



Scene 1

*(As the backing track to the opening song plays (CD track 9) the cast members take their seats. On and in front of the main stage, the sheep and lambs are grazing. There's a distinction between the older, bigger sheep and the smaller lambs, by way of size, horns etc. – see **staging suggestions/costume**. Centrally on the main stage, the shepherds sit round a fire, the older ones closer to the flames than the younger ones – see **staging suggestions/scenery/costume**. Again, the older shepherds are distinguishable by their beards, size of crooks, head-dresses etc. To one side, four narrators stand slightly forward of the main stage. Fade the music when all are ready.)*

Narrator 1 In Bethlehem there was always a lot going on. The busy, bustling streets were full of people – some working, some shopping and some just having a good gossip.

Narrator 2 But outside the city walls, high up on the hillside, Bethlehem was home to a quieter and more relaxed group of people.....shepherds.

Narrator 3 And just as you'd expect, wherever you find shepherds, you will always find.....

All SHEEP!

(All shepherds and sheep stand for the opening song.)

Song **Baa...Baa...Bethlehem** *(CD 1 & 9, lyrics p14)*
(Shepherds and sheep, supported by whole cast)

(As the song finishes, the shepherds sit by the fire again and the sheep go back to their grazing.)

Narrator 4 Now, there's one thing you should know about shepherds, and about sheep – there's a 'pecking order'.

Narrator 1 Which means the bigger, older ones get to boss the smaller, younger ones about!

(A younger shepherd tries to edge closer to the fire to get warm. An older shepherd pushes him/her back!)

Older Shep. 1 Oi! Get back! You'll be allowed nearer the fire when you're older....a lot older!

(The older shepherds all get closer to the fire, pushing all the younger ones back. A lamb starts grazing near one of the older sheep, who gets annoyed!)

Older Sheep Oi! Get back! You'll be allowed to graze on the sweet, green grass when you're older....a lot older!

Narrator 2 And this is how it was; cold feet for the younger shepherds and bitter leaves from thorny bushes for the younger sheep. They knew their place, and their place was at the bottom of the heap!

(All shepherds and sheep stand again for the next song.)

Song Bottom Of The Heap *(CD 2 & 10, lyrics p15)*

(Shepherds and sheep, supported by whole cast)

(As the song finishes, most of the sheep move to one side and lie down, and most of the shepherds return to the fire and nod off. Four young shepherds, Daniel, Naomi, Rachel and Eli, move away from them and sit together. Two lambs also move away from the flock and sit together.)

Narrator 3 Daniel, Naomi, Rachel and Eli were four young shepherds who were definitely fed up with being at the bottom of the heap.

Daniel I'm fed up with being at the bottom of the heap!

Naomi Me too. I'd love to feel important, just once.

Rachel Wouldn't it be nice if we were allowed to take the sheep to market.

Eli Ha! *(pointing to the older shepherds)* They won't let us do that until we're much older. Going to market isn't a job for us youngsters.

Narrator 4 It was true. Only the older, more experienced shepherds got to leave the hillside once a week, to take some of the flock to sell at market.

Narrator 1 And the sheep they took were the ones with the biggest, heaviest fleeces, as these would fetch the most money.

Lamb 1 The hustle and bustle of the market must be so exciting!

Lamb 2 Well, we won't be taken until we're much bigger, and with more wool on our backs.

Lamb 1 But that won't be for such a long time. Oh, I can't wait until we're the important ones, until something special happens to us.

Song We'll Shine Through *(CD 3 & 11, lyrics p16)*

(Young shepherds and lambs, supported by whole cast)

(As the backing track is played again, the shepherds and sheep move to the side, leaving the main stage clear. Fade the music when ready.)

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