

**2023 JOURNEY INTO CHRISTMAS
SCRIPT
GRACE BIBLE CHURCH
DALLAS, TEXAS**

Tour Guide Script:

Guide Speaking Lines in bold print

Directions are underlined and in italics.

Guide will greet the tour group in commons and say:

Guide: "Shalom, we are delighted that you have come. I will be your guide to some miraculous events that have taken place that we think may affect the entire world. To make sure that everyone can see and hear, we ask that taller guests move toward the back, and that all remain as quiet as possible.

Guide: But come, our journey begins..."

Lead group from commons area, down the Grace Kids hallway to inside the Zachariah-Elizabeth scene and say:

Guide: "Over the years, God has sent many messages to his people reminding them of His promise to send a Messiah. One prophecy tells of a man, John the Baptist, who will prepare the way for this Messiah. When it was time to fulfill this promise, God chose a very unlikely couple to be John's parents... Elizabeth and Zachariah."

• Elizabeth and Zacharia Scene Starts and Ends:

[Lights out on the Elizabeth and Zachariah scene-The actors freeze, and the guide interjects:]

Guide: Come, we will exit this way (*pointing to single door exiting to the courtyard*), there have been reports of shepherds nearby, perhaps just around this ridge, who are telling a most amazing true story...

Lead the group into the courtyard and when everyone in the tour group is settled, say:

Guide "Shalom. Mind if we warm ourselves by the fire?"

• Shepherd Scene Starts and Ends:

When lights go down on the Shepherd's scene, the guide takes over and says:

Guide "Are you ready for the Messiah, the Son of God? Come; let us go to the place where Jesus was born.

Once inside the small stable:

Guide "Another of God's promises concerning His Messiah was that He would be born in the small town of Bethlehem. When the time was right, God fulfilled this promise by causing Caesar Augustus to order that all the people were to be counted. Every man had to return to the city of his ancestors. Joseph, Mary's husband, was a descendent of King David and had to journey to Bethlehem. We are just outside Bethlehem now..."

Guide: [once everyone is in and quiet] "This is the place where Jesus was born."

- **Mary and Joseph Nativity Scene Starts and Ends:**

After Mary and Joseph say "goodbye" the Guide says:

Guide "Sometime after the miraculous night of Jesus' birth and the angels' visitation, wise men from the east came to see Jesus. Come! We've been invited to join them at their camp. They are preparing to return to their own country."

Lead the group to the Magi's tent and place the children on the area rug in front of the group.

Wait for Cue by the wise man Melchior (... "go to the field with the other camels!"), and be ready to say your Guide line below:

- **Wisemen Scene Starts and Ends:**

Guides lead group over to the Student Center double doors and says:

Guide: "Our time together is now over but the journey continues, for just as the promises of His birth have been fulfilled, this is but the first of God's loving plan for saving all. Over the next 33 years, Jesus grows and teaches. He performs miracles, and, as the Bible had foretold and as Jesus Himself tried to tell his disciples, He was crucified on a cross to pay the price for our sins. He then was raised to life after 3 days in the grave to conquer death and give all who believe in Him everlasting life the moment we put our trust in Him.

"Now I bid you Merry Christmas - Jesus is born. Maranatha - Jesus is coming again!

Elizabeth & Zachariah Scene Script:

[Lights on]

Zachariah and Elizabeth are at home in a common room. Elizabeth is sitting and stitching some clothing, minding her own business. Zachariah is in the background with his back turned, wildly rummaging through a basket of clothing looking for a particular item. He speaks after the group has entered and is relatively quiet:

Zachariah: *(Loudly)* Elizabeth!.....Elizabeth!

Elizabeth: What dear. What do you need? And don't shout so loudly - or you will wake up our precious little John.

Zachariah: I'm sorry. I forgot he was sleeping. *(frustrated sigh)* I'm looking for my special belt. You know! The one I use when I'm serving in the Temple. Do you know where it is? I haven't seen it.... *(talking to self and mumbling)* Oh, where is it?

Elizabeth: You mean the one hanging by your coat?

Zachariah: By the goat! Why would my belt be hanging on the goat?

Elizabeth: No dear *(pointing to his coat and belt)*... Your coat!Oh Zachariah! Are your eyes failing you now too?

Zachariah: *(Sheepishly)* Maybe I am getting a little older, and my sight and hearing are not what they used to be.

Elizabeth: *(A little loud)* Sssssshhhhhh! Quiet dear. The baby.

Zachariah: *(Walking over and sitting beside her)* I'm still not used to have a little one around here. We have lived so long without any children of our own.

Elizabeth: *(Playfully)* Well, maybe God should never have given you your voice back. But I'm not complaining. What a wonderful gift God has given us. Who would have ever thought that I would have a baby at my age! Yet here we are—with our baby is sleeping in the other room... *[Pause- lost in thought, then excited and pleading]* Zachariah—please tell me the story again! It's so nice to hear your voice telling it after so many months of you not being able to speak. Please tell it one more time.

Zachariah: Ok. Ok—but I doubt this will be the last time I tell this story. *(He gets up imagining the scene with his eyes as he speaks.)* It was my turn to serve in the temple that day. I was supposed to go into one of the holiest parts of the temple... to burn some incense. The smoke is like our prayers rising to God. Well, when I got to that place, I thought I saw a man standing there! I was surprised and scared to see this man because no one was allowed in this holy place besides the priests. He spoke and told me to not be afraid. *(In a stage whisper)* It was an Angel, a messenger from heaven with a very special message! I was scared because God had not spoken through a prophet or angel for almost 400 years. I was trembling with fear, excitement, and awe! *(Moving toward pitcher and cup)* Is this fresh water from the cistern? *(Pours and drinks.)*

Elizabeth: *(Excitedly, to Elizabeth)* Go on, Zachariah, please continue... (to the audience) I love this next part. Please tell me what the Messenger from God said.

Zachariah: *(Pauses and sits)* He said that we were going to have a baby. Yes, you—even at your age were going to bear a child, and this child was going to do something very special. He would to prepare the people for the coming Messiah. (Stand) He would to grow up to be the one to tell our people about the promised Savior, the very Son of God! *(Sighing)* Oh my... After 400 years of silence, God delivered this message to me.Yet, I questioned it... Oh, Elizabeth, I never should have questioned it!

Elizabeth: *(Elizabeth stand and moves toward him, picks up queue quickly)* What did you do? What did you say? Did the angel touch you? *(Ad-lib until Zachariah speaks.)*

Zachariah: I asked the Angel for a sign, something else to prove that I wasn't dreaming, that what I was seeing was really true. That is when he told me, that because of my unbelief, I would lose the ability to talk until the baby was born. When I walked out of the Temple I couldn't say a word. Not a peep. Nary a sound... for almost and entire year I did not speak. It wasn't until after John was born that my voice returned.

Elizabeth: Zachariah, what does all this mean? What is God doing?

Zachariah: It means God is doing just as He had said he would do. The Messiah is coming and will soon be born in Bethlehem as Micah had prophesied! John, our son John will preach to the people to repent: to turn away from doing wrong, and he will "Prepare the Way" for the coming of the Messiah. *(Turning focus to overall audience)* I just hope all people—Parents, children, brothers, and sisters will prepare, even now for God's promised Savior coming to this world.

Shepherd Scene Script:

Eli: You are welcome to join us! I am Eli, and this is Jacob. You know, we have two helpers, but they are off looking for a lost sheep named Morty.

Jr: (shouting in the distance): MORTY

Jacob: They should be back soon, but while we're waiting, how many of you have ever seen a sheep? (*Ad lib*) Wow, that's a lot! (*or*) Really, so few?

Jonathan: (*Walking out from behind shelter or from behind the crowd with Joshua and sheep*) We found Morty!

Joshua: While we were rescuing him, he kicked me! My hand is bleeding!

Eli: Ouch! Let me take a look at that.

Samuel: (*While ELI and JOSHUA are attending to Joshua's hand*) So what took you so long?

Joshua: (*Sheepishly*) Well, first we went the wrong direction. When we finally found him, Morty was stuck in a big pile of rocks.

Jonathan: Yeah, it was a little strange. He was just standing there, and he wasn't even baa-ing.

Samuel: Wait,He wasn't what?

Joshua: You know. The sound a sheep makes.

Jacob: Oh, you mean "baaaaaaaaaaaaaa"

Jr: (mockingly) Baaaa

Samuel: Actually, what I think he means is (*improvise, maybe slightly lower voice and shorter, whatever, but be creative!*) "baaa"

Jr: (mockingly) Baaaa ???

Jacob: No, no. I've been a shepherd for a good number of years, and I think the sound they make when they are in trouble is "baaaaaaaa".

Jr: (mockingly) Baaaa

Samuel: I'm afraid I'm going to have to disagree with you on that point my friend. I believe the proper pronunciation is "baaa".

Jr: (mockingly) Baaaa

Jacob: "baaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa"

Jr: (mockingly) Baaaa

Samuel: "baaa"

Jr: (mockingly) Baaaa

Jacob: "baaaaaaaaaaaaa" *(and so on, keep going back and forth until Eli speaks)*

Eli: *(Eli, abruptly ending the quarrel)* I THINK Jonathan's point is that this sheep WASN'T making ANY calls for help.

Samuel: Well, that wasn't very smart!

Jacob: No kidding. Morty was trapped! He could've been eaten by a lion or a bear in ONE BIG BITE! *(Big arm clap toward audience)* CHOMP!

Joshua: Why wouldn't Morty call for help, Uncle Eli?

Eli: *(Shaking his head)* I don't know, Joshua. Maybe he thought he could eventually get free on his own or maybe he was too scared, or maybe he just didn't think at all! *(Pause)* Hmmm. Isn't it funny that God says people are like sheep?

Jacob: What? We aren't like sheep! People aren't THAT clueless.

Samuel: Actually, I think I can understand what God means. When Morty and the other sheep learn our voices, they recognize us as their Shepherds. They listen to, they follow us, and they trust us. God wants us to listen and trust Him as our Great Shepherd. He loves us and wants the very best for us, but we don't always listen, and we mess us.

Jacob: You mean like when we don't do what we know we should?

Samuel: Exactly. Like when we are selfish and take something that isn't ours.

Jonathan: Or when we say, "not so nice" things about other people or treat them badly?

Joshua: (jumping on board) I've got one! How about when we hurt someone we love and make them sad.

Jacob: You know, I guess we ARE like sheep. God tells us over and over in His word that when we do those things, it will hurt us and hurt Him, but we don't listen. We just do them anyway, don't we? I wonder why?

Eli: Yes, as a matter of fact that's why some of these lambs will be sacrificed at the temple this weekend.

Jonathan: Some of the lambs are going to die!?

Jr: (reacts with wide eyes and hugs Morty!)

Eli: Yes Jonathan. When we sin, it's like a disease eating away at our soul. And it could separate us from God forever!

Samuel: (*picking up queue quickly*) Except God doesn't want to be separated from us. He loves us! In fact, He has said that if an innocent lamb dies for our sins, He will forgive us.

Joshua: *(Scratching his head)* That doesn't make any sense to me.

Jacob: I once heard a teacher say that the lamb isn't really the reason God forgives us. The sacrifice of a lamb is an example of faith. It shows we trust that God will provide a way for our sins to be forgiven.

Jonathan: You mean by sacrificing a lamb we are admitting that we can't take care of our own sins, but we trust that God somehow will?

Jacob: That's right, Jonathan.

Samuel: Hm. I wonder if all this sacrificing of sheep is pointing to something bigger *(pause)*, or something better that God is going to do.

Joshua: Something bigger?..... like what? What are you talking about?

Samuel: I don't know..... Maybe God will do something awesome, and we won't have to sacrifice lambs anymore!

Jacob: *(slowly drawn out with sarcasm)* Whatever happens, it isn't going to be here.

Jonathan: Nope! Not here in the dark and in the middle of a smelly sheep pasture!

Joshua: Even that town over there is only a few old rundown buildings...

(Angel appears, music plays and exhorts: Glory to God in the Highest...)

Jr: *(when Angel appears, hold on to Morty and say as loud as you can):* WOW! or WHAAAT!

Shepherds fall to the ground, terrified.....and when music stops and light off and the angels are blacked out...

Jonathan: Let us go to Bethlehem and see that which The Lord has made known to us! *(shepherds exit)*

Mary and Joseph Scene Script:

Joseph: Shalom–welcome. *(Harshly)* I hope you children can be quiet so the baby can get some rest.

Mary: *(With retort and picking up the baby)* Now Joseph, the children just want to see baby Jesus. *(Show the baby to all)* You know, I never expected our baby would be born here in this stable.

Joseph: Many of the homes and stables were carved right into the hills here in Bethlehem. *(Wistfully)* I had hoped our baby would be born in our home in Nazareth. I had made a cradle there especially for Him.

Mary: Joseph was in our backyard making tables and chairs because he is a carpenter.... *(Excitedly)* Suddenly a Roman soldier came riding up to the house. I called for Joseph to come right away!

Joseph: The soldier said that the Roman governor wanted to count all the people in our country, and we must leave immediately for the town where our fathers, grandfathers and all our relatives were born. Do you know where your mother and father were born?

Mary: Because Bethlehem was the home of our relative, King David, we had to go there to be counted. So... Joseph made a soft seat on our old donkey for the trip. It wasn't very comfortable!..... But it was better than walking. It took us over 3 days to get to Bethlehem just so we could be counted for the census.

Joseph: *(Sigh)* Mary was so tired when we arrived. I saw how crowded the streets were with people. I was desperate to find Mary a place to sleep, but every Inn in town was full. *..(looking around)* This stable was all we could find.

Mary: On that night when our baby was born, we didn't fully understand just how important His birth was. That He would change the World!

Joseph: *(Shivering and turning)* It was sooooo cold that night! The stable keeper said that if we put the baby in the manger near where the cows and donkeys came to feed, their warm breath would help keep Jesus warm. A manger was really a place for holding food for the animals.

Mary: We put some clean straw on the manger with a warm blanket over it and laid Baby Jesus there.

Joseph: *(Excitedly)* You can imagine our surprise when some shepherds came from their fields to find and worship Him. They said that while they were watching their sheep, some *angels* came and told them that a special baby had been born in Bethlehem.

Mary: Before I knew I was going to have a baby; an angel of the Lord named Gabriel visited me back home in Nazareth. I was terrified! Have you ever seen an angel? *(Waits for answers)*... the angel told me not to be afraid, he said God found favor in me. He said I was going to have a baby and that I should name Him Jesus and that Jesus would be the Son of God and that he would take over David's throne and become king and rule forever. I don't think we fully understand how important this child is going to be.

Joseph: The strange thing is that this king was born in a lowly stable, not a palace, or even an Inn. No one thought we were important since we were so poor. If the Innkeeper had known that a King was to be born in his stable, I'm sure he would have given up us his own room. Would you have given up your room for baby Jesus? *(Wait for an answer)*.

Mary: Yet, the same thing happens again and again each Christmas. We know Christmas is a time to remember Jesus' birth, but we are so busy thinking about presents and Santa Claus, that we leave no room for Jesus in our hearts.

Joseph: *(Puts arm around Mary)* That's right, Mary... This is why we are so pleased that you came to this "Journey into Christmas", so we can remember what Christmas is really about: the Birth of Jesus: our Savior. *(Raising hands as if giving a blessing)*: God bless you this Christmas day; keep your hearts open for Jesus and His love.

Mary: *(Hushed)* Would you help me sing baby Jesus to sleep by singing, "Away in a Manger?"

Actors and Guide's sing [*"Away in a Manger" in as high a key as you comfortably can*]

All: Away in a manger, no crib for His bed.
The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky look down here He lay.
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

[Joseph and Mary look at each other, then the Baby Jesus, then back at each other, then out to the audience and speak]

Mary and Joseph: Shalom. Goodbye. *(Fix gaze again on Jesus and the actors freeze.)*

Wisemen Scene Script:

Melchior: Good evening my name is Melchior. Welcome to our tent. These are my friends, Gaspar and Bethazzar. We are Magi from Persia.

Abdul go to the field with the other camels.

Melchior: Can you say hello to my camel?

Melchior: Abdul can usually make a great deal of noise when he's awake, but now he is very tired as I am. *[He sits down onto a pillow.]*

Gaspar: *[rises and moves toward the audience]* We study the heavens. See how the stars make patterns in the sky? Back in Persia, the brightest star that we have ever seen has appeared for several years. This could only mean that the King of the Jews was born in Israel. We followed the great star to Jerusalem to find and worship this new King.

Bethazzar: *[moves forward to join the conversation]* It caused a LOT of excitement when we asked, "Where is the newborn King of the Jews?"

Gaspar: Herod, the present king, was greatly disturbed.

Bethazzar: He had his wise men consult their Holy Books to find out where such a king would be born.

Gaspar: They told him that the prophet, Micah, had predicted that such a baby would be born in Bethlehem.

Bethazzar: *[turns to Gaspar]* Do you remember the look in Herod's eyes when he said *[evilly]* "Find this child and return quickly to tell me where he is?"

Gaspar: He SAID that he also wanted to worship Him.

Bethazzar: But I did not like the look in his eyes! *[turns to Melchoir]* Did you?

Melchior: No, I did not. . *[Gaspar and Bethazzar sit, Melchoir turns to address the audience]* We hurried to Bethlehem to find the baby, Jesus. Do you remember where He was born?

Melchior: Yes, that's right, in a stable inside a cave. Well, by the time that WE reached Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary had been offered a house in which to stay. That's where we found them with the Baby. We each brought presents. I took GOLD, a gift fit for a king. I didn't know then that Jesus would be, more than just a new King of Israel, but the KING OF KINGS. The king who rules in our hearts.

Gaspar: *[stands, picks up a pot of burning incense, and walks toward the audience]* I brought FRANKINCENSE. *[He indicates the pot of incense and wafts the odor to the children]* A priest sometimes burns this rich incense in the temple during sacrifices. Jesus came to BE the ultimate sacrifice and make us acceptable before God.

Bethazzar: I brought Myrrh, a very costly perfumed ointment. *[He opens the container and shows the contents to the children]* In our homeland only wealthy families use it. But, when we got to

Israel, we discovered it was used to prepare a body for burial! Although we did not know it then, WE WERE PREPARING JESUS FOR HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS AS THE SACRIFICE TO COVER OUR SINS.

Melchior: We brought these because they were valuable. Little did we realize that they were the most fitting things we could have brought. GOD INTENDED THAT THESE GIFTS SIGNIFY THE WORK HIS SON WOULD DO HERE ON EARTH.

Bethazzar and Gaspar return to their sets by the fire. Melchior again addresses the audience.

Melchior: We did NOT return to tell Herod about baby Jesus. I had a strange dream that warned us that Herod wanted to kill this child, so we are returning by another route. *[Gaspar and Bethazzar nod in agreement]* We are so fortunate that we shall always be remembered as the ones who brought the FIRST GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS. But they were not the very first gift. Someone else gave a gift before us. Can anyone tell me what that gift was?

Melchior pauses for an answer, the Guides encourages the children to answer.

Melchior: That's right! Jesus, the Savior, was the Gift, and God, the Father, was the Giver. *[Melchior kneels to address the children better]* Will all of you children and adults do us a favor? When you see Christmas presents around your tree, will you let them remind you that the greatest gift ever given was Jesus? Make room in your hearts for Jesus: to TRUST HIM, to LOVE HIM and to FOLLOW HIM? *[All stand]* IF YOU DO SO, YOU WILL MAKE THREE WISE MEN VERY, VERY HAPPY. *[Gaspar and Bethazzar nod in agreement]*