



### **Part One: The Threat**

When we think of Christmas many of us think of images like gently falling snow, children happily opening gifts or stockings hung over a fire. All the warm and fuzzy Christmas festivities are wonderful but the story of the first Christmas was much more than that - it was a story born in conflict. It was a clash of epic proportions.

**Scripture:** Matthew 2:1-16

**Bottom Line:** Jesus is a threat to whatever and whoever threatens people.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What are some of your favourite aspects of Christmas? Do you have traditions that are really important to you and your family? What are they and why are they such a big part of your celebrations?
2. Read Matthew 2:1-16. Can you remember any of the historical context that was talked about on Sunday? How does that context help you understand the story?
3. Why is Herod so threatened by the birth of Jesus? What do you think that message means for us and how we think about our world?
4. In this story Herod represents a corrupt and oppressive system. Where do you see oppression and injustice today (think about personal, communal and even international levels)?
5. Sometimes it can be easy for us to miss the powerful message of Jesus' birth and what it means for people who have been marginalized. How do you think the message of Christmas changes the way we approach the problems that face our community/city/the world?
6. Are there examples of injustice or certain causes that are particularly close to your heart? What are some ways you've been able to be involved in helping others? What encouragement would you give to other people who want to make a difference for people/people groups that they have a heart for?

### **Moving Forward**

At the end of this passage, Jesus is portrayed as a leader like Moses who alleviates oppression and will meet the needs of people who are hurting. What are some practical and specific ways that you could incorporate that spirit in your Christmas celebrations?