# Henry and All Those Wives!

**Subject:** History  
**Area of Study:** The Tudors  
**Summary:** A focus on King Henry VIII is bound to entertain children and yet cause them to question his antics. This assembly takes a somewhat light-hearted view of King Henry's reign, allowing the audience to form their own opinion on this controversial monarch.  
**Timing:** 20–25 minutes approx  
**Props:**  
- 2 chairs dressed as a throne  
- axe  
- baby doll  
- signs: '3 years later', '1 year later', '6 months later', 'Divorced' 'In the same month!', '7 months later', '2 years later', 'Catherine Parr' and '4 years later'  
**Music:** Tudor-style music  
**Background**  
- Framed Tudor portraits  
**Work:**  
- Class survey – King Henry VIII: a good or bad King?  
- 'If I were King/Queen, I would ...'  
**Cast and costumes:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>No needed</th>
<th>Suggested costumes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrators</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>School uniform/clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Henry VIII</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Trousers, white frilly shirt, velvet cape, cushioned stomach, beard, crown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pope</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mitre hat, long red robe, gold stole, crook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine of Aragon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Long dresses - long sleeves, hair up if possible, half coronet with short, attached back veil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Boleyn</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Seymour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne of Cleves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Howard</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Parr</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3/4-length trousers, white shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executioner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>All in black, black eye mask, axe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>As wives, without veil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(non-speaking)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>As wives, without veil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(non-speaking)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans Holbein &amp; Artists</td>
<td>Remaining children</td>
<td>Big white shirt, trousers, beret, moustache</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Suggested Script – Henry and All Those Wives!

Narrator 1 Welcome to our assembly. We have been learning about King Henry VIII and deciding whether we think he was a good or bad king.

King Henry and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, sit on the thrones; Mary sits at their feet.

Henry Catherine, we have one daughter, Mary. Correct?

Catherine Yes, Henry.

Henry Well, I want a son! You're clearly not good enough for me if you can't provide me with a son. You'll have to go!

Catherine Yes, Henry. (Catherine gets up and leaves.)

Henry (Snaps his fingers and the servant comes running.) (To servant) Send a message to the Pope immediately, saying I wish to divorce her!

Servant Immediately, Your Majesty! (Runs off towards the Pope as he enters.) Good day to you, Pope, sir (bowing). Henry Tudor, King of England, wishes to divorce his wife, sir.

Pope Hmmmmm … this is not something I approve of, but I don't really want to upset that man … hmmmmmm … I'd best not say anything at all. Hopefully he'll change his mind!

Servant (Comes back to Henry.) The Pope is not happy, Your Majesty. He does not approve!

Henry Really? Well, I don't want to be part of HIS Church, then. I'll make one of my own! Hmmmm ... the Church of England, that's what I'll call it. Now, it will need a good leader... aaah ... ME of course! (Anne Boleyn walks past.) Ooooh, hello-o there, you beautiful woman! Who are you?

Anne Anne Boleyn, Your Majesty.

Henry Well, come here, my dear (patting the empty throne). Would you like to be my wife? Yes! (giving her no time to answer.) Wonderful – that's settled then!
Narrator 2  Goodness. What a heartless man! Wife number 1 dropped like a hotcake. Wife number 2 grabbed off the street!

Narrator 3  Give the poor man a break - it was vital he had a son to continue the Tudor name.

Child walks across stage with a sign saying '3 years later'. Henry and Anne sit on their thrones; Elizabeth and Mary sit at their feet.

Henry  Anne, we have one daughter, Elizabeth. Correct?

Anne  Yes, Henry.

Henry  Well, I want a son! You're clearly not good enough for me if you can't provide me with a son. You'll have to go!

Anne  Yes, Henry.

Henry  Executioner. Chop off her head!

Executioner  (Looking excited.) Immediately Your Majesty! (Takes Anne Boleyn away, looking at her hair.) Just a little off the top then, dear? (Anne sobs.)

Henry  Jane! Jane! The coast is clear - come to me, my dear!

Jane  (Comes running to sit on the empty throne.) Oh, Henry - at last!

Narrator 2  This man is unbelievable - wife number 2 provides him with a second beautiful daughter and he demands her head on a block!

Narrator 3  The man wants a son! Let's see how wife number 3 fares!

Child walks across stage with a sign saying '1 year later'. Henry sits on his throne cradling a baby, and Mary and Elizabeth sit at his feet.

Henry  At last I have a son! We shall call him Edward and he shall ...

Servant  I'm sorry, sir, but your wife didn't make it. I'm afraid she died this morning.

Henry  Oh ... oh dear (Looking and sounding very sad).

Narrator 2  (Blowing nose loudly into handkerchief.) Oh, how very sad - poor Jane!
Narrator 3  Agreed. But at least Henry now has his son. Something tells me, however, that he might still be on the hunt for a new wife. (Narrator 2 looks shocked.)

Child walks across stage with a sign saying '3 years later'.

Henry  (Looking at a picture of Anne of Cleves.) Well, I suppose she’ll do. Bring her in!

Anne of Cleves enters (unattractive, protruding teeth, ungainly walk). Henry looks appalled.

Henry  Oh! How awful! They were supposed to send me (looking at the picture) a beautiful woman, not this horse-like creature. (Tosses the picture over his head.) Servant - send a message to Hans and his gang, will you? I demand a jolly good portrait.

Servant  Immediately, Your Majesty!

Hans Holbein and other artists enter carrying paintbrushes and other materials. They begin painting Henry and his children. Tudor-style music plays whilst Henry shouts demands.

Henry  Paint my best side - difficult to choose, I know! Let me see, let me see ... mmm ... lose that chin, will you?

Artists gradually turn around to face the audience and show their finished Tudor-style portraits.

Child walks across stage with a sign saying '6 months later'. Anne of Cleves walks off stage with a sign round her neck saying 'Divorced'.

Henry  (Dusting off his hands.) Well that took care of her ... NEXT!

Child walks across stage with a sign saying 'In the same month!'

Henry  Catherine! Catherine! The coast is clear!

Catherine  Oh, Henry - at last!

Child walks across stage with a sign saying '7 months later'.

Henry  Catherine - you have given me no sons and no happiness - you’ll have to go! EXECUTIONER! Chop off her head!
Executioner  Immediately, Your Majesty! (Takes Catherine Howard away.) At least he'll no longer be a pain in the neck for you, my dear! (Catherine sobs.)

Narrator 2  (Shaking his/her head.) This man has no mercy! No feelings, in fact!

Narrator 3  That's not true; he just wasn't willing to lie about his feelings – he knew what he wanted!

Child walks across stage with a sign saying '2 years later'.

Catherine Parr walks past Henry with a sign on her saying 'Catherine Parr'.

Henry  Ooh, hello. I rather like the name Catherine – do you want to get married? Yes, wonderful! (Giving her no time to answer.)

Child walks across stage with a sign saying '4 years later'.

Servant  I'm sorry, m'lady, but King Henry has died! You'll have to leave as you're no longer needed!

Catherine looks sad.

Although you DID survive!

Narrator 2  (Counting with his/her fingers from 1 to 6, stating what happened to each wife each time) DIVORCED … BEHEADED … DIED … DIVORCED … BEHEADED … SURVIVED!

Narrator 3  He certainly had a busy life as King!

Narrator 4  After researching Henry's life and time as King, we carried out a vote. These were the results:
(…….) people thought Henry VIII was a GOOD King.
(…….) people couldn't decide whether he was a good or bad King.
A majority/minority (delete as appropriate) of (…….) people thought, however, that Henry VIII was a bad King! I wonder what you think.

Narrator 5  We thought about what we would do and what changes we might make if we were King or Queen.

Everyone  If I were King/Queen, I would … .

Narrator 6  Thank you for listening to our assembly. We hope you have enjoyed sharing our work with us!