



*Written by
Cora Alley*

“Goodness and Mercy”

Scripture: Psalm 23

Dramatic Category: Christian Mime Theater

What is "Christian Mime Theater"?

During the “voice over” reading of the scripture, people come to life in various light pools across the stage. The people represent modern enactments of the timeless Word of God, which is being heard by the audience. For example, in the “Parable of the Great Banquet” in Luke 14, the actors reject the king’s invitation to the great banquet because they are admiring their new car during the reading of the scripture, “I have purchased a set of oxen, and I must go try them out. Please consider me excused.” The potential for staging these animated scripture readings is endless; all it takes is imagination to transport the messages from yesterday into today.

"Christian Mime Theater" provides very memorable introductions, conclusions, or midway examples for the pastor as he presents the sermon.

This form has the same qualities as the "Skermion," which gives your drama ministry a firsthand opportunity to creatively translate scripture into visual pictures. This is a very effective way to present the "scripture reading" in your service, or link with the pastor to create a sermon illustration that will compliment any topical or expository sermon.

Topic: God’s ever-present gifts of “goodness” and “mercy”

Performance Time: 8 minutes

Number of Players: 11 players (*5 women, 4 men, 2 children*)

Objective:

This “Christian Mime Theater” skit reminds us that God promises to surround us with “goodness” and cloak us in his “mercy” in every circumstance of our lives, even in the valleys. It is an excellent sermon illustration to remind believers that Jesus is the "Good Shepherd," who provides rest and safety to us, His sheep.

Synopsis:

Each one of the seven phrases of Psalm 23 is pictured in a modern-day scene that is acted out in mime; **no words are spoken** even though the characters may mouth dialogue while the narrator reads Psalm 23.

As the Psalm progresses, we first see a woman praying as she struggles to pay her bills. Next, a hiker rests beside a quiet stream, then a teenager makes peace with her mother. Next, a businessman summons his courage before a hostile committee. Then, a father rejoices in the simple gift of a bologna sandwich from his little son. Finally, a woman prays earnestly toward heaven.

Each of these pictures presents the visual essence of the meaning of Psalm 23, while reminders of His goodness and mercy flash onto the screen in the form of slides. It is especially effective if light pools go on and off while each line is being read.

Cast:

Narrator: *Reads the lines "live" during the action*
A woman: *Paying bills (pool 1)*
A hiker: *Taking a break by a stream (pool 2)*
A mom: *Making up with teenage daughter (pool 3)*
A teen girl: *Making up with mom (pool 3)*
A man: *Praying beside a headstone (pool 4)*
3 men in suits: *A power struggle at the office (pool 5)*
A father: *Coming home to his children (pool 6)*
2 young children: *Greeting dad home from work (pool 6)*
A woman: *Reading her Bible alone (pool 7)*

Props:

A calculator
A stack of bills
A folded letter
A headstone
A table
A briefcase
A sandwich
A Bible

Costumes:

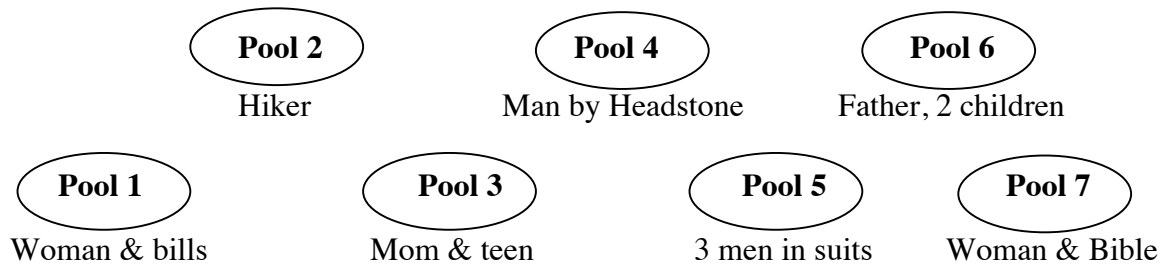
An outfit for the hiker (with hiking boots)
Business suits for the 3 men in pool 5

Lights:

6 light pools that fade up and down across the stage in sync with the reading of the scripture.
(See cues in the script.)

Music: Play an instrumental praise song under the reading. This can be "live" or recorded.

Stage Arrangement:



The Script:

(Characters enter during the blackout before the skit. They remain frozen until all pools are finished, then exit together in a final blackout.)

Technical Notes:

Have someone read the scripture “live.” **Do not prerecord** it because the timing of the voice has to coincide with the actions of the characters in the pools. The timing is critical.

Make slides of the scripture sections for the screens so people can read along as the scripture progresses. The slides correspond to the slide numbers on the script. The slides contain the “category” (goodness or mercy), the scripture passage, and a “summary” of the passage (see examples in the script). After the scene has been presented, and the line from the Psalm has been read, display the slide on the screen for 3 seconds as the light pool fades.

If you decide to use the slides during the scenes, the audience will recognize them when the pastor preaches about them during the sermon. If you think it would be distracting, just use the slides during the sermon and not during the mimed reading.

MUSIC: BEGIN THE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

LIGHTS: UP ON POOL 1

SLIDE 1:

Goodness

*“The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.”*

**Rest in the beauty that
surrounds you.**

Narrator: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

Mime Action

Scene 1:

(A woman, with a calculator and a stack of bills. She sighs, grabs the bills, and prays.)

LIGHTS: FADE OUT POOL 1, UP ON POOL 2

SLIDE 2: Goodness

*“He makes me to lie down in
green pastures. He leads me
beside the still waters. He
restores my soul.”*

**Rest in the beauty that
surrounds you.**

Narrator: “He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul.”

Mime Action

Scene 2:

(A hiker, takes off his shoes and dips his toes into a stream.)

LIGHTS: FADE OUT POOL 2, UP ON POOL 3

SLIDE 3: Goodness

*“He leads me in the paths
of righteousness for
His name’s sake.”*

**Maintain a
clean conscience.**

Narrator: “He leads me in the paths of righteousness,
for His name’s sake.”

Mime Action

Scene 3:

*(A daughter makes up with her mother, by handing her a letter of apology; they share a
tearful embrace.)*

LIGHTS: FADE OUT POOL 3, UP ON POOL 4

SLIDE 4:

Mercy

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

Do not fear; you have an ally in tragedy.

Narrator: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
For you are with me;
Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

Mime Action

Scene 4:

(A man sits, praying, beside a headstone.)

LIGHTS: FADE OUT POOL 4, UP ON POOL 5

SLIDE 5:

Mercy

“You prepare a table before me, in the presence of my enemies.”

You have an ally when opponents attack.

Narrator: “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;”

Mime Action

Scene 5:

(A man sets his briefcase on a table with hostile men seated all around. He opens the briefcase; the men glare at him.)

LIGHTS: FADE OUT POOL 5, UP ON POOL 6

SLIDE 6:

Goodness

“You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.”

Enjoy the simple blessings of the good life.

Narrator: “You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.”

Mime Action

Scene 6:

(A father comes home, and his children run to meet him. One offers him a half-eaten bologna sandwich, drops it, wipes it on his jeans, and offers it to him again.)

LIGHTS: FADE OUT POOL 6, UP ON POOL 7

SLIDE 7: Mercy

*“Surely, goodness and mercy
shall follow me, all the days of
my life; and I will dwell in the
house of the Lord, forever.”*

**Your eternal future
is excellent!**

Narrator: “Surely goodness and mercy;
shall follow me,
all the days of my life;
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord, forever.”

Mime Action

Scene 7:

(One woman sits alone, closes her Bible to her chest and looks up.)

LIGHTS: FADE OUT POOL 7, UP ON SERMON LIGHTING

The End

Sermon Options

Sermon Option 1: "A Skermon" (*skit and sermon combined*)

All the players remain on stage.

The pastor steps onto the stage.

The light pools repeat in their same order.

The pastor steps into each spot, **while the character is frozen**, and expounds on that aspect of goodness and/or mercy.

The players exit from each pool as the lights go down and the pastor moves into the next light pool.

This is the order of the "Skermon" option:

LIGHTS: FADE UP ON SERMON LIGHT

The pastor introduces the concepts of goodness and mercy.

The pastor expounds on either goodness or mercy from the passages represented in each light pool.

In the final pool all the goodness and mercy of this Psalm are culminated in the promise of the goodness we will enjoy in heaven, and the mercy of being there at all through the blood of Jesus.

Sermon Slides: Display on the screens when each light pool is revisited.

LIGHTS: FADE OUT SERMON LIGHT, UP ON POOL 1

SLIDE 1:

Goodness

*"The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want."*

**Rest in the beauty that
surrounds you.**

The pastor refers to the stack of bills and God's provision in our lives, then he moves into the next pool of light.

LIGHTS: FADE OUT POOL 1, UP ON POOL 2

SLIDE 2:

Goodness

*"He makes me to lie down in
green pastures. He leads me
beside the still waters. He
restores my soul."*

**Rest in the beauty that
surrounds you.**

The pastor refers to the tranquil hiker and God's rest in our lives, then he moves into the next pool of light.

LIGHTS: FADE OUT POOL 2, UP ON POOL 3

SLIDE 3:

Goodness

*“He leads me in the paths
of righteousness for
His name’s sake.”*

**Maintain a
clean conscience.**

The pastor refers to the power of God's Spirit to help us make peace in our lives, then he moves into the next pool of light.

LIGHTS: FADE OUT POOL 3, UP ON POOL 4

SLIDE 4:

Mercy

*“Yea, though I walk through the
valley of the shadow of death, I
will fear no evil; for you are with
me; your rod and your staff, they
comfort me.”*

**Do not fear; you have
an ally in tragedy.**

(He could have left us without hope)

The pastor refers to the hope of heaven that bring peace to our lives when a loved one dies, then he moves into the next pool of light.

LIGHTS: FADE OUT POOL 4, UP ON POOL 5

SLIDE 5:

Mercy

*“You prepare a table before me,
in the presence of my enemies.”*

**You have an ally when
opponents attack.**

(He could have abandoned us.)

The pastor points out that our enemies have no lasting power over us, for God enters every battle with us, then he moves into the next pool of light.

LIGHTS: FADE OUT POOL 5, UP ON POOL 6

SLIDE 6: Goodness

*“You anoint my head with oil;
my cup runs over.”*

**Enjoy the simple blessings
of the good life.**

The pastor points out that our lives are saturated in tiny little blessings every day, but we must notice them and give thanks, then he moves into the next pool of light.

LIGHTS: FADE OUT POOL 6, UP ON POOL 7

SLIDE 7: Mercy

*“Surely, goodness and mercy
shall follow me, all the days of
my life; and I will dwell in the
house of the Lord, forever.”*

**Your eternal future
is excellent!**

(He could have isolated us)

The pastor stands behind the woman and looks up with her, admonishing everyone to praise God for His goodness and mercy while we are on this earth, but even more when we enjoy His presence in eternity.

LIGHTS: FADE OUT POOL 7, RETURN TO SERMON LIGHT FOR CONCLUSION

The End

Sermon Option 2:

The players exit the stage after the lights fade to black.

The pastor steps onto the stage and expounds on God's goodness and mercy with none of the players on stage.