

The Gospel Show

by Nick Perrin

Pupil Script

Scene 1 Introduction To The Gospel Show

Incidental - THE SHOW'S IN TOWN

[Cast create a busy scene across the stage, shopping, playing, chatting etc. MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE & JOHN (M, M, L & J) enter from behind the wagon, calling out their lines as they move. They are followed by ASSISTANTS.]

MATTHEW Roll up! Roll up!
The Gospel Show's in town! *(goes to Downstage Right)*

LUKE Roll up! Roll up!
The greatest show around! *(goes to Downstage Left)*

MARK Step this way! Take your seats! *(goes to Downstage Right)*

JOHN The Gospel Show's in town! *(goes to Downstage Left)*

[CHILDREN gradually stop their games. They rush to get seats, leaving front row space for JO, MOTHER & CHILD 1-5. ASSISTANTS usher a few people to places.]

MATTHEW Come on! The show's about to start!

LUKE *(pointing)* There's a few seats over there...

[Excited chatter, ad lib. ASSISTANT 1 (& 3) continue drawing in more people from all directions to take their seats, then go to prepare drum and cymbal. JO, MOTHER & CHILD 1-5 remain central, while ASSISTANT 2 (& 4) settle the crowd, then go to base positions with CHORUS until next needed.]

JO *(to CHILD 1-5)* What's going on?

CHILD 1 What is the Gospel Show?
CHILD 2 Is it like a circus?
CHILD 3 It can't be a circus – there isn't a massive tent!
CHILD 4 Yes, there'd be a big top if it was a circus.
CHILD 5 Well, whatever it is, we're not gonna see from here.
JO Come on then, let's get closer.

[JO pushes past MOTHER, who grabs hold of his/her arm. CHILD 1-5 head towards seats on front row.]

JO's MOTHER Jo! Stop pushing! If you can't behave I'll take you home.
JO Aw, Mum...
JO's MOTHER Instead of watching the show, (*wags finger*) you'll be doing your chores.
JO Oh let me stay! I'll be good, I promise.

[JO's MOTHER rolls eyes, folds arms. JO grins, running to squeeze into the front row with CHILD 1-5, followed by MOTHER, who sits next to her. ASSISTANTS 1 & 2 go to Downstage Left & Right respectively. ALL quieten.]

ASSISTANT 1 (*steps forward*) Ladies and gentlemen!
ASSISTANT 2 (*steps forward*) Boys and girls!
ASSISTANT 1 (3) (*steps forward*) Please give a huge welcome to our magnificent hosts!

[CHORUS applaud enthusiastically as MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE & JOHN enter, waving, and go to stand Downstage Centre.]

ASSISTANT 2 (4) Matthew!
ASSISTANT 1 Mark!
ASSISTANT 2 Luke!
ASSISTANT 1 (3) John!
MATTHEW (*appreciatively, as applause dies down*) Thanks for the welcome!
MARK So – are you ready for the show?

[Quiet responses, ad lib nodding, 'yeah'.]

LUKE He said 'Are you ready for the show?'

[Louder responses ad lib, 'YES!', thumbs up etc.]

JOHN Are you sure you're ready?
CHORUS *(loudly)* Yes!
JOHN In that case... *(pause)* we bring you... *(pause)*
(dramatically) The Gospel Show!

[M, M, L & J move to new positions (as directed) to sing. During the song, ASSISTANTS encourage the 'audience' (CHORUS) to get into the swing of things, clapping etc.]

Song - THE GOSPEL SHOW

[After the song, CHORUS begin a murmur of excited chatter while ASSISTANTS return to base positions. M, M, L & J go to stand in front of the wagon, silent, arms stretched out above their heads in 'Y' position. When CHORUS quieten, MATTHEW lowers his arms and steps forward.]

MATTHEW *(dramatically)* He was born in a stable.
JO *(prompting)* Born in a stable?
MARK *(lowers arms, steps forward, nodding)* He was born in a stable.
CHILD 1 Who was?
LUKE *(lowers arms, steps forward)* He was!
JO Who was?
JOHN *(lowers arms, steps forward)* Jesus. Jesus was born in a stable!
JO Who's Jesus?
JOHN You'll see.

[M, M, L & J all raise right arm to point upwards.]

MATTHEW *(dramatically)* The stable was lit by a star.
CHILD 3 *(prompting)* Lit by a star?
MARK *(nodding, 'don't push your luck' expression)* The stable was lit by a star.
JO *(irritably, opening hands)* What star?

[M, M, L & J drop their arms. JOHN puts hands to hips, MARK, LUKE & MATTHEW fold arms. They glare at JO, irritated by the persistent questioning. JO's MOTHER mimes increasing embarrassment.]

[During the following dialogue, ASSISTANTS beckon FISHERMEN 'volunteers' out of the 'audience' and lead them behind the wagon, to prepare for their entry.]

JOHN The star. The stable was lit by a bright, shining star.

JO (frustrated) But you still haven't told us what star!

JOHN (walking over to JO, hands on hips) What do they call you, child?

JO (proudly) Josephine Mary Louisa Jefferson.
[If this part is played by a boy – Joseph Martin Louis Jefferson.]
But most people call me 'Jo'.

JOHN Well, Jo. Don't they teach you to listen at school?

[JO's MOTHER stands, exasperated. CHORUS show amusement.]

JO's MOTHER (firmly) They do - and she will! (to JO) Won't you, Jo?

*[JO nods sulkily, sits and folds arms. JO's MOTHER sits. CHORUS giggle and whisper, looking at JO. **M, M, L & J** raise arms, staying in position until their turn to speak.]*

Scene 2 The Fishermen

MATTHEW (lowers arms) We're going to tell you about this man called Jesus.

MARK (lowers arms) He was born in Bethlehem, in a land called Judea.

LUKE (lowers arms) Things weren't good in Bethlehem.

JOHN (lowers arms) Things weren't good in Judea.

M, M, L & J Things weren't good anywhere.

MATTHEW (going to Downstage Right) But Jesus came to change things.

JO (open hands) How could he? He was just a man!

MARK (joins MATTHEW) But he wasn't just any man.

LUKE (goes to Downstage Left) And he chose some friends to help him.

[LUKE follows JOHN when he moves.]

JOHN (joining LUKE) One day he saw a group of fishermen by the sea of Galilee.

[FISHERMEN PETER, ANDREW, JAMES & JOHN enter and move to Centre, where they grumble together.]

MATTHEW *(arm out to indicate FISHERMEN)* They didn't look very happy.

MARK *(shrugs)* They weren't catching a thing.

[JESUS enters, stands to Left of MATTHEW & MARK.]

FISHERMAN PETER *(exasperated)* It's no good. We're wasting our time.

FISHERMAN ANDREW *(fed up)* We've caught nothing. Not a single fish.

FISHERMAN JAMES *(gloomy)* With no fish to sell, we won't have enough money to feed our families.

FISHERMAN JOHN *(puzzled)* I don't understand it. We've never had such a run of bad luck before.

JESUS *(calling to FISHERMEN)* Come on. Don't give up!

FISHERMAN ANDREW *(squinting, hand to brow)* Who's that?

FISHERMAN JAMES *(pointing)* It's Jesus!

FISHERMAN JOHN We know you mean well, Jesus, but it's impossible.

FISHERMAN PETER There are just no fish.

JESUS *(calmly)* Try again, Peter.
Cast your nets on the other side of the boat.

FISHERMAN PETER *(unconvinced, to other FISHERMEN)* It's probably a waste of time, but what've we got to lose?

FISHERMAN ANDREW OK. Let's give it a go.

FISHERMAN JAMES One last chance.

FISHERMAN JOHN Might as well try.

[If directed, ASSISTANTS select extras from CHORUS to join in, giving them suitable props. These will mime during the 'catch' scene towards the end of the song.]

Song - CAST OUT YOUR NETS

LUKE *(wisely)* It seemed the stories they'd heard about Jesus were true.

JOHN So the fishermen followed him.
And amazing things kept happening.

[JESUS leads FISHERMEN off behind the wagon; any extras return to seats. ASSISTANTS collect up props, then return to base positions.]

Scene 3 Peter Walks On Water

[FISHERMEN re-enter, go to Centre Stage.]

MATTHEW One dark night, the fishermen were out on the sea in their boat.

Incidental - STRONG WIND

MARK Suddenly, the weather changed. The wind began to blow.

LUKE *(speaking over music)* As the wind grew stronger and stronger, the waves became higher and higher, battering the boat. The fishermen were terrified.

[JESUS enters, slowly walking behind CHORUS to stop Stage Left.]

JOHN Then suddenly they saw what they thought was a ghost...
[JESUS begins to walk very slowly towards them.]
...walking towards them on the water.

FISHERMEN *(pointing, terrified)* A ghost!

FISHERMAN ANDREW We're gonna die!

FISHERMAN PETER No – wait a minute! *(peering at JESUS, hand to brow)*
It's Jesus!

JESUS *(stops)* It's all right! Don't be afraid.

FISHERMAN PETER Is it really you? If it is, can I walk on water too?

Song - WALK UPON THE WATER

[On 'Splash!' PETER falls. FISHERMEN point and laugh, though not unkindly, and everyone applauds PETER's efforts. PETER gets up looking sheepish, with JESUS helping him. They go to Centre.]

M, M, L & J go to stand in front of the crate, Centre. Discreetly, ASSISTANT 1 (3) 'select' MOTHER, GIRL & FRIENDS from the 'audience', leading them to Downstage Right, where GIRL lies as if dead. ASSISTANT 2 (4) keeps JAIRUS & NEIGHBOUR by the wagon ready for their entries.]

MATTHEW Gradually, Peter learned to trust Jesus.

MARK It wasn't long before Peter was one of Jesus's closest friends.

[FISHERMEN exit to base positions – apart from PETER, who goes to Downstage Left with JESUS.]

LUKE *(points at GIRL)* Ah, the volunteers for our next story are ready.

JOHN Over to you, Matthew!

Scene 4 Jairus' Daughter

[Enter JAIRUS, anxious and in a hurry.]

MATTHEW One day a man came rushing up to Jesus. He was very upset.

JAIRUS Please help me! My daughter is dying!
Oh please, come quickly!

MARK They set off at once, but on the way they heard dreadful news.

[Enter NEIGHBOUR, rushing up to JAIRUS and whispering to him. JAIRUS covers his face with his hands. Meanwhile, the group around GIRL are weeping.]

PETER *(sadly)* Looks like it's too late.

NEIGHBOUR *(to JESUS)* His little girl is dead.
(shaking head) No-one can help her now.

JESUS Let's go and see.

*[JESUS puts a hand on JAIRUS' shoulder.
They walk to GIRL. PETER follows.]*

LUKE At the girl's house, everyone was weeping.

JOHN Jesus spoke to them.

JESUS Have faith. Your little girl isn't dead, she's sleeping!

*[NEIGHBOUR & FRIENDS scoff at the suggestion.
MOTHER reacts with shocked disbelief, and a FRIEND
puts an arm around her; they go to Downstage Left.
JESUS]*

MARK Jesus took hold of the girl's hands and spoke softly to her.
He told her to get up.

*[As LUKE speaks, GIRL gets up, stretches, smiles, looks
around at everyone, puzzled, then walks to MOTHER.]*

LUKE Everyone was amazed, because that's exactly what she did!

FRIEND *(amazed)* She's alive – and she's well!

MOTHER My little girl! We thought we'd lost you forever!

[GIRL & MOTHER embrace, GIRL goes Downstage to sing.]

Song - ONCE IN A DREAM

[MOTHER leads GIRL, JAIRUS & NEIGHBOUR to kneel at JESUS' feet. He lays hands on their heads, while JOHN goes to Downstage Centre.]

JOHN Wasn't that an amazing thing to happen?

[LUKE follows JOHN to Downstage Centre.]

MATTHEW And there are many more stories about how Jesus healed people.

[GIRL, MOTHER, JAIRUS, NEIGHBOURS, FRIENDS & PETER go back to base positions in CHORUS. JESUS goes to sit on crate. MARK & MATTHEW go to Downstage Right.]

Scene 5 The Parables

JO Tell us more!

MATTHEW *(to MARK)* You want more, Jo? Well listen up!

MARK OK. So – Jesus often told stories to teach people things.

LUKE Each story had its own special meaning.

JOHN The stories were called parables.

MATTHEW *(quickly turning round to JO)* What were they called, Jo?

JO Um...

CHILD 1 *(hisses at JO)* Parables!

JO They were called parables, Matthew.

MATTHEW Hm! Just checking you're keeping up with us!

JO *(with a cheesy grin)* Of course I am!

MARK People loved listening to the parables. They all had their favourites.

LUKE Let's see now. What would their favourites have been?

MATTHEW Well, there was the parable of the prodigal son –

JOHN Yes...

LUKE And the parable of the talents – and the parable of the sower.

JOHN *(puzzled)* The sower? I don't remember a needlework parable.

[LUKE & MARK raise their eyebrows, and shake heads.]

LUKE *(poking JOHN)* Not needle and thread sewing, John, seed sowing!

JOHN I know that! I was only joking.

MATTHEW *(moving to Centre)* Right.
(to CHORUS) We need some volunteers.

[SEED volunteers among CHORUS put hands up. LUKE & JOHN go to Downstage Left, MARK goes to Downstage Right. MATTHEW moves around ad lib.]

You lot, and – you and you – yes, and you too – come and be seeds. Lie down here and wait until you're told to sprout.

[They all move to an awkward spot and stay in a huddle.]

No, not over there – here.

[They all move next to MATTHEW. MARK, LUKE & JOHN start laughing at his lack of control.]

Well not all of you. Some of you over there.

[They all move to where he indicates. CHORUS giggle.]

(exasperated) No!! Not all of you! Honestly! You'd think being a bunch of seeds would be an easy job for anybody! I mean, is it difficult to play the part of a seed?

[CHORUS laugh. ASSISTANTS move to Centre.]

ASSISTANT 1 Would you like us to organise your seeds for you, Matthew?

MATTHEW Go for it!

JOHN *(stepping forward, laughing)* So! Let's hear a round of applause for our wonderful assistants!

[All cheer and applaud. ASSISTANTS step forward, smile and bow/curtsey. MATTHEW joins MARK. ASSISTANT 1 (& 3,4) quickly organise SEED volunteers into three groups, WEEDS & THORNS (Stage L.), GOOD GROUND (Stage R.) & STONY GROUND (Centre), where they lie down.]

ASSISTANT 2 You won't be offended if we take over then?

MATTHEW Offended? No, no! I'd be delighted!

[ASSISTANT 1 rejoins MATTHEW.]

ASSISTANT 1 Would you like us to do the talking too?

MATTHEW Oh please! Just get on with it!

ASSISTANT 1 & 2 *(responding to his tetchiness)* Oooooooooo!

ASSISTANT 1 (or 3) *(firmly)* So. We're talking about the parable of the sower.

ASSISTANT 2 (or 4) This story is about a man sowing seeds – some of which fell on stony ground...

ASSISTANT 1 *(pointing at STONY GROUND SEEDS)* And those seeds couldn't grow.

[Pre-arranged STONY SEED wriggles.]

ASSISTANT 2 *(to wriggling seed)* Oi! You're on stony ground! Lie still.

ASSISTANT 1 (or 3) *(pointing at WEEDS & THORNS SEEDS)* Some of the seeds fell among weeds and thorns.

ASSISTANT 2 (or 4) And those seeds couldn't grow either.

[One WEEDS & THORNS SEED begins to 'grow'.]

ASSISTANT 1 *(pushing down 'growing' seed)* Get down, you! You're among thorns!

[CHORUS laugh.]

ASSISTANT 2 *(points to GOOD GROUND SEEDS)* But some seed fell on good ground.

[GOOD GROUND SEEDS slowly begin to grow.]

MARK Ah, yes... It's all coming back to me now.
(confidently) The seed that fell on the good ground grew –
(growing gesture) and grew and grew! *(grins happily)*

MATTHEW *(testing him)* And the meaning of the story is...?

MARK *(frowning, chewing lip for a second)* It means that – um – the word of God is like the seeds. If it is sown in the right place it will grow.

MATT., L & J *(smiling, clapping)* Well done!

MATTHEW And a round of applause for our wonderful seeds!

['SEEDS' stand up and take a bow before returning to their places. ASSISTANTS return to base positions.]

JO Tell us another story!

MARK Shall we?

MATTHEW Who wants more?

CHORUS *(chanting)* We want more! We want more! *(etc.)*

*[During the chant **M, M, L & J** go to centre. When in position they raise their arms to quieten the chanting.]*

LUKE *(to CHORUS, crossing to Centre)* Do you really want to hear more stories?

CHORUS Yes! We do!

LUKE Oh, all right then.

JO *(shouting)* Come on, get on with it!

JO'S MOTHER Jo! Be quiet!

JOHN OK. We need more volunteers.

[Children's hands shoot up. Ad lib calls of "Me!" "Please can I?" etc. Two children are chosen to mime HOUSE BUILDERS. ASSISTANT 1 (& 3) get foam blocks from behind the wagon. Meanwhile ASSISTANT 2 (& 4) prepare(s) children for the Good Samaritan scene: ROBBERS, INJURED MAN, PRIEST, LEVITE, SAMARITAN. JESUS stands on crate and sings with CHORUS.]

MATTHEW *(to ASSISTANTS)* Are you ready?

ASSISTANT 1 *(nodding)* We're good to go.

MATTHEW Right! Give it up for the parable of...

M, M, L & J *(grand gesture, announcing)* The House Builders!

[CHORUS applaud. MATTHEW & MARK to Downstage Right, LUKE & JOHN to Downstage Left.]

Song - THE HOUSE BUILDERS

*[JESUS sits on crate as **M, M, L & J** go to Centre to stand silent, arms stretched out above their heads. MATTHEW & LUKE look up, MARK & JOHN look down.]*

Scene 6 **The Good Samaritan**

JO *(after a pause)* What are we waiting for?

JO'S MOTHER *(mortified)* Oh Jo – honestly!

CHILD 1 Are we waiting for another parable?

CHILD 2 *(to CHILD 1)* Perhaps they're waiting for us to ask nicely!

CHILD 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 *(nicely)* Please can we have another parable?

M, M, L & J *(lower arms)* That's more like it!

MATTHEW And now – one of the all time favourites – The Good Samaritan!

[ALL cheer. M, M, L & J go to Downstage Left & Right.]

Song - THE GOOD SAMARITAN

[JESUS returns to crate. ASSISTANTS collect up props, actors return to places.]

CHILD 1 Shouldn't the priest have helped?

MATTHEW You'd think so... but he didn't.

CHILD 2 Good job the Samaritan did the right thing.

Scene 7 **Jesus Feeds A Crowd**

CHILD 1 *(standing up, rubbing tummy)* I'm starving.

CHILD 2 So am I.

CHILD 3 We should have brought a picnic!

CHILD 4 Yeah. Bread and cheese would be nice.

ALL Mmm...

CHILD 5 And pumpkin pie.

ALL Mm—mmm!

CHILD 1 Or chocolate cake...

ALL Mm—mm—mmm!

[M, M, L & J return to Centre.]

MATTHEW You lot are a bit like the crowds who gathered to listen to Jesus. They sat listening for so long – sometimes they missed out on meals!

MARK *(nodding)* It's true. One time they missed out on breakfast, lunch and tea!

JO *(pulling a face, clutching stomach)* Ooh, I wouldn't like that!

LUKE *(nodding at JO)* They were very hungry!

JO Mum, I'm hungry too. Can I have something to eat?

JO's MOTHER Don't be greedy. You haven't missed your breakfast, lunch and tea!

[JO grumbles ad lib, as she stands to sing verse 1.]

Song - THE BIGGEST EVER TAKE AWAY

[JESUS goes to JO & SOLOISTS and gives them bread. That done, they all return to base position.]

Scene 8 Jesus Goes To Jerusalem

JOHN Talking of food, the next part of the story takes us to Jerusalem, where the Jewish people were getting ready for Passover.

MATTHEW It was something they did every year.

CHILD 1 They still do – don't they?

MATTHEW *(nodding)* That's right. Ever since Moses led the Jews out of slavery, thousands of years ago.

MARK So, along with thousands of other people—including his followers—Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.

[JESUS waves, going off behind the wagon. DISCIPLES, MARY MAGDALENE & FOLLOWERS get ready to enter.]

JO So was Jesus Jewish, then?

LUKE Yes.

JOHN Some even called him 'King of the Jews'.

MATTHEW By this time, news had got around about the amazing miracles he'd performed.

LUKE People saw him as their hope—their Saviour.

JOHN *(nodding)* So when he rode into Jerusalem the crowds were shouting for joy! *(punching the air)* 'Hosanna!' they shouted, 'Hosanna!'

[JESUS & DONKEY enter, travelling round the stage, MARY MAGDALENE, DISCIPLES & FOLLOWERS following.]

Song - HOSANNA JESUS

[JESUS beckons DISCIPLES. CHIEF PRIEST(s) enter silently, to stand Downstage Right.]

Scene 9 The Last Supper And A Betrayal

MATTHEW When the time came for the Passover meal, he invited his followers...

MARK *(interrupting to correct)* – his disciples –

LUKE *(nodding)* He invited his disciples to join him.

JOHN He knew it'd be his last supper.

[JESUS & DISCIPLES go to stand behind the wagon.]

JO Why was it his last supper?

JOHN *(patiently)* Listen carefully, Jo. You'll soon understand.

MATTHEW One of his friends, a disciple named Judas –

MARK *(interrupting to correct)* – Judas Iscariot –

MATTHEW Judas realised he could make some money for himself.

MARK And he couldn't resist the temptation.

LUKE He knew the chief priests hated Jesus.

JO They hated him? Why?

LUKE They were very angry when Jesus accused them of being greedy.

JOHN *(nodding)* He said they cared more about power and gold than they did about helping people.

MARK They wanted him out of the way.

MATTHEW So. You get the picture? Judas went to the chief priests and made a deadly deal. In exchange for money, he would lead them to Jesus.

[JUDAS goes to CHIEF PRIEST(s). MARY MAGDALENE & FOLLOWERS react with shock and disapproval, and don't join in the repeat. MARY MAGDALENE exits.]

Song - WHAT IS IT WORTH?

CHIEF PRIEST We'll pay you thirty pieces of silver.

[JUDAS shakes their hands, as the dialogue continues.]

LUKE There you have it. That was the price.

CHILD 5 Thirty pieces of silver? *(tuts, shakes head in disgust)*

*[CHORUS react with head-shaking, tuts, etc.
as CHIEF PRIESTS return to base position.
JUDAS rejoins DISCIPLES as LUKE speaks.]*

JOHN Having made the deal, Judas went to meet Jesus and his disciples for their last supper together.

[ASSISTANTS set the Last Supper during the intro to the song, bringing on table, loaf and goblet. JESUS, ANDREW, JAMES, JOHN, PETER & JUDAS (and any extra disciples) return and gather upstage of the table.]

Song - THE LAST SUPPER

MATTHEW The disciples were very upset and shocked. Jesus took them to the garden of Gethsemane.

[DISCIPLES follow JESUS across the stage.]

MARK He told them to sit down while he went aside to pray.

[DISCIPLES sit down Stage Right. JESUS crosses to Stage Left.]

Scene 10 Jesus Is Arrested

LUKE Jesus knew what was going to happen and he was very troubled.

JO Troubled? Why?

LUKE The priests were jealous. People were following Jesus instead of them.

JOHN *(nodding)* So they tried to turn everyone against him. Jesus knew they were even planning to kill him.

JO But he was such a good man.

CHILD 3 Yes! He helped people.

CHILD 4 And he healed the sick.

JO Why would they want to hurt him?

[M, M, L & J are unable to give a response to this. They look at each other, and shrug. Everybody looks puzzled.]

MARK That's a very good question. (*shrugs*) Anyway. Matthew – we need more volunteers.

[Eager hands go up, some calling out "Me!" etc. MATTHEW points at ROMAN soldiers, who go to ASSISTANTS.]

LUKE OK. (*points*) If that group over there would just like to go and get ready with our wonderful assistants...

[ASSISTANTS equip ROMAN SOLDIERS with spears, helmets etc., as well as crown of thorns and cloak to be used later for JESUS.]

It should only take a minute or two... *(pause)*

Meanwhile... *(looks to MARK and gestures for assistance)*

[MATTHEW & JOHN are looking anxiously at ASSISTANTS and making hurry-up gestures. ASSISTANTS shrug hopelessly in reply.]

(beginning confidently) Meanwhile we can stand here and talk amongst ourselves about... Hmm...

[MATTHEW & JOHN are still trying to hurry things up. ASSISTANTS shoo them away.]

About – the genuine authentic Roman costumes they will be putting on.

MARK Oh absolutely! Totally authentic.

ALL Oh no they're not!

M, M, L & J Oh yes they are!

ALL Oh no they're not!

MARK Well alright, they're not.
But they are the finest soldiers round here!

ASSISTANT 1 Just give us one more minute...

LUKE Yes, they're absolutely the finest soldiers in the whole country!

MARK (nodding) They've had hours and hours of military training...

ASSISTANT 2 We're nearly ready...

LUKE They can't be beaten on the battlefield...

MARK Or anywhere else, for that matter...

[ROMAN SOLDIERS stand to attention.]

MATTHEW Finally, we have them ready!

[Enthusiastic applause, ASSISTANTS mop their brows etc.]

JOHN Suddenly there came the sound of marching...

[CHORUS tramp feet. DISCIPLES stand and go to protect JESUS. JUDAS leads ROMAN SOLDIERS towards JESUS.]

JOHN A crowd of soldiers came into the garden, led by Judas.

MATTHEW Judas had planned a signal, to show the soldiers which man was Jesus.

JOHN He went right up to Jesus and kissed him on the cheek.

JUDAS Rabbi! *(kisses JESUS on the cheek)*

DISCIPLES *(in a hushed gasp)* Judas!!

JESUS *(sadly)* Judas! Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?

[JUDAS reacts by recoiling, ashamed.]

MATTHEW Judas was terrified. He ran away – and so did the disciples.

[JUDAS looks terrified and exits quickly, so do the DISCIPLES.]

JOHN Then the soldiers took Jesus away.

[ROMAN SOLDIERS take JESUS upstage, behind wagon.]

Scene 11 The Trial

MARK By now, people had heard what was going on.
A crowd was gathering.

[CHORUS now become the crowd, who stand and peer towards the wagon, whispering quietly. PONTIUS PILATE enters.]

LUKE They'd heard that Jesus was being brought to the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate.

[CROWD mutter to each other, still peering expectantly towards the wagon. When JESUS appears with ROMAN SOLDIERS, everyone is suddenly quiet, watching as he is taken to stand before PONTIUS PILATE.]

PONTIUS PILATE So – Jesus – are you the king of the Jews?

JESUS If you say so.

CHIEF PRIEST(s) *(persuading the crowd)* He's dangerous!
He's plotting against you! He's a blasphemer!

PONTIUS PILATE Aren't you going to answer these accusations?

[JESUS stands quietly.]

MARK Pontius Pilate was in a difficult position, because he knew
that Jesus had done nothing wrong.

Song - I'M SICK OF HIS NAME

Scene 12 Barabbas Is Set Free

JOHN Now don't forget this all happened at Passover. And at
Passover, the custom was that a prisoner could be set free.

JO (or CHILD 2) So did they set Jesus free?

JOHN Pontius Pilate let them choose who to set free:
a man called Barabbas – who was a criminal – or Jesus.

PONTIUS PILATE It's your choice – either Barabbas or Jesus.

[PONTIUS PILATE walks to one side.]

MATTHEW Sorry to break into the story, but I just realised we need
a volunteer to play Barabbas – somebody who looks really
mean and evil. Who can show us what really nasty looks like?

[All the CHILDREN pull the meanest face they can.]

MARK *(mock fear, turning to JOHN)* The crowd's starting to turn
ugly, John!

LUKE *(pointing to the meanest looking child)* You'll do.
(indicating the direction of the audience) Go on – show 'em!

[ALL laugh at the 'mean' expression.]

JOHN Excellent. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you – Barabbas!

*[ALL applaud. ASSISTANT 1 propels BARABBAS forward.
ROMAN SOLDIERS march JESUS & BARABBAS into
position as directed.]*

Song - WHO WILL YOU CHOOSE?

[M, M, L & J raise arms as previously, while BARABBAS rejoins the crowd and is welcomed back with pats on the shoulder etc. PONTIUS PILATE exits, shaking his head.]

MATTHEW *(lowers arms)* As you can tell, the chief priests had turned the people against him.

MARK *(lowers arms)* The soldiers surrounded Jesus.

[SOLDIERS put cloak and crown of thorns on JESUS.]

LUKE *(lowers arms)* They dressed him up as if he was a King.

JOHN *(lowers arms)* But his crown was a crown of thorns.

MATTHEW They mocked him.

[SOLDIERS mime mocking JESUS while music plays.]

Incidental - MOCKERY

CHILD 1 That was horrible – and so unfair.

JO They must have known he had done nothing wrong.

MARK Jesus was taken to a hill outside the city.

LUKE His hands and feet were nailed to a wooden cross.

JOHN He was crucified.

Scene 13 The Crucifixion

[JESUS stands as directed with arms outstretched. MARY MAGDALENE & other FOLLOWERS / DISCIPLES enter and react with suitable distress as the crowd sings.]

Song - KING OF THE JEWS

[JESUS and cross (if used) go off stage. The next four lines are spoken over the music.]

JO So – did he die?

MATTHEW Yes. He died on the cross.

MARK *(walking to the appropriate place)* Then his body was taken to a cave.

LUKE And a huge stone was rolled across the entrance to the cave.

*[ALL watch quietly as **M, M, L & J** mime rolling a big stone across the place where the cave is imagined to be. Then **M, M, L & J** move to the sides of the stage.]*

Scene 14 The Resurrection

JO And was that the end of the story?

[MARY MAGDALENE & TWO WOMEN enter, immediately miming startled reaction, as if the stone has been rolled away.]

MATTHEW Oh no. That was just the beginning.
Three days later, Mary Magdalene and two other women went to the tomb. They were amazed at what they found.

LUKE The stone had been rolled away!

*[MARY MAGDALENE & TWO WOMEN go to the cave and look in. They turn back around, looking amazed and bewildered. **The next four lines are spoken over the flute intro.**]*

MARY MAGDALENE He's gone!

WOMAN 1 His body's not there!

WOMAN 2 What's happened to him?

ANGEL Don't be afraid. He is risen, just as he said.

[MARY MAGDALENE draws the other two with her, smiling, to the front of the stage. JESUS re-enters on verse 2, to sing with the rest.]

Song - ROLL BACK THE STONE

Song - THE GOSPEL SHOW (reprise)



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