**Scripture**

**Scene 1: Introduction: 3 teens and a mysterious visitor**

Teen 1: Thank you for coming to our program. This year we are going to talk about Scripture. In fact, speaking of Scripture, that reminds me that we need to start studying for the Bible Bowl competition at this year’s Winter Youth Rally.

Teen 2: What chapters of the Bible do we need to study this year?

Teen 3: Hold on. (Checks a paper.) We need to study the Gospel of Mark and St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans.

Teen 2: Well, just be glad both those chapters are from the New Testament rather than the Old Testament. I find the Old Testament very confusing.

Teen 1: Really? In what way?

Teen 2: Well, for one thing, the Orthodox Study Bible (picks it up from a stack of bibles on a table) seems to be bigger than other bibles. I don’t just mean that it looks bigger. It actually seems to contain more books in the Old Testament. I counted them once, and it has 49 books. Other bibles like this one (picks up another one) only have 39 in the Old Testament.

(At this point another person walks over and joins the group.)

Visitor: Good eye! And if you were to investigate more, you would find that some of the books, such as the books of Daniel and Esther, that are common to both actually have more sections in them in our Orthodox Study Bible than in some of the other bibles.

Teen 3: Uh, okay! I’m glad it’s not just me!

Visitor: In the spirit of Christmas, and to hopefully clear up your confusion, why don’t we take a brief walk through some of Scripture? I will be your tour guide, and we will get some help along the way.

Teen 1: Fine by me. And you are….?

Visitor: I will reveal my identity in good time. I am not Christ Himself, but worship him, as you do. For now, I want you to think about a verse from Chapter 13 of the Book of Hebrews in the New Testament: “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by doing so, some have unwittingly entertained angels.”

(The 3 teens look at each other quizzically, and they all exit the stage.)

**Scene 2: Ruth: Ruth, Naomi, and 3 narrators**

Narrator 1: Let’s go to the Old Testament, to the book of Ruth, which is believed to be written in the time of the Judges, about 1300 B.C. Naomi and her husband were Israelites who had taken their family from Israel to Moab when there was a lack of food in Israel. The family had remained in Moab, and their two sons had both married Moabite women.

Narrator 2: Noami’s husband and sons had both died, leaving only herself and her two daughters-in-law. Naomi decided to return to her people, the Israelites. She didn’t expect her daughters-in-law to follow her, as they were both Moabites, not Israelites. The other daughter-in-law decided to return to her own people.

Sister-in-law: I’m sorry but I’m leaving now with my people! (walks off)

Naomi (turning toward Ruth): Look, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and to her gods; go with your sister-in-law.

Ruth: Do not ask me to leave you, or to turn back from following you. For wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.

Narrator 1: Ruth’s loyalty to her mother-in-law was later noticed by Boaz, who she married and became the great-grandmother of King David, and therefore, an ancestor of Christ Himself.

(All exit the stage. A small desk and a chair need to be brought onto the stage for the next scene.)

**Scene 3: Symeon: Symeon, an angel (will appear later in the scene), and 3 narrators, and Teen 1 is standing off to one side. Symeon is writing with a quill pen at his desk.**

Narrator 3: Now we come to someone who is not only in the Bible himself, but who is also one of the first translators of the Old Testament into Greek.

Narrator 2: The Old Testament had previously been written in Hebrew. About 1 to 2 centuries before Christ, 70 Hebrew scholars were commissioned to translate the Old Testament into Greek, which was then the popular language of the time.

Narrator 3: According to tradition, the 70 scholars worked independently, but when they were done, their translations were miraculously identical.

Simeon (reading from the book of Isaiah, Chapter 7 Verse 14): Then Isaiah said, Hear now, O house of David, is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary the Lord also? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and you shall call His name Immanual.

Simeon (making a questioning gesture): That can’t be right. I bet it should say “woman” instead of “virgin.” (prepares to strike out the word on the paper) (Then the angel appears next to him.)

Angel: Simeon, do not change this word, for the prophecy is true and is written correctly.

Simeon: (startled, drops the pen and his hands by his side)

Angel: According to the will of God, you will not die until you see the Messiah born.

(Simeon looks very happy to hear these words.)

Narrator 1: This translation by the 70 scholars from Hebrew into Greek is known as the Septuagint, from the Latin word for seventy, and abbreviated with Roman numerals LXX. It was the “King James version” of its time.

Narrator 2: The Orthodox Church as always relied on the Septuagint as its translation of the Old Testament. In fact, it was this version that was used by Jesus and the apostles when they were quoting scripture.

Narrator 3: The Septuagint Old Testament has 49 books in it. Later translators did not consider all of those books to be true parts of the Bible, and their translations from Hebrew had only 39 books and also some of the books contained fewer sections, such as Daniel and Esther. For bibles that are based on these later translations of the Old Testament, the left-out information is either not included at all or is included only in appendices.

(All exit the stage.)

**Section 4: Three Holy Youths: (3 Narrators, King Nebuchadnezzar, and Teen 2 who is off to one side, and the Tour Guide)**

Narrator 1: From the Book of Daniel do you remember his 3 friends, who are known as the Three Holy Youths? They were Hebrew youths, among all of those who were taken to Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar, captured Jerusalem.

Narrator 2: In his eighteenth year, King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image. The king decided that whoever does not fall down and worship the golden image shall be cast into the burning fiery furnace.

Narrator 3: The Three Holy Youths refused to worship the golden image, and so were cast into the fiery furnace. Only the Septuagint translation of the Book of Daniel contains the Prayer of Azariah, one of the three, who prayed as they were going into the fire for God’s mercy and for the victory over their enemies.

Narrator 1: (Daniel 3:49-50) But the Angel of the Lord went down into the furnace to join Azariah and his companions, and shook off the fiery flame of the furnace to be as though a dew-laden breeze were blowing through it, so the fire did not touch them at all, or cause them pain, or trouble them.

Youth 1: These flames aren’t burning me

Youth 2: Me neither!

Youth 3: Bless the Lord, we are saved from the hand of death!

King Nebuchadnezzar (walks onto the stage with Soldier): Did we throw these three tied men into the fire?

Soldier: Yes, O King.

King Nebuchadnezzar: Behold, I see **FOUR** men untied and walking in the fire, yet they are not destroyed; and the vision of the fourth man is like the Son of God.

Teen 2: Did he say “Son of God?” I thought Jesus hadn’t been born yet!

Tour Guide: Yes, this is considered by the Church to be a theophany of Christ, perhaps we could say a “sneak preview,” when Christ appeared in the Old Testament before he was born on Earth. This is a mystery, but we know that Jesus has always been God, even before he became man.

(All exit the stage.)

**Section 5: Annunciation: Mary, Archangel Gabriel, Narrator, and Teen 3**

Narrator 3(Luke 1:26): Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.

Gabriel: Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!

(Mary looks intent.)

Narrator 3: And the Angel Gabriel said to Mary: Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.

Mary: How can this be?

Gabriel: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will over shadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

Teen 3: What will she say? How will she respond? Will she disobey God, like Adam and Eve?

Mary: Behold, the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.

Teen 3: Awesome! She said yes!

(All exit.)

**Scene 6: The Presentation of the Lord into the Temple**: Mary, Joseph, 3 Narrators, Simeon, Teen 2, and Tour Guide

Narrator 1 (Luke 2:22): Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.

Narrator 2: And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

Narrator 3: And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple.

Simeon (taking the baby in bundles of blankets from Mary): Lord, now You are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.

Teen 3: How could Simeon have been one of the 70 who translated the Hebrew bible into Greek, 1 or 2 centuries before Christ, and yet he was still alive to hold Christ after He was born?

Tour Guide: Church Tradition holds that Simeon lived to be around 250 years old.

(All exit.)

**Scene 7: The Three Wise Men: 3 Wise Men, 3 Narrators, and Teen 1**

Narrator 1 (Matthew 2:1): Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem.

Wise Man 1: Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?

Wise Man 2: For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.

Narrator 2: When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

**Narrator 3: (Group)** So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judah, for thus it is written by the prophet:

 ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
 Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;
 For out of you shall come a Ruler
 Who will shepherd My people Israel.’

**Teen 3:** Wow! So it looks like, for the Wise Men, the star was their GPS.

**Teen 2:** AND it looks like the scripture was their GPS too!

***Scene 8: 3 Teens and Tour Guide***

Tour Guide: So that was your tour. What did you think?

Teen 3: Good tour, but aren’t you forgetting something?

Teen 2: You still haven’t told us who you are!

Tour Guide: I will now reveal my identity. I am the Archangel Raphael. You can read my story in the book of Tobit.

Teen 1 (picks up a smaller bible): Did you say Tobit? Where is that??

Tour Guide: Now what did we learn on our tour?

Teen 2 (picks up the Orthodox Study Bible): I bet it’s in the Septuagint translation!

 (the younger kids come up to the center and hold up the following words:)

Tour Guide: What do the Scriptures teach us?

 **LOYALTY**  – for the Loyalty that Ruth showed to the people of Israel

**REVELATION -** for Simeon seeing that the prophesies came true

**SACRIFICE** – for the 3 youths who gave their lives to God

**FAITH** – for the Faith that Mary showed in doing God’s Will

Thank you for coming to our program. Join us in singing “Joy to The World”