



Written by
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“The Parable Trail”

Preview Script

Scriptures:

Overall Scripture: Matthew 13: 10-17

Specific Skit Scriptures:

“Unmerciful Servant”: Matthew 18: 21-35

“Prodigal Son”: Luke 15: 11-31

“Talents”: Matthew 25: 14-30

“Sower”: Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23

Dramatic Category: "Collected Skits On A Theme"

What are "Collected Skits On A Theme"?

"Collected Skits On A Theme" are a group of skits that fit together to make a thematic statement. Each of these collected skits begins with a narrative designed to tie together these skits with segues that bring each skit into the narrative. Each of these skits can also stand alone, but together they combine into one storyline lasting 30-45 minutes. Different casts can perform different skits, or one ensemble cast can perform all of them. These skits set up the pastor for a sermon on the central topic of the skits.

NOTE:

In this “Collected Skits On A Theme,” four "Fractured Parables" are woven into a narrative of six detectives who are on the trail of Jesus, the teacher:

1. "The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant" (script #FP5)
2. “The Parable of the Prodigal Son” (script #FP6)
3. “The Parable of the Talents” (script #FP7)
4. “The Parable of the Sower” (script #FP4)

DO NOT MEMORIZE THE PARABLE NARRATIVES! Let the narrators read them from the scripts. Memorize **ONLY** the detective sequences between the parables. The detective lines are woven into the parables, and listed at the end of the script for ease of memorization.

Topics: Forgiveness and stewardship

Performance Time: 30 minutes

Number of Players: 6 players (*men or women*)

(or between 12-30 players if you use a new cast for each parable)

Objective:

To present four parables of Jesus in which mercy, forgiveness, and stewardship are humorously presented in "Fractured Parable" style.

Synopsis:

In this collection of four "Fractured Parables," six detectives are in pursuit of the "Teacher," Jesus. The message of His parables has caused quite a stir in town, enough so that they had to call in the famous Sergeant Friday of "Dragnet" fame to track down the illusive teller of these life-changing tales. The comic one-liners never quit in the interaction between the detectives: "Colombo," "Two-Story Homes" and "Watson," "Savings Bond," and of course, "Ma'am," the ditzy woman from whom Sergeant Friday is always, "just trying to get the facts." This delightfully zany retelling of the profound truths contained in the parables of "The Unmerciful Servant," "The Prodigal Son," "The Talents," and "The Sower," will keep the audience laughing, while learning the importance Jesus placed on mercy and stewardship.

The Cast:**NOTE:**

The six detectives also perform the narrated parables as "mimes." Their mime assignments are in the Cast Roles Chart, to the right of their names for each of the parables. They simply "shed" their detective props and assume whatever character is required next. It is your option to expand the cast and use entirely different people to perform the parables; this could expand your cast from 12 to 30 people.

Cast Roles Chart

DETECTIVE ROLES	UNMERCIFUL SERVANT	PRODIGAL SON	TALENTS	SOWER
Sergeant Friday <i>Dragnet star spoof</i>	Unmerciful Servant	The Older Son	Patrick Mahoney III	"Pests" (bird, sun, and thorns)
Ma'am <i>a ditzy woman</i>	The King	"Extras" (<i>pig, sleazy lady, starving person</i>)	Narrator 2	Seed Along the Path
Savings Bond <i>Spoof of James Bond</i>	Narrator 1	The Prodigal Son	Mike	Seed in Good Soil
Two-Story Homes <i>Spoof of Sherlock Holmes</i>	Narrator 2	"Extras" (<i>card shark, land owner, servant</i>)	Ike	Seed In Shallow Ground
Watson <i>Spoof of Holmes' friend</i>	The King's Messenger	The Father	The Master	Narrator & The Farmer
Colombo <i>Spoof of the scruffy detective</i>	Fellow Servant	The Narrator	Narrator 1	Seed Among the Thorns

Sound: Wireless mics for the Narrators and other speaking parts

Music:

Theme from the classic "Dragnet" television show
Transitional music to show a change from Detective narrative to parables

Set:

This is best performed on a simple stage, without too much clutter; however, because there is no real set, it can fit in among any kind of stage.
Light pools create the playing areas.
Elevate the Narrators, above the mimes, on boxes or platforms

Props:

For "Detectives"

A notepad
A pencil
2 cell phones
A fax paper
2 boxes or platforms for the Narrators
A cigar for Colombo
Plants for Watson

For "The Unmerciful Servant"

A crown for the king

For "The Prodigal Son"

A sign that reads "ESTATE"
A feather boa for the "sleazy" lady
A visor for the card shark
A dollar bill
A top hat for the wealthy landowner
A pig nose with elastic straps to keep it on

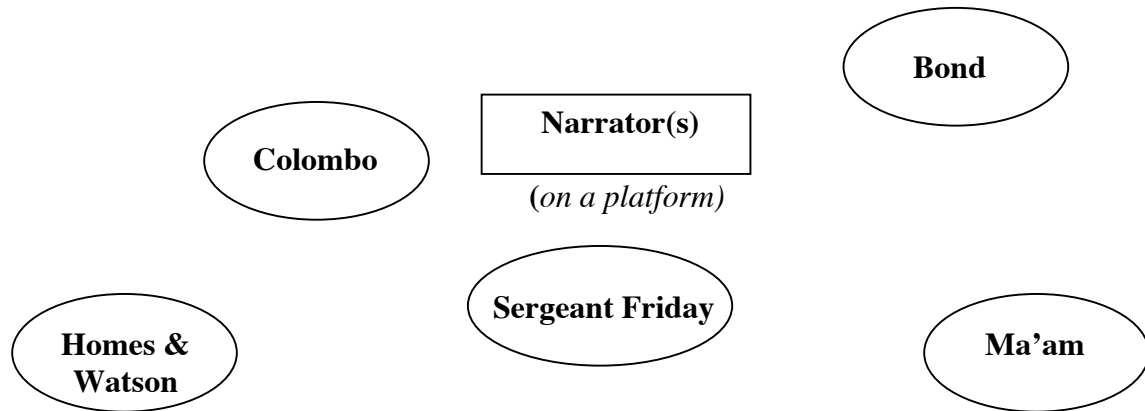
For "The Talents"

No props needed

For "The Sower"

A bucket
A straw hat
A dollar bill
Car keys
A Bible

Stage Arrangement: *(By light pools only. No sets. Light pools indicated by ovals below.)*



The Script:

LIGHTS: DARK STAGE WITH A SINGLE LIGHTS ON CENTER STAGE

(Sergeant Friday walks into the light. He opens his notebook, pretends to take notes with his pencil, and begins to narrate:)

MUSIC: DRAGNET THEME

Friday: This is the city. My name is sergeant Friday.
It was 8:02 PM when we got the call.
(He opens his cell phone and speaks to Ma'am)

LIGHTS: UP ON MA'AM

Ma'am: *(Frantically speaking into her cell phone in a New York accent)*
Officer, it's the teacher. He's coming through town again,
and there's no peace anywhere.

Friday: Was he carrying a piece, Ma'am?

Ma'am: No, I'm telling you there was no peace.
He's disturbing the peace!
Everywhere he goes, there's crowds, noise, no place to park!

Friday: We're on it Ma'am.
(He closes the phone and addresses the audience.)
This was another call to add to the hundreds we had received.
It seems there's been another disturbance.
Our job: to restore order.
We knew we were up against a sophisticated operation,
so we alerted the finest minds in crime detection:

(Lights come up on each character as he/she introduced.)
My colleagues:

LIGHTS: UP ON BOND

Bond, savings Bond

LIGHTS: UP ON HOMES AND WATSON

Two-Story Homes, and his able assistant Watson

LIGHTS: UP ON COLOMBO

and of course who could forget Colombo.

The case had us baffled; we had to get to the source:
we put a tail on the teacher.

MUSIC: DRAGNET THEME

LIGHTS: OUT ON EVERYONE, EXCEPT MA'AM

(Friday walks over to Ma'am)

Ma'am: *(pacing frantically back and forth when Friday enters her light pool.)*
Lieutenant Monday?

Friday: No Ma'am; the name is Friday, Sergeant Friday; you've seen the teacher?

Ma'am: Yes, I saw him Monday.

Friday: No, I'm Friday....we've been over this, Ma'am.
Did you report the sighting?

Ma'am: Yes. I reported it to Officer Monday.

Friday: Good, the same day you saw the teacher.
I just want to get the fax, Ma'am.

Ma'am: Oh, of course. Let me get it; it came in this morning.
(She hands him a piece of paper.)
Here it is.

Friday: *(with a puzzled look)* What's this?

Ma'am: Just the fax.

Friday: *(He reads it...)* Ah...It's from Officer Monday;
It's addressed to Bond, Savings Bond;
I'll have to deliver it myself.
He'll get it from Monday through Friday.

Ma'am: Every day?

Friday: Never mind.

LIGHTS: OUT ON MA'AM AND UP ON CENTER STAGE

(Friday walks back to center stage and addresses the audience.)

As I observed, *(holding the fax)*
the fax was addressed to Bond, Savings Bond.
I found him in a little dive near the neighborhood pool,
discussing the case with his old companion: Two-Story Homes.

LIGHTS: UP ON HOMES AND BOND

Homes: I say, old man; would you like a drink?

Bond: Yes, punch, fruit punch....shaken, not stirred.

(Friday steps into the light with Homes and Bond)

Homes: Ah...Friday.

Friday: Homes.

Bond: *(raising his hand in recognition)* Bond.

Friday: *(handing him the fax)* This came for you.

Bond: No time for idle reading man; I'm on an important case.

Friday: It's just the fax.

Bond: All right then. *(He reads with Homes looking over his shoulder.)*
Says here, you're trying to put a tail on the teacher.

Friday: That's what he's known for.

Homes: His tail?

Friday: No. His tales....stories.....He tells tales.

Bond & Homes: *(in unison)* We know.

Friday: It seems the teacher has upset the status quo.

Homes: What's a status quo?

Bond: Anyone with status.

Homes: Oh yes, we heard that tale;
he leveled the high and mighty;
and he made some of the high, mighty mad.

Bond: The teacher says it's not alright to hold a grudge;
He puts us all on level ground before God.

Friday: *(audience aside)* The offenses are stacking up.
Now we've got him on a 612: excavating without a permit.

(turning back to Bond & Homes) How much dirt did he move?

Homes: My esteemed colleague was there. Do you remember the tale?

Bond: I'll try.
(to Homes) Fill in where I leave gaps, would you old friend?
I recall you heard it as well.

MUSIC: TRANSITIONAL MUSIC AS MIMES GET INTO PLACE

LIGHTS: UP ON CENTER STAGE

“The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant”

(Homes becomes "Narrator 1" and Bond becomes "Narrator 2." They assume their "narrator" positions up on boxes or platforms; the others shed their detective props and become neutral mimes, ready to perform this parable.)

Cast:

Homes becomes "Narrator 2"
Bond becomes "Narrator 1"
Colombo becomes the "Fellow Servant" mime
Friday becomes the "Unmerciful Servant" mime
Ma'am becomes the "The King" mime
Watson becomes the "King's Messenger" mime

Narrator 1: *Reads the script and can speak in a "kingly" tone*
 Narrator 2: *Reads the script and can plead in a pathetic tone*
 Mimes:
 King: *A pompous and powerful ruler*
 Messenger: *A humble emissary of the King*
 Unmerciful Servant: *A self-righteous and harsh servant*
 Fellow Servant: *A pitiful victim*

NOTES:

1. When the script refers to “mimes,” they respond to the Narrator as neutral mimes, not as their assigned characters. When you see character names in the script, the mimes portray those characters; add character props to the standard mime costume, if you desire, such as: hats, neckties, a briefcase, a boa, etc.
2. Change the character names to reflect the gender of the mimes playing the parts.

Props:

A crown for the king
 All other props are “pantomimed” (imaginary)

Sound: Wireless mics for the Narrators

Staging Arrangement:

The various characters in this mime line up across the stage in the configuration sketched out below. When they are not “on,” they turn their backs to the audience. Raise the Narrators up on a box or a platform so they look down on the action, but can be clearly seen by the audience.

Narrator 1	Narrator 2
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King

Messenger

**Unmerciful
 Servant**

**Fellow
 Servant**

Lighting: Even light across the stage

NOTE:

This skit is a narrated mime; this technique requires that the action described by the Narrator be acted out in **pantomime** by “mimes” who **perform simultaneously** while the story is being told. The attention of the audience is on both the Narrator and the mime action. Block the action of the mimes so that they illustrate the events being described by the Narrator. Facial expression and interaction between the Narrator and the mimes is suggested to add comedy and energy to the performance. The characters respond to what the Narrator says. The action is almost constant.

The Script:

NOTE: The narrator lines are in bold. *The mime directions are in italic.*

NOTE:

Before the formal action begins, the mimes perform a "pre-show" routine that mirrors the action of the parable. All the players enter the stage area casually.

Narrator 1: *(To the mimes)* **Okay, it's story-time, folks!**

Narrator 2: **Places, everyone!**

(In the shuffle of taking their places, the mime who plays the King, gets knocked over by the mime who plays the Unmerciful Servant. The King lands flat on his bottom and looks up bewildered. The Unmerciful Servant hurries to pick him up and begs his forgiveness.)

Unmerciful Servant: *(mortified and helping the King up)*
Oh, I am so, so sorry. Please forgive me.

King: *(dusting himself off and getting up gingerly)*
That's okay; I'll be fine.

Unmerciful Servant: *(apologetic)* Thanks.

(As the Unmerciful Servant takes his place, he trips over the Fellow Servant who inadvertently steps in his way. The Unmerciful Servant takes a tumble on stage and scowls at the Fellow Servant, who tries to help him up.)

Fellow Servant: *(apologetic)* Oh, I am so sorry. Are you okay?

Unmerciful Servant: *(indignant)* Why don't you watch where you're going?
You could kill somebody with those big feet.

Fellow Servant: I said I was sorry!

Unmerciful Servant: Yeah, well sorry's not good enough!
I'm gonna' call you "bigfoot" from now on.

Messenger: *(defending the Fellow Servant)* Hey, lighten up, man.
He said he was sorry.

(The two mimes begin arguing with each other; the King and the Messenger step in to settle things, but it backfires and they all start yelling at each other. The Narrators look at each other in bewilderment.)

Narrator 1: *(raising his voice over the "free-for-all" that is taking place on stage.)*
Peter came to Jesus and said,
"How often should I forgive my brother when he sins against me?"

Narrator 2: *(ignored by the mimes, who are now all in each other's faces)*
"Up to seven times?"

Narrator 1: *(shouting)* **I said... "How often should I forgive?"**

(The narrators exchange a knowing look and realize that they will have to take matters into their own hands to save this parable, so they put their scripts down and step into the middle of the scuffle, which has now escalated into a full brawl, with Mimes and gloves flying everywhere! The Narrators break up the fight.)

Narrator 1:
(grabbing the Unmerciful Servant and holding him back as he says these words, right in his face)

"How often should I forgive my brother when he sins against me?"

Unmerciful Servant:
(straining against the Narrator who is holding him back from attacking the Fellow servant)
He stuck his "big foot" in my way!

Fellow Servant:
(straining against the other Narrator who is holding him back from attacking the Unmerciful Servant)

You could watch where you're going!

(The two mimes lunge out at one another again, while the other mimes stand panting from the fight, putting their gloves back on, and watching anxiously.)

Narrator 2: *(to the other narrator)* **What did you say this parable was about?**

Narrator 1: *(answering him)* **Forgiveness.**

Narrator 2: **That's right!** *(to the warring Mimes)*
Forgiving others as you have been forgiven.

King: *(stepping up to the Unmerciful Servant and trying to be helpful)*
He's right there. I did forgive you.

Messenger: You did the same thing when...

(The two servants lunge at each other again; this time the Narrators really clamp down, and the Mimes look uncomfortable.)