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sound effects, music



instant

Puppet

skits

Mikal Keefer & John Cutshall



Group

20 Stories From People Who Met Jesus



Group's R.E.A.L. Guarantee to you:

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry—one that encourages long-term retention and life transformation. It's ministry that's:

Relational

Because learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential

Because what learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

Applicable

Because the aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Learner-based

Because learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

Dedications

To Jennifer, whose laugh is better than gold.
Always remember the Easter break when the puppets invaded.
—John Cutshall

For Adrienne, who'd rather have a good story than a good pizza any day.
—Mikal Keefer

Note: The price of this text includes the right for you to make as many copies of the skits as you need for your immediate church performing group. If another church or organization wants copies of these skits, it must purchase Instant Puppet Skits in order to receive performance rights.

Instant Puppet Skits: 20 Stories From People Who Met Jesus
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Welcome to the Show!



Want to see a child's eyes light up? Introduce the child to a puppet. Puppet shows are a surefire way to snag a child's attention. And that makes puppet shows a compelling way to introduce children to Bible stories and Bible characters.

The twenty scripts you'll find in Instant Puppet Skits have something in common: Each script tells the story of someone who had a personal encounter with Jesus. And you'll find that the scripts have other things in common too:

- Each script provides a way to involve the audience. Sometimes they'll have a part in the skit, and other times they'll provide a sound effect or a prop.
- After each script you'll find questions designed to help children apply what they've experienced and draw closer in their own relationships with Jesus.
- Scripts have no more than four puppets on stage at any one time, and often fewer. That makes it easy for you to recruit enough puppeteers!
- And each script is already recorded on a fun soundtrack. You and your puppeteer friends don't have to worry about digging up sound effects or reading the lines as you perform. It's already done for you!

How to Perform a Puppet Skit

1. Recruit puppeteers

Involve children every chance you have! Maybe your performance production values will suffer, but the learning your children experience more than makes up for the occasional missed exits and entrances.

2. Create a stage

You can get by with a table turned on its side, but you'll be more comfortable and provide better performances if you design a puppet stage that includes these elements:

- an elevated stage area,
- side panels,
- lighting controls (so you can dim the stage lights), and
- a backstage pad to save wear and tear on your puppeteers' knees.



3. Select a skit

Listen to the CD and then assign roles to specific puppets and puppeteers. In the table of contents of this book, you'll also find Scripture references for each skit to help you select which skits will fit into your upcoming programs.

4. Collect props and build sets

These skits are intentionally prop and set "light," so you'll need very few items. To give your puppets a Bible-times appearance, you will want to create simple robes sized to the puppets you'll use in these skits.

5. Practice, practice, practice

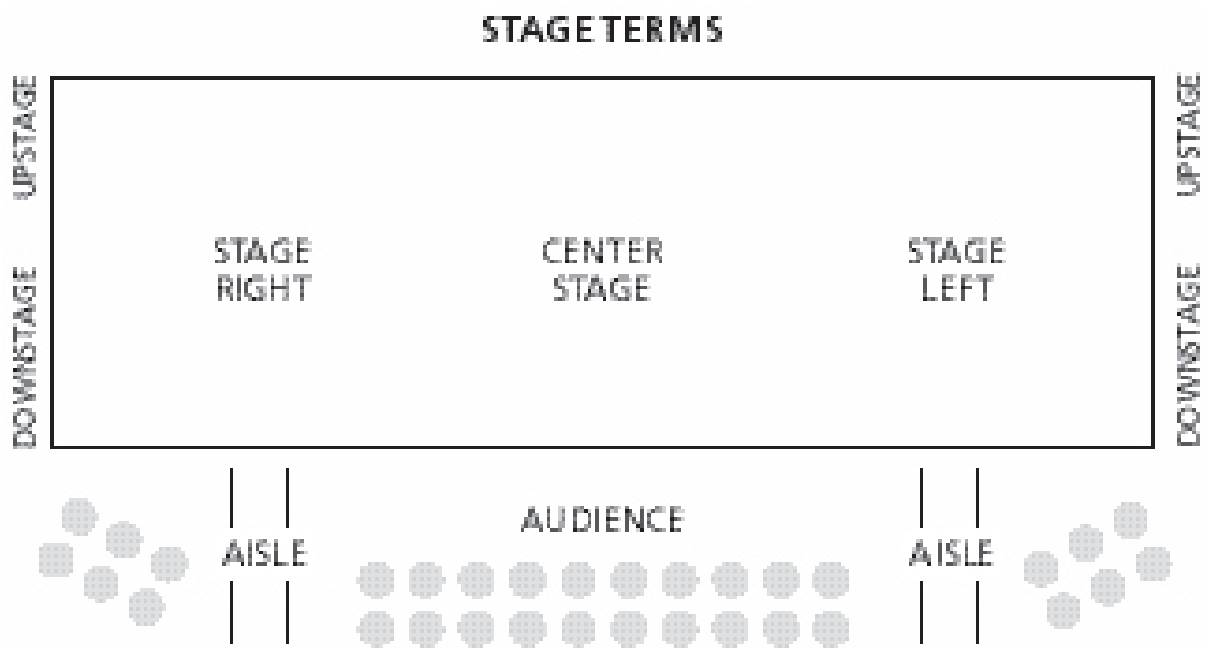
See "A Puppet Primer" (p. 7) for a short list of skills you'll want your puppeteers to master. Also make certain puppeteers are familiar with specific scripts before performing them—including lines, emotions, blocking, and entrances and exits.

6. Break a leg!

Perform your show! Use the prerecorded soundtrack, or work without it—it's your choice!

Staging Terms

We use simple stage instructions to help you move the puppets. You'll want everyone on your team to know these terms so that, during rehearsals, it's easy to communicate where you want puppets to move.

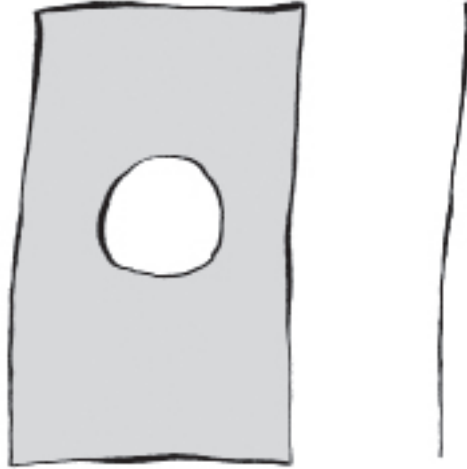


How to Create Simple Bible-Times Costumes

Use the simple illustrations below to help you create inexpensive cape-robes for your puppets. Because puppets come in so many different sizes, we haven't attempted to provide measurements. You'll need to tailor a robe for puppets you want to use in these skits.



Step 1



Step 2

Step 3



Step 4

A Puppet Primer

The best thing about working with puppets is that puppets grab children's imaginations. When you're leading a puppet show, you aren't just sending your puppets scampering across a makeshift stage in the corner of your room. You're also playing on the grand stage of your children's imaginations.

With a twist of your wrist, you can convince children that a large, talking, purple dog has hit a home run. Your nimble fingers can send a marionette tap-dancing across a fairy-tale carpet of flowers. Lowering a simple yellow disk on a stick to show the sun setting can be enough to cause droopy eyes.

A good puppet show connects with kids in a way that's powerful and effective, so you want to do it well.

Whether you're a solo artist who's just beginning or you direct a team of experienced puppeteers, there are disciplines you'll want to master. Why? Any puppeteer who has dropped a prop or forgotten to come in on cue knows how fast a group of children will zero in on a mistake. Those distractions take away from the fun, the imagination, and, most important, the message.

To keep children focused on the message, practice the following skills until your puppets shine.

Lip-sync with precision.

If you're using puppets with moving mouths, be careful to minimize the amount of mouth movement. When people speak, it's primarily the lower jaw that moves. When your puppets

speak, simulate the same movement. Use your thumb to move the lower jaw of your puppet, and don't open the mouth wide unless you want your puppet to show surprise.

Improve puppet posture.

Puppeteering is hard work! It's tempting to relax a bit by letting your arm drift down, especially if you're working behind an elevated stage and you have to keep your arms above your head.

Always keep your arms at a 90-degree angle to the floor. The characters you're portraying wouldn't walk leaning over, so don't let them. Some puppeteers use a slight bobbing motion to simulate running when puppets dash from one place to another. It's a good technique, but if you use it, be sure everyone in your puppet troupe uses it for consistency's sake.

One thing to keep in mind if you're developing a puppet troupe: The puppeteers must have the upper body strength to keep puppets upright.

Look directly at your audience.

These scripts call for occasionally addressing your audience directly. When you do so, be sure to make direct "eye contact" by having your puppets "look" directly at the children. If children are seated on the floor, or your stage is high, make the appropriate adjustment by angling your wrists.

Know what's in view.

Raise your arm too high and it's painfully obvious that Zacchaeus doesn't have feet—he's walking around on a forearm. Not good.

Practice makes perfect. And if you're able, consider having a monitor hooked up to an inconspicuous video camera that's out in front of the stage. Place the monitor where your puppeteers can see it as they perform. But be careful; this technique may be distracting and create more problems than it solves.

Be able to make a graceful entrance and exit.

When making entrances and exits, be consistent about whether you let puppets "stair-step" (move up and down as if climbing or descending steps) at the edge of the stage or whether they'll move off stage fully standing.

An easy way to resolve the situation is to build a stage that features side panels with ample room for puppeteers to move puppets out of sight before dropping them below the audience's sightline.

Know your script.

Certain Shakespearean actors might disagree, but we think puppet plays may be more challenging than people plays, and here's why:

Puppets can't read the audience. When you're doubled over with both arms high over your head, wondering how you'll sneak past another puppeteer so your puppets can cross the stage and exit, you can't see how the audience is responding. You have to rely just on what you hear. When the audience unexpectedly laughs, it may be because you were brilliant delivering a line... or because a puppet's head just fell off.

Having whatever script you're using down cold lets you pay attention to the details that can

turn a good performance into a great one.

Know the lines. Know the blocking. Practice stage movement.

Trim Your Cast—and Cut Costs

Something you'll quickly discover about puppets: They can be pricey. Even when you create your own, you'll find that they're expensive to make and maintain.

Here's a way to trim the number of puppets you'll need for these skits: Create an ensemble cast. That is, always use one puppet to play the part of a bumbling sidekick, another to be the female lead, and another to play the director or hero.

Creating an ensemble cast is a strategy that has served Jim Henson Productions and the Muppets well.

Think about it: Kermit the Frog plays many different roles throughout the Muppet movies and television programs, but he's always essentially the same character: the reasonable, calm, "Everyman" who finds himself surrounded with more colorful characters. Miss Piggy is always the self-possessed prima donna, and Fozzie is always the scattered, hyper, kindhearted sideman.

We've provided a recommended cast list for you to use if you want to keep your puppets' characters consistent as you present these scripts. Doing these scripts with just a few puppets and two socks.

The four primary puppet characters you'll need if you include:

so lets you do all

create an ensemble

NORTON is a levelheaded character who doesn't panic, even in the midst of chaos. He's the perfect narrator or leader, though he's not used to anyone in the ensemble cast actually following him.



NORTON

EDWARD has played Macbeth and is a serious thespian. He regards himself a bit above the novices he has been reduced to acting alongside, but the show must go on. Prone to occasional tantrums, he has been known to sulk in his dressing room. He's capable of brilliance on stage, but not as often as he imagines.



EDWARD

SUE is a strong, caring character who is self-aware and able to speak with certainty. Her melodic voice makes her a great narrator. She's steady and aware, a character who moves with purpose and conviction.



SUE

FRITZ is easily excited and eager to please, but he



FRITZ

If you create an ensemble, here's how they can fit with the skits in this book:

The Christmas Miracle

Director: Sue
Actor: Edward
Shepherd Boy 1: Any puppet
Shepherd Boy 2: Any puppet

Teacher at the Temple

Rabbi Rosen: Edward
Host: Norton
Associate Producer: Fritz

John the Baptist

Host: Edward
John the Baptist: Norton

Apostle Andrew

Fisherman: Fritz
Apostle Andrew: Edward

Planning the Wedding

Caterer: Norton
Assistant Caterer: Fritz

Friend of the Paralytic

Elias: Edward
Friend: Fritz

Clear the Temple

Tourist: Norton
Construction Worker: Fritz
Joe: Edward

Nicodemus

Man: Norton
Nicodemus: Edward

Centurion and Servant

Centurion: Norton
Servant: Fritz

Fish and Loaves

Hot Dog Salesman: Edward
Boy: Fritz

Peter on the Water

Disciple 1: Norton
Disciple 2: Fritz
Peter: Edward

Grateful Leper

Doctor: Norton
David: Fritz

Mary and Martha

Mary: Sue
Mike Rophone: Norton

Lazarus

Bernie: Fritz
Lazarus: Norton

Prodigal Son

Director: Norton
Bruce: Edward
Daphne: Sue
Frankie: Fritz

Little Girl on His Lap

Disciple 7: Edward
Father 1: Norton
Father 2: Fritz
Little Girl: Sue

Zacchaeus

Man: Norton
EMT 1: Towel
EMT 2: Towel
Zacchaeus: Fritz

The Last Supper

Jim: Edward
Ruth: Sue

The Centurion and the Soldier

Roman Centurion: Norton
Soldier: Edward

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene: Sue
Peter: Norton
John: Edward

The Christmas Miracle

Bible Reference: Luke 2:8-18

Cast

DIRECTOR: tired, overwhelmed woman who is struggling to stay even-tempered

ACTOR: dramatic, pompous, and definitely difficult artist

SHEPHERD BOY 1: innocent and wide-eyed boy

SHEPHERD BOY 2: tired and cranky boy

VOICE: offstage production helper




Costuming: All characters wear Bible-times costumes.

Props: Bible-times costumes, a small script taped to Director's hand, and a sign that reads:

Coming Soon:
The Christmas Miracle
A Play in Three Acts

Setup: Before the skit begins, seat four or five trusted children down front and center. Give each of these children a flashlight, and appoint them the Spotlight Crew. When instructed, they'll turn on their flashlights and shine them as directed. When asked to turn off the flashlights, they'll do so.

ACTIONS	SCRIPT	WORDS
<p> Play track 1 on CD A.</p> <p>DIRECTOR enters from STAGE LEFT and then looks left and right while giving directions.</p> <p>DIRECTOR calls OFFSTAGE RIGHT.</p>		<p>DIRECTOR (Calling) Places everyone! Places! You there, shepherd! Do something with those sheep; they're eating the carpet!</p> <p>Spotlight Crew, hit me with the lights, and let's see if they're working...OK, that's good, focus on me. OK, turn 'em off.</p>

ACTOR enters from STAGE RIGHT.

DIRECTOR stops what he is doing and looks at ACTOR.

ACTOR moves dramatically as he talks with DIRECTOR.

ACTOR continues dramatically.

DIRECTOR looks down as if checking notes and looks at ACTOR.

ACTOR throws up hands.

Look, people, The Christmas Miracle opens in four days. That's four days, people, and we are not ready. Let's make this rehearsal count! Everyone, take your places and let's go. Act One again...this time without dropping the star through the roof of the stable, OK?

ACTOR

(Indignant) Director, we must talk...

DIRECTOR

(Long-suffering) What now?

ACTOR

(Indignant) I must protest madame! You have me playing the part of a common innkeeper, but I am an actor, madame. I have played Shakespeare, madame. Hamlet!

DIRECTOR

(Struggling to stay patient) Look, Hamlet isn't in this play. You're an innkeeper. You're supposed to be over by the inn. You know, so Mary and Joseph can come over and you can send them out to the stable.

ACTOR

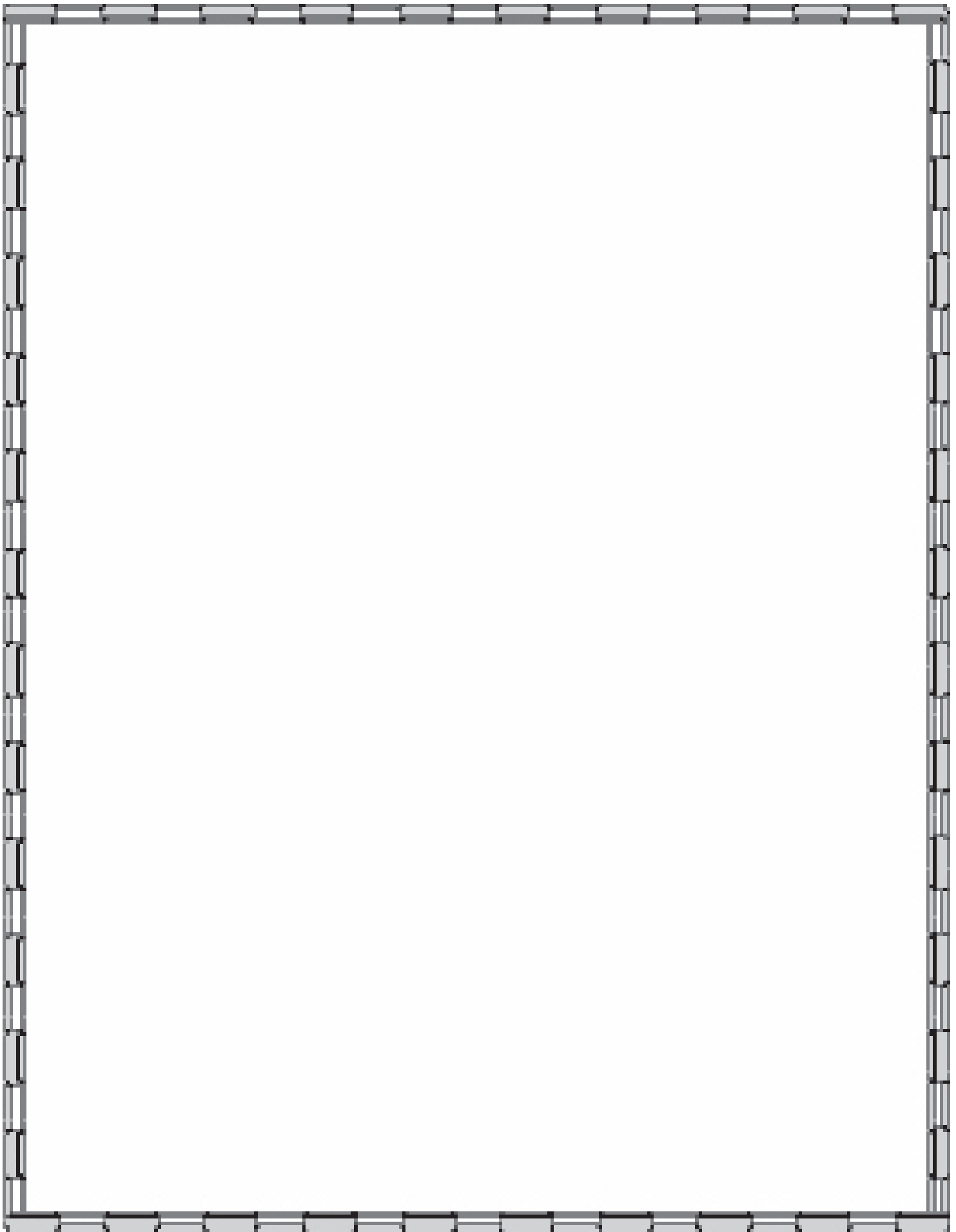
(Indignant) There it is! That's the problem! You've cast me in the role of a villain! What kind of person would send a woman to a stable to have her baby?

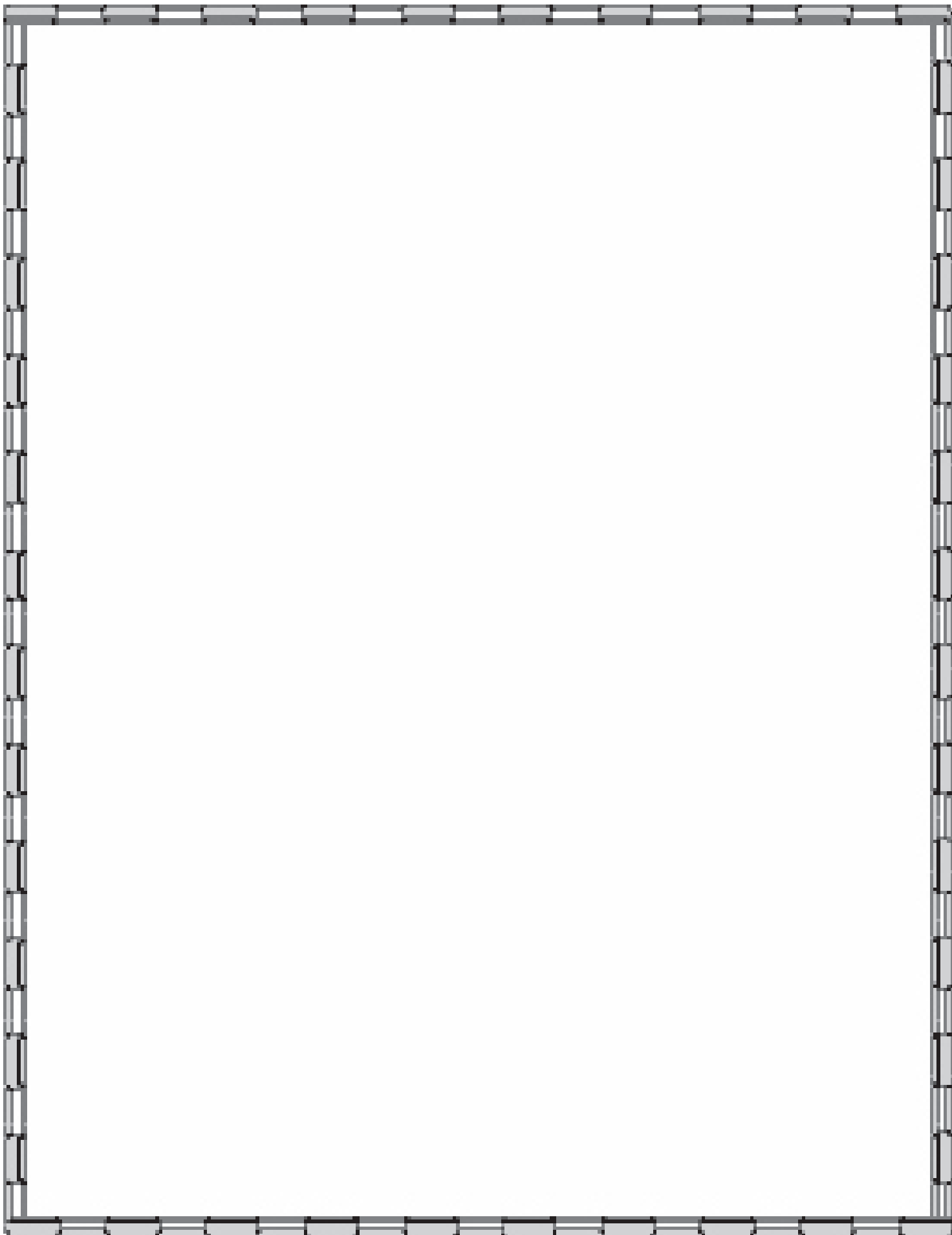
DIRECTOR

You. You're that kind of person. It's right here in the script.

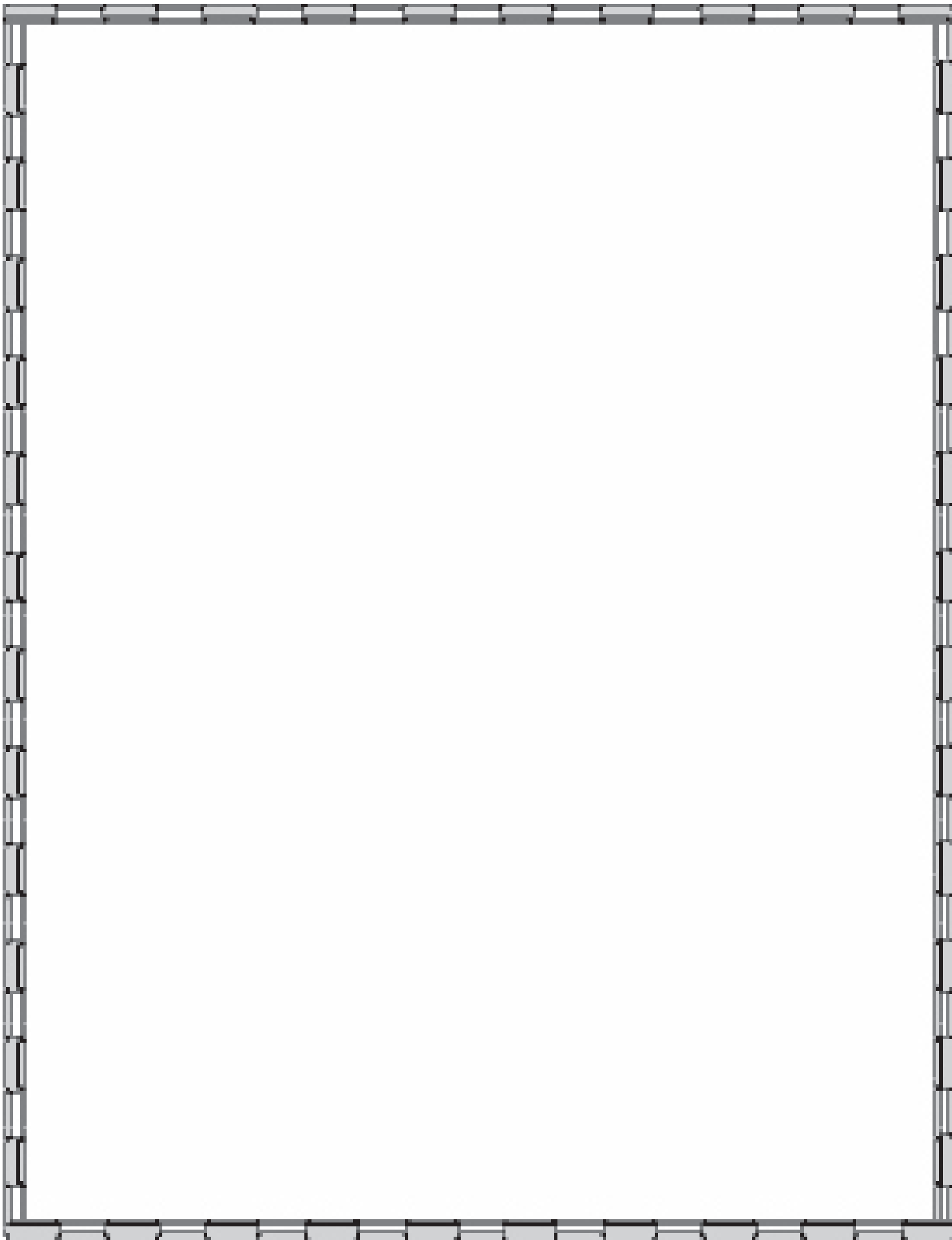
ACTOR

But what's my motivation?





Skit One:
The Christmas Miracle



DIRECTOR looks to ceiling in relief.

ACTOR calls from OFFSTAGE.

DIRECTOR nods his head "yes."

SHEPHERD BOY 1 points OFFSTAGE LEFT.

DIRECTOR nods his head "yes."

DIRECTOR

You know, this is good stuff! Add this to your lines.

SHEPHERD BOY 1

But it didn't matter! Mary and Joseph let us come right up to the manger so we could peek inside. Jesus was sleeping, but I think he knew we were there anyway. I could feel it.

DIRECTOR

Kid, I'm adding all this to page 53. Say it just that way.

ACTOR

(Calling) I'm not kidding—I want that apology!

SHEPHERD BOY 1

Look, Miss, I'd like to stay and talk, but I've got to go tell people what I saw! I've just seen Jesus! I've seen the Son of God!

DIRECTOR

(Calling) Hey, where are you going? Shepherd boy! Hey, shepherd boy!

SHEPHERD BOY 2

Whataya want?

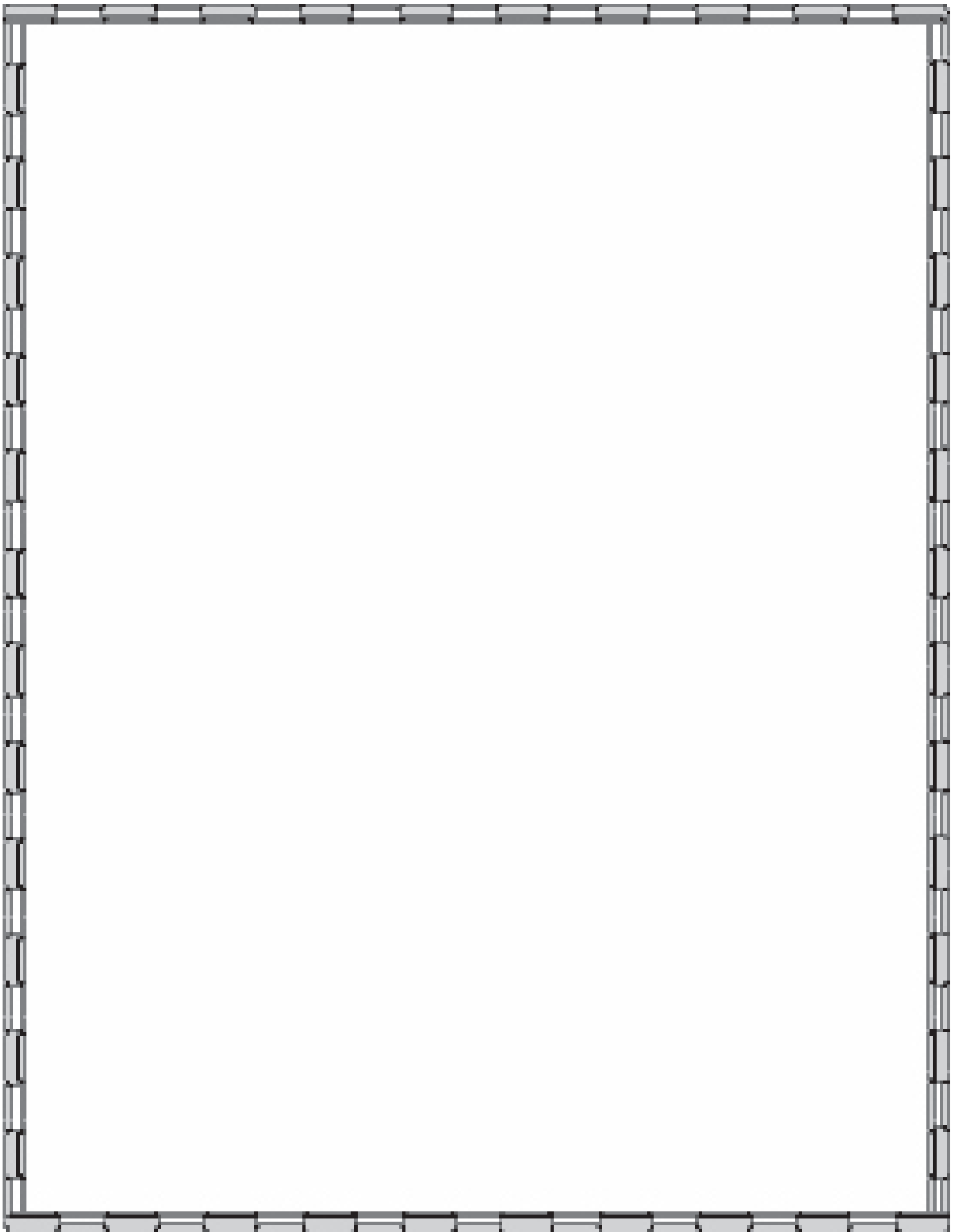
DIRECTOR

I want the shepherd boy to get back here.

SHEPHERD BOY 2

First you want me over there rounding up sheep, then you want me over here. Make up your mind.

DIRECTOR



Um...Would anyone out there have a hammer?

Hello? Anyone there? Anyone?

SHEPHERD BOY nods his head "yes."

For Deeper Learning

Say: We can't really talk with the shepherds who met Jesus on the first Christmas night. But we can know and love Jesus ourselves!

Have children form groups of three or four and discuss:

- How do you think the shepherds who went to see and worship Jesus felt when they got to the stable? Why?
- If you could see Jesus face to face, what would you say? What would you do? Why?
- If you love and follow Jesus, you'll see him in heaven. How will you feel then?

DIRECTOR looks STAGE LEFT.

SHEPHERD BOY 2 looks around.

SHEPHERD BOY 2 brings one hand to chest.

Teacher at the Temple

Bible Reference: Luke 2:41-52

Cast

RABBI ROSEN: elderly, prickly Jewish gentleman

HOST: male adult who is trying to stay calm as his show collapses around him


FRITZ THE ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: adult male who is a bit rough around the edges and not terribly bright



Costuming: All puppets should be in Bible-times costumes.

Props: Bible-times costumes and a sign that reads, "Important People in History"

Setup: Place the sign at stage left.

ACTIONS	SCRIPT	WORDS
<p> Play track 2 on CD A.</p> <p>HOST enters from STAGE RIGHT and crosses to CENTER STAGE.</p>		<p>HOST</p> <p>Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to our television show, "Important People in History." I'm Norton, your host. Each week an important person in history shows up, and we ask the person some questions. We'll begin filming in a few moments, but first I want to remind you to applaud when our guest comes on stage so he feels welcome.</p> <p>While we're waiting, I'd like to know what famous people you'd like to meet. Turn to a neighbor, and tell that person the name of an actor or music star you'd like us to invite to our show. You have fifteen seconds. Go ahead; I can wait. Talk to the person sitting next to you.</p> <p>(15 SECONDS) Dum, de dum, ta-dah-dum-dum...</p>

HOST turns to STAGE LEFT.

HOST waits for four seconds—nothing happens.

FRITZ sticks his head onto stage from STAGE RIGHT.

HOST goes to FRITZ.

HOST looks at wrist as if checking his watch.

FRITZ raises his hands for emphasis.

OK, everyone shout out the names of famous people you want to meet. Let's hear it. All at once, please—shout out names.

Uh, huh...yeah...sure. OK, got it.

I'll see what we can do. But now I'd like to introduce you to a famous teacher from the Temple University and a man who was my teacher when I was in school. Ladies and gentlemen, put your hands together and let's give a warm welcome to Rabbi Rosen!

I said, Rabbi Rosen!

FRITZ

(Stage whisper) Pssst! Hey, Norton! Come here!

HOST

Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen. Must be a little glitch...

So what's up?

FRITZ

(Stage whisper) The Rabbi ain't here!

HOST

(Stage whisper, disbelieving) What do you mean he's not here? I saw him here half an hour ago!

FRITZ

(Stage whisper) I mean he ain't here.

HOST

(Stage whisper) Did you check the dressing room?

FRITZ nods his head "yes."

HOST points OFFSTAGE.

FRITZ exits STAGE RIGHT; HOST crosses back to CENTER STAGE.

HOST turns to face audience.

FRITZ calls OFFSTAGE.

FRITZ from OFFSTAGE.

FRITZ is still OFFSTAGE.

FRITZ

(Stage whisper) There, the parking lot, the bathroom, the basement, everywhere!

HOST

(Stage whisper) Well, he has to be somewhere. Go find him! I'll stay here and stall...

FRITZ

(Stage whisper) Got it, chief! I won't let you down! I'm on it! One rabbi comin' up!

HOST

Um, we seem to have a bit of a delay, ladies and gentlemen...

FRITZ

(Calling) Oh, Rabbi...come out, come out wherever you are.

HOST

I'm sure our guest will join us shortly, but while we're waiting...

FRITZ

Maybe he's in this closet...

Nope, not in there...

HOST

Like I was saying, while we're waiting, I'll entertain us by telling a few jokes. Two puppets were in a rowboat, and the first puppet turned to the second puppet and said...

FRITZ

Maybe he's in this closet...

Aaaahh! Nope, not there!

RABBI enters from STAGE LEFT.

HOST turns to face RABBI.

RABBI dismisses the thought with a wave of his hand.

HOST turns to audience.

RABBI looks HOST up and down in examination.

RABBI shakes his head "no."

RABBI lifts his head in thought.

HOST

And the second puppet said, "Hey, I see you have a parrot on your shoulder..."

RABBI

Who's making all that racket? And you call that a joke?

HOST

Rabbi! We thought you were lost!

RABBI

Lost, schmost. I was getting a snack. So let's get started already.

HOST

(To audience) Ladies and gentlemen, this is Rabbi Rosen, my very favorite teacher.

RABBI

I remember you—always turning things in late. But I taught at the Temple for more years than I can remember and I've had some bright students. Wonderful students.

HOST

Like me?

RABBI

(Flatly) No. Not like you. Like Jesus.

HOST

(Surprised) You taught Jesus?

RABBI

Just for a few days, when he was twelve years old. Very polite. Extremely well studied. His mother and father had brought him to Jerusalem for the Passover, and he stopped by the Temple.

HOST

Skit Two:

Teacher at the Temple

RABBI looks at HOST.

RABBI shakes his head in disappointment and looks up at ceiling.

Did he sign up for your class?

RABBI

That young man could have taught my class. He came in, he listened to me and some of the other teachers, and then he started asking questions. Great questions, not at all like the kind of questions you used to ask.

HOST

You can remember what I asked after all these years? I'm flattered.

RABBI

Don't be. You're the only student I've ever had who every day asked where to find the bathroom. Aye, aye, aye. The questions Jesus asked showed how much he understood. And when we asked him questions, it was like we were talking with another teacher. He was amazing!

Anyway, I found out that Jesus' parents didn't know he was at the Temple. They'd started home after the Passover and thought he was in the crowd. When they found him, they were plenty relieved, I'll tell you.

HOST

What did they say?

RABBI

Jesus said something remarkable. He told his mother, "Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" Jesus knew that God was his Father. A truly remarkable boy, that Jesus.

HOST

Rabbi Rosen, thanks for coming. One more

RABBI raises his hand in testimony.

HOST turns to audience.

RABBI slowly exiting STAGE LEFT.

HOST looks around nervously and exits STAGE RIGHT.

question. You've won dozens of awards for excellent teaching. Which award are you proudest of?

RABBI

That's easy: none of them. The thing I'm proudest of as a teacher is that for at least a few days, I was with Jesus. That is the shining moment.

HOST

Again, Rabbi, thanks for being here.

RABBI

You're welcome. And don't think I forgot that you owe me a term paper. You never turned it in.

HOST

Umm. That's the show for today, folks. Thanks for tuning in.

RABBI

(Calling) Don't think I'm gonna forget it, either. Ten pages! And watch your spelling!

For Deeper Learning

Say: Jesus knew he was God's Son, and he wanted to know God. The Temple teachers were amazed at all Jesus knew and understood.

We can get to know God better, too.

Have children form groups of three or four and discuss:

- What's a way that we can get to know God better?
- What's something you know about God that amazes you?
- What's the one thing you'd like to tell your friends and family about God?

Skit Two:

Teacher at the Temple



THIS IS A SAMPLE

The number of pages is limited.

Purchase the item for the complete version.

