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.