth Wise Man
(contains traditional carols, a rap & a pop song)**

**Written
By
Stewart
Auty**

ARTABAN'S DILEMMA**CAST :****Narrator 1****Narrator 2****Sunday School Leader****Child 1****Child 2****Child 3****Child 4****Child 5****Abgarus, father of Artaban****Artaban the Astronomer****Abdus, servant to Artaban****Zoraster, wife of Artaban****Melchior****Gaspar****Balthazar****Soldier 1****Captain of the Palace Guard****King Herod****Scribe****Shepherd 1****Shepherd 2****Shepherd 3****Joseph****Mary****Donkey****Angel****Soldier 2**

26 speaking parts. Donkey is non-speaking. Other non-speaking could be added.

MUSIC

Backing tracks can be purchased and downloaded for a modest fee from various sources, as shown below. Or, you could source the original artiste recording from amongst parents/grandparents and just have the children sing along to it, as many schools do. If you cannot source them from amongst the school community, then Amazon sell very cheap downloadable MP3 tracks for hundreds of thousands of songs. These can be purchased, downloaded on to a computer and then burnt on to a CD for performance. Below we give the song title and source of backing tracks. Where it says "Traditional" or "Disney" this means there is no backing track we know of but it may be in sheet music form in your school or on a children's school music compilation CD.

Riding Out Across the Desert	Traditional
Little Donkey	Traditional
We Three Kings of Orient Are	Traditional
O Little Town of Bethlehem	Traditional
The Angel Gabriel	Traditional
We Will Rock You (Queen)	

www.ameritz.co.uk

Note : The Shepherd Rap is chanted without music.

ARTABAN'S DILEMMA

Opening Song: Riding out across the desert.

*Riding out across the desert, travelling over sandy plains,
Comes a company of wise men, moving steadily along their way.
Leaving all their friends behind them, guided by a star so bright,
Now they've got to keep on going, must not let the star get out of sight.*

*Riding through the desert gently the wise men go,
Onward to the King, who, was promised long ago.
But they don't know where they're going to find him
There's many towns to search, so they'll keep on following the star,
For it will take them to his place of birth.*

*Wise men on their desert journey, travelled many miles so far,
Though they're getting tired and weary, town of Bethlehem is not too
far.
How they long to worship Jesus, and honour him with royal gifts,
Hearts are full of joy and wonder, as they're searching for the new
born King.*

*Riding out across the desert, travelling over sandy plains,
Comes a company of wise men, moving steadily along their way.
Leaving all their friends behind them, guided by a star so bright,
Now they've got to keep on going, must not let the star get out of sight.*

NARRATOR 1

Welcome to our Christmas Play.

NARRATOR 2

We will take you from this school on a journey to Bethlehem.

NARRATOR 1

Our story, whilst based on the traditional tale, is very unusual.

NARRATOR 2

We still have Joseph and Mary, the shepherds and the Wise Men.

NARRATOR 1

But the focus of our story is the Wise Men.

NARRATOR 2

This is a Victorian story first written in 1895 based on an ancient legend.

NARRATOR 1

Everyone knows the story of the Three Wise Men.

NARRATOR 2

And how they travelled from afar, guided by a star.

NARRATOR 1

But have you heard of the fourth Wise Man?

NARRATOR 2

He travelled separately, but followed that same star.

NARRATOR 1

And the story poses a very difficult question.

NARRATOR 2

Can it ever be right for an honest man to tell a lie?

NARRATOR 1

We begin the story in a typical church Sunday school.

NARRATOR 2

Mrs. Jenkin, the Sunday School Leader is sitting with a small group of excited children as they look forward to Christmas.

(The NARRATORS leave and the Sunday school children and their leader come on stage. The LEADER brings a chair on with her. She sits and the children all sit on the floor)

LEADER

Isn't it exciting, children! Almost Christmas Eve!

CHILD 1

I can't wait! I'm getting an X-box and a Play Station for Christmas.

CHILD 2

I'm getting a skateboard.

CHILD 3

Well I'm going skiing in Italy.

CHILD 4

And I'm getting a new seat for my tractor.

CHILD 5

Well I don't know what I'm getting. Mum says it's a surprise, whatever that is.

LEADER

But that's lovely! A surprise is much better than knowing what you're going to get. It means there's still a bit of mystery about Christmas.

CHILD 3

But your parents might get it wrong! Might get you the wrong present! Disaster!

CHILD 4

You've got to help them get it right. Guide them if necessary.

CHILD 1

Anything else would be a simply awful!

LEADER

No wonder you're all excited.

CHILD 1

Just two days to go!

LEADER

But what do you know about the real Christmas? What does Christmas really mean?

CHILD 2

It's presents and parties!

CHILD 5

Crackers and streamers!

CHILD 3

It's Christmas Dinner.

CHILD 2

With turkey, roast potatoes and stuffing

CHILD 4

And brussel sprouts!

CHILD 1

Yuk! I hate brussel sprouts!

LEADER

But there's more to Christmas than food and presents.

CHILD 3

We're having visitors again this year.

CHILD 1

That's terrible. They just get in the way.

CHILD 2

And you'll have to be nice to them.

CHILD 5

Relatives are the worst. Especially cousins!

CHILD 3

Why do they always have to visit at Christmas?

LEADER

I think you're beginning to lose the spirit of Christmas already.

CHILD1

Well, I think our house should be a visitor free zone this year.

CHILD 2

I agree. If we get visitors, I'm going out!

CHILD 3

You can come round to my house if you like.

CHILD 2

But then I'd be the visitor, wouldn't I?

CHILD 3

I never thought of that!

LEADER

But what do you know about the first Christmas? Over two thousand years ago?

CHILDREN

We weren't born then!

LEADER

But do you know what happened?

CHILD 1

I know Jesus was born in a stable.

CHILD 2

In Bethlehem.

LEADER

Yes, that's right. But why in a stable? And why Bethlehem?

CHILD 5

I'm not sure.

LEADER

And why was he special? And who visited the stable?

CHILD 3

Oh, I know that! Some shepherds, and the Wise Men.

LEADER

Ah, the Wise Men. Do you know who they were?

CHILD 1

They were Astrologers.

CHILD 2

They were fortune tellers? That can't be right.

LEADER

They were astronomers, not astrologers.

CHILD 3

What's an astronomer?

LEADER

Someone who knows about the stars.

CHILD 1

Stars? I know all about them! Popstars, soap stars, film stars

CHILD 3

Not that kind of stars - the sky at night, stupid.

LEADER

Now don't fall out. Let's get back to the Wise Men. How many were there?

CHILD 4

Everybody knows that.

CHILD 1

Yes, there were three Wise Men.

CHILD 3

They travelled hundreds of miles to see the baby Jesus.

CHILD 2

And they took gifts for Mary and Joseph.

LEADER

Well, yes, that's true, up to a point.

CHILD 1

But everybody knows about the Three Wise Men.

LEADER

I'll let you into a little secret. There was a fourth Wise Man.

CHILD 2

That's a new one on me.

CHILD 3

Me too.

CHILD 5

Will you tell us about him?

LEADER

The other Wise Man saw the star too, and set out to follow it.

CHILD 2

And what happened?

LEADER

Well, if you sit quietly and listen, and watch carefully

(The CHILDREN and the LEADER all move to the side of the stage and sing whilst MARY, JOSEPH and the DONKEY come on stage and begin to tie bags and blankets on to the DONKEY's back. The scenery is revealed – a sky full of stars.)

SONG 2 – LITTLE DONKEY

*Little donkey, little donkey,
on the dusty road.*

Got to keep on plodding onwards, with your precious load.

*Been a long time, little donkey,
through the winter's night.*

Don't give up now, little donkey, Bethlehem's in sight.

Ring out those bells tonight

Bethlehem, Bethlehem.

Follow that star tonight

Bethlehem, Bethlehem.

Little donkey, little donkey

Had a heavy day.

Little donkey, carry Mary safely on her way.

(The NARRATORS come back on stage.)

NARRATOR 1

In the days of Caesar Augustus

NARRATOR 2

When King Herod ruled in Jerusalem

NARRATOR 1

An order was made that everyone must return to the city of their birth to be counted.

NARRATOR 2

Although Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth, Joseph was born in Bethlehem, and so he had to return there.

NARRATOR 1

And Mary went with him.

(MARY and JOSEPH begin walking around, leading the DONKEY.)

NARRATOR 2

It took about a week to walk to Bethlehem.

NARRATOR 1

This was difficult for Mary as she was pregnant.

NARRATOR 2

They walked in the day, and rested at night, sleeping under the stars.

(MARY and JOSEPH lay down on the ground.)

NARRATOR 1

Little did they know how important the stars would be.

NARRATOR 2

Even before JOSEPH and Mary arrived in Bethlehem the Wise Men had already noticed the star wandering across the night sky.

NARRATOR 1

When they arrived in Bethlehem, it was crowded, so Joseph and Mary stayed in a stable.

(MARY and JOSEPH get up and lead the DONKEY off stage.)

NARRATOR 2

Meanwhile, far away, in the mountains of Persia lived a man named Artaban.