

7. Jesus was once a refugee (Children)

PLAYS FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL

JESUS WAS ONCE A REFUGEE

SEEKING REFUGEE STATUS

Voice We are now to visit some officials in an office in first century Egypt.

(Two officials are seated at a desk covered with papers, discussing refugee cases in an office in Egypt.)

Official 1 (Yawning and stretching) How many more? I want to go home.

Official 2 Only one more and that's it for the day.

Official 1 Well come on. Make it snappy. Who is it?

Official 2 A family. Man, woman, child.

Official 1 Country of origin?

Official 2 Israel.

Official 1 What's their plea?

Official 2 Seeking refugee status here in Egypt.

Official 1 On what grounds?

Official 2 Persecution and death if they return to their own country.

Official 1 Papers?

Official 2 None.

Official 1 What sort of persecution? Religious? Political?

Official 2 Political. They claim their son's life is in danger. He will be killed if they return home.

Official 1 Only the son?

Official 2 That's what they say.

Official 1 Who are these people? What do our contacts say about them?

Official 2 No one has any knowledge or record of them.

Official 1 What's the man's occupation?

Official 2 He's a carpenter.

Official 1 And the woman?

Official 2 None. She's just a wife and mother.

Official 1 What about the boy? How old is he?

Official 2 Difficult to say.

Official 1 Give me a range. 0-2? 2-5? 5-8? 8-10?

Official 2 0-2.

Official 1 And who's going to kill him?

Official 2 The king. Herod.

Official 1 Herod? Any facts to verify this?

Official 2 Again difficult to say. The child was born in Bethlehem and our contacts have mentioned an alleged incident there where all boys under the age of two were allegedly killed. But we haven't been able to verify it with the authorities.

Official 1 So how did these people escape?

Official 2 The man, Joseph, said he had been warned to leave prior to the incident.

Official 1 Warned? They had inside information? Who from?

Official 2 He said he was told in a ...a dream.

Official 1 Dream! Rubbish! He knows more than he's telling us. He must have contacts somewhere. What about her?

Official 2 Mary? She's harmless enough.

Official 1 Harmless, my eye. What sort of parents would take a young child on such a hazardous journey across those inhospitable deserts?

Official 2 I don't know. People who are desperate?

Official 1 Their story sounds pretty thin to me. Anyone to corroborate it?

Official 2 Not really.

Official 1 Have they got any money?

Official 2 I believe they have some.

Official 1 But not much, I bet. Probably spent it all getting here. But they must have been well off to afford getting this far.

Official 2 I don't know. He says he's a carpenter. And he's willing to work.

Official 1 Carpenter? They work in wood. Great! Look around you. How much wood do you see? Are the pyramids made of wood? Are the tombs of the Pharaohs made of wood? Stone cutters! That's what we need.

Official 2 He could possibly adapt his skills.

Official 1 And put our own people out of work? No. I guarantee he'll expect the Egyptian people to support him.

Official 2 Don't forget the woman and child.

Official 1 Ah yes, the woman and child. And we know why they came along, don't we.

Official 2 Because they're a family?

Official 1 You are so naive. They add sympathy to their plight! These people just bring the wife and kids along to add to the occasion – like you do to a dinner. Look, I don't like this. There are plenty of other countries closer than us they could have gone to. Why did they choose to come to Egypt anyway?

Official 2 I don't know. Perhaps because it's safe.

Official 1 I'll tell you why. They just want to share the economic benefits of our country. These people are here solely for a better life. Persecution. What garbage! They should accept their lot in life and live in their own country.

Official 2 But....

Official 1 They're just queue jumpers, illegals, probably criminals. They should have waited in line like everybody else, gone through the correct channels and been processed properly.

Official 2 But the correct channels have been cut back. And they're so slow. It takes years for people to get the proper accreditation. Besides, if the king is threatening your life, you're hardly going to apply to him to leave the country, are you?

Official 1 I don't care. I have the backing of the Egyptian people on this. And if I displease them I'll lose my job. No, it's time to make a stand. We've had too many of these people crossing our borders. By the way, what's their religion?

Official 2 They're Jews.

Official 1 I knew it! Jews are troublemakers. We don't want them here indoctrinating our people with their religion. Before we know it they'll be taking over our country.

Official 2 They seemed like nice people to me.

Official 1 Listen. Let's get this straight. These people have arrived on our doorstep –illegally. No papers, no money. No proof or record of persecution. No one to back up their story. I see no reason to grant them refugee status. We are a decent, caring people, but we've been the good guys for too long. These people are just taking advantage of us. Send them back where they came from. We have no room for any more illegals in this country. We have enough rubbish in this country already. We don't want any more.

Official 2 But what about the threats? We know what Herod's like.

Official 1 Threats! What sort of a threat would a young boy be to King Herod? We must send a strong message to these people that Egypt is not a soft touch. We'll start now and make an example of this family. Refugee status denied! (Official 1 stamps the papers defiantly) Send them back where they came from. Official 2 But what happens if any harm comes to the child? Official 1 It's my guess nothing will. What makes him so special? Besides, who cares? They're only peasants. It's hardly as if this one child will make any difference to the world, is it?

(The officials collect their papers and leave).

Voice Let us never forget that Jesus was once a refugee.