

## REFLECTION TWO

The journey to Bethlehem would not have been easy: days were hot, nights were cold, and donkeys are not known for their speed. The route could be dangerous too. Mary and Joseph must have felt great anxiety and would have been very pleased to see Bethlehem appearing in the distance. They would have been hoping for somewhere comfortable to rest and await the baby's arrival. But, like with so many plans, things turned out rather differently.

## TABLEAU THREE

*Inside the stable. Mary and Joseph side by side. The Innkeeper opposite them. Between them, an empty manger. Behind them, upstage, an ox, a sheep and a donkey.*

**Narrator/s**        Upon their arrival in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph needed to find somewhere to stay.

They sought shelter all over town, but it was very busy and all of the inns were full.

Eventually, a kindly innkeeper took pity on them. He led them to his stable, and offered them shelter with his animals.

## DIALOGUE BETWEEN MARY, JOSEPH AND THE INNKEEPER

*This could be spoken by the children from within the tableau, or by other children speaking at a lectern or elsewhere.*

**Innkeeper**        It's not fancy, I'm afraid, but it's warm and dry, if a little smelly.

**Joseph**            We are grateful, thank you. It is enough.

**Innkeeper**        You've a few animals for company, too.

**Joseph**            We don't mind that. After a walk like the one we've had, we could sleep anywhere.

**Mary**                I don't think we'll be getting much sleep, Joseph. It feels like the baby might be on its way.

**Innkeeper** A baby? Here? In my barn? (*pause*) Well that's a first.

**Joseph** Yes, it's a first for us too. We'll just have to manage with what we have.

**Mary** We have each other, and the Lord is with us. He has guided us here, we are where we should be.

**Innkeeper** Right, well, I think I'll leave you to it.

**Joseph** Thank you for your kindness. We won't forget it.

**Innkeeper** No, I don't think I will either. Goodnight.

#### **TABLEAU FOUR**

*A baby doll, wrapped in swaddling clothes, is placed in the manger. Mary and Joseph stand either side. The ox, sheep and donkey position themselves closer behind, as if aware of what has taken place.*

**Narrator/s** That night, amidst the straw of the animals ...  
the lowing of the ox ...  
the braying of the donkey ...  
the baaing of the sheep ...  
baby Jesus was born.  
They wrapped him in cloths and placed him in the manger.