

**A  
Christmas  
Beginning  
Matt. 1:18-2:23  
Luke 1:26-2:39**

*Written by Pastor Brock Ketchum*

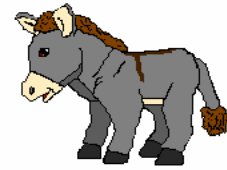
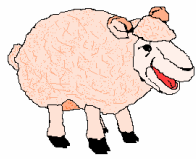


*Puppets &  
Scripts*

*Sunday School,  
Junior Church,  
& V.B.S.*

*Proverbs 4:23 "Keep thy heart with all diligence:  
for out of it are the issues of life."*

**A Hand to Heart Ministries production.**



## A Christmas Beginning

(Matt. 1:18-2:23 & Luke 1:26-2:39)

(All parts can be done by puppets, people, or a mixture of both according to your tastes)

**Congregation song:** *The First Noel*

**Puppet intro:** *Donkey & Sheep* (may use children dressed up as the animals)

**Donkey:** Have you ever thought about what the very first Christmas was like?

**Sheep:** Yeah, I hear the farmer's family talking about it a lot this time of year.

**Donkey:** I think it would have been awesome to be the donkey Mary's family used.

**Sheep:** Why is that?

**Donkey:** Just think, he would have been tied just outside of the house when the angel Gabriel appeared to her. He might have even seen a flash of light as Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, and entered her room straight out of heaven.

**Sheep:** If he was tied close enough to the house he may have heard some of the discussion.

**Donkey:** Just think of that announcement.....

*(Lights fade off donkey and sheep and come up on Mary sleeping)*

*(Mary & Gabriel)*

**Gabriel:** Hello, you that is highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed are you among women.

**Mary:** *(whispers to herself)* Who is this? What manner of greeting is this?

**Gabriel:** Don't be afraid, Mary: for you have found favour with God. For you will have a son, and will call him Jesus.

**Mary:** How can this happen, seeing I know not a man?

**Gabriel:** The Holy Ghost will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you: and the holy thing which will be born of you will be called the Son of God.

**Mary:** This is so much.

**Gabriel:** And, your cousin Elisabeth, she has also conceived a son in her old age: For with God nothing is impossible.

**Mary:** I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it happen to me according to your word.

*(Gabriel exits)*

**Mary:** *(Starts to pack)* This is so exciting I must go see Elisabeth right away. I can't believe all that has happened tonight. I wonder how she is doing, what is she thinking about it all. I have been chosen to be the mother of the Messiah, God's son. Oh, I have to talk to Elizabeth...

*(Starts to pack faster)*

*(lights fade)*

**Puppets: Lights come up on the Donkey & Sheep**

**Donkey:** That would have been so awesome to be only a few feet from the earthly start of the event that could save all mankind.

**Sheep:** Yeah, by the sounds of it Mary probably had that donkey packed and ready to go in no time at all.

**Donkey:** In Luke 2:39 it say's "*And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste*". She was most definitely in a hurry.

**Sheep:** She had good reason. She must have been bursting with excitement.

**Donkey:** Speaking of bursting with excitement. What do you think Elisabeth thought when Mary greeted her and her baby leaped.

**Sheep:** She had to be excited. Then to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

**Donkey:** She couldn't contain herself and shouted "*Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.*".

**Sheep:** It would have been so fun to be there and see it all happening.

**Donkey:** Speaking of seeing it all happening, look the farmer is pulling in. He has something in the trailer, but I can't quite tell what it is.

**Sheep:** It's always interesting to see some of the exotic animals he picks up at those auctions.

**Donkey:** We can worry about that later. I was just wondering, what do think Joseph thought about the whole thing?

**Sheep:** I know he had a lot to think about it says in Matthew 1:19 "*Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.*"...

*(Lights fade off donkey and sheep and come up on Joseph tossing in bed)*

**Joseph & Gabriel**

**Joseph:** Oh, what shall I do? If I make a public example according to the law she will be put to death. I do love her. I should just take care of this between her family and me. What should I do, what should I ...

*(falls asleep mumbling)*

**Gabriel:** Joseph, son of David, fear not to take Mary to be your thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. She will have a son, and you will call his name JESUS: for he will save his people from their sins.

**Joseph:** It all makes sense now, all this was done, so that what Isaiah wrote would be fulfilled the way God told him it would, “*Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel.*” This is the sign, the promised, this means God is with us through this baby. *(Sits up quickly)*

*(Gabriel exits)*

**Joseph:** I will marry her. I am so happy, God has given me a wife, *(Pauses)* and His son to raise. This is quite the responsibility. God has chosen us though, He has confidence that we are able. *(bows beside bed)* Thank you Lord, for trusting us with your Son.

*(lights fade)*

*(Lights come up on the Donkey & Sheep)*

**Donkey:** I would have loved to have been the donkey on that trip to Bethlehem.

**Sheep:** They would have had a lot to talk about. Why did they have to go to Bethlehem? You would think in Mary’s condition they would have just stayed home.

**Donkey:** That would have been easier, but that is not how God had planned it.

**Sheep:** Oh, that’s right in Micah 5:2 it said that “*out of Bethlehem shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*”

**Donkey:** Yes, when Caesar Augustus ordered everyone to be taxed he was only doing what God knew would happen. Then when Cyrenius the, governor of Syria, wanted every one taxed in his own city he was just completing God’s plan.

**Sheep:** That’s right, Joseph had to go because he was of the house and lineage of David.

**Donkey:** Yes, and David was from Bethlehem.

**Sheep:** They sure had a lot to talk about on that trip.

**Donkey:** Like I said, I would have loved to be able to listen in on that conversation!

**Sheep:** I wonder how it would have gone.....

*(Lights fade off donkey and sheep and come up on Joseph & Mary walking)*

**Joseph:** How are you doing dear? Would you like to stop and rest? Are you in any pain?

**Mary:** I'm just fine, there was that one spot when the donkey stumbled, that was a little uncomfortable. Not to worry I don't think it's too much farther. Is it?

**Joseph:** Are you sure? I don't want anything to happen to the baby. You are so close now.

**Mary:** God is with us. I am not worried. He will take care of us.

**Joseph:** You are right, it is hard to believe He has chosen us for this great responsibility. To raise His son, we will be raising God's son. Have you thought about that.

**Mary:** Yes, ever since the angel came and spoke to me that night all those months ago, and every time this donkey takes a wrong step.

*(both giggle)*

**Joseph:** Look up ahead, I see the lights of Bethlehem it won't be long now.

**Mary:** I think that is a good thing. Joseph it's time, I think baby Jesus is ready to meet the world.

**Joseph:** Then we must hurry. Oh, and donkey watch out for holes, you heard the lady she doesn't like them.

*(lights fade off Mary & Joseph)*

**Primaries:** *Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem.*

*(lights come up on the donkey and sheep)*

**Puppets:** *Donkey & Sheep*

**Donkey:** That would have been a long trip.

**Sheep:** The toughest part would have been to find a place to stay.

**Donkey:** Yeah, with all the people going there to be counted and taxed, the rooms would have filled up quickly.

**Sheep:** Mary was so close to having the baby too.

**Donkey:** I know it would have been scary for Joseph to have all that responsibility.

**Sheep:** To have a pregnant wife in a strange place with no place to stay. It would have been a little unnerving.

**Donkey:** Yes, to go from place to place and not find a room.

**Sheep:** I wonder how Mary was doing through it all.

*(lights fade off donkey and sheep and come up on the Mary & Joseph)*

**Joseph & Mary at Bethlehem**

**Joseph:** Hi, we need a room for the night.

**Inn Keeper #1:** That's nice but I don't have any.

**Joseph:** Can we at least...

**Inn Keeper #1:** No, try someplace else!

**Joseph:** Could you help me? We need...

**Inn Keeper #2:** No! (*Door slams*)

**Mary:** Have you found anything yet?

**Joseph:** No, not yet dear.

**Mary:** But we've tried almost every Inn on this street.

**Joseph:** There is one more up here. I'll try this one, hopefully they will have something.

**Mary:** Joseph, I do not want to have the baby in the street. (*Joseph walks away, Mary looks up*) Please Lord, let him find a place to have your son.

**Joseph:** Please, do you have a room?

**Inn Keeper #3:** We are all filled up, sorry.

**Joseph:** Thank you for giving me your time. I hope I can find someplace soon. The baby could be here any time now.

**Inn Keeper #3:** Baby, what baby?

**Joseph:** My wife is just outside, and the delivery time is close.

**Inn Keeper #3:** Listen, all my rooms are full, but I do have a little room out in the stable. It's not much but at least it will give you some shelter from the elements.

**Joseph:** Oh, anything would be helpful, I don't know how much longer we can look.

**Inn Keeper #3:** It's just out back. (*points out to the back*)

**Joseph:** Mary, they don't have a room but they said we could stay in the stable this evening.

**Mary:** At this point anything is good. (*looks up*) Thank you Lord.

(*lights fade off Mary & Joseph and come up on the donkey and sheep*)

**Donkey:** Amazing how God found them a spot.

**Sheep:** God had His Son born in a lowly manger. The King of Kings in a stable.

**Donkey:** Remember it wasn't where he was born but who he is.

**Sheep:** He is Emmanuel, God with us.

**Donkey:** Think of all the animals in that stable at the Messiah's birth.

**Sheep:** Present to see the son of God being born.

**Donkey:** It would have been a wonderful thing, animal noises are always so calming.

**Sheep:** I don't know, cows can get a little noisy at times.

**Donkey:** That's very true. I have been stuck in a barn with cows before. The smells not that great either. I wonder if Mary and Joseph even noticed if anything else was there.

*(lights fade off donkey and sheep)*

**Joseph & Mary at the stable**

*(lights come up on the Mary & Joseph)*

**Joseph:** Mary, he's beautiful! Just look at those tiny little feet. He's not crying, I thought babies were supposed to cry. Is he alright?

**Mary:** He's fine, just look at him lying there sleeping.

**Joseph:** To think God gave us His Son to care for and raise.

**Mary:** Yes, it will be a great responsibility.

**Joseph:** I feel bad that we couldn't provide him a proper place to be born. All we could do for him was wrap him in swaddling clothes, and lay him in this manger for his crib. It just isn't right.

**Mary:** Joseph, don't forget this is the place God has chosen for him.

**Joseph:** You're right dear, we don't have to understand it, we just have to accept it.

**Mary:** Have you noticed it does not seem to be as dark as it was when we arrived.

**Joseph:** Yes, it's odd but a very bright star appeared right above Bethlehem as soon as the baby was born.

**Mary:** I wonder what it means?

**Joseph:** I'm not sure, but maybe some day God will reveal it to us.

**Mary:** So much has happened; it's hard to even comprehend.

**Joseph:** You look tired, why don't you rest now. I'll keep an eye on the baby.

**Mary:** That sounds good, I am a little tired.

*(lights fade off Mary and Joseph)*

**Pre-primaries: Away in the Manger**

*(lights come up on the donkey and sheep)*

**Sheep:** What comes next is one of my favorite parts of the Christmas story.

**Donkey:** The wise men?

**Sheep:** No silly, the shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

**Donkey:** That sound kind of boring.

**Sheep:** It was anything but boring.

**Donkey:** How can sitting around watching sheep sleep not be boring? I've seen you sleep, believe me it's not that interesting.

**Sheep:** Think about it a calm quiet night, you could just about see every star in the heavens, and then... (*pauses*)

*(lights fade off donkey and sheep)*

**Shepard's in the field** (Sheep sounds in the background)

*(lights come up on the shepherds in the field)*

**Shepherd #1:** I love sitting out here at night, nothing but the breeze, the crackling of the fire, and the sounds of sheep.

**Shepherd #2:** We must not let our guard down though. There are still wolves, lions, and bears that would like to make a meal out of these sheep.

**Shepherd #1:** I know, I am watching, but I am still going to enjoy the peace and quiet while I can.

*(Angel suddenly appears and shepherds drop down on knees face to the ground)*

**Angel:** "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; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

*(Shepherds look up as bright spotlights shine on them so they can't look in that direction)*

**Kid's Choir:** *Hark the herald angels sing*

**Angel group:** "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

*(Angels leave)*

**Shepherd #2:** Did you see that?

**Shepherd #1:** Of course I did, why?

**Shepherd #2:** I wasn't sure if, maybe I had fallen asleep, and it was a dream.

**Shepherd #1:** Dream or not, I want to see the Saviour. (*grabbing some stuff*)

**Shepherd #2:** Forget our things, let's go to Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, that the Lord has made known to us.

*(lights fade on the shepherds in the field)*

**Primaries:** *While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks by Night.*

**Kid's Choir:** *Angels we have heard on high*

*(lights come up on the donkey and sheep)*

**Sheep:** Hey, if the shepherds all went to see the baby, who was left to watch the sheep?

**Donkey:** Does it really matter?

**Sheep:** To me it does.

**Donkey:** I don't know, but I am sure they were fine.

**Sheep:** Well, o.k.

**Donkey:** You are right though. It would have been exciting to be there when all those angels announced Jesus' birth.

**Sheep:** Oh, to have the sky light up, filled with angels to tell you were to find the baby Jesus.

**Donkey:** If it was me, it wouldn't take long at all for me to get there.

**Sheep:** Mary and Joseph must have been shocked to get visitors in that stable.

**Donkey:** Yeah, I'm sure they thought no one but God and the inn keeper knew where to find them.

**Sheep:** Don't forget, God is the one who sent them the directions.

**Donkey:** That's true.

**Sheep:** The shepherds would have been the first ones there. I hope all the commotion didn't keep the poor baby awake too much.

**Donkey:** Do you think the shepherds really knew who Jesus was, and what he came to do for them?

**Sheep:** If they had read the writings of Isaiah or Micah they would have.

*(lights fade off Donkey & Sheep)*

*Joseph & Mary at the stable*

*(lights come up on the Mary & Joseph as shepherds walk up)*

**Shepherd #1:** Pardon us, but we are looking for....

**Shepherd #2:** Look, it's the baby the angel told us about.

**Shepherd #1:** He said we would find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

**Joseph:** Gentlemen what are you talking about?

**Mary:** Yes, who did you say told you we would be here?

**Shepherd #2:** We were in the fields watching our flocks.

**Shepherd #1:** When suddenly an angel from the Lord God appeared unto us.

**Shepherd #2:** He spoke to us and said "*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; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*"

**Shepherd #1:** Then the entire sky lit up and was filled with angels. They proclaimed "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*"

**Shepherd #2:** Then they were gone. As quickly as they had appeared, they were gone! We had to come to find you immediately!

**Joseph:** You have found the One you seek.

**Shepherd #1:** We have witnessed the coming of the Messiah!

**Shepherd #2:** We must spread the news of what we have seen and heard this night. All must know the Messiah is here! (*shepherds leave*)

**Mary:** (*softly to herself*) Lord, I will remember this night and all that has happened. I will ponder and think about it and keep it in my heart for as long as I live.

*(lights fade off Mary & Joseph)*

*(lights come up on the donkey and sheep)*

**Puppets: Donkey, Sheep, & Camel**

**Donkey:** In Luke chapter 2 it says in verse 17 “*And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.*”

**Sheep:** Even at that hour?

**Donkey:** Yes, even at that hour and in verse 20 of Luke 2 it says, “*And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.*”

**Sheep:** Wow, they must have been so excited they could have hollered it from the roof tops.

**Donkey:** That was not the end of all the visitors though.

**Sheep:** Yea, that’s right the next guest to visit them at the stable were the three wise men. They came bearing... (*suddenly interrupted*)

**Camel:** Excuse me, but I could not help but over hear.

**Sheep:** Woe, what are you?

**Donkey:** Yes, and where did you come from?

**Camel:** To answer both of you’re questions, I’m a camel, and the farmer just bought me at an auction this morning.

**Sheep:** So you are what he had in the trailer.

**Camel:** Yes, that was me. I am sorry for interrupting, but what your wooly friend here was about to tell you is not exactly accurate.

**Donkey:** About the three wise men?

**Sheep:** What’s not right about that? Everybody knows about the three wise men, and how they brought the gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

**Camel:** Let’s start with the three wise men, there is no place in the Bible that mentions how many there actually were.

**Sheep:** Then where did they come up with three then?

**Camel:** It is believed to have come from the amount of gifts listed.

**Donkey:** That would make sense.  
**Camel:** As for them meeting at the stable, that's not exactly how it happened.  
**Donkey:** How did it happen then?  
**Sheep:** Please, just because it doesn't say how many wise men came to see baby Jesus can we leave at three?  
**Camel:** I don't see why not. To be correct though the wise men did not get there on the first night. A matter of fact it was a bit later, they first stopped to get help on their directions from...

*(lights fade off Donkey, Sheep, & Camel)*

**Kid's Choir:** *We three kings*

*Wise men & Herod*

*(lights come up on the Wise men & Herod)*

**Herod:** What is the nature of your visit, and what has brought you this great distance west, to appear before me?

**Wise man #1:** What we seek king Herod, is an answer to a question.

**Herod:** What then, is the question?

**Wise man #1:** Where is he that is born King of the Jews?

**Wise man #2:** For we have seen his star in the east,

**Wise man #3:** And are come to worship him.

**Herod:** If you would wait outside, I will seek counsel to give you your answer.

**All wise men:** As you wish. *(step off stage)*

**Herod:** Bring in the priests and scribes I must know what these magi are speaking of.

**Priest:** How may we serve you, your highness?

**Herod:** *(very angry)* Tell me now! Where will this Christ child be born?

**Priest:** In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, and thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

**Herod:** *(still angry)* Bring the magi back before me!

**Wise men:** Have you word on His birth?

**Herod:** *(calmly)* When did this star appear?

**Wise men:** We have been following the star for almost two years now.

**Herod:** Go to Bethlehem, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

**Wise men:** Look the star is still here. Praise God let us go.

*(lights fade off Wise men & Herod)*

*(lights come up on the Donkey, Sheep, & Camel)*

**Donkey:** Ok, we now know they stopped to see Herod first.

**Sheep:** Yeah, but how do we know it wasn't the same night?

**Camel:** In Matthew 2:11 the Bible tells us "*And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*"

**Donkey:** I remember now, then they were warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

**Sheep:** That's right and after they had left the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

**Camel:** The next day he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

**Donkey:** Herod had to be extremely mad about it.

**Sheep:** He was probably sitting there waiting for them to come and tell him where they had found him.

**Camel:** He thought that the magi were mocking him. He then sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

**Donkey:** All those little children.

**Sheep:** But God had saved baby Jesus by sending him to Egypt.

**Camel:** That's why Matthew wrote in 2:17-18 about how the prophesy of Jeremiah was fulfilled, that the voice of great mourning over Israel's children, would not be comforted, but would be heard in Egypt.

**Donkey:** But when Herod was dead, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.

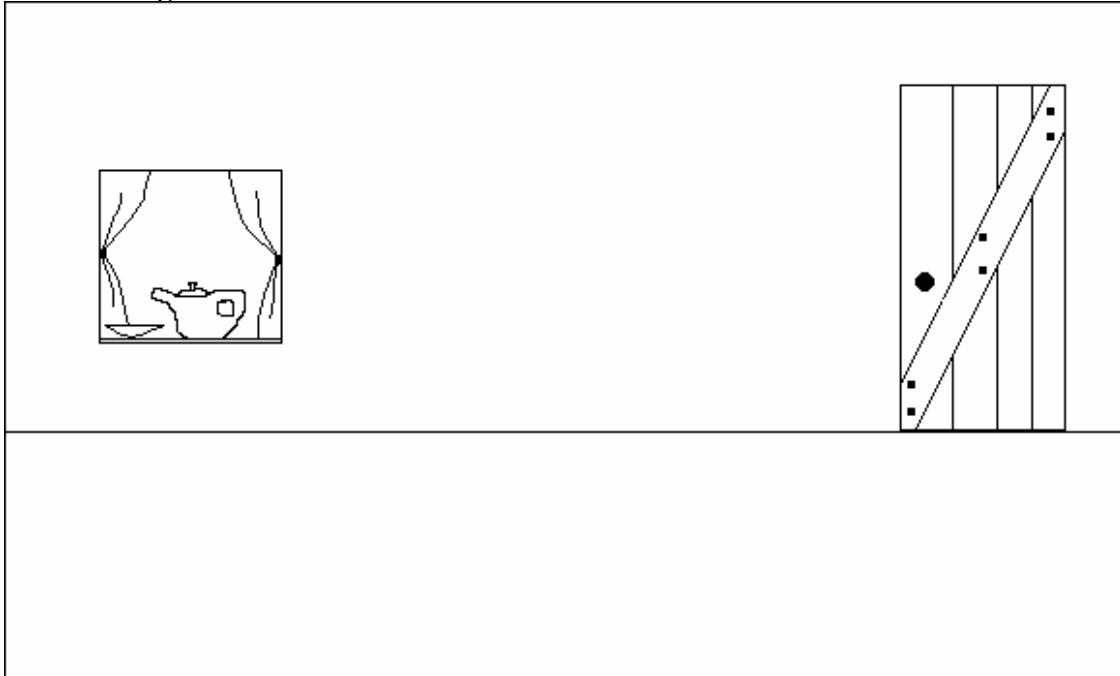
**Sheep:** He told him to arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

**Camel:** So that, is the whole story.

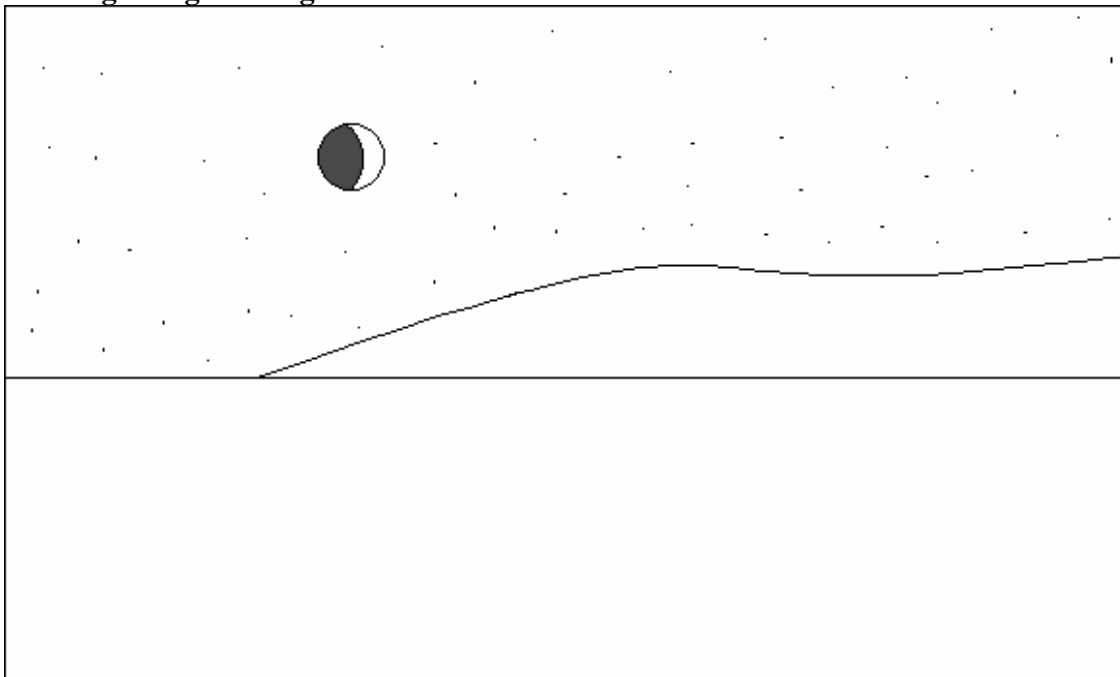
- Donkey:** Is it just a story the humans tell every year?
- Sheep:** It is written in the Bible.
- Camel:** That's right and we must always remember that the Bible is not just a book, but a book of the history of God and man.
- Donkey:** It's wonderful how He sent His son to be one of them.
- Sheep:** More than just that, He sent his son to take their place in judgment.
- Camel:** That's right Jesus came to live with men as a man, and then, to die for all their sins.
- Donkey:** In John 3:16-17 it says "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*"
- Sheep:** All man has to do is trust and believe.
- Camel:** In verse 18 it say's just that "*He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*"
- Donkey:** Then why don't they believe, if it means they can go to heaven and live with Jesus in all His Glory? That's why Jesus came to earth as a baby all those years ago isn't it?
- Sheep:** Yes it is, you would have to ask one of them though, and I think it would be a pretty easy decision. But then again, I'm just a sheep.
- Congregation song:** *Angels from the realms of glory.*
- Closing:** Challenge from Pastor,

Some background ideas to paint on cloth for quick change

**Room Background**



**Walking at night background**



**Inn Background**

