



# 2023 Script

# Auditorium (While Waiting)

***Note to WTB Workers:** There are about three minutes when the groups are just sitting and waiting to enter into the hallway to begin their tour. The group sits together in the section in front of the piano in the auditorium. Instead of this being wasted time, we will use this time to go over things that they used to say in the first holding area.*

Tonight you will take a trip back in history to that very first Christmas when Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, was born.

Shortly you will be greeted by a Tour Guide. The Tour Guide will take you into the city.

There will be a dialogue between the Tour Guide and the various merchants and people in the city. So stay close together as a group.

We ask that you allow parents with small children and those in a wheelchair to be at the front of your group so they can see everything.

Also, if you haven't already turned off or silenced your cell phone, we ask that you do that now. Please be respectful of those around you in your group. We request no flash photography; however, recording video is permitted.

As you know, you are here because of the census. Everyone should have a completed census card. When you pass through the door, your census card will be collected.

ENJOY YOUR TRIP. WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS, AND GOD BLESS.

## (First Holding Area)

**Host:** It is time for you to take a trip back in history to that very first Christmas.

Bethlehem was five miles south of Jerusalem. Most of the activity went on in the market. This was where the people bought or traded for goods and heard news from other cities. The market was also the best place to catch up on the local gossip.

Bethlehem was full of mostly Jews who were living under God's Old Testament Law.

God's law included the Ten Commandments. God's law showed people that they were guilty of sin, but the law could not provide permanent forgiveness before God. This is why God sent His Son, Jesus Christ to earth. Tonight you will travel back in time to the night when the Savior of the world was born.

To get into the city, everyone will have to pay tax to the Tax Collector. I have your tax here. You will also need some help to get into the city. Come with me, and I will see if I can find somebody to help you. *(Group enters the tunnel)* John/Hannah! Are you on your way into Bethlehem? *(Guide nods)* Will you be so kind as to take these people with you? They've come from a very faraway place and need some help—someone to show them around Bethlehem and, hopefully, find them some lodging.

**Guide:** *(Looks at group skeptically)* Do they have money for the tax?

**Host:** Yes they do. They each have one shekel.

**Guide:** Good! They should have some money left over to give to God at the Temple. Come with me. I'll show you the way to get to Bethlehem.

**Note to Tour Guide:** *Below is some dialogue while going down the sidewalk to the city.*

Hello, everyone. As *(Host's name)* said, my name is *(John/Hannah)*. I was born and raised in Bethlehem. I moved away five years ago, but like everyone else, I am returning to my hometown for the census. I have no family left in Bethlehem for us to stay with. I have a feeling it's going to be difficult to find a place to stay tonight with the city being so full.

But enough about me. *(Host's name)* said that you were from a faraway place. Where exactly **are** you from? *(Allows someone from the group to answer. The Tour Guide looks shocked at the answer.)* That **must** be a very faraway place because I've never even **heard** of it!

Just stick close to me and stay **away** from the Roman Soldiers. We don't need any trouble tonight. I can't make any promises, but I'll try to get you into the city and help you find a place to stay tonight.

As you enter the gate area, the Roman Soldiers will stop you, but don't worry, I'll do the talking, and I'll get us in the city.

## Note to Tour Guides

1. The Tour Guide carries the heaviest responsibility for the tours. The Tour Guide is with the group from beginning to end, with many lines of dialogue along the way.
2. We have crafted the script in a way that will provide our Tour Guides a few rests along the way. In a few of the shops, the Tour Guide and group will simply be watching the action between characters in the various shops. These shops include the Temple, the Jewish Home, the Weaver Shop, and the Tanner Shop.
3. Speak up!! Tour Guides need to project their voice to the person furthest away in the group. If people cannot hear the dialogue, they will miss the message. You may feel like you are shouting, but this is an outdoor event, with many competing noises. You must project to be heard.
4. The Tour Guides should never turn their backs to their group. As you carry on dialogue with the shopkeepers, always face your group and project your voice toward the group.
  - Even as you walk from shop to shop, you should walk backward with your face towards the group.
5. Please do not ad lib lines **at the shops**. There are several reasons we ask this:
  - The script has been written and timed in a way that we can get through the city the thousands that come each year. Every ad-lib line of dialogue adds time to the tour. Some people wait 2 to 3 hours to get into the city, so please stick with the script.
  - Your fellow actors are not prepared for ad-lib lines. When they happen, it creates confusion, obvious and ineffective pauses, and it overall weakens the quality of acting.
  - You have Tour Guides in front of you and behind you. When you take extra time by ad-libbing lines, it causes the groups to get too close together, which weakens the quality of the tour for your group and the groups around you.
  - We will have leaders on each street to insure that the script is being followed and to give direction if a group needs to hurry or slow down.
6. There are times when you **will** need to ad-lib as a Tour Guide:
  - In between shops while you are walking to your next stop. This is where you can create dialogue to make the tour more enjoyable for your group.
  - In between shops when a Roman Soldier has to hurry you up or slow you down due to the groups being too close together. You will have to ad-lib with the Soldier until it is okay for you to move on.
7. So there **are** times when ad-libbing is needed, but simply do not do it at the shops.

# Tax Collector

**Roman Soldier:** Don't try to enter the city without stopping here. All must pay the tax.

**Tax Collector:** (*With false good cheer*) Welcome, in the name of Caesar Augustus to our lovely and fair town of Bethlehem. I am the official collector of taxes, and this is my boy, Zacchaeus, who is learning the trade. Zacchaeus, take over and be a good little Tax Collector.

**Zacchaeus:** (*Very arrogant and obnoxious*) How many are in your family? Do you have any animals? **All** must pay the tax. Did you hear me? **ALL!**

**Guide:** There are \_\_\_\_\_ of us. As you can see, we have no animals.

**Roman Soldier:** (*Stepping in from the gate, he points to someone in the group.*) This one looks familiar. Haven't I seen you around here before, causing trouble?

**Guide:** No, they're all from out of town. You **must** be mistaken.

**Roman Soldier:** (*Right in Tour Guide's face*) Lady/Mister, one of the things you'll learn – we **NEVER** make mistakes.

**Guide:** But I'm telling you, they are **all** from out of town...

**Tax Collector:** (*Interrupts*) Enough!! (*Looks at Tour Guide*) You want in the city? (*Looks at his boy*) What do you think, Zacchaeus? What should be their tax?

**Zacchaeus:** I think you should charge them a **full** shekel for talking back!

**Tax Collector:** Very well. I decree that the tax for each of you is one shekel.

**Guide:** (*Impulsively – without thinking*) But I was told that Rome required a half-shekel. I was saving a half-shekel to offer to God.

**Tax Collector:** God will wait! Caesar requires what is his **now**. But, if you must be persuaded... (*Roman Soldier steps forward, looking stern. Soldiers clang their swords for drama.*)

**Guide:** (*With fear, to group*) I'm sorry, friends. The Law of Moses says God comes first. Yet, we must also obey the law of the land. If we don't pay, we'll be arrested (or worse). I think it would be better to pay him the money and give our service to God. We will pay the tax.

**Tax Collector:** (*Smiling and counting coins*) I thought you would. Welcome to Bethlehem.

**Roman Soldier:** (*Sneering*) You may enter the city, Jews. Move along!

**Cast:**

Tax Collector: Adult man

Roman Soldier: Adult man

Zacchaeus: Boy (8-11 years old)

## Market Area

**Note to Tour Guide:** *As you take the group through the city gate, please make sure that you encourage your group to get through the gate quickly. Once everybody is through the gate, you can begin to talk and let them know that they have entered the market area of Bethlehem. Gather them all together before you start explaining the market area. Let them know there is no time to shop; you must find lodging.*

*There will be sellers hollering out to the group as they pass, encouraging them to come over and buy their goods. The Tour Guide will politely tell them no thank you and keep the group moving through the market area until you arrive at the Trader Shop.*

## Trader's Shop

**Note:** *The Trader is all about making money. He is interested in the group and is cordial until he finds out they are broke. After this, his only concern is getting them out of the store and moving them along. Two different and distinct personalities should be shown.*

**Trader:** *Hey you! (Waves Tour Guide over) The Tax Collector at the front gate got you, didn't he? (Smiling big) You look like you could use a little money. (Goes into booth) I'm in the business of buying and selling. As they say, "One man's trash is another man's treasure." Do you have anything to sell?*

**Guide:** *No, I have nothing, and I have little money. God says money may just bring trouble, and I have plenty of that already! You see I'm...*

**Trader:** *(Interrupts and is visibly annoyed) Then YOU take your troubles somewhere else. If you can't buy and have nothing to sell, move along. You're cluttering up my store. (Starts to walk off, away from group) (Under his breath as he looks at group) Transients. (Gruffly) Try the Best Eastern Inn a few streets over, or maybe the Holy Day Inn on your way out of town, if you're looking for a place to stay. (He sarcastically says "Shalom" as he waves them out of his store.)*

**Guide:** *Shalom. (As if in disbelief at his rudeness)*

**Cast:**

Trader: Adult man

# Bread Shop

## “Heavenly Manna Bread Shop”

**Bread Seller:** Bread! Fresh and delicious! Bread! (*Grabs Tour Guide by sleeve, as he/she passes*) Sir/Ma’am, you look hungry. Why not some of our bread? It’s savory to the taste and filling to the stomach. It’s heavenly manna! It’s the **only** food you’ll ever need.

**Guide:** But doesn’t Scripture say “... *man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord?*”

**Bread Seller:** (*In a patronizing tone with a sarcastic smile as he pats the Guide on the shoulder*) Well friends, looks like we have ourselves a Bible thumper here. Well (*Pauses and thinks*), maybe you’ve got a point, but the Scriptures do **little** to fill an empty belly, and the bread from heaven stopped long ago.

**Guide:** Why not watch and pray that the manna may come again?

**Bread Seller:** (*Emphatic*) But I make my living selling bread! If bread came down from heaven, where would that leave me?

**Guide:** (*Smiling*) Full, good merchant, very full!

**Bread Seller:** (*Looks puzzled, then smiles and says*), “Well, maybe you’re right.”

**Guide:** By the way, I need to find shelter for my friends. Do you know of any rooms?

**Bread Seller:** Everyone is stopping to ask the same thing! No – there are so many people here for the tax and so few rooms. But maybe some bread would help keep you warm?

**Guide:** It smells delicious, but no thank you. And Shalom!

**Bread Seller:** Shalom.

**Cast:**

Bread Seller: Adult man or woman

# Fruit and Vegetable Shop

“Garden of Eatin’ Fruit Shop”

*(Little boy/ girl is loitering near shop, touching the fruit.)*

**Fruit Seller:** *(To group)* Shalom, friends! *(As he waves them into his shop)* How about something in case you get hungry? A fine apple perhaps? The finest since the Garden of Eden. Like I always say, “An apple a day keeps the Roman Soldiers away.” *(Laughs at his own joke).*

*(To boy)* You there – please don’t handle the fruit. *(To Guide, laughing)* I always keep one eye on him! Fruit has a way of walking off when he’s around.

**Guide:** *(Laughs at fruit seller while looking at the fruit)* I guess the harvest was good this year!

**Fruit Seller:** It was excellent! Why, we might even have enough to pay our taxes **and** feed our families!

**Guide:** Not if the Tax Collector and his Roman cut-throats at the gate hear about it. One of those Roman monsters almost took my head off! *(Roman Guard approaches and starts eavesdropping, drawing closer)*

**Fruit Seller:** *(Concerned, seeing the Roman Guard heading over)* John/Hannah! You need to be careful! *(Guard loses interest and starts to walk away.) (Fruit Seller frustrated)* These Roman reprobates – always watching. I hope God will send our Deliverer soon.

*(Little boy/girl grabs an apple and starts to run away.)*

**Roman Guard:** I saw that. Stop! Thief! Somebody grab that little apple-pickin’ pickpocket!

**Fruit Seller:** *(Concerned)* Oh boy – I hope they don’t hurt him/her! He/She never takes more than an apple.

**Fruit Seller:** But still – he/she **is** breaking the law, and God’s law. “*You shall not steal*” **is** one of the Ten Commandments.

**Guide:** I guess we have all broken that law a time or two, haven’t we? We must move along. Shalom!

## Cast:

Fruit Seller: Adult man or woman

Little boy or girl who steals apple: Boy *(6-10 years old)*

Roman Guard: Adult man



# Potter's Shop

*(Potter should be outgoing with a big smile. As group approaches, he is working busily, singing or humming or whistling to show happiness. Greets group heartily.)*

**Potter:** Shalom, friends! How is your evening? *(Points to clay and potter's wheel and says)* I hope it's **shaping** up nicely. Do you get it? That was a pottery joke – shaping up? *(Laughs at own joke with his assistant)*

**Guide:** Yes, I get it, but actually I have a bit of a problem. I'm trying to find a place for these kind people to sleep tonight and haven't had much success. *(Pauses and changes topic)* But I must say, **you** sure seem happy. You must love your work.

**Potter:** I love people, **and** I love my work... who could have better? My work is the closest to God's on earth! *(Overly dramatic)* Think about it, friend. As God took the dust of the earth to make Adam, we take the dust and make things. We mix it, mold it, and shape it with our very hands.

**Guide:** You're right! And Scripture does say, "... *as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel...*" No wonder you are so happy as you work. Your work is a constant reminder of God working on us.

**Potter:** Yes, and as I am reminded of Him, I pray always for the coming of our Messiah.

**Guide:** May He come soon! Shalom. And while you pray, keep smiling. You have lifted our spirits.

**Potter:** Shalom! *(Resumes singing)*

## Cast:

Potter: Outgoing adult man

# Inn

## “Holy Day Inn”

**Note to Tour Guide:** *the Inn will now be enclosed and will have a “No Vacancy” sign on the door.*

**Guide:** It says, “No Vacancy,” but what have we got to lose? Let’s see if he has any rooms available.  
(*Knocks on door*)

**Innkeeper:** (*Opens door quickly while grumbling. He looks at the Guide and then at the sign and then back at Guide.*) Do you just **look** dumb? Can’t you read? (*As he points to and taps the sign.*)

**Guide:** (*Startled by his rudeness*) (*Stammering*) Well, uh, I’m sorry; are you the Innkeeper?

**Innkeeper:** (*Sarcastically laughing*) Am I the Innkeeper? Hey Rebekah! (*Wife comes out.*) Did you hear that? He wants to know if **I’m** the Innkeeper. Why no, I’m not the Innkeeper, I’m the Queen of Sheba. Can’t you tell? (*Goes from sarcastic to angry*) Well of course I’m the Innkeeper, and I have no room for any of you, so move on! (*Be forceful and obnoxious.*)

**Guest Upstairs:** Be quiet down there! We’re trying to sleep.

**Innkeeper:** (*Looks up*) Why don’t you mind your own business! (*To Guide*) My inn is **full** of strangers. Two families in each room, and still more come for the census. Why, if my wife had not given our stable to that young couple, I could have charged five shekels for it! Five!!

**Innkeeper’s Wife:** (*Soft and gentle*) But the woman looked like she was ready to give birth... I’m sorry, we have no room. I hope you can find shelter somewhere else.

**Guest Upstairs:** I said be quiet!

**Innkeeper:** And I said mind your own business! (*Looks at Tour Guide*) These out-of-towners think they can boss **me** around!

**Innkeeper’s Wife:** Honey, calm down.

**Innkeeper:** (*Hysterically*) I am calm!! Come on Rebekah; I’ve got no time for this. We’ve got rooms to clean! (*Innkeeper and wife go back inside as wife looks at group and kind of rolls her eyes.*)

**Guide:** (*Shakes head in dismay*) I’m sorry, friends. It looks like we won’t be staying indoors tonight, but I’ll try to find something. We will keep looking; let’s move on!

**Cast:**

Innkeeper and Wife: Adult man and woman or husband/wife team

Guest upstairs: Teen boy

# Candle Shop

**Shopkeeper:** (*Motions to group*) Come on over and view our beautiful candles. I'm David, and this is my little sister Anna. My motto is, "Why walk in darkness, when you can walk in light?"

**Guide:** We were just talking to the Potter about the Messiah. When He comes, He'll give us all the light we need.

**Shopkeeper:** Is that religious nut at it again? I'm so sick of hearing about the Messiah. I've been hearing about that my whole life. It's wishful thinking, if you ask me. I don't need a Messiah. I have Moses and his law. If you keep the Ten Commandments, which **I DO**, you will be **just** fine.

**Guide:** You keep the Ten Commandments?

**Shopkeeper:** I most certainly do! I have kept them my whole life!

**Guide:** (*Pondering*) That's interesting. Have you ever told a lie? (*Smiling*) Now don't lie about it.

**Shopkeeper:** Well, sure, maybe a few times, but everybody has.

**Guide:** Tell me, have you ever taken something that didn't belong to you?

**Shopkeeper:** Me, steal? I'll have you know I have never... (*Sister interrupts*)

**Shopkeeper's Sister:** David, remember the wood behind the Carpenter's Shop that you said he'd never miss?

**Shopkeeper:** (*Gives Sister dirty look*) Okay, maybe a time or two.

**Guide:** Have you ever used God's name in vain?

**Shopkeeper:** (*Shocked that the Guide would even ask*) Now that is one thing I have **never** done.

**Sister:** David, I heard you talking to the Tanner last week and you said....

**Shopkeeper:** (*Cuts her off*) Anna, **please**, would you just stay out of this!

**Guide:** (*Laughs*) David, do you see my point? And that was only three of the Ten Commandments. Let's be honest – we **all** need a Messiah and somebody who can deliver us from our sin.

**Shopkeeper:** You know, I guess you're right. I've just always thought I was good enough – that I didn't need a Messiah. (*Chuckles*) My business is candles, but you have brought some light to **me** today. Thank you, and Shalom.

**Guide:** Shalom, friend.

**Cast:**

Shopkeeper and Sister: Man and woman, or two older teens

# Jewish Temple

**Priest:** (*Looks at crowd*) Welcome, welcome to our temple. The prophet Micah prophesied about our city. He said, “Bethlehem, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall he come forth that is to be ruler in Israel...”

**Guide:** But what does all of that mean?

**Priest:** Friend, it means that the Messiah will be born right here in our little town of Bethlehem.

**Guide:** (*Looks at group excitedly*) Did you hear that?! (*Looks back at Priest*) I sure hope he comes soon!

**Priest:** Somehow I believe He **will** come soon. Be encouraged and keep praying!

**Guide:** We certainly will. Shalom.

**Cast:**

Priest: Adult man

# Jewish Home

**Note:** *This scene is meant to be very humorous and add some light-heartedness. You will knock on the door, and Dinah will come outside.*

**Guide:** *(To group)* Hey, I forgot about this big house. Let's ask these people if they have any extra space to lodge us tonight. *(Knocks on door)*

**Dinah:** *(Answers door and steps outside with broom in hand)* Oh, Shalom. Can I help you?

**Guide:** We noticed you have a nice big house, and we were wondering if you might have some extra space to lodge us tonight – we'll be glad to do some chores to repay your hospitality.

**Andrew:** *(Sticks head out from window from upstairs and yells)* What's going on down there?! *(Starts heading down the stairs)*

**Dinah:** Oh that's my husband. He's a little grumpy tonight. Let me see, how many are there? *(Starts to count the group)* I might be able to lodge most of you... *(Interrupted by husband).*

**Andrew:** *(Obviously frustrated, but not angry)* Dinah, what's going on out here? We have work to do. You know your big family is going to be here any minute, eating all our food, wrecking our house...

**Dinah:** Andrew, these people need a place to stay tonight and I thought... *(Interrupted by Andrew)*

**Andrew:** What?! Are you kidding?! No Dinah, a big N-O *(spells out "no")*! Once your family gets here, we won't have any room for a cockroach *(Looks at Guide)* – no offense. Your sister is coming with her five brats...

**Dinah:** *(Interrupts)* Don't you call my sister's kids brats!

**Andrew:** Okay – her five little angels. There's your Uncle Bartholomew and his whole weird family. Your Aunt Hoglah will be here with... *(Tour Guide interrupts)*

**Guide:** *(Says to group laughingly)* We'd better be moving along. Sounds like they have a full house tonight, and I think Andrew might be in serious trouble.

## Cast:

Andrew/ Dinah: Adult man and woman or husband/wife team

# Phoebe

**OPTIONAL:** *Depending on group flow, you may say your lines as written below, or you may be called upon to help with the flow by walking around and being prepared to speak when prompted by a leader.*

**Phoebe:** Hi, John/Hanna! I almost didn't recognize you at first! How long has it been since I've seen you? *(Notices the group)*

**Guide:** Hi, Phoebe. It **has** been a long time. I just got back into the city. How've you been?

**Phoebe:** Oh, I can't complain. After all, you know I'm not one to talk. Who are all these *(Hesitates, looking for an adjective)* interesting-looking people you are with? *(Looks at other ladies)* They look like tourists to me. *(All laugh)*

**Guide:** They're some friends I met outside the gate. I'm trying to help them find lodging. Do you know of any place?

**Phoebe:** Oh, dear me, no. The city is so full tonight. I don't know anyone with an extra room, or even floor space. I'm sorry. *(Pauses and looks around and smirks)* You know I'm not one to talk... but there's even a couple staying in a stable. Why I heard tell...

**Guide:** *(Interrupts Phoebe in mid-sentence)* I wonder if there's any more room there? Where is this stable?

**Phoebe:** Oh, a few streets over, but there's something pretty strange going on out there. You know I'm not one to talk, but they're pretty strange people – a carpenter and his wife, and she's pregnant. You won't believe what I overheard them talking about. Now you know I can't stand gossip, but I couldn't help but overhear her say something about this being God's child. Imagine that – this woman actually claims to be a virgin and carrying the Messiah! Of course I'm not one to talk... but I think they are just plain crazy. I don't know what you may believe about all this, but I think I'd stay away from that stable, if I were you.

**Guide:** Thanks for the tip, Phoebe. It was very... informative... talking to you, as always.

**Phoebe:** Well, I just thought it was my duty to warn you. Even though, as you know...

**Guide:** *(Interrupts)* ... You're not one to talk.

**Phoebe:** How right you are!

**Guide:** *(Speaking to group as you walk off)* That was Phoebe all right, she hasn't changed a bit. Come, friends, we must keep moving.

**Cast:**

Phoebe: Adult woman

# Weaver and Dye Shop

**Guide:** Look, a Weaver's Shop. Maybe they can help us out.

**Weaver:** (*To crowd*) Come on in. Are you interested in any cloth? Maybe you need some cloth dyed. Look at these bold colors...

**Dyer:** (*Rushes in from outside of shop, immediately takes the attention of the Weaver*)

Rachael, Rachael, did you hear about that couple we saw yesterday? The woman just gave birth to the baby! Phoebe just told me they're staying in old man Abel's stable. She also said the woman claims to be a virgin.

**Weaver:** How ridiculous!

**Dyer:** (*Almost disappointed*) Do you really think so?

**Weaver:** Of course, I don't put any stock in what Phoebe says. She's always gossiping about something. They don't call her the Bethlehem Blabbermouth for nothing!

**Dyer:** Yeah. (*Sarcastically and laughing*) But you know, she's not one to talk.

**Weaver:** (*Sarcastically*) Phoebe? Oh no, never! (*Thoughtful after pausing*) Still though, I'd **like** to believe it. Isaiah the prophet did talk about the Messiah being born of a virgin.

**Dyer:** (*Suddenly hits her that people are watching their conversation and says to Weaver*) Rachael, we have customers!

**Weaver:** You're right! I'm so sorry, friends! Can I interest you in some fine cloth?

**Guide:** No, not today, but thank you, and Shalom, friend. (*As they walk away, Guide says to group*) The rumors about a virgin birth and the Messiah are starting to make me wonder if this **could** be the Messiah!

**Cast:**

Weaver: Adult woman

Dyer: Adult woman or teen girl

# Carpenter and Blacksmith Shop

***Note:** Carpenter should be very busy working on building a cross, with his back to the group. There is a customer sitting in the shop also. The Blacksmith is also busy working.*

*The Carpenter and the Blacksmith look dismayed when they see a large group approaching. They tell them, “Just so you know, there is a wait tonight,” and ask them to “Please be patient,” “The line forms here,” etc. When the group has gathered in close, the dialogue starts.*

**Customer:** How much longer, Nehemiah? I’m in a hurry, and I need my plow now!

**Carpenter:** I told you, you’re going to have to wait. I only have two hands, but you have one big mouth! Now sit down!! (*Carpenter turns his back to group while continuing to work.*)

**Guide:** You all seem very busy, friend.

**Carpenter:** (*Looks up as though startled and speaks gruffly and sarcastically*) Busy? Oh no (*Looks at Blacksmith*), we’ve got nothing to do. People just need plows and yokes for their fields, and door frames to keep out the cold. And the Romans are about to drive us both crazy...

**Guide:** Romans? (*Kind of startled*) What do the Romans want?

**Carpenter:** What do the Romans want? Where have you been mister/miss? They want crosses to line the road from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. Crucifying people is like a hobby to them. And while they force me to make their crosses, the people in need of their plows have to wait.

**Guard:** Out of my way! (*To Blacksmith*) Blacksmith, do you have those nails ready?

**Blacksmith:** Tomorrow (*Scared, frightened*), Centurion. They will be ready first thing tomorrow, as promised.

**Guard:** You see that they are! (*Hatefully*) We must be prepared; we know at least one Jewish man will be nailed to a cross tomorrow. (*Walks away*)

**Blacksmith:** They’ll be ready! You have my personal guarantee. (*Guard sneers as he walks away.*)

**Carpenter:** (*Looks at group*) See what I mean?

**Blacksmith:** My carpenter friend builds the crosses, and I make the nails. Nasty business, but we fear for our lives if we don’t fill their orders.

**Guide:** I’ve heard that there is a young carpenter and his espoused in town. I’ve heard the woman has just given birth. He’s a carpenter. Maybe he’s looking for work.

**Carpenter:** I may go look him up. Thanks for the tip. By the way, sorry if I seemed a bit gruff.

**Guide:** Oh, that’s okay, I hope you find the help you need. (*As Guide is walking off*) Oh, they are staying at Old Man Abel’s stable. Shalom!



**Carpenter and Blacksmith:** Okay, thanks! (*As group is walking away, they look at each other.*) Did I hear him right? They're staying in a stable?

**Cast:**

Carpenter: Adult or teen male

Blacksmith: Adult or teen male

Roman Guard: Adult or teen male

Customer: Older teen or adult male

# Tanner Shop

***Note:** As the Tour Guide and group are coming close to the shop, they will listen in on a heated conversation going on between the Tanner and a religious Pharisee. This will provide the Tour Guide an opportunity to catch her/his breath as you and the group watch the action. As the group comes in close, the Pharisee comes around the corner and begins the dialogue.*

**Pharisee:** Well, you've had time to think about it. Are you willing to cooperate or not?

**Tanner:** But I'm short on help, and I have to take care of my customers.

**Pharisee:** You have been skinning animals, and you are unclean according to the law of Moses. You cannot be around other people or you will defile them. You must come to us and go through proper purification. Only **we** can pronounce you clean.

**Tanner:** I can't come running to you every time I skin an animal. I have a business to run here. You're just trying to throw your religious weight around. **You** don't even obey all of your religious rules.

**Pharisee:** Don't you get smart with me. You know I have the power to close this store down, BUT *(Pauses and gets a sly grin)*, we could work out a suitable arrangement for both of us. If you cut me and my other Pharisee friends in on your business ... say 25% ... we will sort of overlook your gross disobedience to Moses' law.

**Tanner:** That is nothing but downright extortion. You are hypocrites and extortionists. One day the Messiah will come, and when He does, I sure wouldn't want to be in your shoes!

**Pharisee:** Now you've done it! You have insulted the dignity of my robes. *(Looks at group)* Don't be surprised if you see a "Closed" sign on this business the next time you come by!! *(Stomping off)* Lawbreaker! Sinner!

**Tanner:** *(Hangs his head in worry)* What have I done? *(Looks at group and is serious and somber.)* He's right. I **am** a sinner. I do break God's law often. But God's Word says, "*There is none that doeth good.*" We have all broken God's law and deserve punishment. Our only hope is for a Savior, a Messiah.

**Guide:** We will keep praying for that. Thank you and Shalom.

## **Cast:**

Tanner: Adult man or older-looking teen boy

Pharisee: Adult man

# Well and Shepherd

**Note to Tour Guide:** After the Tanner scene, as you are backing up towards the well, you say, “I am so sorry, I don’t know what we are going to do about lodging tonight. There just doesn’t seem to be anything...”

Typically, as you are saying these lines, Shepherd 1 will stop you, and you will follow the “Shepherd” script below. **If this does not happen**, due to the Angel scene having a group still in it, go to the well and use the “Well” dialogue below while waiting.

## Well

**Guide:** This well has been here for years, friends. I have been refreshed by its water many times.

**Guide:** (To group) This water (Points to well) sustains physical life, but only God can provide water that gives eternal life. In fact, the prophet Jeremiah said that the Lord is “*the fountain of living waters*.”

**Guide:** We all need water, but more importantly, we need God. Like the Tanner said, we need a Messiah to take away our sins.

**Guide:** Come on, friends, we must keep moving. It’s getting late, and we really need to find a place to stay.

## Shepherd

**Shepherd 1:** Excuse me, did I hear you say you were looking for a place to stay?

**Guide:** Yes, we are. But we haven’t found a thing. The city is so full.

**Shepherd 1:** Yes, with the census going on, you’re not going to find anything in the city, but you are welcome to join me and some of my shepherd friends at our camp right outside of town. We have a fire, food, tents, and enough space for everyone! Follow me. Our field is right through this gate.

**Note:** Shepherd 1 leads the group through the gate. Typically, once Shepherd 1 has led the group through the gate, he will return to his post by the well.

# Shepherds and Angel

***Note:** Guide leads group through gate and approaches group of Shepherds around a fire. Shepherds and Tour Guide need to work together to gather the group in close. The Shepherds get up from their campfire and enthusiastically welcome their guests. Once the entire group is through the gate and has gathered by the fire, the Angel appears.*

*(Angel appears. Turns on the light and steps out.)*

*(Shepherds and Guide immediately drop to their knees, frightened, when Angel appears.)*

**Angel:** *(Starts to speak as lights and music come on) "...Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." (Pauses) "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Turns off light and steps behind the wall)*

**Shepherd 1:** *(Still a little shaky)* I can't believe what just happened. An angel came to **us**! And he said that the Messiah has been born tonight in **Bethlehem** and that we would find Him lying in a manger! You know, there's a stable not far from here. Let's go check there! Let's go find Him!

**Shepherds:** Yeah! Let's go!

**Guide:** *(Excited)* Come, friends, we must go and see what has happened. *(Encourages everybody to hurry to the manger)* It sounds like the Messiah has been born.

**Cast:** *(There will be a maximum of 8 Shepherds per shift.)*

Shepherds: Mixture of men and older and younger teens *(All male)*

# Manger

**Note:** *The Shepherds lead the group excitedly to the manger, where Mary and Joseph are holding baby Jesus. Once everyone is close enough to see and hear, Shepherd 2 begins the dialogue.*

**Shepherd 1:** It's Him! It's the Messiah! The promises have finally been fulfilled!

**Mary:** *(A bit shocked and overwhelmed)* How did you hear about the birth of our son?

**Shepherd 1:** An Angel told us! He told us that we would find the baby lying in a manger... and here you are, just like he said!

*Mary and Joseph look at each other in amazement*

**Joseph:** It's just like what happened to us, Mary! *(Turning to the Shepherd and group)* Angels came to both of us too, the first to Mary, saying, "...you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name JESUS." I didn't believe it at first, but then an Angel told **me** that this baby would not be an ordinary child... He would be the Son of God.

**Shepherd 1:** Come on, let's all sing praises to our Messiah.

**Shepherds:** *(Lead the chorus of "O Come All Ye Faithful")*

**Guide:** *(Excitedly to Shepherds)* Friends, *(To group and Shepherds)* we have shared a great blessing this night. We must spread the word. We must tell everyone that the Messiah has come!

**Shepherds:** *(Excitedly, all talking at the same time)* Yes, yes, we'll wake them up if we have to! Let's go! *(The Shepherds and Guide run away hurriedly, saying, "The Messiah has come! The Messiah has come!")*

**Guide:** Look how excited they are! I am going to join them.. (walk toward the open door of the cross and tomb scene and gesture with your arms pointing toward the door, and then say...) Don't worry, I am leaving you in good hands, Shalom! (runs off in the direction the shepherds went)

*Note: After running away, the Guide will return to the Tour Guide room.*

**Cross and Tomb Host:** Look how excited he/she is, and he/she doesn't even know the rest of the story. What happened to this baby when He grew up? That's the most important part. Please, come with me now and hear the rest of the story. *(Take them inside the Cross & Tomb area. Extra Cross & Tomb Hosts will point the group to the available, open area and will help to gather everyone in.)*

# Cross & Tomb

We are glad you came out tonight to our “Walk Through Bethlehem.” We hope you enjoyed the sights and sounds from long ago on that Bethlehem night. But, it is more important that you understand the purpose of Christ’s birth. Let’s continue the story.

Jesus lived for 33 years on this earth. At 30 years old, He began to reveal exactly who He was. He went all throughout the land, doing miracles, touching lives, healing hurting people, and changing hearts. Remember Zacchaeus, the little Tax Collector? Christ changed his life completely. Remember the crippled man? He would have a face-to-face encounter with Christ about 30 years later, and his life would be forever changed.

But 33 years after Jesus was born, after living a sinless life, He was crucified. (*Point towards the cross.*) Why was the innocent, sinless One sent to die on a cross? It was God’s plan of substitution. Jesus died on the cross for you and for me. The Bible says, “*For the wages of sin is death...*” Jesus made an eternal payment for **our** sin.

Let me explain the need for this payment: Do you remember the candle maker who lied and stole? How about the Trader who was so covetous and greedy? Or the little boy who stole the apple from the Fruit Shop? This is why Christ had to die. Have you ever lied? Taken anything that did not belong to you? Or made idols of your money or other things? “*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*” We are all guilty before God. The wages of sin is death, eternal separation from God! This is why Jesus came to this earth to make a final payment for **our** sin.

After being crucified – shedding His blood for our sins – three days later, Jesus was raised to life! (*Point to the empty tomb.*) Jesus is God’s gift. Romans 6:23 declares, “*The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” God offers eternal life as a gift to every person through faith alone in Jesus Christ. It all comes through you personally trusting in Him.

Why was Jesus born into the world? The Bible states that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners! “Save” means “to rescue from eternal death.” “*For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved!*” Eternal life is the gift that God offers to you, based on what Christ has done for you.

We wanted you to receive a gift far greater than our gift of “Walk Through Bethlehem,” and that is the gift of salvation. Do you know for sure that you will go to heaven when you die? Do you believe that Jesus Christ died for your sin? Do you believe that He rose from the dead? Do you believe God’s promise that “*whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved?*” If you have never prayed to receive Jesus as your Savior, I invite you to pray with me a prayer of salvation right now. Would you bow your head with me in prayer? If you would like trust Christ right now, you can say this prayer to the Lord silently from your heart.

**Note:** The Cross & Tomb Host must pause often for a couple of seconds to give people time to say the prayer. These pauses are noted in the sample prayer below.

- “Dear God (*Pause*), I have sinned (*Pause*), but I believe (*Pause*) that Jesus died for my sin (*Pause*) and rose from the dead (*Pause*). Thank you for forgiveness (*Pause*) of all my sin (*Pause*), for a new life in Christ (*Pause*), and for eternal life.”

With our heads still bowed, if you just prayed and trusted Jesus Christ for the first time in your life, would you please raise your hand? (*Do a quick headcount to yourself, and log the number after the group leaves.*) Amen.”

You can look up here. If you raised your hand, we have something special for you that you can receive in the gymnasium. Look for the table with the banner that says, “What’s Next?” We all want to thank you for coming to “Walk Through Bethlehem.” We are so **glad** that you came. **Merry Christmas**, and Shalom!