



Written by
Cora Alley

“Have A Heart For The Lost”

Scripture: The book of Jonah

Dramatic Category: “Story Time Theater”

What is a “Story Time Theater”?

Each “Story Time Theater” selection aims at creating a contemporary parable that brings to life the message behind a scriptural concept or passage. This type of Christian Drama Skit features the pantomime/story-telling talents of four people: one male and one female mime, one “Story Lady,” and one pianist, who improvises music during the story. The mimes act out the events told by the Story Lady as she reads them. Each story takes approximately 10 minutes to tell. The entire family loves this art form: children and parents alike. These stories are excellent for adult worship or for the “children’s moment.”

Topic: Compassion for the lost

Performance Time: 10 minutes

Number of Players: 3 players (*2 female, 1 male*) + 1 pianist

Objective:

To stress the importance God places on sharing the “Good News” with the people who have not heard, even if we think they are not worthy.

Synopsis:

This story puts the lesson of Jonah into a contemporary setting by highlighting the decisions of two children who determine simply not to share the “Good News” of Jesus Christ with people they think are not worthy of it; just like Jonah decided that the people of Nineveh were not worth saving! This kind of a decision gets us into a “whale of a lot of trouble” with God, as we soon discover by hearing about what happened to Jonah.

Cast:

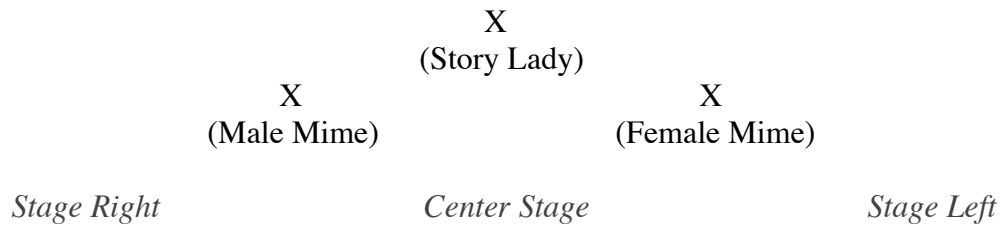
Female mime: *animated, expressive, dancer-type*
Male mime: *animated, expressive, big eyes*
The “Story Lady”: *an animated storyteller*
The pianist: *improvises background music during the action of the story*

Costumes:

Mimes: Dress the mimes in matching black pants, black and white striped shirts, and white gloves, but **do not use white-faced make-up**
Story Lady: Festive attire, classy, not clownish

Set:

Elevate the Story Lady on a platform just behind the playing space for the mimes.
On ground level, place 2 chairs for the Mimes.



Lighting Note:

Light pools make this story even more dramatic.
Create a light pool at stage right that surrounds the Mime’s chair.
Create a light pool at center for the Story Lady.
Create a light pool at stage left around the Mime’s chair.

Music Notes:

These are the songs that are suggested to be played during this story:
Mariner’s, ocean-type music as the performers enter
“Do Lord, Oh Do Lord”
“Onward Christian Soldiers”
“Jesus Loves Me”
“Dagnet Theme”
General background music
“Jaws Theme”
“Jesus Loves Me”
“Yo ho, Yo ho, A Pirate’s Life For Me”

Production Notes:

1. Minimal actions and musical selections are suggested in the script in italics. These are made merely to guide your thinking.
2. The planning of these mime routines is intensely artistic and must reflect the interpretation of your own artists.
3. Be sure to select key words that pinpoint particular actions.
4. The mimes do not mouth the words the Story Lady speaks; even when she mentions what they said. It is better to have them respond with their eyes, hands, arms, etc.
5. Music is the thread that ties this story together. Plan it carefully so that it leads the action. Have the mimes wait for particular music cues for dramatic effect. The music seldom stops.
6. When the Story Lady plays adult parts, like the part of Mom or teacher, she does not move from her spot as the narrator. She simply leans forward and her eyes meet with the children at a mutual focal point over the heads of the audience, like an EXIT sign or a clock. This is a reader's theater technique that signals an imaginary meeting place for actors who do not relate to each other on the stage.
7. Some minimal lighting cues are suggested for effect, but this art form is very effective with just general stage lighting.

The Script:

NOTE:

The Story Lady's lines are written in bold

The actions (Story Lady and mimes) and musical suggestions are written in plain italic

LIGHTS: ALL LIGHTS UP

Hello boys and girls of all ages, I am the story lady, and I have a “whale of a tale” for you today.

MUSIC: Mariner's, ocean-type music as the performers enter

It's the story of a little boy, named Michael,

Michael pops up from behind his chair.

and his little sister, Emily

Emily pops up from behind her chair.

who were both sitting in Sunday school one beautiful morning.

Mimes wave their arms.

MUSIC: “Do Lord, Do Lord...”

They were singing, and praising God with all their hearts.

Then, their teacher began the lesson.

She told them Jesus wanted Christians to “...go into all the world and make disciples of all nations.”

MUSIC: “Onward Christian Soldiers”

What does that mean? The children asked?

“It means....

MUSIC: “Jesus Loves Me”

Mimes lean on their arms and listen.

...that God wants us to tell people that He loves them so much that He sent His only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross so their sins could be forgiven.”

Their teacher went on to explain:

“Knowing how to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and living with God forever in Heaven is the best news people could ever hear; that’s why it’s called the ‘Good News.’”

After the lesson was over, the teacher prayed:

“Dear Jesus,

Help us to tell all the people we know that you want them to be part of your church. In

Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.”

MUSIC stops.

Mimes stare straight ahead

The room was very quiet, and their teacher looked at all the boys and girls in the class with a very serious expression on her face; then she said,

“I want challenge you to obey Jesus’ command and ‘make disciples.’ Next week, bring a friend to Sunday school, who isn’t a Christian yet.

All the boys and girls cheered and ran out of the room except for Michael and Emily.

They just sat there.

“What’s the matter?” the teacher asked.

MUSIC: “Dragnet Theme” (one beat – da da da da)

MUSIC: General background music

NOTE: Mimes always motion and use gestures as though they are talking, but they do not mouth the words.

Emily worked up her courage and softly said,

“I can’t make disciples.”

MUSIC stops abruptly.

“You can’t? Why not?

“Because I... well, I... it’s just that I don’t...”

“Don’t what?”

The teacher could not figure out what Emily was trying to say.

“We don’t know anybody who isn’t a Christian yet,”

Michael explained.

The teacher was very surprised.

“Our family, our neighbors, the kids at church, even our cousins and their moms and dads already know about Jesus.”

“What about the children at school?”

the teacher asked.

THE MUSIC stops abruptly

Michael and Emily stared straight ahead;

MUSIC: Dragnet Theme (one beat – da da da da)

...then they stared at each other,

MUSIC: Dagnet Theme (one beat – da da da da)

... then they stared at their teacher;

MUSIC: Dagnet Theme (one beat – da da da da)

...then they got the strangest looks on their faces.

“What’s the matter? You can’t tell me that every child in your public school is a Christian!”

Emily began to squirm in her seat. She didn’t know what to say.

Finally, she blurted out:

“They can’t know about Jesus.”

MUSIC: General background music

“What! The teacher shouted. “What do you mean they can’t know about Jesus?”

“They are mean kids!

If they come to church here, they will pick fights”

Michael makes fists

“... and they will knock me down and get my Sunday dress all dirty!”

Emily fixes her imagined dress

“They will say nasty words...”

Michael covers his ears

“... and spill food!”

Emily spills food

“Hold it right there.”

MUSIC: Music stops

The teacher was shocked!

“Do you mean that those children don’t deserve God’s love and forgiveness?”

“That’s right; they’re bad!” said both Michael and Emily, very smugly, as they folded their arms.

MUSIC: General background music

“So you don’t care if those children are lost in a world without Jesus, with no hope of Heaven.”

“They would mess up heaven if they went there!” said Michael.

Michael points up.

The teacher shook her head in disbelief. “Oh, you’re in a whale of a lot of trouble if you don’t care about the lost.”

Michael and Emily looked nervous.

“What do you mean, a ‘whale of a lot of trouble?’” asked Emily shyly.

You're just like Jonah. The teacher answered.

"Who's Jonah?"

"A guy in the Old Testament who got swallowed by a big fish!"

said Michael.

Michael holds arms wide to show the bigness of the fish.

"Why?" asked Emily running for cover behind her chair.

Emily panics and runs behind her chair.

MUSIC: back to "Jesus Loves Me."

"God told Jonah to preach to the people in Nineveh and tell them to stop their wicked ways or He would destroy their city.

He wanted Jonah to tell them that God loved the people of Nineveh and He wanted to forgive them.

But Jonah was just like you, he said, 'No!' Go ahead and destroy Nineveh; those people are bad anyway! So, he got in a boat headed in the other direction. He went to Tarshish instead. He figured God would not find out."

"That's dumb!" said Michael, interrupting the teacher's story.

Michael shakes his head.

"Yes, you're right.

MUSIC: General background music

It was silly of Jonah to think that he could hide from God.

“So, how did he get swallowed up by the big fish?” asked Emily.

Emily makes the big fish with her arms.

“Well, God sent a terrible storm to rock the boat that was headed for Tarshish.

The children rock back and forth, holding their hands out to check for rain.

The wind blew terribly, and the waves were so high the sailors could barely see the tops.

The children rock wildly in their chairs; then, wave their arms in terror.

The boat started filling up with water, and everybody panicked!

The children raise their feet up onto their chairs to escape the water!

“Jonah knew that God was angry with him, so he told the sailors to throw him overboard, and God would calm the seas.

So they did. They tossed Jonah right into the water,

The children get up and toss an imaginary Jonah out into the audience.

... and that’s when it happened.”

MUSIC: “Jaws Theme”

“God sent a huge fish, as big as a whale, to swallow Jonah right up,

The children back up to their chairs and land in them with eyes wide from seeing the big fish.

and there he sat, all huddled up in the dark, inside the belly of that whale, thinking about how foolish it is to disobey the will of God.

They sit huddled into a little ball in their chairs as though cramped in a whale.

“Jonah begged God to forgive him for thinking that the people of Nineveh were too bad to receive God’s love and forgiveness. He promised God that he would preach to Nineveh if only he could get out of this fish!

They pray, while shaking their heads.

“So, what happened?” asked Emily.

MUSIC: General background music

“The fish spit him up,” answered Michael.

Michael pretends to vomit.

“Really?” Emily’s eyes got as big as saucers.

“Really,” the teacher went on.

When Jonah got to Nineveh, he told the people to stop their wicked ways and receive God’s love and forgiveness.

“Did they stop being bad?” Emily asked?

“Yes! They stopped their wicked ways, and God did not have to destroy their city.

“Jonah must have been so happy!” shouted Emily.

Emily claps her hands.

“He was cranky,” whispered Michael.

Michael leans over to Emily.

“That’s right, He still couldn’t understand how God could love bad people.

MUSIC: “Jesus Loves Me”

“Finally, God said to Jonah, ‘Why shouldn’t I have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 people...and all their animals, too!’”

“Now, do you know what I mean when I say, ‘You’ll be in a whale of a lot of trouble if you don’t care about the lost?’”

Both of the children nod.

“Jonah didn’t think the people of Nineveh were worth saving, but he preached to them anyway; he’d had plenty of belly-time to think about his attitude, and he didn’t want anymore. So, Michael and Emily, isn’t there someplace you need to go right now, and somebody you need to tell some good news to, or do you two need some ‘belly-time’ to think it over?”

Emily and Michael look panicked and exit in a mad rush.

The Story Lady addresses the audience.

The next time you decide that someone isn’t good enough to hear about Jesus.....just remember, there’s something “fishy” about that kind of thinking.

MUSIC: “Yo ho, Yo ho, A Pirate’s Life For Me.”

The End