



*Written by  
Cora Alley*

## “The Good Shepherd in the Valley”

**Scripture:** Psalm 23: 4

*"Even 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."*

**Dramatic Category:** Monologue

**Topic:** The death of dreams

**Performance Time:** 4 minutes

**Number of Players:** 3 players (*1 man, 2 women*)

**Objective:** To show God’s presence in three instances of death:

1. physical death
2. financial death
3. relational death

**Synopsis:**

These three monologues examine the anguish of good people. One loses a job, one is heartbroken by a wayward child, and a fearful disease plagues the other. In each instance, the pastor makes the point that in these valleys God is still the Good Shepherd, and we must trust Him, not turn from Him.

**Cast:** 3 people: (*male or female; these are only suggestions*)

1. one woman who has a physical illness
2. one man who has been laid off from work
3. one woman who is estranged from her son

**STAGE RIGHT SPOT UP:**

**#1: Andi:** (*Spot on her alone. The rest of the stage is black.*)

Oh God, it's me again.  
Are you even listening?  
I've asked you so many times to heal me,  
But I still have this awful disease.  
You call yourself the great physician, the divine healer,  
Why can't you just make a simple little house call?  
Maybe you're too busy with more important things  
like world hunger or nuclear war.  
What did I do to deserve this?  
I've done my best...well, most of the time.  
Oh God, are you listening to me?  
I don't understand why you are so distant  
now when I need you the most!  
I guess I'll just fold up and die,  
Is that what I'm supposed to do?  
Why don't you take this away from me?  
Maybe you can't, or you just won't, I don't know.  
I'm so tired.  
I'm so alone.  
I'm so confused. (*Freeze*)

**DOWN RIGHT SPOT OFF  
CENTER SPOT UP**

**#2: Mike:** (*Spot on him alone. The rest of the stage is black.*)

Oh God, this can't be happening! It just can't!  
I've worked at this place for ten years,  
How could I get laid off!  
How am I supposed to pay my house payment?  
Who is supposed to put food on the table?  
What do I tell my kids when they need money,  
And they need money all the time. It's ridiculous!  
I'm the provider in this family, and now I'm nothing.  
I'm just trashed like an old shoe.  
I don't deserve this.  
I've never done anything to you.  
How could you let this happen?  
What are people going to think of me?  
They'll think I'm a loser, that's what they'll think.  
A person can't live without respect.  
If I don't have my dignity, I don't have anything.  
Come on, you made me this way....in your image, remember?  
You have dignity, you're a provider, you need respect.  
Well then, how can you deny me the very thing you need.  
How could you let this happen? (*Freeze*)

**CENTER SPOT OFF  
DOWN LEFT SPOT ON**

**#3 Donna:** *(Spot on her alone. The rest of the stage is black.)*

You don't know what this is like do you, God?  
Your son turned out just fine.  
Oh, he had his moments,  
hiding from his parents in the temple  
and turning over some tables in church,  
but all in all, I'm sure you were proud of Him.  
Why can't I be proud of my Jeffrey?  
Why is he always in trouble? Why is he so angry?  
What can I do to fix my family?  
It seems like every morning brings a new battle.  
We don't even talk anymore.  
I've worked so hard to keep my family together.  
Can't you work at this, too!  
Everything I've ever done has been for Jeffrey.  
What did I do to deserve this awful sense of failure.  
Sometimes I wish I could see into the future,  
just so I know he'll be all right.  
But I can't see that far.  
Maybe you can't either, or maybe you don't deal with  
people one on one after all.  
Maybe that's just wishful thinking. *(Freeze)*

**SERMON OPTIONS:**

1. Each character stays after the monologue, the pastor approaches the frozen statue and talks about reaching out to God in faith rather than pulling away in these "valley's of the shadow of death."
2. Each character leaves the stage after the monologue; the pastor steps on to a bare stage and refers to where the characters were standing.

# The Ten Commandments of Oral Interpretation and Monologues

**#1: Thou shalt know the purpose of Oral Interpretation.**

*The “Oral Interpreter” is a human bridge between the author and the audience, conveying the author’s purpose for writing the selection. One who delivers a “monologue,” is one who actually becomes the character and represents his/her inner-most thoughts to the audience.*

**#2: Thou shalt know how to select an appropriate passage.**

*Select a passage that has impacted you profoundly and is 3-5 minutes in length. Poetry, prose, comedy, or drama is fine, but it must have had a significant impact on your life in order to be worthy of being read; scripture is, of course, the most important material to read and deserves the greatest application of all of these principles. Some other sources include: The Chicken Soup Series, the works of Max Lucado, Chuck Swindoll, C.S. Lewis, etc. Some Children’s stories and fables are also extremely effective in preparing the audience for receiving a Christian messages.*

**#3: Thou shalt prepare the selection properly.**

*Divide it into phrases for breathing & timing. Re-type it in phrases. Bind it into a small black notebook, 3-hole punch it, and highlight the words of emphasis. If this interpretation is a “monologue,” be sure to memorize it completely and internalize each phrase so that you are becoming the character speaking, not merely representing the author.*

**#4: Thou shalt use eye contact.**

*Make eye-contact with the audience. Look up from your manuscript 2/3rds of the time. Scan the audience from left to right; make everyone feel included. If this is a “monologue,” speak directly to the audience as though they were eavesdropping on an intimate time of “true confession.”*

**#5: Thou shalt use voice inflection.**

*Use all of your vocal options. Vary the pitch (high/low); vary the pace (fast/slow); vary the volume (loud/soft); vary the tone (emotion: satire, mystery, joy, etc.)*

**#6: Thou shalt maintain an impressive appearance.**

*Dress up (church clothes) for this presentation. Dress in costume if this is a “monologue.”*

**#7: Thou shalt use facial expression.**

*Your voice is your least effective tool. Your body and face are more expressive. Use your eyes, mouth, eyebrows, nose, everything to communicate.*

**#8: Thou shalt use gestures for emphasis.**

*When the body moves, people notice. Use gestures wisely, for emphasis of a word or a mood. Do not let the free hand lie limp at your side. Hold the notebook in either your right or your left hand; brace it by placing your little finger in the spine, so it does not flop around. Restrict movement. Imagine that one foot is nailed down & the other can move one step to the left or right of center. For “monologues” move freely across the stage as though you were alone in a room.*

**#9: Thou shalt know the selection.**

*Rehearse this over & over & over, until you know it so well that you don’t have to have your nose in the book, except to glance down occasionally for added confidence. Monologues require tremendous practice. (Here’s a hint: story board out your monologue in stick figures, then place the series of pictures on the floor. The audience will never see it, but you will! Glance down if your mind goes blank; the pictures will help you remember what comes next. Remember, if you make a mistake in a “monologue,” you are the only one who know it, so move on to your next confident point, and don’t get flustered. Plan your gestures & pauses. Read it before some peers for practice. Sit your audience 25 ft. away & practice projecting to them.*

**#10: Thou shalt craft an interesting introduction.**

*Tell us why you chose this piece, then introduce it by title and author. (20 sec. into)  
For “monologues,” have someone else introduce you or set the stage for your presentation.*