

# Pay the Price

By Gary Millar and Scott Tunmer



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## Description



*Pay The Price* is a game show (inspired by *The Price is Right*) where contestants are chosen at random to *come on down* from the studio audience. Each contestant gets the chance to open one of the prize boxes and then choose whether or not to take the prize that's inside.

## Purpose



To show that Christ bore the consequences of our bad choices and paid the price for our sins.

## Additional Information



Welcome to Pay the Price, the game show where you can make exciting choices and have the chance to win valuable prizes. But remember – someone has to *pay the price!*

This sketch may be shortened if needed, by omitting one or two contestants, such as Vera, Robert, or both. There are several US-specific references in this sketch. Adjust them as needed for other countries.



**Category**  
Comedy



**Audience**  
Any



**Time**  
25 Minutes



**Difficulty**  
Medium - Hard

## Scripture Reference



**Ephesians 2:8 (NIV):** “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”

## Cast of Characters [8 Male, 3 Female, 3 Either – Characters can be altered to accommodate available actors]



**TED LARSON:** The tacky host of Pay The Price.

**JOHNNY:** The announcer. (Never seen on stage.)

**GILBERT WELLINGTON:** Contestant number one. Gil is a lawyer.

**SPECIAL AGENT PETERS:** An extremely serious law enforcement agent.

**VERA SWENSON:** Contestant number two. Vera is nervous about everything.

**ROBERT MACMILLAN:** Contestant number three. Robert works for a wall-street investment firm.

**MITCH FLETCHER:** a long time viewer of Pay The Price, who now has the chance to be a contestant.

**HEAD:** A head hidden inside one of the prize boxes.

**ASSISTANTS:** Non-speaking stage helpers.

**PHIL CRAMER:** Friend of one of the contestants.

**DARLENE CRAMER:** Phil's wife.

**SUZY CRAMER:** Phil's young daughter.

**NICKY CRAMER:** Phil's young son.

## Props



<i>Prop</i>	<i>Start Location</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Tables covered with cloth	On Stage	
Box One	On Table	Contains Play Money, Tax Forms
Box Two	On Table	Bottom of box is open, concealing the head.
Box Three	On Table	Contains a plaque, and a proposal
Box Four	On Table	A Bible
Plaque	In Box Three	
Proposal	In Box Three	Some stapled paper should suffice.

Two tables should be set up next to each other with a gap in between, and then covered with the cloths so that the underside of the tables cannot be seen. The actor playing the HEAD will place his or her head in the gap and then be covered with an appropriately sized box. The tables could also be angled to accomplish this.

## Costume



**TED LARSON** wears slacks, a dress shirt, a tie, and a jacket. The colors in the outfit should mismatch a little bit.

**GILBERT WELLINGTON** is well dressed, but may be casual. A tie is optional.

**SPECIAL AGENT PETERS** wears a suit, mirrored sunglasses, and an earpiece.

**VERA SWENSON** is made up to look older and somewhat frail. A shawl is optional.

**ROBERT MACMILLAN** is dressed in a suit, like a businessman.

**MITCH FLETCHER** wears a plaid flannel shirt, jeans and suspenders. Think lumberjack.

**OTHERS** are at the discretion of the drama team.

## Sound Effects



<i>Sound</i>	<i>Cue</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Jeopardy Music	Gil / Robert making their decisions.	A short clip of music from the Jeopardy game show.
Heartbeat sound	Microphone is near Vera	
Long beep sound.	Microphone is near Vera after she screams.	

## Lighting



General stage lighting. Some flashing or colored lighting can optionally be used to highlight certain portions of the show, such as the introduction, or when the Jeopardy music plays.

## Scene



On stage for the taping of an episode of Pay the Price. The audience becomes the “studio audience” for the game show.

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## Script



*(The lights come up to an empty stage, with the boxes appropriately arranged on tables.)*

**JOHNNY:** And now... It's time for the show everyone's talking about – Pay the Price! Let's meet the host of our show, Ted Larson!

**TED:** *(Bounding onto the stage.)* Welcome! Welcome, welcome ladies and gentlemen to America's favorite game show – where we find out if you're willing to Pay the Price. I'm your host, Ted Larson. Johnny, let's meet today's contestants!

**JOHNNY:** All right, Ted. We've picked four cards at random from our studio audience, and our first lucky contestant lives in Andover Massachusetts where he owns his own law firm. Gilbert Wellington, come on down! You're the next contestant on Pay the Price.

*(GIL leaves his seat, smiling and excited and joins TED on stage.)*

Ted, contestant number two comes to us from the Listless Hills Retirement Community in Tampa Florida. She recently had a pacemaker put in and is on very high doses of blood pressure medication. Mrs. Vera Swenson, come on down! You're the next contestant on Pay the Price!

*(VERA leaves her seat and – sometimes clutching her heart with excitement -- makes her way to the stage.)*

Contestant number three is from New York City, where he works on Wall Street for a large investment firm. He currently manages many portfolios and hopes one day to be vice-president of the company. Robert Macmillan, come on down! You're the next contestant on Pay the Price.

*(ROBERT seems very happy to be a contestant and jogs up to the stage.)*

Ted, our final contestant lives in Portland, Oregon where he works as a Lumber Transfer Technician for a logging company. His hobbies include whittling, matchstick model making, carving, playing with Lincoln Logs, making campfires, removing splinters, tree house construction, collecting pinecones, and searching for Bigfoot. Mitch Fletcher come on down! You're the next contestant on Pay the Price.

*(MITCH doesn't move. TED scans the audience.)*

I said – Mitch Fletcher, come on down! You're the next contestant on Pay the Price!

**MITCH:** *(MITCH stands up, but is reluctant.)* Um, no thanks. I've seen this show lots of times and I'm just interested in watching.

**TED:** Well, that's too bad Mitch, because one of our lucky contestants will have a chance to win over six-thousand dollars!

**MITCH:** *(Stands back up.)* What? Excuse me? How much?

**TED:** Six-thousand dollars!

**MITCH:** Mitch Fletcher, come on down!!! Excuse me... Pardon me... Get out of my way! *(Ad-libs as he hurries to the stage.)*

**TED:** Well let's get down to business. Gil, you're the lucky contestant that gets to start things off. Gil, come on over and pick a box.

*(GIL makes up his mind and picks a box.)*

What's in the box Gil?

**GIL:** *(Excited.)* Money!

**MITCH:** *(Waving hands and boldly interrupting.)* Whoa! Whoa, wait a minute! Hold on!

**TED:** Is there something wrong Mitch?

**MITCH:** Yes, Ted, there is.

**TED:** And what might that be?

**MITCH:** That's my money!

**TED:** Excuse me?

**MITCH:** Well, Gil was clearly confused and picked the wrong box. That's my money!

**TED:** Mitch, I happen to know that one of these other boxes contains something much more valuable than Gil's box.

**MITCH:** More valuable?

**TED:** Oh yes.

**MITCH:** *(Shakes GIL's hand and pats him on the back.)* Good luck, Gil.

**TED:** Gil, what else is in the box?

**GIL:** *(Really Excited.)* More money!!

*(TED: and GIL both stop and look at MITCH to see if he's going to interrupt again.)*

**TED:** Come on, Gil – there's something else in that box.

**GIL:** *(Searches...)* It looks like a 1040 Federal Income Tax form.

**TED:** Look a little closer, Gil.

**GIL:** Why, it's got my name on it and it's all filled out.

**TED:** That's right, Gil. Johnny, tell him all about it!

**JOHNNY:** Well, Gil, our crack team of uncertified private accountants has done some creative accounting and we've reduced your net taxable income to zero dollars. Yes, that's *zero* dollars, and that means you're entitled to a refund from Uncle Sam of six-thousand two-hundred eighty-one dollars and fourteen cents!

*(TED applauds and gets the audience involved.)*

**GIL:** Excuse me Ted, but I made more money than this last year. And I didn't give this much to charity. And I don't have five kids. In fact, I don't have any kids, do I?

*(TED shakes his head no.)*

**GIL:** So... that means this isn't entirely accurate.

**TED:** It's a bold faced lie.

*(Beat.)*

There's something missing on that form, Gil.

**GIL:** There is?

**TED:** Yes Gil. *(Hands GIL a pen.)* Your signature.

**GIL:** But that's tax fraud!

**TED:** *(Puts his arm around GIL.)* Gil... Gil, we're talking six-thousand two-hundred eighty-one dollars and fourteen cents! The only thing we need to know, Gil, is: are you willing to – help us, audience – Pay the Price!

*(Jeopardy music starts. TED encourages the audience to chant "Pay The Price! Pay The Price!" After 15 – 20 seconds, the music stops, TED stops chanting and raises his hands to the audience to signal that they are to stop now. MITCH continues loudly, while TED shoots him a sharp glance. Then MITCH realizes he is supposed to be quiet.)*

**MITCH:** Back to you, Ted!

**TED:** Well, what's it gonna be Gil?

**GIL:** I'll Pay the Price!!! *(Takes pen and signs form. Immediately AGENT PETERS ENTERS and handcuffs him.)*

**GIL:** What's going on?

**TED:** You're being arrested for tax fraud. Johnny, tell him about it!

**JOHNNY:** Gil, we'd like you to meet Special Agent Peters from the United States Treasury Department.

*(GIL and AGENT PETERS shake hands.)*

As a result of playing Pay the Price, you're about to be convicted on four counts of tax evasion. Yes, Gil, that means you'll be spending the next ten years at San Quentin Federal Penitentiary in sunny California.

*(Beat.)*

Gil, thanks for playing Pay the Price!

**MITCH:** *(While GIL and AGENT PETERS turn to leave)* What an idiot! Nobody gets caught cheating on taxes. I've never been caught. In fact last year on my...

*(AGENT PETERS quickly turns toward MITCH.)*

my... my...

**(MITCH places his hand on his heart and starts to sing.)**

My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing...

**TED:** **(Applauding)** Let's hear it for Gil, ladies and gentlemen!

**(GIL and AGENT PETERS EXIT.)**

Well, Vera, it's your turn to play Pay the Price!

**VERA:** Good, I was afraid you forgot me.

**TED:** Nonsense, not to worry. So, are you ready to pay the price?

**(When TED holds his microphone near VERA, we hear the sound of her heartbeat. He pulls the microphone away and the sound goes away. Repeats this a few times.)**

**VERA:** That darn pacemaker – interferes with everything.

**TED:** So that was your heartbeat?

**VERA:** Yup. Wireless mikes pick up my pacemaker signals.

**TED:** Well Vera, which box are you gonna pick?

**(VERA has some trouble deciding, she finally picks box number two. There's a HEAD underneath looking right at her! VERA is startled and screams. The HEAD is then startled by VERA and also screams; they both completely freeze.)**

**TED:** Vera? Vera? Are you OK?

**(TED holds his microphone near VERA and we hear the sound of a rapid heartbeat, followed by a constant "beeeeeep.")**

**TED:** I said Vera, are you OK?

**VERA:** **(Slowly and deliberately – VERA at first thinks she might be dead.)** I shouldn't be able to hear you... For a minute there I thought my heart had stopped.

**TED:** Vera, that wasn't your heartbeat we were listening to.

**VERA:** It wasn't?

**TED:** No! It was hers!

**(HEAD falls over backwards, dead. ASSISTANTS remove the body and EXIT.)**

**TED:** Want to go on, Vera?

**VERA:** You bet your bippy Ted!!

**TED:** That's the spirit! Let's hear it for her. Well Vera, have you figured it out yet?

VERA: No.

TED: What's in the box?

VERA: Nothing. It's empty.

TED: That's where you're wrong, Vera! This box is full – full of all the things that have been gained by your years of worry, fear, and anxiety.

VERA: You mean it's empty.

TED: That's right Vera. You get... Nothing!

VERA: But what if I decide to pay the price?

TED: Vera, you already have!

VERA: Empty, huh?

*(TED nods his head yes and VERA EXITS.)*

TED: Thanks for playing Pay the Price!

Well Robert, you're our next lucky contestant

ROBERT: OK Ted, I think I'm ready

*(TED puts his arm around ROBERT's shoulder, as MITCH begins to sneak toward the boxes.)*

TED: Are you a little nervous Robert?

ROBERT: I've never been on TV before. I am a little nervous, Ted.

TED: Do you have any family members with you today?

ROBERT: Yes, that's my wife Clara right over there.

*(MITCH smiles at the audience, as he is about to peek under a box.)*

TED: *(Without looking toward MITCH.)* Mitch, get away from the box and get back where you belong!

*(MITCH can't believe that TED saw him. He returns to his place and makes a face at him.)*

TED: I saw that, Mitch. You know what time it is, Robert?

ROBERT: No. What?

TED: It's time for you to pick a box!

*(MITCH raises his hand, about to speak.)*

...And it's time for Mitch to shut up. Pick a box, Robert.

**(ROBERT picks a box and looks inside, pulling out a plaque.)**

**ROBERT:** It's a plaque – "Robert Macmillan, Vice President." Vice President! I'm Vice President!

**(Jumps up and down with arms in air repeating "Vice President!" ROBERT's arms remain up.)**

Right?

**TED:** **(Lowers ROBERT's arms.)** Not yet. But you can be!

**ROBERT:** How?

**TED:** Well, what else is in the box?

**ROBERT:** **(Pulls out the proposal and flips through it.)** It looks like a proposal... And it's great!

**TED:** Yes it is! Johnny tell him all about it.

**JOHNNY:** Robert, as you know, your company is in the midst of a major restructuring. The Board of Directors is looking for fresh ideas – ideas that will take them into the 21st century, ideas that will make someone the new Vice President! Robert, you're holding those ideas in your hands.

**ROBERT:** So this is mine?

**TED:** Not yet. Do me a favor.

**ROBERT:** What?

**TED:** Turn to the back page and read the closing out loud.

**ROBERT:** "Respectfully submitted by Phil Cramer." Phil Cramer my co-worker? My best friend, Phil Cramer? Excuse me Ted, but I don't understand what this has to do with me.

**TED:** **(Holding up white out.)** Does this bottle of white out help?

**ROBERT:** Wait a minute. I don't know if I can do that!

**TED:** Before you decide, we'd like you to meet somebody. Johnny?

**JOHNNY:** Robert, we've spared no expense in helping you with your decision. So we've flown in – all the way from New York City – your co-worker and best friend in the whole wide world. Ladies and gentlemen, lets have a *Pay the Price* welcome for Phil Cramer, his lovely wife Darlene, and their two – up until now well feed – children, Suzy and Nicky.

**(PHIL CRAMER and FAMILY ENTER.)**

**TED:** Robert, Phil and his family have been in a sound proof booth and have absolutely no idea why they are here. Let me spell it all out for you.

*(PHIL realizes that ROBERT has his proposal.)*

**PHIL:** Hey! That's my proposal!!

**DARLENE:** I told you I didn't have it!

**TED:** People, people – please. It's this simple, Robert: Step One - White out Phil's name. Step two - Sign your name. Step three - You become Vice President. Step four - Phil becomes a victim of restructuring, as outlined in *your* proposal, and loses his job! Robert, you know what's next. You need to decide if you're going to... Pay the Price! Phil, Darlene, you have twenty seconds to try and save your job!

*(DARLENE falls into PHIL's arms. SUZY and NICKY go to ROBERT's side.)*

**SUZY:** Uncle Robert, why is Mommy crying?

*(Jeopardy music plays while PHIL's family pleads with ROBERT for about 10-15 seconds.)*

**TED:** What's it going to be Robert?

**ROBERT:** I... I... I'm sorry Phil. I'll Pay the Price.

**TED:** He'll pay the price! Johnny tell him all about it.

**JOHNNY:** Well Robert our Pay the Price staff will fax your proposal immediately to the Board of Directors and within six months you'll see the fulfillment of a life-long dream. Congratulations, Vice President Robert Macmillan!

*(TED and ROBERT shake hands and ROBERT EXITS.)*

**TED:** Johnny what do we have for the Cramer's?

**JOHNNY:** Well, we have a... Um... Not much, Ted. But thanks anyway for playing Pay the Price!

*(TED ushers the CRAMER's out.)*

**TED:** Mitch.

**MITCH:** What?

**TED:** Are you ready to play Pay the Price?

**MITCH:** Um... Well....

**TED:** Excited Mitch?

**MITCH:** I guess.

**TED:** Whoa! Where's the Mitch Fletcher we saw coming down the aisle a few minutes ago?

**MITCH:** Frankly Ted, you scared the daylight out of him!

**TED:** Come on, Mitch. Relax! Tell us a little about yourself!

**MITCH:** *(Suspicious.)* Why?

**TED:** Look Mitch, if you really don't want to play we'll just call another contestant. Johnny!

**MITCH:** Wait, wait... Hold on Let's see. First I was born and when I was three days old my father put me in my bassinet. It was solid oak with mahogany trim and beautiful maple inlays. And when I was ten, I built my first tree house...

**TED:** I see you are ready to play. Let's see what's in the box, Mitch.

*(MITCH opens the remaining box.)*

**MITCH:** It's a book. A lousy book. Do you know how many trees died to make this book?

**TED:** Oh, it's not just any old book. It's the Bible! And I believe you'll find a bookmark in it. Open it Mitch!

*(MITCH opens the book carefully, as if it might be booby-trapped.)*

And you'll find a verse highlighted for you – It's Romans 6:23. Read it out loud Mitch.

**MITCH:** "For the wages of sin is death." Death? Death! Oh no, they're going to kill me. I knew it. I'm too young to die!

**TED:** Mitch, you need to read the rest of the verse.

**MITCH:** Why? Does it describe how you're going to kill me? Oh great. Next you'll be showing me pictures. Yeah, here's a guy from last weeks show blindfolded and slumped over in front of a firing squad... And here's a guy swinging from the gallows...

**TED:** Mitch! Just read the rest of the verse!

**MITCH:** "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

**TED:** I told you it was more valuable than the other boxes!

**MITCH:** Wow! Eternal life! So what do I have to do?

**TED:** It's a free gift. All you have to do is receive it!

**MITCH:** That's it?

**TED:** That's it! Johnny, tell him about it!

**JOHNNY:** Well Mitch, the Apostle John put it this way in chapter one, verse twelve of his gospel: "To as many as received him to them he gave the right to become children of God."

**TED:** Mitch it's yours for the taking. What's it gonna be?

**MITCH:** Wait a minute! Hold everything. I know this show and you're not fooling anybody. Right, audience? Ted, I've watched this show my whole life. I know this show. I lost

my own dear mother on this show, and the one thing I know for sure – the one constant, unchanging, irrefutable fact – is that somebody always has to pay the price!

**TED:** Somebody already has!

**MITCH:** Man, I bet he got the short end of the stick...

**TED:** Johnny, tell us all about it!

*(Lights fade out.)*