



Scene 1

*(As **intro music** plays (CD track 9) the children enter and take their positions for the first scene. Fade the music when ready.)*

Narrator 1 There won't be many of you who don't know the story of the very first Christmas – the one about Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, wise men and, of course, the baby Jesus!

Narrator 2 These characters will be in *our* story, but we'll also be telling you about a few you may not have heard of before. They're not so well known, but they still had an important part to play in what happened all those years ago.

(Joseph enters carrying a chisel and a saw.)

Narrator 3 But let's start off with someone who is well-known. Joseph (we mentioned him earlier) was a carpenter in a village called Nazareth. But he wasn't born there. No, Joseph was born and grew up in a different town, which was called Bethlehem.

Narrator 4 Bethlehem was where he learned his trade. With other keen youngsters he spent his early years mastering the saw, hammer, chisel and plane, until he and his friends became skilled craftsmen.

(The other carpenters enter, each carrying tools of their trade.)

Narrator 5 The carpenters of Bethlehem were a jolly lot. They would whistle merrily as they turned a piece of timber into a door, a table, a cartwheel or a simple set of bowls and plates. For them life was busy, and life was good.....

Song Life's Good (CD tracks 1 & 10, lyrics p16)

(Carpenters supported by the whole cast)

(As the song finishes Joseph stands forward of the other carpenters. A suitcase is slid across the floor to him. He picks it up.)

Joseph Friends, I have something to tell you. I'm leaving Bethlehem to set up in business where there's a bit less competition!

(Simeon, with a grey beard, stands forward and embraces Joseph, who then exits.)

Simeon *(waving to Joseph)* Goodbye Joseph, my friend. Things just won't be the same without you!

Narrator 1 Simeon was an older carpenter. When Joseph was a boy he had been Simeon's apprentice. That means Simeon had taught Joseph all his carpentry skills and had given him a job.

Narrator 2 They worked happily together for many years, but now, with Joseph gone, Simeon was a man down. He needed a new apprentice.

Simeon And I know just where to find one!

(The trades people enter; builders, bakers, weavers, farmers etc, two or three of each, all carrying a sign showing the tools/products of their trade and the word 'HIRING'. With the carpenters, they stand in their groups at one side of the stage – see staging suggestions/props.)

Narrator 3 One day every month the local trades people would gather in Bethlehem's town square, to hire youngsters who were looking for work.

(The children nervously enter and stand on the other side of the stage.)

Narrator 4 These children, who wanted to start earning a living, would become apprentices to bakers, builders, weavers, farmers and, of course, carpenters.

Narrator 5 And in this way the town prospered and everybody kept themselves busy.

Song Scratch My Back *(CD tracks 2 & 11, lyrics p17)*

(Trades people and children supported by the whole cast)

(As the song finishes the trades people and children mingle. The trades people inspect the children, checking their hands, muscles, teeth and behind their ears. As the following conversations take place, they 'pair-up'.)

Weaver Hmmm, you're a bit grubby but I reckon I can make a weaver out of you.

Builder With a bit of fattening up we'll have you carrying bricks in no time. You're hired!

Baker Kind of rough round the edges, but I think you show promise. Fancy being a baker, you little whipper-snapper?

Farmer (*sniffing*) Phew! You'll fit in on my farm! The goats and sheep are going to love you!

Carpenter 1 Ten fingers - good! That means you can afford to lose a couple while you learn how to use a saw!

(The rest of the children and trades people mingle then all exit in pairs, leaving only one tradesman, Simeon, and one child, Sarah. Sarah sits cross-legged, looking sad. She has a cloth bag slung across her shoulder.)

Narrator 1 When the trades people had chosen their apprentices, off they went to start teaching them their new skills.

Narrator 2 All except Simeon had found someone. He still needed to fill the position left by Joseph, but the only child left was a little girl called Sarah.

Narrator 3 Sarah was from a poor family who needed her to earn extra money so they would have enough food to see them through the coming winter.

Narrator 4 But a small girl like this couldn't become a carpenter, surely? Who'd ever heard of a girl making a living hammering and sawing great lumps of wood? Yet Simeon was a kind man and the least he could do was offer this lonely little girl a few minutes of his time.....



Song **The Lucky Ones** *(CD tracks 3 & 12, lyrics p18)*

(Sarah and Simeon supported by the whole cast)

Narrator 5 Simeon longed to help Sarah, but what could he do? As he put a comforting arm around her, he noticed the cloth bag she had over her shoulder.

Simeon What is in your bag, child?

(Sarah takes out three or four intricate wooden carvings – see staging suggestions/props. She hands them to Simeon.)

Sarah I like to carve wood, you see. I make these ornaments and try to sell them to get money for my family.

Narrator 1 Simeon was amazed. He'd never seen such beautiful woodwork, especially by a child. He immediately had a change of heart.

Simeon I'd be a fool not to make you my apprentice. Sarah.... you're hired!

(As intro music plays (CD track13) Simeon and Sarah exit and the stage is made ready for the next scene. Fade the music when ready.)

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