

# Join Us

## Three One-Act Plays

*Adapted from the curriculum of Sonja M. Stewart and Jerome W. Berryman  
by Ian Reed Twiss*

### **ACT I: The Boy Jesus in the Temple**

Cast: Narrator, Mary & Joseph, Jesus, Jesus' buddy (or buddies).

*The acting space is divided into zones: Joseph and Mary's hotel room, stage R. Jesus' buddies, stage L (near the piano). And the Temple (Center stage, altar area.) The general dynamic is that Jesus is a teenager, impatient to be out in the world, and his parents are the parents of a teenager!*

Narrator: Once every year the people of God go up to Jerusalem...to celebrate the feast of the Passover, to remember how God led them through the waters to freedom. *(Mary, Joseph, Jesus, Jesus' Buddies, and Family and Friends Walk down the center isle into their places on stage)*

After they arrived in Jerusalem they found nice rooms at the Quality Temple Mount Inn.

This year Mary...and Joseph...and Jesus... were so happy because Jesus was old enough to go to the Temple all by himself.

Jesus: *(Bounding into the space where Joseph and Mary are sitting, knitting and reading the paper.)* Hey, Mom, Dad. I'm going to the Temple.

Mary: Wait, son. Don't you want some breakfast? I thought we could have some nice breakfast and maybe go swimming in the hotel pool.

Jesus: *(Interrupting)* Maybe later. Gotta go.

Mary: What time will you be home?

Jesus: Don't wait up.

Joseph: Young man, as long as you're in our house, you still have a curfew...

Jesus: It's not your house. It's a hotel room. Bye! *(Jesus mimes slamming a door shut, then getting into a car and turning it on, backing out too fast, slamming on breaks, peeling out into the road. He makes the noises for all these actions.)*

Mary: Drive...carefully. *(Looks at Joseph. They both shrug.)*

Narrator: Jesus went to the Temple to talk with God...and to hear the great teachers tell the stories of God. Then he went to eat the feast of the Passover with

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family and friends. (*Jesus is seen, carousing with a buddy (or some buddies). Clinking glasses, etc. Then buddy/ies mime getting sleepy and lie down Stage L near the piano. Jesus goes and sits by the altar in prayer.*)

Narrator: After Passover, everyone started home.

When evening came, Mary and Joseph went to Jesus' friends to get Jesus. But no one had seen him. (*Mary and Joseph go up to the buddies who look bleary and tired.*)

Joseph: Have you guys seen Jesus?

Buddy: Hey, man, I'm not my buddy's keeper, okay?

Narrator: They began looking for him. They looked everywhere (*looking behind, organ, under chair, through the pews, shouting "Jesus! Where are you?"*)...At last they found Jesus at the Temple.

Mary: Where have you been? We have looked everywhere for you. We were so worried.

Jesus: (*Surprised*), Why did you look everywhere for me? Didn't you know I would be in my Father's house?

(*Mary and Joseph look at each other and shrug, just like they did earlier.*)

Joseph: Come on, son. Come and join us. (*Mary and Joseph put their arms around Jesus and head off stage.*)

Narrator: They didn't understand. But they went home together. And the boy, Jesus, grew to be a man. He grew taller and stronger. He grew in wisdom and love, and he was loved by God and loved by people.

## ACT II: Jesus and the Tax Collectors

Cast: Narrator, Sea of Galilee, Jesus, Disciples, Scribes (wearing signs that say FBI and sunglasses?), Levi & Tax Collectors (wearing signs that say IRS), Crowd

*Scribe 1 is lurking around by the baptismal font and scribe 2 is near the Prayer Wall. Sea of Galilee is center stage. Levi comes on stage R. Levi's house is up by the altar stage L)*

Narrator: This is the Sea of Galilee (*Sea of Galilee stands next to narrator, holding up cardboard cutout of waves*). So many important things happen by the

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sea that we need a small piece of it here to help us tell the story. (*To the Sea*) Thanks for coming in today!

Sea: We didn't want to just drift by and wave!

Narrator: The sea is a wonderful and strange place... When the wind blows... the sea becomes very rough and wild. (*Sea wiggles spastically.*) And when the wind is calm... the sea is peaceful and still. (*Sea puts finger to its lips and stands very still.*)

One day Jesus was walking by the sea.....Many people were following him. Peter, Andrew, James, and John were following. Women were following. Children were following too.

John: Where are we going?

Peter: Beats me. I'm just following that guy. (*Points to Jesus.*)

Narrator: The scribes from the synagogue were watching.

Scribe 1: (*On a walkie talkie*) This is agent 001 to agent 002. Do you have an eyeball on the suspect?

Scribe 2: Roger, I got the eyeball. He's down by the Sea of Galilee.

Scribe 1: Well keep him in sight at all times. He's a very dangerous character. (*Scribe 2 sneaks up near Jesus and follows him throughout the rest of the Act.*)

Narrator: Now a toll road goes by the sea. People pay a tax at the tax collector's booth to use this road.

Levi was a tax collector.

Levi: Taxes! Taxes! Pay your taxes, right here, come on, don't cut in line, everyone will get a chance.

Crowd: Tax collectors are sinners!

Levi: What is this, kill the messenger day? I just work here, okay?

Narrator: People did not like tax collectors. So they were not supposed to walk with tax collectors. And they certainly were not to eat with them. Now as Jesus was teaching about the kingdom of God, he saw Levi at the tax booth.

Jesus: Levi come! Follow me.

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Narrator: They walked to Levi's house...to prepare a meal. Other tax collectors and sinners joined them. And they had a great feast. When the scribes saw this, they were confused.

Scribe 2: This is 002 to 001. Tell me something. Why is Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners?

Jesus: *(Overhears Scribe 2, and addresses him directly.)* People who are healthy do not need a doctor, but the sick do. I have come to ask sinners to repent, to change the way they live, and to follow the way of the kingdom of God. Won't you join us?

*(Jesus reaches out a hand to Scribe 2. Scribe 2 shrugs, and then tosses away the FBI sign and comes to sit with the tax collectors at the table.)*

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### ACT III: Jesus Makes Lazarus Live Again

Cast: Narrator, Lazarus, Mary & Martha, Messenger, Jesus, Crowd

Narrator: Lazarus was very sick.

Lazarus: Was it something in the hummus? (*Lazarus swoons*)

Narrator: He was dying. Now Jesus loved Lazarus very much, so his sisters, Mary and Martha, sent for Jesus. (*The sisters pantomime calling a messenger*)

Mary: You must find Jesus and tell him our brother Lazarus is very sick. Go quickly, for only Jesus can heal him. (*The messenger goes quickly to Jesus and whispers in his ear the message.*)

Narrator: But before Jesus came, Lazarus died. (*Lazarus dies.*)

Narrator: The sisters washed his body (*using a bucket with sponges*), Then they anointed it, (*with a jug labeled ointment*), and wrapped it in linen cloth (*using toilet paper*).

Narrator: They placed him in a tomb. (*They walk him into a tomb and lie him down and return to their house*)

Narrator: When Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days.

Mary: (*Waving hand in front of her face.*) Pee-ew!

Narrator: Martha went to meet him,

Martha: (*Going up to Jesus. Very upset.*) If you had been here my brother would not have died.

Jesus: Your brother will be alive again... I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even when they die. Do you believe this?

Martha: (*Nods and dries her eyes.*) Yes .... I believe you are the Christ. (*They all go to the tomb, along with a crowd that gathers.*)

Jesus: Remove the stone. (*looking up and praying*) Thank you, God, for hearing me. (*Then shouting*), Lazarus, come out! (*Lazarus comes out. Mary and Martha unwrap him. Then they stand back in awe.*)

Mary: It's a miracle. You are alive again!

Narrator: Now many believed that Jesus was the Christ.

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*(The crowd splits into two parts. One part, including Mary and Martha, start saying to each other the following:*

Crowd 1: Can you believe it? He brought Lazarus alive again!

Crowd 2: He must be the Christ!

Crowd 3: The one from God who will bring peace to all the world!

Narrator: But some of the chief priests and scribes and others did not.

*(The other part of the crowd says the following.)*

Crowd 4: I don't believe it.

Crowd 5: Me neither!

Crowd 6: He wasn't dead!

Crowd 7: He was only mostly dead. There's a difference between mostly dead and all dead!

Narrator: What do you believe?

Crowds: *(Turning toward the audience and extending a hand.)* Won't you join us?

END

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<sup>i</sup> Stewart and Berryman, *Young Children and Worship*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989. Also Stewart, *Following Jesus*, Louisville: Geneva Press, 2000.