



SCRIPT

ASSISTANT GUIDE

ASSISTANT GUIDE brings GROUP down the stairs and gathers everyone outside the door to A MODERN FAMILY'S HOME.

Good evening and welcome to this exciting adventure as we follow the star. My name is _____, and I will be your guide for the first part of your journey. Tonight, as we step back into history, you will feel a mixture of past and present. We will find that the star the wise men followed so long ago is still shining and we can follow it too!

In order to get the most of this experience please make sure your cell phone ringers are off. Photos are allowed, but to protect our actors eyes, please no flash or laser focus. For those with sensory sensitivities, stay with me and I will let you know what to expect. Events happen fast, so let's stay close together so you don't miss anything.

As we enter each scene, please help me by making space for children and wheelchairs in front so everyone can see well. After the first scene I will bring up the rear, so no one gets left behind. If you have concerns, come to me. I am here to help.

As we follow the star, we will be on dimly lit paths but don't worry! Safety precautions are in place. And do not fear the Roman soldiers. They know their place, but they will not hesitate to keep order. Are you ready to follow the star? Then follow me!

Gestures to the door.

Do you know the Joneses? We will be stopping by their house to see what they are doing in preparation for Christmas. You don't know the Joneses? I think maybe you will find you do. Let's knock and see if they are home.

Knocks on the door. GROUP enters.

SCENE 1
A MODERN FAMILY'S HOME

Scene opens in a living room decorated for Christmas. Upbeat secular Christmas music plays quietly. DAD sits reading on a couch stage right. DANIELLE sits in an armchair upstage, playing on her phone. SAMMY sits on the floor stage left in front of the Christmas tree wrapping a present badly. MOM stands stage right in front of the couch looking at the phone on her list, agitated.

ASSISTANT GUIDE

Here we are at the Joneses. Let's listen in and see what's happening. Though they may not be your neighbors, you may find that you have more in common than you think.

MOM

Honey, did you pick up that present you were getting for your secretary?

DAD

Yeah, I got it yesterday.

MOM

Good. Danielle, what do we need to get for your Christmas party at school?

DANIELLE

I need to bring cupcakes and a \$5.00 gift to exchange.

MOM

OK. Oh no! I forgot to get the chips and dip for the party tomorrow night!

Looks over at SAMMY who has covered the package in tape

Sammy! Don't put the tape there! Smooth out the paper so grandma's present looks nice! You know she cares about stuff like that!

Takes the present and tries to fix it

Great! Why didn't I just do it myself? Now I have to redo it.

SAMMY looks down, ashamed.

I don't know how I'm going to get everything done.
Sometimes I don't think Christmas is worth all the hassle!

DANIELLE

Oh Mom, yes it is. Especially the gifts and all the lights!
(*reflecting*) Mom? How did it all begin? You know, the presents and the decorations?

SAMMY

Well, Santa Claus started it, didn't he? I mean I really like all the presents he brings me.

MOM

Yes, some people do think it's all about Santa and presents.

DAD

Ok! It's time for you to take a break. Come over here and relax for a minute.

MOM

Oh, I'm sorry, sometimes I get so caught up on what needs to be done that I forget about what's really important.

DAD

I know honey. This time of year does get pretty crazy.
Thank you for all you're doing.

Hugs Mom.

And it is worth all the hassle just to enjoy this time together as a family.

Danielle, you asked a very good question, because the Christmas story really means a lot more when we know how it all began. And Sammy, it actually began a long time before Santa Claus showed up.

You know when I was little, on Christmas Eve our family always read the story of how Christmas began.

DANIELLE

Oh Dad, that would be awesome! Do we have the story?

DAD

Embarrassed

Uh, yeah. I think so. Mom, have you seen a Bible anywhere?

MOM

I think I saw Grandma's old one around here somewhere.

DANIELLE

Pulls old Bible out from under a chair, blows off the dust, hands it DAD

Is this it?

DAD

Yeah! That's it! Ok, now let's see if I can remember where the story is.

Looks through the Bible

Here, this looks like it. It's written by a man named Luke.

Reads Luke 2:1, 3-7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the Inn.

SAMMY

Is that all there is?

DAD

Frowns

No, I remember there being more to the story. Something about heavenly beings.

SAMMY

Woah! You mean like from Star Wars?

DAD

Laughs

No, they were called angels. Let's see if I can find it.

Searches through the Bible

OK, this looks like it might be it. It's in Matthew. Well, it's not about the angels but it is more about the first Christmas.

Reads Matthew 2:1,2 from the Bible

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wisemen from the east to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him."

Magi enter interrupting family conversation, talking excitedly to the group

WISEMAN 1

Have you seen the star? It's amazing! You've got to see this!

Points to the sky

WISEMAN 2

We are from a far country and have been following this star for many nights.

WISEMAN 3

I had a dream telling me that we should follow the star. It was such a compelling feeling, that I knew we had to follow this strange, yet wonderful star.

WISEMAN 1

Please come with us and follow the star!

WISEMEN walk slowly up the hill towards Jerusalem

**ASSISTANT GUIDE encourages the group to follow the WISEMEN*

WISEMAN 2

There's the star, over there.

Pointing at the star

I wonder, is this the best road to take to follow it?

WISEMAN 3

I wish there was someone from around here who could tell us where this road leads.

GUIDE

Walks down the road and meets the WISEMEN

Did I hear you wondering where this road leads? It leads to Jerusalem.

WISEMAN 1

Oh good! We are following that star (*points*) and want to go to Jerusalem to find a newborn king. But we need someone to show us the way. Could you be our guide?

GUIDE

Well, I'm on my way to Bethlehem for the census, but Jerusalem is on the way. Yes, I can guide you there. My name is_____.

Now there are dangers along the way, but I can get you there safely. (*Beat*) You said you are following a star? To find a newborn king? That's interesting. Can you tell me more about it? Where did you come from?

WISEMAN 2

We began far away in our home country in the East. It has been a very long dangerous journey.

WISEMAN 3

We've had to travel at night in order to follow the star! But it's worth it because we were told in a dream that the star would bring us to the Messiah, to a newborn king!

WISEMAN 1

We researched this, we found a promise in some ancient scrolls about a star that would herald the birth of a king who will bring peace. Well, everybody's looking for peace, so of course we had to follow this star!

GUIDE

Fascinating! Well, let's get on our way to Jerusalem. It's not far.

SCENE 2
THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM

A horn blows as the GROUP approaches the temple. People mill around the outer court talking loudly, and chanting prayers. Others stand in lines to exchange money and buy animals. There are sounds of money hitting metal and animal bells ringing. The HIGH PRIEST stands behind the alter attending to the sacrificial offering fire and controls the lights. Worshipers approach MONEY CHANGER stage right beside the alter, noisily drop coins into the metal container and walk across to ANIMAL SELLER and drop more coins into the metal container and go stand next to pillars while GUIDE and WISEMEN talk.

GUIDE

Oh, good. Here we are at the Temple. It sounds like it is time for a sacrifice.

GUIDE encourages GROUP to come up to the second pillar of the Temple.

**ASSISTANT GUIDE encourages GROUP to crowd together to allow everyone to be able to see and hear.*

Wheelchairs, strollers, and the little ones are ushered to the front of the group. ASSISTANT GUIDE signals GUIDE with light when everyone is in place.

GUIDE

This is our beloved Temple, where we come to worship the one true God.

WISEMAN 2

Would there be any scholars here who could interpret the scrolls and answer our questions?

GUIDE

Why yes, there are priests and teachers here who could help you.

WISEMAN 3

Wonderful! Perhaps they can help us find this new born king.

GUIDE

Pointing to MONEY CHANGER

Here is a Priest, perhaps he can help you.

MONEY CHANGER stands upstage right behind a table. MAN 1 stands in the front of a line of people waiting to exchange coins.

MONEY CHANGER

Come! Exchange your money for a temple shekel.

MAN 1

Here are two Drachmas for a temple shekel.

MONEY CHANGER

Counts the two coins with a look of disgust.
But you must now pay four Drachmas.

MAN 1

But this is all I have!

MONEY CHANGER

A temple shekel is all that is acceptable to the Most High. You must pay the price! Now move on, there are people waiting!

MAN 1 crosses to the opposite side of the courtyard in great distress. WISEMEN walk forward to speak with MONEY CHANGER.

WISEMAN 1

We have come seeking the child born king. Can you help us?

MONEY CHANGER

Standing

Child born king? I know of no new king. Just who are you?

WISEMAN 1

We are Magi from the east.

Gestures to the other WISEMEN standing with him.

WISEMAN 2

Shows an open scroll.

We have read from your prophets and feel that the time is now for the Messiah to come! We have followed his star and-

MONEY CHANGER

Interrupts

Ah yes! The Messiah! Yes. He is coming, someday. But you Gentiles must be confused. But then how would you know? Our Messiah will come, but with power and majesty. He will rule and break the bondage of the Romans and we will be a great nation again. People will look at us in awe, as it should be! Now excuse me, I must go back to my appointed work.

MONEY CHANGER returns to exchanging money.

RICH MAN enters downstage right and walks to stage right. HIGH PRIEST, standing centerstage watches RICH MAN as he prays.

RICH MAN

O Lord, I thank you that my sacrifice is acceptable in your sight. Out of my great abundance this perfect lamb is provided, and given up to you oh Lord, to atone for my "occasional" sin. Oh Lord, I am grateful that you have seen fit to bless ME, and that I am not like these poor miserable peasants.

Motions to the GROUP in the courtyard.

I fast twice a week and give a tenth of my sizeable income to you.

EXITS praying loudly about his greatness

I give generously and yet look at all I am still blessed with! Gold, jewels, sheep, goats...

WISEMEN shake their heads in disbelief and approach HIGH PRIEST.

WISEMAN 3

Excuse me, can you tell us where we might find the one born king?

HIGH PRIEST

Startled

What's this? You are looking for a new king? I wish we had a new king, but unfortunately we're stuck with Herod, if you can call him a king.

Shakes head

WISEMAN 3

Are you sure? From what we have studied, we are certain that-

HIGH PRIEST

Interrupts

I'm sorry, but you must be mistaken. There is no new king! Now please go! I must prepare for the next sacrifice.

Gestures to the alter and moves upstage.

WISEMEN look confused and look to GUIDE, who shrugs and points to ANIMAL SELLER stage left, where two worshipers have brought out lambs and stand next to ANIMAL SELLER

GUIDE

Perhaps this priest can help you.

Guides group over to ANIMAL SELLER

ANIMAL SELLER

Yelling like a salesman

Animals for sacrifice! Come and get your sacrificial lamb. Perfect, spotless, without blemish. The best you will find for all your needs.

POOR MAN

Approaches meekly through the crowd

Allow me to buy a lamb to sacrifice for myself and my family. This is all I can give.

ANIMAL SELLER

Counts the coins and looks disdainfully at POOR MAN
Is this all you have? This is not nearly enough to buy such fine lambs as these.

POOR MAN

Will it buy a goat?

ANIMAL SELLER

Not a goat. Not even two doves! (*Scoffs*) Nothing that is worthy!

POOR MAN

Falls to the ground pleading
How then can I atone for the sins of my household and receive the blessings of the Lord?

ANIMAL SELLER

Disdainfully
That is not my concern. You must work it out for yourself! Now go!

Throws coins to the ground

POOR MAN scrambles for the coins, moaning and walks away in distress

WISEMAN 1

Addresses GROUP and GUIDE
What will this poor man do? Is there no mercy here?
Looks at ANIMAL SELLER and starts to walk away

SIMEON, leaning heavily on his staff, hobbles towards the WISEMEN from downstage right.

SIMEON

Greetings! My name is Simeon. I have heard you asking questions about a new king, I too am looking for Him. The Lord God Almighty has revealed to me that I will not die until my eyes have seen Him. And I know the time is now.

WISEMAN 1

You are looking for Him too? Can you help us?

SIMEON

Yes, but you must look for the right one.

Gesturing to PRIESTS

They are looking for a king for the Jews. The Messiah will bring hope and salvation to all people.

Anna Enters upstage right and walks slowly to

SIMEON

ANNA

Looks at WISEMEN and GROUP with puzzlement

Simeon, who are all these people?

Gestures towards WISEMEN and GROUP.

SIMEON

Oh, Anna, these people are looking for the Messiah too! I have told them, he will come to save!

ANNA

With great joy

You are looking for the Messiah?

WISEMEN & GUIDE

Yes, we are!

ANNA

Oh, bless you all! You must keep looking!

Gesturing to the PRIESTS

These people who are giving up animals for sacrifices are depending on that sacrifice to save them, but it can't. It only points to the one who comes to bring us redemption and true forgiveness. If you look with all of your heart, you will find Him.

TEMPLE GUARD enters downstage left behind GROUP

TEMPLE GUARD

Shouting and pointing to the WISEMEN

You! Come! king Herod wants to speak with you, now! Follow me! And be quick about it!

WISEMAN 1

To GROUP

I don't know what we have done, but we better follow him!

*GUIDE clears the way for WISEMEN, wheelchairs,
and strollers to leave first.*

GUIDE

Let the chariots go first. We should follow that soldier and the Wisemen. Come quickly and stay together! Hurry! Hurry!

ANNA & SIMEON

With urgency

Be careful! God be with you!

*TEMPLE GUARD leads the group up to Herod's
Palace.*

SCENE 3
HEROD'S PALACE

PALACE SOLDIER stands downstage right at the entrance to the palace. WISEMEN stand on the ramp behind TEMPLE GUARD.

**ASSISTANT GUIDE encourages GROUP to crowd together to allow everyone to be able to see and hear. Wheelchairs, strollers, and the little ones are ushered to the front of the GROUP. ASSISTANT GUIDE signals PALACE SOLDIER with light when everyone is in place and PALACE SOLDIER approaches the GROUP.*

TEMPLE GUARD

Hits heart with closed right fist in Salute to PALACE SOLDIER

Sir! Here are the men King Herod requested. Watch out for this one.

Points to someone near the front

He/She looks like a trouble maker.

PALACE SOLDIER

Very Good. You are dismissed.

TEMPLE GUARD salutes and EXITS

To WISEMEN

And just what have you done to stir up the king?

WISEMAN 2

We don't know. We were just told that the king wants to see us.

PALACE SOLDIER

You're the ones looking for a new king?

WISEMAN 1

Well yes-

PALACE SOLDIER

Interrupting

What took you so long to get here? The king is furious! Looking for a new king? You know heads have rolled for less

than this! Wait here! I will announce you to the king at once.

PALACE SOLDIER crosses to THRONE SOLDIER standing to the right of the throne. THRONE SOLDIER moves to center stage to meet PALACE SOLDIER

Go tell the king the men you wanted to see are here.

THRONE SOLDIER salutes and EXITS behind the curtain. PALACE SOLDIER turns to the group and stands at attention. THRONE SOLDIER returns and whispers to PALACE SOLDIER and then returns to stand beside the throne.

The king will see you now, but watch yourselves! The king doesn't usually allow such rabble (*Pointing to the group*) into his presence. (*ominously*) You saw the prison just outside the palace? It's real easy to end up there. Now come! The king is very interested in what you have to say.

Turns and scoffs loudly to himself

A new king? Ha! This should be interesting.

PALACE SOLDIER brings WISEMEN and GUIDE to the throne. WISEMEN stand to the left of the throne. GUIDE stands left of them, behind the red curtain. PALACE SOLDIER brings GROUP to stand in front of the throne. THRONE SOLDIER leaves to bring in HEROD.

WISEMAN 3

I'm a little nervous about all this. Did you hear the guard? Furious, he said the king was! I don't want to offend this king. I'm not ready to die!

WISEMAN 2

Oh, don't worry. The guard is probably just overreacting. This is the king of the Jews. He must know the Messiah is coming.

WISEMAN 1

Once he knows we're looking for the Messiah, I'm sure he'll be helpful. Maybe he'll even have information that will help us find the newborn king! You just wait and see.

WISEMAN 3

I don't know. I hope you are right.

THRONE SOLDIER

Returns and announces

King Herod of Judea!

ALL bow before HEROD.

HEROD

Enters and takes a seat at his throne

I have been told by trustworthy people that you are looking for a new king. Just what is this all about?

WISEMAN 1

We have learned of the one born king, and have come to find Him. Perhaps you know of Him too and could help us.

HEROD

Stands, turns abruptly and paces the floor

Just who are you, and where are you from?

WISEMAN 2

We are Magi and have come far from the East. We have followed His star for many nights and have come to worship Him.

HEROD

Magi? Humph, as you can see, I am the king in Israel. Tell me, where did you hear of this, this king?

WISEMAN 1

We have studied from the scrolls of your prophets, O King, and found that the time was near for Him, the Messiah, to come. Then we saw the star.

HEROD

Oh yes, the prophets! Of course. I too have been looking for Him. Wait here!

Walks back to THRONE SOLDIER and whispers loudly.

Get me the priests and teachers, now! And have them bring the scrolls of the prophets.

THRONE SOLDIER walks behind the sheer curtain upstage right and addresses someone through the doorway.

THRONE SOLDIER

The king demands to see the priests and teachers. And bring the scrolls of your prophets! Quickly!

HEROD walks around the curtain to the back room behind a sheer curtain. THRONE SOLDIER comes back with the PRIEST and TEACHERS holding scrolls which they lay out on the table.

HEROD

What do you know about this, this child born king?

PRIEST

O King, we know nothing of what you speak.

HEROD

Don't you teach of a coming Messiah? You must know something! Don't play me for a fool! Just tell me. Don't you know when he is to be born?

PRIEST

Well, yes. According to the prophet Daniel the time of His coming is at hand. But I don't know. A baby?

HEROD

You call yourselves teachers? Where is this Messiah to be born?

TEACHER 1

Feverishly looking through scrolls
In Bethlehem of Judea, O King.

HEROD

How do you know this?

TEACHER 2

Here. It is written by the prophet Micah: "But you, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah. For out of you will come a ruler to shepherd my people Israel."

HEROD

Are you sure of this?

TEACHERS 1 and 2 look to PRIEST.

PRIEST

Yes, O King. It is right from the ancient prophets.

HEROD

Leave!

PRIEST and TEACHERS scramble to gather scrolls and leave.

HEROD

Stands alone, rubbing his beard. Then, shouting
I am the king of the Jews!
HEROD composes himself and walks back to his throne and addresses the WISEMEN
Magi, I am so glad you have brought this to my attention. I have learned that this king will be born in Bethlehem of Judea.

WISEMEN 1

Oh! Really?

HEROD

Yes, do you have someone who can show you the way?

GUIDE

Yes! I know the way. I can show them!

HEROD

Very good. Please, go there and look carefully for the child. And when you have found him, come quickly and tell

me for I too am anxious to go and (beat) worship Him. Go now, and hurry!

GUIDE

Make way for the Wisemen.

GUIDE creates an exit for the WISEMEN through the GROUP. Once WISEMEN have made their way out, GUIDE motions the GROUP to follow. GUARDS helps move GROUP out.

GUARDS

Move along! Everyone out. Your audience with Herod has ended.

WISEMAN 3

Let's hurry to Bethlehem. This way! Come!

Motions down pathway leading out of HEROD'S PALACE.

WISEMEN gather GROUP at the bottom of the walkway. ASSISTANT GUIDE signals WISEMEN with light when everyone is in place.

WISEMAN 2

Look! There's the star again. We must follow that star!

WISEMEN and GUIDE walk up the path to the PLATFORM on the right side of the road. WISEMEN step onto the PLATFORM.

WISEMAN 1

One moment _____ (guide). We need to talk something over.

GUIDE and ASSISTANT GUIDE usher GROUP to stand around the PLATFORM.

WISEMAN 1

I must tell you, last night I had a very troubling dream. It was about King Herod.

WISEMAN 3

I too have had a dream about the king! And after meeting him, it's beginning to make sense.

WISEMAN 1

Yes, it is! I was warned that we must not go back to King Herod again. Were you also warned?

WISEMAN 3

Yes, I was!

WISEMAN 1

After hearing the way he talked about the new king, something just wasn't right. I don't trust him at all!

WISEMAN 2

This is not just a coincidence! Surely we are being lead by the God of Heaven. We must not come back this way as he has warned. Agreed?

WISEMAN 1 & 2

Agreed.

GUIDE

Very well. Let's be on our way to Bethlehem!

SCENE 4
SHEPHERDS & ANGELS

SHEPHERDS stand talking quietly around a campfire as GUIDE and WISEMEN approach. ANGELS CHOIR is positioned in a blind uphill, unseen. ANGEL OF THE LORD waits unseen uphill.

GUIDE and WISEMEN stop at the top of the pathway that leads down to the SHEPHERDS. ASSISTANT GUIDE signals GUIDE with light when everyone is in place.

GUIDE

My, it's cold tonight. Look! There are some shepherds. Let's see if they will let us warm up by their fire. Come along with me.

WISEMAN 1

I think we'll go on. We're anxious to get to Bethlehem. Is it that way?

GUIDE

Pointing

Yes, right that way. We'll catch up with you later. Farewell!

WISEMEN stand in a line across the pathway to BETHLEHEM and direct GROUP down to SHEPHERDS. WISEMEN exit once ASSISTANT GUIDE passes with the last of the GROUP. SHEPHERDS greet GROUP warmly as they approach.

GUIDE

Shalom my friends! May we warm ourselves by your fire?

SHEPHERD 1

Why, hello there! Yes, please! Come warm yourselves.

SHEPHERDS and GUIDE keep people on the walkway with their backs to the ANGEL CHOIR

SHEPHERD 2

Have you been traveling long?

GUIDE

We have just come from Jerusalem. We've been traveling with three men that have come from far away. They looked important. Called themselves Magi. They were very anxious to get to Bethlehem, and have gone on ahead of us.

SHEPHERD 1

Why are they going to Bethlehem?

GUIDE

Oh, it is exciting! They are looking for the Messiah!

SHEPHERD 1

Really? The Messiah?

GUIDE

Yes, yes! But first let me tell you what happened in Jerusalem! We were at the temple when we were summoned to the palace to have an audience with the king!

SHEPHERD 2

You saw the king?

GUIDE

Yes!

SHEPHERD 1

Why did you see him?

GUIDE

Well, these three men have been following a star, certain that it leads to the new king, the Messiah! They hoped King Herod would know where he is to be born.

SHEPHERD 4

We've been talking about the ancient prophecies at night out here by the fire, and we too believe the coming of the Messiah is near.

ANGEL OF THE LORD appears in SPOTLIGHT

ANGEL OF THE LORD

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth! Don't be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy for all people. Today in Bethlehem, the City of David, a Savior has been born for you; He is Christ the Lord! This will be a sign for you; you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger.

LIGHTS COME ON the ANGEL CHOIR who sing "Joy to the World/Gloria." After angels finish singing, LIGHTS OFF. SHEPHERDS shout in wonder and look around to see where angels have gone.

SHEPHERD 3

Can you believe what we have seen! This is Amazing!

SHEPHERD 1

Let's go to Bethlehem and find this child, the Savior, the angels have told us about!

GUIDE

Yes, let's go! Look! There's the star again!

SHEPHERD 3

Good, let's follow the star.

SHEPHERDS and GUIDE encourage the GROUP to go with them to Bethlehem. SHEPHERDS line the path and walk along with the GROUP for a time but quietly fade away back to the fire.

GUIDE

Excitedly

Can you believe what we have seen? Did you hear the Angels sing? It was so beautiful! Have you ever seen angels before? I haven't. I feel so blessed! We must stay together. There are many dangers along the way.

GUIDE continues talking about the weather and the roads, the taxes we pay and how the roads are still so bad until GROUP is approached by mounted soldiers.

SCENE 5
MOUNTED SOLDIERS

TWO SOLDIERS on horseback come trotting up in the darkness on the road between the shepherds and BETHLEHEM

MOUNTED SOLDIER

Halt! Who goes there?

GUIDE

I am _____(name) and these are my friends.

MOUNTED SOLDIER

State your business at such a late hour.

GUIDE

We are just travelers journeying to Bethlehem, following the star to find the new baby king.

MOUNTED SOLDIER

New baby king? Treason! We have no king but Herod! Speak no more of this or Herod may hear of it. On your way now! Go!

GUIDE

Yes sir!

MOUNTED SOLDIER

Move! Quickly now! And make no trouble or I'll send you back to King Herod. He has a nice comfortable dungeon for troublemakers like you.

GUIDE

Leads group down the road to BETHLEHEM. Points to people on the side of the road.

Look there are lepers along the road, stay away from them, they're unclean.

Beggar children run through the GROUP calling out "Alms."

Hold on to your money pouches! The beggars will steal you blind! Please stay close together, it's much safer.

SCENE 6
BETHLEHEM

Beggars and lepers sit outside the city gate, asking for alms as the GROUP passes. A SOLDIER stands guard at the entrance of the town. BETHLEHEM is full of shops and people milling around and warming themselves by fires. Shops may include a bakery, carpenter, jewel seller, vegetable and fruit merchant, wood seller, basket weaver, potter. A CENSUS TAKER is located on the right side as you enter the town.

The GROUP is stopped by a SOLDIER as they enter Bethlehem.

SOLDIER

Shouting

Who goes there? Where are you from? What is your purpose here?

GUIDE

We have come from Jerusalem. Have you heard about the newborn king?

SOLDIER

What king? The only person with true authority around here is Caesar Augustus! And he demands that every native of Israel be registered. Now, go over there and take care of it immediately!

GUIDE

Yes, of course!

GROUP moves toward Census Taker. Wheelchairs and strollers move up front.

CENSUS TAKER

Next! Come up here! Are you from the lineage of David?

GUIDE

Yes, I am.

CENSUS TAKER

And just what is your name?

GUIDE

Oh, I'm sorry. My name is_____.

CENSUS TAKER

And how many are in your family?

GUIDE

(Fill in character's family information).

CENSUS TAKER

Are they with you?

GUIDE

No sir.

CENSUS TAKER

They are supposed to be here with you! Now, you come back in no more than 4 days, with all of your family. Do you hear me? Or you will be taxed twice as much as you are now! This census is supposed to be done in two weeks. If I don't have all you Jews counted, I'll search you out, and there will be penalties to pay!

GUIDE

Yes sir, I assure you my family and I will be here. And thank you!

CENSUS TAKER

And who are these people? Are they more from your tribe?

GUIDE

Oh, no sir! These are my friends. They are not from here and are just passing through.

CENSUS TAKER

Well, just make sure that they don't cause any trouble. We want this town to be peaceful. NO trouble or it's prison

for you. This town is full enough with all the people coming in for the census.

GUIDE

There will be no trouble, I assure you sir. May we be on our way?

CENSUS TAKER

Motions to the door

Go!

GUIDE

Thank you sir.

GUIDE leads GROUP through the town. GUIDE stops at one vendor to ask if they have heard about the newborn king. Vendors peddle their wares to the GROUP.

It's getting late, and we still haven't found the newborn king. It's been a very long day, maybe we should find a place to stay for the night. (*Looks around*) There's an Inn over there. Let's see if we can stay the night. Come!

Walks with GROUP to DAVID'S Inn, and knocks on the door.

INNKEEPER

Opens the door

Shalom!

GUIDE

Shalom! Can we sleep here tonight? There are about 30 of us.

INNKEEPER

Oh no, I'm sorry. We have been full for three days. This census has brought in so many people! Try the Inn down the way.

GUIDE

Ok, thank you anyway.

GUIDE leads the GROUP through the town. Townspeople interact with the group. GUIDE approaches MEBAR'S INN. MEBAR stands outside sweeping

GUIDE

Shalom! Good evening! Do you have room for us to stay the night?

MEBAR

Laughs

A room? I have had no rooms or peace and quiet for days! It has been much too busy with all these people in town. I'll be glad when things are back to normal. My apologies. Here I am complaining and you are standing out in the cold. I am sorry my friends. *(Thinking)* You know, there is a small Inn just outside of town. Maybe you can find a place there. Good luck to you.

GUIDE

Thank you.

GUIDE and GROUP walks out of town on outside of town

GUIDE

Look! There's the star again. And it appears there's a light over there. Perhaps it is the Inn.

SCENE 7
THE MANGER

The front of an inn. The Inn door is located stage right. A gate leading to the stable is stage left.

GUIDE

Yes, this must be the Inn the other Innkeeper was talking about. Let's see if there are rooms here.

To children in the GROUP.

Would you knock on the door for me?

CHILD knocks on Inn door

Thank you!

INNKEEPER

Opens door.

Good evening.

GUIDE

Good evening. We were told you might have a room for us to stay the night.

INNKEEPER

I'm sorry! We have been full since early afternoon. We are so full in fact that I sent a couple down to the stable to stay the night.

GUIDE

The stable?

INNKEEPER

Yeah, I felt sorry for them. They looked so tired from traveling and the woman was pregnant! She looked ready to burst at any minute. My stable is large, clean and comfortable, and I thought they might as well use it. They were grateful. If you're not picky, you can join them if you want. At least you will be out of the cold.

GUIDE

To GROUP

What do you think? Would you like to do that?

To INNKEEPER

Thank you for your generosity. I think we just might do that. Where is the stable?

INNKEEPER

Oh, it's just up there at the end of this building. Let me show you.

INNKEEPER walks GUIDE over to the gate outside the stable and opens it.

Please make yourselves comfortable.

GUIDE

Thank you so much! And good night!

INNKEEPER Exits

To GROUP

Did you hear that? The woman is about to have a baby! And the part about the manger! Remember what the angel said? "You will find the baby lying in a manger." Could this be the one?

GUIDE calls children to the front of the group before they enter the MANGER SCENE. GUIDE knocks and looks in, then motions the GROUP to come in.

WISEMEN stand holding their gifts upstage left. MARY JOSEPH and BABY JESUS sit behind a short fence center stage. Fence extends to the exit stage right. Hidden door upstage right allows the ANGEL to enter.

GUIDE stands stage right of the manger, far enough over to give the ANGEL room to move. GUIDE and ASSISTANT GUIDE encourage children to move up to the fence.

WISEMAN 1

Turns and smiles, motioning the GROUP to come closer with a finger to his lips

I'm so glad you found your way! You followed the star?

GUIDE

Yes, we did!

WISEMAN 1

This is the newborn king, the Messiah!

Turns back to face the manger.

GUIDE kneels, and invites children to kneel, so adults behind them can see.

SOUNDTRACK BEGINS "Mary Did You Know." As music begins ANGEL enters and crosses to stand to the right of MARY where she can make eye contact. ANGEL smiles at MARY and BABY JESUS and begins singing. At the end of the song, ALL ACTORS freeze in place.

GUIDE

Stands up

Shh... Come quietly with me. The baby is sleeping.

GUIDE leads the GROUP out the exit upstage right. Once the GROUP is outside:

The Messiah! God promised He would come, but I never thought I would see Him! What an amazing sight! The Messiah is born! The Messiah is born! I'll shout it to the whole world, HE IS BORN!

Walks towards MODERN SCENE then looks right toward the illuminated cross and stops abruptly.

I haven't noticed that cross here before. (Beat) I wonder what's going to happen to this baby? (Walks a few steps further) You know, some of the prophets of old were stoned because our people would not accept their message. I pray that this Messiah we have just seen does not end up there (pointing to the cross). We must listen to our Heavenly Father, and follow Him (motions back to the manger). This baby is our only Hope!

Walks to the door of the MODERN SCENE

I want to thank you for being such a great group to travel with tonight. Now let's see. Where did you start your journey tonight? Ah, yes! The Joneses. I wonder what they've learned since you left their living room? Would you like to find out? Here we are at their home again. Come on, let's go see.

GUIDE knocks on the door.

SCENE 8
A MODERN FAMILY'S HOME

Family sits as they were when interrupted by the WISEMEN. MOM and DAD are on the couch. DANIELLE sits in her chair center stage. SAMMY sits stage left in front of the Christmas tree.

DAD has a Bible open in his lap and reads from Luke 2:20

DAD

Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen as it was told to them.

DANIELLE

With awe

Wow! That must have been amazing to see! Is that where giving gifts at Christmas began? When the wisemen brought gifts to Jesus?

DAD

No, gift giving started much later, but I think Jesus was the greatest Christmas gift the world ever got.

DANIELLE

Totally! *(Beat)* Mom, do you think that Mary knew how important Jesus was when she was holding him as a baby?

MOM

Well, she knew that He came from God. That He was the Messiah, and that he came to save His people. But I don't think she had any idea of what that would look like. How could she know that one day he would heal leprosy and go for walks at night on the sea?

Sammy:

Wait! You mean that baby was Jesus, Jesus? The one that healed the sick and walked on water?

MOM

Yes, He's the same one! He did so many miracles while he was here. He healed the sick, drove out demons, forgave people's sins and showed us how to treat each other. (*Beat. Leans forward.*) Sammy, I'm so sorry for losing my temper earlier. I was so overwhelmed and I took it out on you. Will you forgive me?

SAMMY

Of course I forgive you!

Crosses and gives MOM a hug and sits next to her on the couch.

MOM

Thank you sweetheart.

DANIELLE

But is that all? If that's the end of the story, it seems so worthless to give each other presents at Christmas, just to honor a man who died 2,000 years ago.

MOM

Oh, Danielle, there's more to the story! Jesus wasn't just a man. He was the Messiah, the promised deliverer of humanity. Messiah means "Savior." Our sins, like greed, pride, and (*with humility*) anger, had separated us from God. But He loved us anyway and wanted us back. So God Himself, in the form of Jesus, came to live a perfect life. Like a perfect, spotless lamb, like the one sacrificed in the temple, He died on the cross to rescue us from all the bad things we had done and to give us the gift of eternal life. All we have to do is accept this gift, believe in Jesus and let Him fill our heart, and we can be saved, right here, right now.

DANIELLE

Reverently.

That's amazing. I want that gift.

SAMMY

Me too.

MOM and DAD look at each other.

DAD

Me three. (*DAD Looks down at the Bible in his hands*) Guys, I think it's time we look for a church that teaches from here (*Raises bible*) and start going. What do you say?

DANIELLE SAMMY and MOM nod their heads and agree.

SAMMY

Man, I wish I'd been one of those guys following that star!

DANIELLE

Kindly

You mean the Magi?

Sammy

Yeah! 'Cause I would have followed it too and would have brought a gift to baby Jesus. (*Sigh*) I wish I could still follow the star.

DAD

You know, you can. We all can. The Bible tells us that Jesus is the bright and morning star and that one day he's going to come back and get us. You see, Jesus didn't just die. He rose again and went back to heaven. And he wants us there with him. So really we can all still follow the star, day or night. Because the star is Jesus.

Sammy

Cool!

DANIELLE

Mom, Dad, do you think we could pray?

MOM

Surprised.

Of course sweetie. Would you like to do it?

DANIELLE

Hesitantly

Uh, OK.

Bows head

Dear Jesus, You're pretty cool, you know? Thank you for loving us. Thank you for coming down here as a baby. Thank you for living a perfect life. That must have been really hard. Thank you for dying for us on the cross and for forgiving my sins. Help us to follow you Jesus, like the wisemen followed the star. I want to be ready when you come to take us home. Amen.

LIGHTS OUT

GUIDE

As you go, look up through the darkness of the night. There is still a bright star there. The star of promise that the king will come again.

Goodnight and God bless you all, and remember, follow the star!