



JANET and HENRY

20 PUPPET STORIES

Tested and Approved in Actual Use



Margaret Elliott

JANET
and
HENRY

20 PUPPET STORIES

Margaret Elliott

Copyright © 1991 by Margaret B. Elliott
All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations are from the
Good News Bible, in Today's English Version.
Copyright © American Bible Society 1966, 1971, 1976.
Used by permission.

Published by:
Iglesia de Cristo
317 S. Broadway, Suite #130
Lawrence, MA 01843

Table of Contents

Alphabetical Index by Titles at Top of Pages

	Page
Afraid: "Being Afraid".....	48
Complaining.....	43
Fighting.....	32
Filthy Language.....	38
Following: "Following Instructions".....	56
Forgiving.....	26
Good for Evil: "Returning Good for Evil".....	6
Gossip.....	66
Hints: Hints For the Use of These Puppet Stories.....	3
Important: "What is Most Important?".....	51
Jealousy.....	8
Laziness.....	16
Lying.....	30
Making Fun: "Making Fun of Others".....	35
Money: "Loving Money".....	22
Obedying: "Obeying Parents".....	4
Respectful: "Being Respectful".....	12
Selfishness.....	28
Stealing.....	10
Thankful: "Being Thankful".....	19
Visiting Sick: "Visiting the Sick".....	62

HINTS FOR THE USE OF THESE PUPPET STORIES

1. These stories have had the undivided attention of a variety of audiences, even groups of unruly children. They have been used in opening exercises, in camp chapels, in vacation Bible schools, in a bus ministry, in share-ins, in small classes and by families at home.
2. The purpose of these stories is to present common problems in children's lives and show them that the Bible has the answer. The stories are built around one family and their friends. This gives continuity and reduces the total number of puppets needed.
3. The arrangement of the stories in this printing is in the order of their ease of performance, considering the number of puppeteers needed and the use of props. They have been printed in loose-leaf form so that the pages can be easily taken out for a performance. They are printed on only one side so that they can be pinned or tacked in front of the puppeteer and pages do not have to be turned.
4. Nine stories can be performed by one person with one puppet on each hand. The puppet is identified by the use of changes of voice and moving the puppet that is speaking. Following are 10 stories that can be done by 2 people, and the final one requires 3 people.
5. Voice differences can be made by twisting the mouth sideways, lowering the tone of voice, raising the tone, and speaking naturally. Choose the voice that you will use for each character and keep that voice for each character in all the stories.
6. Information about kinds of puppets and how to make them can be found in a variety of books published by other authors. It is recommended, however, that in order to emphasize the reality of the situations, you should use puppets representing people, not animals, and much less "monsters."
7. Props are used to add interest to the stories, but they have been kept to a minimum. To make the chair and table, cut and shape boxes of an appropriate size and cover them with plain paper.
8. To make it easy to handle the Bible, use a small one or a New Testament. Place it on the stage and have the puppets go to it to read rather than trying to hand it back and forth.
9. Backdrops for the stories can be drawn on white paper and hung behind the stage. This helps to set the scene in reality. However, they are not essential to the use of the stories.
10. Always practice enough to be able to move the puppets with ease and keep the spoken words flowing naturally. Use lots of expression.
11. To help make each story more than entertainment, it should be followed by a discussion of its teaching with the children.

TOPIC: OBEYING PARENTS

SCENE: in the house

PROPS: telephone, Bible

CHARACTERS: Mother, Janet

[curtain]

[Mother is on stage at window]

Mother-- Janet! Janet! *[slight pause]* Come in! *[pause]* No! Come now!

[turns from window and puts the telephone receiver up to her head]

Hello, Mother. I called Janet so she could talk to you.
[pause] Yes, I know long distance costs a lot. Did you hear from Bob yet? *[pause for unheard reply]* Oh good! Then we'll try to come for a visit at the end of the month while he's there. I'll write exactly when to expect us after I talk it over with the family. *[pause]* Yes, I'm so glad you called. I'm sorry Janet isn't here to talk to you. Can't imagine why she didn't come in when I called her. *[pause]* Goodbye. *[hangs up the phone]*

Now why didn't Janet come in?

[Janet enters]

Mother-- *[scolding]* Janet! What took you so long? I called you 15 minutes ago. I shouldn't have to call you but one time and you should obey immediately.

Janet--- I don't see why I have to come in! You're always spoiling my fun.

Mother-- Janet! That's no way to speak to your mother. When I tell you to do something you are to obey whether you like it or not.

Janet--- Well, what did you want?

Mother-- I called you because Grandma was on the phone and wanted to talk to you.

Janet--- *[disappointed]* Aw! And I missed her!

Mother-- If you had come when I called, you would be happy now instead of sad.

Janet--- Oh, well, I don't care...I guess.

Mother-- Of course, you care. Tell me something, Janet. What do you have a mother for?

Janet--- To fix the food,...to wash my clothes,...to take me places, ...to clean the house, and...oh, you know, to do all the things around the house.

Mother-- Yes, those things are a big part of my job. But did you realize that the most important part of my job is to teach you children what is right and what is wrong?

Janet--- Oh that. Is Grandma going to call again?

Mother-- No, she's not. Here, I want to show you something.

Janet--- *[with interest]* What?

Mother-- *[Goes over and opens the Bible lying by the phone]* The Bible. Your father and I are Christians now so we look for the answer to all our problems in this book from God. Now let's see. *[pause]* Yes, here it is. It says, "Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your parents, for this is the right thing to do." *[Eph. 6:1 TEV]* See, Janet, God wants you to obey me when I tell you to do something.

Janet--- But the other kids do what they please and don't obey their mothers.

Mother-- They haven't learned what God says in the Bible. Maybe you can help them by setting a good example from now on.

Janet--- But it's so hard when I want to do something else.

Mother-- I know it will be hard for a while because you've gotten into such a bad habit but I'll help you. And we will pray to God and He will help you too. But you have to do your part too and really try. *[puts arms around Janet]* I love you, honey, and I know this is the right way for God says so. Will you try?

Janet--- *[slowly]* Well...all right...I'll try.

Mother-- You'll see how much happier we'll all be. Now let's begin. *[steps away from Janet]* Janet, I want you to please go to the store to get bread for supper.

Janet--- Oh, Mommy, do I have to? Why don't you send Henry?

Mother-- Janet, what should you have said?

Janet--- *[puts hand quickly over mouth as says--]* Oh! *[hand down]* All right, Mommy. I'll be glad to go.

Mother-- Perfect! I have an idea. Let's keep a list of the times you obey willingly and another list of the times you complain and disobey. By the end of the week I hope the obeying list will be the longest.

Janet--- That's a good idea. I really do love you, Mommy, and I'm going to try real hard. What did you say I should get at the store? *[kisses Mother]*

[curtain]

TOPIC: RETURNING GOOD FOR EVIL

SCENE: living room

PROPS: Bible

CHARACTERS: Janet, Mother

[curtain]

[Mother is on stage]

Janet--- *[enters crying]*

Mother-- What's the matter, dear? *[puts arms around Janet]* Now, now.

Janet--- Betty and Marie *[sob, sob]* hit me and said *[sob]* I can't play jump rope with them. *[sob]*

Mother-- Why did they do that?

Janet--- They said they don't want to play with anyone that goes to our church.

Mother-- Oh, that's too bad.

Janet--- We were talking about the Bible and they laughed at me when I told them the Bible says not to fight but be kind. Then they started hitting me to try to make me fight with them.

Mother-- I'm so sorry they're acting that way. But it's wonderful that you were telling your friends about what you've learned from the Bible.

Janet--- But what will I do now? I have no one to play with!

Mother-- I'm so glad you didn't hit back when they hit you.

Janet--- Yes, I remembered that the Bible says not to do bad things to others when they do bad things to you.

Mother-- Let's look at the Bible to see what else it says. *[opens up Bible]* Here's one place. "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and tell all kinds of evil lies against you because you are my followers. Be happy and glad, for a great reward is kept for you in heaven..." *[Matthew 6:11,12 TEV]*

Janet--- Be happy and glad!? How can you be happy and glad? It just makes me angry and upset and sad when they do that to me!

Mother-- Maybe at the moment it's happening you're not happy and glad, but later, when you think that it was because you were doing right things, then you can be happy and glad.

Janet--- Oh, I see. Let me look for a verse. *[looks in Bible]* Look, Mommy, I found one. It says, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you." *[Luke 6:27,28 TEV]*

Mother-- Yes, that's a good one, too. Remember what Jesus did when the wicked men put nails in his hands and feet?

Janet--- I remember He said, "Father, forgive them."

Mother-- Yes, and He didn't hit back and He could have asked God to kill them all. But Jesus loves all kinds of people and He wanted them to be sorry for their sins and start doing right.

Janet--- When people do bad things to me I feel like screaming and hitting them but I'm going to try to remember what Jesus did.

Mother-- Good! And try to smile and be glad this is happening to you because you love Jesus. When the girls start something, just walk away. Maybe it will help them be ashamed of themselves.

Janet--- That verse I found said, "Pray for those who mistreat you." Could we pray for Betty and Marie right now?

Mother-- Of course.

[both bow heads]

Janet--- Dear God, please forgive Betty and Marie for being mean to me. Help me not to hate them. Help me to love them like Jesus does. And help me to be kind to them no matter what they do to me. And please, I hope they will come to church with me sometime. Amen.

Mother-- Isn't God's book, the Bible, wonderful? It helps us with all our problems.

Janet--- Oh yes! What kind of nice thing could I do for those girls? The Bible says, "Do good to those who hate you."

Mother-- How about making cookies to give them.

Janet--- That's a super idea, Mommy! Could I? Could I?

Mother-- Of course! Run go wash your hands.

[curtain]

TOPIC: **JEALOUSY**

SCENE: in the house

PROPS: chair, Bible

CHARACTERS: Father, Henry

[curtain]

[Father enters, finding Henry sitting dejectedly in chair]

Father-- Why, Henry, what's the trouble?

Henry--- Oh nothin'. Leave me alone.

Father-- There is something wrong or you wouldn't be sitting there like that. I'm not going to leave you alone until I find out what it is.

Henry--- Oh, Dad.

Father-- I love you. I don't like to see you sad. Come now, tell me about it.

Henry--- I don't see why other people are always getting new things and I never do.

Father-- Whoa! Slow down, Henry. That just isn't true. Let's name some of the new things you've had, starting with your birthday.

Henry--- My birthday? Oh...yeah, I'd forgotten.

Father-- As I remember you got a shirt, shoes, 3 new games and 4 dollars to spend. What was wrong with those?

Henry--- Oh nothin'...but I mean big things.

Father-- Like what?

Henry--- Well...oh, you know...a bike.

Father-- You know bikes cost a lot of money.

Henry--- But Jack got a new one and if he can buy one why can't I?

Father-- Now I see what's the matter with you. Jack has a new bicycle and you're jealous and miserable because you don't have one too.

Henry--- I'm not jealous. I just...

Father-- What else is it? Instead of sitting here so upset, you ought to go out and be glad with Jack.

Henry--- How can I be happy when he's riding and I'm not? He'll be away riding down the street all the time and I'll just be sitting on the steps.

Father-- I'm sure he would share with you. You're his best friend.

Henry--- I don't know. He'll probably forget all about me now.

Father-- I doubt that. Have you even been out to talk to Jack since he got the bike.

Henry--- Well, yes. And he did say I could ride some. But...

Father-- I thought so. But you're so miserably jealous that you're in here moping instead of out there with him where you could be having a good time. Here, Henry, I want you to read a Bible verse. *[Walks over and opens the Bible]*

Henry--- *[reads]* "Be happy with those who are happy, weep with those who weep." *[Romans 12:15 TEV]*.

Father-- You have things all mixed up, don't you? Weeping means to be very sad and cry. You're almost weeping because Jack is happy. How about doing it the right way?

Henry--- Sometimes that's awful hard. But...I'll try.

Father-- Good! And why not start saving some money each week to buy a bike?

Henry--- Say, that's a swell idea! Bye, Dad, I'm going out to play with Jack and tell him how great his bike is.

[curtain]

TOPIC: STEALING**SCENE:** in front of house**PROPS:** a dime**CHARACTERS:** Henry, Janet

[curtain]

[Henry is on stage. Janet comes rushing in]

Henry--- Hey, Janet, where you goin'?

Janet--- To buy some candy. Want to come along?

Henry--- O. K. Great! How much money you got?

Janet--- A dime. See? *[holds up dime (can be scotch taped to puppet's hand)]*

Henry--- That's not much money to buy candy.

Janet--- I know, but I know how to get a lot for a dime.

Henry--- Oh yeah? Since when?

Janet--- Well, this is how it works. You...*[whispers in Henry's ear]*...and...
[aloud] See how easy?

Henry--- You can't do that!

Janet--- Want to see me?

Henry--- But that's stealing!

Janet--- Sooo? Everybody does it. The man will never know. Besides he's so rich he'll never miss it.

Henry--- But suppose he catches you?

Janet--- Aww, never! I can run and besides I told you he will never see me do it.

Henry--- I don't think I want to go.

Janet--- What's the matter? You chicken?

Henry--- No. I just don't think it's right to take something you don't pay for.

Janet--- Who says?

Henry--- Well, the other day Dad and I were talking about stealing and he told me a story from the Bible about a man who took some things that weren't his. God says, "Do not steal," and if you do it's a terrible sin.

Janet--- Uh Oh! I forgot about God.

Henry--- God is the only one who can tell us what is right and wrong.

Janet--- Tell me that story about stealing.

Henry--- O.K. Let's sit on the steps.

[with much expression] This is a true story from the Bible and it happened a long, long time ago--way back before Jesus was born. It was when Joshua was the leader of the people of God. You know--those people called Israelites. Anyway there was a city called Jericho, where very, very wicked people lived. One day God told Joshua to take the Israelites and destroy the city because the people had to be punished for being so awful bad. He told the Israelite army to kill the people of Jericho and burn everything in the city except the gold and silver that was to go into the treasury of God. When the Israelites went into the city to burn everything, one of the men, named Achan, disobeyed. He saw a beautiful coat, a lot of silver and some gold. He wanted them awful bad so he stole them. He ran quick and hid them in the dirt under his tent where he lived. He thought nobody knew what he'd done.

Janet--- Did they catch him?

Henry--- I'm comin' to that part. Well, it seemed like nobody knew what he had done. But after that nothing went right for the people--for the Israelites. And they couldn't figure out why. So Joshua and the other men began begging God to help. And they asked Him why so many bad things were happening to them. Well, God had seen Achan steal the coat and silver and gold. But He just told Joshua that somebody had disobeyed His order about what to do with everything in Jericho. Joshua would have to find out who it was and punish him or worse things would happen to Israel. Anyway they had a big meeting and God finally showed them that it was Achan. Achan told what he had done. God said his sin was so bad that he had to die! So you see how bad stealing is?

Janet--- I never thought about it before. I thought that as long as the man didn't see me it was o.k.

Henry--- But, God always sees what you do!

Janet--- Then I'd better be careful what I do.

Henry--- That's for sure! We'd both better be careful.

Janet--- I'm glad you told me that story. Come on, let's go buy some candy and I do mean buy, not steal.

Henry--- Great!

[both rush off stage together]

[curtain]

TOPIC: **BEING RESPECTFUL**

SCENE: living room

PROPS: chair, newspaper, report card, Bible

CHARACTERS: Henry, Father

[curtain]

[Father is looking out window when Henry enters]

Henry--- Dad, can I have an ice cream cone?

Father-- Not today, Henry.

Henry--- Why not? Please, please...

Father-- I said not today, Henry.

Henry--- But I want one!

Father-- I said, "No!" Now go and play.

Henry--- Please, Dad, just this once!

Father-- For the last time--No! *[leaves room]*

Henry--- *[stamps foot as says--]* Oh man! *[leaves]*

[Father returns with newspaper and sits down to read]

[Henry comes running in]

Henry--- Hey, Dad can I go to Joe's house to play?

Father-- I'm afraid it's too near to supper time. Mother needs you to go buy bread.

Henry--- Can't I go for just half an hour?

Father-- No. Joe's family eats about this time. You can go tomorrow.

Henry--- But I want to go now! And I'm sick of doing things around here!

Father-- Henry! That's no way to talk to me!

Henry--- Aw! *[gives a big, disgusted sigh]*

Father-- That will be enough from you, young man! Go to your room until I call you.

[Henry leaves, stamping foot as he goes]

Father-- And don't stamp your foot at me!

[curtain]

[put up card that says: Next Day]

[curtain]

Henry--- *[enters excitedly with report card in hand]*
Wow! Is Dad going to be pleased with my grades on this report card! I got all A's! Best ever--best report in the whole class! *[calls]* Hey, Dad, where are you?

Father-- *[off stage]* In here, Henry.

Henry--- Come see what I got!

Father-- *[entering]* What's all the excitement?

Henry--- *[waving report card]* Look, look! It's my report card!

Father-- *[looks at report card]* Humm...Now that is something! All A's! Even in math! But...

Henry--- The best report I ever got!

Father-- But...Henry, I...

Henry--- The best report card in the class! I beat everybody this time!

Father-- Yes, it's exciting, isn't it? But there's something here I don't like one bit.

Henry--- What, Dad? Don't you understand? I got all A's!

Father-- What I don't like is in this other section at the bottom of the card--the part about behavior. You have a D for talking in class and a D for being disrespectful.

Henry--- Oh, those. They don't count. Nobody pays any attention to that part.

Father-- Well, I do and as far as I'm concerned it's the most important part of the report card.

Henry--- I don't see why!?

Father-- Because, Henry, you can be the smartest kid in the world, but if your behavior is bad, your grades don't mean a thing to me or to God.

Henry--- What!? Being smart is the most important thing ever! When I grow up, I'll be able to get the best job anywhere and make a lot of money!

Father-- But, Henry, people who are disrespectful to others, who are 'lippy' and are always 'mouthing-off' either don't get good jobs or if they do they don't keep them for very long.

Henry--- How's that?

Father-- Who wants someone around who has such a miserable attitude? And I'm completely ashamed of your attitude and behavior at school.

Henry--- I don't like my teacher! Nobody does. She's awful! She can't make me do anything!

Father-- Henry! How can people believe that you love Jesus when you have such a bad attitude? You've been talking worse and worse here at home and now at school, too. We're going to do something about it.

Henry--- What?

Father-- First, read in the Bible what God says about it.
[opens the Bible] Here, read this verse out loud.

Henry--- "A good person brings good out of the treasure of good things in his heart; a bad person brings bad out of his treasure of bad things. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of."
[Luke 6:45 TEV]

Father-- The Bible says your mouth says bad things because your heart, your attitudes are bad. Your heart is full of bad things, Henry, and you need to get rid of them.

Henry--- What kind of bad things?

Father-- Like selfishness and pride. You want what you want when you want it. You just think about yourself and what you want to do or say. You're not the only person in the world nor are the other people here just to do things for you.

Henry--- I know that.

Father-- And you're proud of yourself. You think you're the greatest so you think you can say anything you want to.

Henry--- Everybody else talks the same way I do.

Father-- No, they don't. Even if they did, it would be no excuse for you. Let's read the Bible again to see what it says about respecting those who are over you. [*points to Bible*] Read these verses.

Henry--- [*reads*] "Children...respect your father and mother..." [*Eph. 6:1,2 TEV*] "Respect everyone, love your fellow-believers, have reverence for God and respect the Emperor." [*1 Pet. 2:17 TEV*]

Father-- You notice it does not say, "if you like them." Tell me, what does the word "respect" mean?

Henry--- I guess it means to be polite and treat them right.

Father-- Yes. And who are you supposed to respect?

Henry--- Parents, teachers, older people..well, it said, "everyone."

Father-- If you don't learn to respect your parents and teachers, you will have respect for no one. Soon you will be laughing and making fun of God!

Henry--- That would be really bad. I can see that I've been using my mouth the wrong way.

Father-- You certainly need to change.

Henry--- I will try. Will you help me, Dad?

Father-- Of course, and God will help you too.

[*curtain*]

TOPIC: LAZINESS**SCENE:** bedroom with clothes lying all around**PROPS:** clothes, bed, a book, empty can to make sound, Bible**CHARACTERS:** Henry, Mother

[curtain]

[Mother and Henry on stage]

Mother-- Henry, how many times do I have to tell you to stop throwing your clothes around? Hang these things up right this minute!

Henry--- Aw, Mom, I was going out to play ball.

Mother-- Not another word. You heard me.

Henry--- But the guys are waiting...

Mother-- Henry, you're wasting time. *[leaves]*

Henry--- *[sits on bed, head in hands]* I don't see why I have to do it. What are mothers for anyway? Besides I don't know how.
[kicks at clothes near by; sits and mopes]

Mother-- *[from off stage]* Henry! Did you hang up those clothes yet? I want you to carry the garbage out. *[pause]* Did you hear me?

Henry--- Yeah! I heard you! *[to himself]* Always something for me to do and I'm tired. *[picks up book and starts reading]* Say, this is a good story. *[stretches out on bed to read]*

[pause]

[Henry still reading, falls asleep. Book falls]

[Mother enters]

Mother-- Henry Martin! What do you think you're doing? Half an hour ago I told you to pick up your clothes and take the garbage out and look at you!

Henry--- *[awakens and rolls over slowly]* Huh? What'cha say? I'm tired.

Mother-- *[takes book and puts it across room]* I'm giving you just 20 minutes to get your jobs done, young man. March!! *[leaves]*

[Henry gets up and groaning, slowly begins. Carries each item off stage as to a closet. Finishes and stretches out with the book again.]

Mother-- *[enters]* Henry! Put that book down and carry out the garbage now! No more reading for you today, my lazy boy! And come back in when you're finished.

Henry--- But I'm tired. Why can't Janet do it? *[leaves reluctantly]*

[sound of can falling off stage]

Mother-- *[to herself]* Something has to be done about his laziness. It just can't go on! Let me look in the Bible. *[opens Bible]*
Yes, here is a good place to read.

[Henry returns slowly]

Henry--- Oh, am I tired!

Mother-- Henry, you know what an ant it, don't you?

Henry--- *[nods head, yes]* Those little, tiny insects we watched at Grandma's in the country.

Mother-- Tell me something about what you saw.

Henry--- Well, seems like they are always moving, going somewhere.

Mother-- Yes, what are they doing?

Henry--- Humm, well, first a few go out and run back and forth looking for something to eat. When they find something, they take a piece and carry it back to their home.

Mother-- What happens when they get home?

Henry--- I guess they tell the others because real quick a whole bunch of ants come hurrying out of the home and go to where the food is.

Mother-- Why?

Henry--- To help get all that food home. Some break off a piece to carry and when the piece gets smaller a lot of them will begin pulling and pushing to help each other take it home.

Mother-- Humm...They don't wait 'til tomorrow, do they?

Henry--- No way.

Mother-- What happens if someone steps on their house?

Henry--- They get busy and help each other fix up the pile of dirt again at the door. They clean everything up.

Mother-- And they work until it's finished. Henry, did you know the Bible talks about ants?

Henry--- No, mother.

Mother-- [*opens Bible*] Here's the place in Proverbs. You read it for us.

Henry--- [*reads*] "Lazy people" Oh, oh. "Lazy people should learn a lesson from the way ants live. They have no leader, chief, or ruler, but they store up their food during the summer, getting ready for winter. How long is the lazy man going to lie around? When is he ever going to get up? 'I'll just take a short nap,' he says; 'I'll fold my hands and rest a while.' But while he sleeps, poverty will attack him like an armed robber." [*Proverbs 6:6-11 TEV*]

Mother-- I'm afraid that's talking about you, Henry. You are lazy. You want other people to wait on you. You like clean clothes but you don't want to help take care of them. You like to eat but you don't want to help and do your part of the work.

Henry--- Aw, mother.

Mother-- I think you'd better sit there and read those verses again and think about it. [*leaves*]

Henry--- [*opens Bible*] She said Proverbs 6. Let's see. Oh, here it is. [*reads Proverbs 6:6-11 TEV*] "Lazy people should learn a lesson from the way ants live. They have no leader, chief, or ruler, but they store up their food during the summer, getting ready for winter. How long is the lazy man going to lie around? When is he ever going to get up? 'I'll just take a short nap,' he says; 'I'll fold my hands and rest a while.'" [*looks up*] Well, I don't like to admit it but I think mother is right about me. I am lazy! But I'm going to surprise her and be different.

[*gets up and runs out as calls--*] Hey, Mother, did you want me to go to the store for you before I go out to play?

[*curtain*]

TOPIC: BEING THANKFUL

SCENE: living room or kitchen

PROPS: story book, table, paper, pencil, Bible.
Have blackboard and chalk ready for use beside the stage.

CHARACTERS: Mother, Janet, Father, Henry--puppets;
a Bible school teacher

[curtain]

[Mother is on stage]

Janet--- *[enters carrying a story book]* Mommy, look what a good book the lady at the library helped me find. It's about a girl named Lucy who went to her grandmother's in the country.

Mother-- Did you thank the lady for helping you?

Janet--- Why should I? That's her job.

Mother-- Even so you should say "thank you" when anyone does something for you.

Janet--- *[opens book]* Look! She gets lost in the story. I wonder if...

Mother-- Janet, you're paying no attention. Now close the book and look at me! *[pause until Janet slowly closes book and looks at mother]* Nice people always say "please" and "thank you." It's rude and selfish not to.

Janet--- All right, Mommy. I will next time. Will you please fix my dress. It's unbuttoned again. *[turns back to mother to be buttoned]*

Mother-- There you are.

Janet--- Bye! I'm going to my room to read. *[starts to leave]*

Mother-- You forgot something, Janet.

Janet--- *[turns back toward mother]* What? I have my book.

Mother-- What were we just talking about?

Janet--- Oh! I did forget. Thank you, Mommy, for fixing my dress.

Mother-- You're welcome. *[Janet leaves]*

[mother alone on stage, shakes her head as she says--]

I hope she learns someday.

[curtain]

[pause]

[curtain opens]

[Dad and Henry are on stage]

Father-- I fixed your wagon wheel last night, Henry.

Henry--- *[as he starts to run out]* Great! See you.

Father-- Where are you going, Henry?

Henry--- *[turns]* Out to play with my wagon.

Father-- You forgot something.

Henry--- What?

Father-- Think.

Henry--- I put the game away. What else am I supposed to do?

Father-- Say, "Thank you," to someone who did something for you.

Henry--- Oh, that's all? Well, thanks, Dad. Bye. *[starts to leave]*

Father-- Wait a minute. Seems to me you don't use those words very often. In fact, they've been almost forgotten in this house. Time we dusted them off. Tonight I want you and Janet to make a list of things to say thank you for. I want them written on paper.

Henry--- Aw, Dad, do we have to?

Father-- Yes! If you kids aren't saying "thank you" here around the house, you probably aren't saying it to anyone. How long since you thanked God for some of the things He does for you?

Henry--- Well...

Father-- Probably always asking for things and never saying thank you. God does a lot more for you than Mother and I do. I want to see your list by tomorrow night. The Bible says: "Always give thanks for everything to God the Father." *[Eph. 6:20 TEV]*

[both leave in different directions]

[pause]

[Janet and Henry come in together; Henry carrying paper, Janet pencil]

Henry--- Like I told you, Dad says we have to make a list of things to thank God for. I guess we'd better get started.

Janet--- Here's a pencil. This is going to be a big job. Let's see...Oh, I have the first one. We should say thank you to God for our Mommy. *[writes]*

Henry--- And for Dad.

[Janet writes]

Janet--- For our food. *[writes]*

Henry--- For our clothes. Say, I like doing this.

Janet--- I do, too. And I have a good idea. Let's get the kids here at church today to help us.

[both turn toward audience]

Henry--- Hey, kids, would you help us? Mister _____, *[name of the teacher who is going to write on blackboard]* would you please help, too.

Janet--- Could you write the things on the blackboard so we can copy them.

TEACHER-- Sure I'll be glad to. *[Calls for things from audience and writes them on board]*

[When the list is complete, Janet and Henry together say to audience--]
Thank you, everybody!

TOPIC: **LOVING MONEY**

SCENE: in the house

PROPS: table, 2 dollars, book, Bible, chair,
small bag with a ball of paper inside to make it look full

CHARACTERS: Janet, Henry, Father

[curtain]

[Henry and Janet on stage]

Janet--- *[crying]* Give it to me! You mean old thing! Give it to me!

Henry--- I already gave you one. That's all you get!

Janet--- But you've got 3 and I have only 1.

Henry--- And who was it that went to the store for Mrs. Allen?

Janet--- We went together. Now give me another nickel. She said to give me half of the money.

Henry--- Nothing doing. I've got it! It's mine! I'm keeping it!
I carried more of the things than you did. Now get lost!

Janet--- I'm going to tell Dad how stingy you are. You're keeping my
nickel. Meany! *[leaves]*

Henry--- Go ahead, pest! *[after Janet leaves]* I wonder how long it is
going to take me to get enough money for that baseball glove
I'm saving for. If I didn't have to share with that pest of
a sister I would have had enough long ago. I want that glove
more than anything in the world!

[Father enters]

Father-- Hello, Henry. What are you frowning about so hard?

Henry--- I'm trying to figure out how I can get a glove in a hurry.
It takes so long saving from the jobs I do for the neighbors.

Father-- But it's good for you to have to save that way. You
appreciate what you get so much more. Well, I have to go out
for a while.

[Starts to leave and turns back to say---] By the way, if the garbage man
comes to collect his money for the week, it's under that book
on the table by the door.

Henry--- O. K. Dad. *[Father leaves]* Money? Wow! Let me see. *[Goes over to table and moves book]* Yes, here it is. How much is it? Two dollars! Just what I need to have enough to buy that glove. Now suppose I just borrow it. No one will know. I'll tell the garbage man that Dad forgot to leave his money. Hope he comes soon so I can go buy that glove today!

[a knock is heard]

Maybe that's him. *[Hurries off stage and is heard off stage saying---]*
Hello Joe. You came to get paid for the garbage collection this week? Sorry. My father forgot to leave the money for you. Bye. *[returns on stage]* Whew! So far so good. Now, I'll take the money from under the book and get my savings from under my bed. And I'll be off to buy that baseball glove before anyone finds out what I did. *[Leaves]*

[pause]

Father-- *[enters and goes to table, looks under book]*
Humm. I see that the money for the garbage man is gone. *[picks up Bible]* Think I'll read awhile. *[Sits down to read]*

[Sound of door banging. Henry rushes in out of breath carrying a paper bag with a ball of paper inside to make it look full.]

Henry--- Hi, Dad! *[Hurries across stage on his way to his room.]*

Father-- Hi, Henry. What's the rush?

Henry--- I got to put this away. The guys are waiting to play.

Father-- Wait a minute. What's in the bag?

Henry--- *[stops]* I went shopping and got my new glove.

Father-- But I thought you told me earlier you didn't have enough money yet.

Henry--- Yeah, that's right. I didn't until I cleaned Mrs Jacob's garage.

Father-- When did you do that?

Henry--- Oh, right after you left.

Father-- Is that so? Must not have been very messy.

Henry--- No, it wasn't but she paid me real good.

Father-- I see the money for the garbage man is gone.

Henry--- Yeah. He came right after you left and I paid him.

Father-- Henry! You are lying!

Henry--- But, Dad I....

Father-- No buts! I know you are lying. In fact you're piling one lie on top of another. You did not pay the garbage man. I met him on the street awhile ago and he told me you said I forgot to leave the money for him. When I came in I looked under the book and the money was gone. Where's the money, Henry?

Henry--- I was going to pay it back! I borrowed it to have enough to buy the glove.

Father-- So not only did you lie, you stole also.

Henry--- I only borrowed it!

Father-- Borrowing without asking is stealing.

Henry--- I....

Father-- And you lied about where you got the money. It's impossible to clean a garage and go shopping to buy a glove in only one hour.

Henry--- But I wanted a new glove so bad and it takes so long to save money. I wish we were rich!

Father-- How well I know that it takes time to save up money. But it's the honest Christian way. Stealing and lying are not! Before you came in I was reading in the Bible about what loving money and wanting to be rich does to people. Here, you read it. [*hands Bible to Henry*]

Henry--- [*reads*] "If we have food and clothes, that should be enough for us. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and are caught in the trap of many foolish and harmful desires, which pull them down to ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a source of all kinds of evil. Some have been so eager to have it that they have wandered away from the faith and have broken their hearts with many sorrows." [*1 Tim. 6:8-10 TEV*]

Father-- It says: "Those who want to get rich fall into temptation" and "the love of money is a source of all kinds of evil." And you sure proved those words to be true today, Henry. What are some of the evil, bad things you've done today because you wanted money so badly?

Henry--- *[with head down]* I told lies.

Father-- And?

Henry--- I took--I stole some money.

Father-- And I also overheard you earlier being mean and selfish about dividing money with your sister.

Henry--- Yes, Dad.

Father-- You've stacked up a pile of sins and at the bottom is your love of money. This is so serious there will have to be a punishment. You will return the glove to the store and the money you stole from me will be returned to me. Not only that, but you will not buy a glove for a month even if you are able to save enough money.

Henry--- Oh, Dad, so long?

Father-- Yes, you have done some very serious things. Now is the time to learn how bad they are.

Henry--- I'm sorry, Dad.

Father-- I hope you truly are. Come on. Let's return the glove to the store before it closes.

[As they leave----curtain]

TOPIC: **FORGIVING**

SCENE: kitchen

PROPS: Bible, piece of paper, paper airplane, pencil, table, chair

CHARACTERS: Janet, Mother, Henry

[curtain]

[Mother is on stage]

Janet--- *[begins calling from off stage and as entering]*
Mommy! Mommy! Where are you? Mommy!

Mother-- Right here, Janet! What happened?

Janet--- I want to tell you something very important!

Mother-- Well, sit down and catch your breath. Now then, what's it all about?

Janet--- Mr. John at church says I have to forgive people when they ask me to.

Mother-- Yes, that's right. That's what the Bible says, Janet.

Janet--- But some people are always doing mean things to me. Do I have to forgive them every time? What good does it do?

Mother-- One time Peter asked Jesus the same thing. Get your Bible and we'll read about it.

Janet--- O.K. Mommy. *[leaves and returns with Bible]* Here it is. Where do I look?

Mother-- In Matthew 18.

Janet--- *[opens Bible]* Here it is. *[reads]* "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, if my brother keeps on sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him? Seven times?' 'No, not seven times,' answered Jesus, 'but seventy times seven'."
[Mt.18:21,22 TEV] *[looks up]* Wow! what a lot of times! Let's see... 7 times 7 is 49 and 49 times 10 is...490 times! You'd sure have to keep a list to remember all those times!

Mother-- No, No! Janet, that's not the idea at all. Jesus means just to keep on and on and on forgiving. That's what God does for us. He keeps right on forgiving us for our sins every time we ask Him to--over and over and over again.

Janet--- I hadn't thought of that.

Mother-- And He forgets them too, like they never happened.

Janet--- But how can you forget?

Mother-- By thinking about what God says and talking to Him about it. If you truly forgive in your heart you can forget and you will treat the person you forgave as if it never happened.

Janet--- Well...I guess I'll have to try.

[curtain]

[pause] [place a piece of paper on table]

[curtain]

Henry--- *[enters]* Wish I could find a piece of paper to make an airplane. *[pause]* Oh! Here's one! Just the right kind, too! *[picks up paper and begins to make plane]* Fold it here...and here..and

Mother-- *[calls from off stage]* Henry! Come hang your shirt in the closet. I finished ironing it for you.

Henry--- O.K. Mother. *[leaves carrying paper; returns with completed plane]* There, it's finished. Nice! Let's see how she flies. *[throws it so it flies off the stage]* Oh, oh! It went out the window!

Janet--- *[enters carrying a pencil]* Hi, Henry. Whatcha' doin'?

Henry--- I just made a neat airplane but it went out the window. I'm going to see if I can find it outside. *[starts to leave]*

Janet--- Where's my paper? I want to draw a picture for my teacher.

Henry--- Uh..oh...

Janet--- I left it right here on the table. Now where could it be? *[looks on floor under table]*

Henry--- Uh...ah...a...Janet. I'm sorry but I guess your paper just went out the window.

Janet--- What!? You took my paper to make your airplane?! What a mean thing to do! You're always doing things like that!

Henry--- I'm sorry, Janet. Please forgive me. I should have asked before I used the paper. I am awful sorry.

Janet--- It wasn't a nice thing to do! *[slowly]* But...well...O. K. Henry, I'll forgive you...because Jesus wants me to.

Henry--- Thanks, Janet. I'll get another piece of paper for you.

Janet--- Oh, thank you!

[Henry leaves in a rush]

Janet--- It was awful hard not to get mad and stay mad but I am happier now that I forgave him instead.

[curtain]

TOPIC: SELFISHNESS

SCENE: living room

PROPS: chair, Bible

CHARACTERS: Janet, Henry, Mother

[curtain]

[Janet and Henry on stage]

Janet--- Henry, let's play a game of checkers. I'm first!

Henry--- No! I want to be first! You're always first.

Janet--- No! I said I was first before you.

Henry--- I'm telling Mommy.

Janet--- Go ahead, but if I'm not first I won't play. And I'll tell Joe not to be your friend if you don't let me be first.

Henry--- You're mean!

Janet--- I am not! You're mean! I want to be first!

Henry--- I'm telling Mommy anyway. *[leaves]*

Janet--- I don't care. I still say I'm first.

[pause]

[Henry returns]

Henry--- Mom says to take turns being first.

Janet--- All right, but I'm first the first game.

Mother-- *[calling from off stage]* Children! Come get some cake!

Henry--- I get the first piece!

Janet--- That's not fair! I'm younger and besides I'm a girl so I should be first.

[as both run out, they almost bump into Mother entering]

Mother-- Children! All I've heard all morning is "I'm first!" How selfish! All you're doing is thinking about yourselves.

Janet--- Well, I like to be first. It's no fun to wait to be second or last.

Henry--- I like to be first, too!

Mother-- Only one can be first at a time, you know. What would happen if you both were first at the same time?

Janet--- *[giggles]* That's silly, Mommy.

Mother-- I know, but let's try it. Here's a chair. You may both be first to sit in it.

[a scramble--both land on floor]

Mother-- See what happens?

Henry--- *[laughing]* Wow! Look at us!

Janet--- It's not funny! You hurt my arm!

[both get up]

Mother-- That's often what happens when you are selfish. Someone gets hurt. Did either of you happen to think what Jesus says about all this?

Henry--- Oh, no, Mom. Does the Bible talk about this too? It must have everything in it!

Mother-- Yes, Henry, the Bible has the answer to all kinds of problems. Let's look this one up. *[opens Bible]*
Read this, Janet.

Janet--- *[reads]* "If one of you wants to be great, he must be the servant of the rest; and if one of you wants to be first, he must be your slave--like the Son of Man," Jesus, "who did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life to redeem many people." *[Matthew 20:26,27 TEV]*

Mother-- Jesus is saying to not always be thinking of yourself and what you want. A servant is always doing things for other people, isn't he? Even Jesus calls himself a servant. Are you better than Jesus?

Henry & Janet-- No!

Mother-- Well, then. You need to think of others and how you can make them happy. One of those ways is to let others have the first turn or first place. How about it now?

Janet--- Henry, you can be first in checkers. Is that the way, Mommy?

Mother-- Yes, dear.

Henry--- O.K. thanks. And the next game you will be first.

Mother-- Good! Keep acting that way and we'll all be happier in this house! Now, let's go eat that cake I offered you.

[curtain]

TOPIC: **LYING**

SCENE: living room

PROPS: broken flower pot, Bible

CHARACTERS: Mother, Janet, Henry

[curtain]

Mother-- *[enters and sees broken flower pot on floor]* Just look at this mess!
I wonder who did this? It must have been one of the children.
Janet! Come here!

Janet--- *[enters]* Yes, Mommy. Here I am.

Mother-- Do you know anything about this broken flower pot?

Janet--- No, Mommy. I didn't do it.

Mother-- Didn't you even hear it when it fell?

Janet--- Well, I did hear a noise but I thought it was outside.

Mother-- All right. Where's Henry?

Janet--- Outside. Want me to go get him?

Mother-- Yes, please do.

[Janet leaves]

Mother-- Guess I'll clean up the mess. *[begins carrying the pieces out]*

[Henry enters]

Oh, Henry, there you are. Do you know how my flower pot was broken?

Henry--- I didn't do it. Janet did.

Mother-- Are you sure? Janet said she didn't do it.

Henry--- Well I saw her do it.

Mother-- How about telling me the whole story.

Henry--- She was playing dolls and got too close to the pot and knocked it over.

Mother-- What were you doing?

Henry--- Sitting in the chair over there, trying to get her to come outside to play with me.

Mother-- All right. Go get Janet and you come back too.

[as Henry leaves, Mother opens Bible]

[Henry and Janet enter]

Janet--- What do you want, Mommy?

Mother-- I think you know, Janet. You said you didn't break the flower pot. Henry says you did. What I want to know is: who is lying?

Janet--- He is!

Henry--- She is!

Mother-- Maybe you both are! Let me tell you something. Lying is a sin! God puts it in the same list with murder! Do you know who told the first lie in the world?

Janet--- That's easy! The devil told a lie to Eve in the garden. I heard that story at church.

Mother-- That's right. And Jesus says, here in the Bible, [*points to Bible*] that the devil is the father of lies. So that means that people who tell lies have the devil for their father because they are doing things the way he likes. God's way is to tell the truth. He never tells a lie! Which one is supposed to be your father?

Henry--- God, of course.

Mother-- Do you know what happens to liars when they die? Here it says in Revelation...Janet, you read it.

Janet--- [*reads*] "But cowards, traitors, perverts, murderers, the immoral, those who practice magic, those who worship idols, and all liars--the place for them is the lake burning with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." [*Revelation 21:8 TEV*]

Henry--- "The lake burning with fire and sulfur"!? That sounds awful!

Janet--- I don't want to be there! I want to be in heaven where everything is beautiful and good!

Henry--- Me too!

Mother-- Then you must stop lying. Now who will tell the truth about the flower pot?

Henry--- We both broke it, Mom. It was an accident but we were afraid to tell you.

Janet--- Yes, you see, we were playing ball in the house and well...now we know why you told us not to. I'm sorry I lied.

Henry--- So am I!

Mother-- Thank you for finally telling the truth. I hope that's all we have around here from now on!

[*curtain*]

TOPIC: FIGHTING

SCENE: living room

PROPS: chair, Bible

CHARACTERS: Janet, Henry, Mother

[curtain]

[Henry and Janet are fighting over a chair. Have the Bible to one side]

Janet--- That's my chair! I had it first!

Henry--- You left! Now I'm in it!

Janet--- But you can't! Get up!

Henry--- Go on, leave me alone!

Janet--- Get out or I'll pull you out!

Henry--- Oh no you won't!

[hitting each other. Janet begins to cry]

Janet--- I'm going to tell Mommy. You nasty, horrible thing!
[as leaves] Mommy! Mommy!

Henry--- I don't care!

[Janet and Mother enter]

Janet--- See, Mommy, he's in my chair and see the spot where he kicked me!

Henry--- She left it! She left it! And I only gave her a kick 'cause she hurt me first.

Janet--- No, I didn't! He...

Mother-- Children! Janet! Henry! Stop right now! This sounds terrible!

Janet--- But Mommy, look at my arm where he hit me! It hurts!

Mother-- The two of you are giving me a headache. Now keep quiet! I'm sure the people on the street could hear you. I'm ashamed of both of you.

Henry--- I didn't do anything.

Janet--- Oh, noooo.

Mother-- Both of you were wrong! The Bible says, "Blessed are the peacemakers," [Matthew 5:9 TEV] but you two are war makers. The Bible also says, "Be kind to one another." [Ephesians 4:32 TEV] Henry, was it kind of you to take Janet's chair?

Henry--- I didn't know she was coming back. Besides I wanted to sit here.

Mother-- You should have asked her. Or when you found out she was coming back you should have given it to her right away. Do you know something? You two have just proved that the Bible is right.

Henry--- What do you mean?

Mother-- Janet, take the Bible and find James, chapter 4.

Janet--- [opens Bible] Here's Hebrews and next comes James. What chapter?

Mother-- Chapter 4. Read the first 3 verses.

Janet--- [reads] "Where do all the fights and quarrels among you come from? They come from your desires for pleasure, which are constantly fighting within you. You want things, but you cannot have them, so you are ready to kill; you strongly desire things, but you cannot get them, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have what you want because you do not ask God for it. And when you ask, you do not receive it, because your motives are bad; you ask for things to use for your own pleasures." [James 4:1-3 TEV]

Henry--- I didn't know that was in the Bible!

Mother-- Why do people quarrel and fight?

Henry--- Because we want something and can't get it.

Janet--- And because we want things for ourselves, for our own fun.

Mother-- And that's exactly why the two of you were fighting.

Henry--- Yea, o. k., but anyway she started the fighting.

Janet--- You made me do it 'cause you took my chair!

Mother-- It takes two to have a fight, so you can't blame the other person. Anyway, the Bible says not to fight like that. We are supposed to love one another. If you love someone you don't fight with them. We're not supposed to fight with people, but we are supposed to fight against the devil. [looks in Bible] Here, in another place in the Bible, God says to use the Bible as your weapon to fight with.

Janet--- Oh, Mommy, that sounds silly. Fight with the Bible? [giggles]

Mother-- Yes, it is different. This is how it works. God gave us the Bible so we would know what are the right things to do and what are the wrong things. The devil hates right things. He wants us to sin but the more we know about what the Bible says, the more we can keep the devil and sin away. That's the Christian's kind of war.

Henry--- But the boys will call me sissy if I won't fight.

Mother-- Maybe so, but it takes someone who is really brave to fight the Christian way and to be a peacemaker. Remember, too, that Jesus didn't hit back when the Jews and the Romans beat him, spit on him, mocked him, and crucified him. Instead, he said, "Father, forgive them." Don't you want to be like Jesus?

Henry--- Yes, of course, I want to be like Jesus. I can see it's the right way. But it's so hard!

Janet--- I'll say it's hard! But if we start being nice to each other at home maybe that will help us with the others outside.

Mother-- Oh, yes! And Jesus will help you too, if you really want Him to.

Henry--- Let's start now. Here's your chair, Janet. I'm sorry I was mean.

Janet--- Thank you. I'm sorry I was mean too. Does your leg still hurt where I kicked you? Want me to get you a band-aid?

[curtain]

TOPIC: MAKING FUN OF OTHERS

SCENE: school playground

PROPS: none

CHARACTERS: Janet, Jack, Sue, Joe, Henry

[curtain]

[Jack, Janet, Sue on stage]

Jack---- Hey, here comes that dumb kid, Joe. Let's have some fun.

Janet--- Yeah! He can't stand to be called names.

Sue----- Always gets mad. I even saw him cry one day.

[Joe enters walking tall but as kids call him names, he gradually droops and hangs his head]

Jack---- *[mocking voice]* Hey, Joey, think we're going to have a flood? I see you're wearin' your high-water pants today.

[laughter from Janet and Sue]

Sue----- He's not worried about a flood 'cause he can float on those boats he's got on his feet!

[laughter from 3 tormenters]

[Joe walks off the stage]

Janet--- *[laughs]* Oh, that was fun! Did you see his face?! All red!

[all 3 laugh together]

Jack---- Here he comes again! You two do what I do.

[Joe enters walking tall]

Jack---- *[drops down to make himself shorter and calls up to Joe. Sue and Janet also drop down]* Hey, jolly green giant, how's the weather up there?

Sue----- Don't you ever get dizzy with your head up so high in the air?

Janet--- Must be hot up there, huh, Joe? Your ears are red!

Jack---- Oh that's just his natural ugly look.

Janet--- *[chanting]* Ugly, ugly, ugly Joe!

ALL 3--- Ugly Joe, how's the weather up there? *[laughter]*

[Joe drops his head and runs off stage]

Sue----- Hey, what's the rush, crybaby?!

[Henry enters from same side where Joe disappeared]

Henry--- Hi there kids. What are you guys up to this time?

Jack---- Hi, Henry. Nothin' much.

Janet--- We were havin' a little fun with Joe.

Henry--- Well, Joe didn't look like he was enjoying it.

Sue----- Oh, he can't stand a little teasing.

Jack---- We were just kiddin' him a little.

Henry--- Are you sure he understood that you weren't serious? By the look on his face he didn't think it was funny at all. What were you saying to him?

Janet--- Oh just about his silly looking pants and big shoes.

Sue----- He really is ridiculous looking. You'd think he's wear something better than that to school.

Jack---- I wouldn't be caught dead dressed like that!

Henry--- Really? Sounds to me like you weren't "just kiddin'" like you said. Maybe I need to set you straight on a few things. You 3 should be ashamed of yourselves.

Sue----- Who do you think you are, Mr. Big Shot?

Henry--- Keep quiet a minute and listen. Did any of you bother to find out why Joe dresses like that?

Jack---- Well...no...but I thought he'd get the message if we teased him.

Henry--- If you've got something to say to someone, that sure isn't the way to say it! Besides that, did you know that Joe's family is having a hard time? A couple of months ago his Dad lost his job and then his mother got sick.

Sue----- Oh!

Henry--- And Joe has 4 brothers and sisters. It's hard enough for them to buy food and pay the rent! There isn't money for clothes.

Janet--- Oh.

Henry--- Joe needs friends--real friends--not people like you three. There's a verse in the Bible that talks about you. We learned it in my Bible class in church. It says, "If you make fun of poor people, you insult the God who made them. You will be punished if you take pleasure in someone's misfortune." [Proverbs 17:5 TEV]

Jack---- Oh wow! I never thought there was anything wrong with makin' fun of people.

Henry--- Besides that, do you know the Bible story of Elisha and the bears?

Sue----- No, I never heard it.

Janet--- Tell it to us, Henry.

Henry--- Well...it goes like this. Elisha, who was a prophet of God, was walking along a road one day. As he came near a town a gang of boys from the town started yelling at him and making fun of him. I guess he was bald-headed 'cause they were yelling, "Get out of here, baldy!" Well, Elisha didn't like it a bit so he cursed them in the name of the Lord and 2 bears came out of the woods and tore those boys to pieces!

Jack---- Oh, wow! I'd sure hate to have been one of them!

Janet--- Me too!

Sue----- I guess what you are saying is that God doesn't want us to make fun of people.

Henry--- Right! And He says it is such a bad thing that it is the same as if you were making fun of God himself.

Jack---- I see now that what we were doing was really bad. You know what? I think we owe Joe an apology. Come on gang, let's go find Joe.

[all hurry off stage behind Jack]

[curtain]

TOPIC: FILTHY LANGUAGE**SCENE:** on the playground; in the home**PROPS:** broom, Bible**CHARACTERS:** Janet, Henry, Joe, Mother, Father

[curtain]

[on the playground]

[Henry & Joe are on stage whispering and laughing.]

Henry--- Aw, Joe, that's nothing. Listen to this one!

[Boys put heads together briefly and then separate laughing loudly]

Joe----- O.K. but I got a better one than that. My big brother said it the other day and shocked everybody. It's... *[whispers in Henry's ear]*

Henry--- You beat me that time but I've still got another. Did you ever hear the guys coming out of the factory on the East Side? Man, have they got a vocabulary. I heard one telling a story the other day and he was saying a really filthy word all the way through. Want to hear it?

Joe----- Of course, Henry. Aren't we having a contest to see who can say the filthiest word? How will I know if your word is worse than mine if you don't tell me?

Henry--- It was... *[again whisper together]*

[Both laugh loudly, doubling over as Janet enters]

Joe----- Say that one again. I bet you won't say it out loud.

Henry--- Sure I will. No body will hear me. It's.....oh, oh.
[Henry claps his hand over his mouth then quickly takes it off as he says:]
Ah...hello, Janet. Where are you going?

Janet--- Henry! How could you say such an awful thing?

Henry--- What are you so mad about? All I said was "hello." What's wrong with that?

Janet--- You know exactly what I'm talking about Henry Martin! Shame on you! How can you say such a filthy word?

Henry--- Aw, come on, sis. Everybody says words like that nowadays. Don't they Joe?

Joe----- Sure they do. And if everybody does it why can't we do it too. It's fun. Want to hear some more. I got a real juicy one. It's... *[Before Joe can say the word, Janet claps her hands over her ears and runs frantically from the stage screaming:]*

Janet--- NO...NO....NO!!!!!!!

[the boys laugh nastily and clap each other on the back]

Joe----- Did you see her face? You would have thought we had shown her a live snake.

Henry--- Yeah...Ha! Ha! Treats her right. She's a pesty sister anyway.

Joe----- Let's have another round before we go home. O.K. pal?

Henry--- Sure. *[boys put their heads together]*

[curtain]

[curtain rises on Mother in the house.]

Mother-- *[sings a chorus as she sweeps the floor]*

[a door bangs off stage and Janet is heard off stage calling]

Janet--- Mother! Mother! *[enters running and very upset]* Oh, Mommy, oh...oh. It makes me so mad!

Mother-- *[puts her arms around Janet]* Hello, Janet. Easy does it. What has you so upset?

Janet--- Those boys! Mommy, they are so nasty! I can't stand them!

Mother-- Who, dear? What are you talking about?

Janet--- Henry and Joe! I was coming home from Judy's house and I saw them down the block laughing and whispering. I thought they were planning to play a trick on me but when I got near I found out what they were up to. Mommy, they were saying nasty, filthy words and laughing!

Mother-- I'm so sorry to hear that. Are you sure?

Janet--- Oh, I'm very sure. When they saw me, Henry stopped and covered his mouth but I heard what he said anyway. And they laughed at me because I was upset and they tried to say more to me but I ran away screaming.

Mother-- Well, I'm glad that you didn't join in with them, Janet. This kind of thing is going around all over the place and it's terrible. It's shocking. I think that tonight we had better have a family time to talk about this matter before it gets worse. I'm sure your father will agree.

[looks at her watch on arm] Oh, look at the time! We'd better get supper ready. Your father will be home soon.

[curtain]

[When the curtain rises, the family--Father, Mother, Henry and Janet--are on stage]

Henry--- But, Dad, it wasn't so bad. And besides everybody's saying those things now so what's the big deal?

Father-- The 'big deal' Henry, is that just because everybody's doing it doesn't make it right. In fact, if everybody's doing it, then most likely there is something wrong with it. When it comes to right and wrong it's not a case of whether everybody's doing it or not.

Henry--- Well, I don't know why not.

Father-- What is the basis for deciding what is right and wrong for Christians?

Janet--- I suppose that God is the one who tells us what is right and wrong, doesn't He, Dad?

Father-- Yes, that's right, Janet. And how does He tell us these things?

Janet--- Is it in the Bible?

Father-- Exactly right. God gave us the Bible so we would understand what He thinks about things that we might choose to do. And the Bible says, Henry, that most people have chosen the way that leads them to punishment instead of the way that leads to life.

Henry--- Of course, I don't want punishment but still...well, it's hard to be different.

Father-- How well I understand but in the long run it's well worth it. Life here on earth is for just a few years while eternity is forever and forever.

Mother-- Don't you think that it would be a good idea to read what the Bible says about filthy talking so we can make sure of what God thinks about it?

Father-- Exactly what I was coming to. Henry, please go get the Bible.

Henry--- O.K. Dad. *[goes off stage and returns with Bible]*

Father-- Now who remembers a verse about the words we should not use?

Janet--- The other Sunday we read a verse in class that said we aren't supposed to use bad words but I don't remember where it is.

Mother-- I remember one in Ephesians.

Father-- Yes, let's read that one. *[opens Bible]* Here it is: "Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you." *[Ephesians 4:29 TEV]*

Mother-- *[looks in Bible]* And there's another verse further down which says: "Nor is it fitting for you to use language which is obscene, profane, or vulgar. Rather you should give thanks to God." *[Ephesians 5:4 TEV]*

Father-- Children, do you know what 'harmful words' are?

Janet--- I think it means saying things that are not nice.

Father-- Yes, and it includes unclean words and dirty jokes.

Henry--- There were some other big words, 'ob...scene' and 'pro...fane' and 'vulgar'. What do they mean?

Mother-- They mean unclean, filthy, nasty. The kind of words that you and Joe were having such a good time saying to each other this afternoon.

Father-- I was very sad to hear that you were doing that, Henry.

Henry--- I figured it was all right because it seems like everybody's doing it. Why I've even seen some of the kids that go to church wearing Tee shirts with some pretty bad words printed on them.

Mother-- You're right, Henry. Written that way, they have a very unclean message. I believe that sometimes people don't stop to think about what is written on their clothes or what they are saying.

Father-- Yes, sad to say, the use of bad words is even getting into the church. But that's no excuse for anyone in this family to be using them. I'm planning to make this subject the topic for my lesson the next time I teach at church. But starting now, we have to be more careful not to use unclean words at any time or in any way. We should be a good example to others instead of doing what everybody else is doing.

Mother-- And when someone uses a bad word in our presence, we can ask them not to say such things around us. Maybe we can help them to think about what they are saying and how awful it is.

Henry--- Maybe they're like me and think that just because most people are doing it then it must be o.k. I'm sorry, Dad, Mom, Janet that I've been saying words that I shouldn't say.

Father-- Of course we forgive you, son. We must all pray for each other that this sin will never again be a part of our family.

Mother-- Do you know what my mother used to do to us kids when I was a child if any of us spoke a bad word? She would wash our mouths out with the strongest soap in the house.

Janet--- Oh, Mommy, how awful!

Father-- Now maybe that's not a bad idea.

Henry--- Ugh! Oh, Dad, please don't do that.

Father-- We'll see...we'll see...

[curtain]

TOPIC: **COMPLAINING**

SCENE: the dining room

PROPS: table, dishes to represent food, math book, Bible

CHARACTERS: Mother, Father, Henry, Janet

[curtain]

[family is at the table, heads bowed, Father praying]

Father-- Thank you, heavenly Father, for taking care of us today. Thank you for providing the food we have tonight. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Henry--- What! Beans again?! We had beans last night!

Janet--- Mommy, you know I can't stand meat loaf. Why can't you just make hamburgers?

Henry--- What did you do to these potatoes?! Mom, they're awful! I sure wish you'd cook macaroni. I like it better than potatoes!

Janet--- Yeah, me too! Isn't there any fresh bread? This bread is dry!

Mother-- I'm sorry about the potatoes but they only browned a little bit. It started to rain and I ran out to get the clothes off the line.

Father-- The meat loaf is delicious. Janet, please pass the butter.

Janet--- The dish is empty.

Father-- Will you get some from the kitchen, please.

Janet--- Do I have to?

Father-- Yes.

Janet--- I always have to get things for the table. Let Henry do it.

Father-- Janet, I asked you to get more butter.

Janet--- But I don't want to.

Father-- Go!

Janet--- *[as leaves table]* It's not fair! I always have to go!

Henry--- What's for dessert, Mom?

Mother-- I didn't have time to make dessert today.

Henry--- What! But I want dessert. I'm still hungry!

Mother-- There's still plenty of meat loaf, beans and potatoes.

Henry--- But I don't want that stuff! Ugh!

Father-- That's enough, Henry! You may leave the table and no bedtime snack tonight. That's no way to talk to your mother about the food.

Henry--- *[as he leaves]* That's not fair! I'll starve!

Father-- It might be good for you to learn what real hunger is. Then you wouldn't complain so much.

Janet--- *[returns with butter]* Here's your old butter.

Father-- When you finish eating, Janet, you will clear the table.

Janet--- Oh, I'm finished.

Father-- There's still food on your plate.

Janet--- I'm not eating that stuff. I can't stand it!

Father-- You will eat the food on your plate and I'm giving you just 5 minutes to finish.

Janet--- Oh, Dad! I can't!

Father-- Get busy!

[Janet eats]

Mother-- I visited Mrs. Harris today. She's been very sick so I stayed to do her wash.

Father-- I'm sorry she's ill. No wonder you look so tired.

Janet--- I'm finished! I'm finished! Can I leave now?

Father-- Not until you have cleared the table.

Janet--- That's not fair. It's Henry's turn. He never does anything around here. *[begins taking dishes out]*

Father-- *[while Janet is off stage]* You know, dear, this complaining of the children has got to stop.

Mother-- I know! It's getting worse and worse. *[sigh]* What can we do?

Father-- We've been letting them get by with it just too much. Let's pray about it tonight and think of a plan to make things better.

Henry--- *[calls from off stage]* Hey, Dad, I can't do this problem in math!

Father-- Bring it here, Henry. I'll help you.

Henry--- *[enters]* That dumb teacher always gives too much homework. I'd like to change places with him. I'd show him! I'd make him work!

Father-- Quit mouthing off and show me the problem.

Janet--- *[runs in]* Mommy! Mommy! Where's my blue dress? I want to wear it to school tomorrow.

Mother-- Probably in the laundry. You have others to wear.

Janet--- But I want the blue one. I don't see why you didn't wash my blue dress today!

Mother-- There wasn't time to wash all our clothes today because I was helping Mrs Harris. She's sick. You can wear the red dress.

Janet--- But I don't like that one!

Mother-- Stop complaining! Just be glad you have another one to wear.

Janet--- *[leaves angrily]* Oh, man!

[curtain]

[put up sign that says: NEXT MORNING]

[curtain]

[Mother and Dad are at the table; Henry and Janet enter]

Mother-- Good morning, children.

Father-- Good morning, Henry, Janet.

Janet--- Morning.

Henry--- Morning. What! Oatmeal again! Ugh!

Janet--- I won't eat that awful stuff! I want eggs.

Mother-- I'm sorry, children, but if you don't like it, then you can do without breakfast.

Henry--- But I'll starve!

Janet--- Mother!

Father-- No matter what we have to eat you children complain. In fact, you complain about everything. So, from now on if you complain about the food, you will not eat anything until the next meal.

Henry--- But, Dad...

Father-- No buts! Go brush your teeth. It's time for school.

Janet--- *[crying]* But I'm hungry.

Father-- Perhaps you won't complain next time.

Mother-- And when you two come home for lunch, I have some Bible verses for you to learn.

[curtain]

[Put up a sign which says: LUNCH TIME]

[curtain]

[Henry and Janet run into room]

Henry--- Hey, Mom! We're home! What's for lunch?

Janet--- We're starved!

Mother-- *[enters carrying dish]* Hello, children. I'm glad you're home.

Henry--- I'm starved! I could eat anything!

Janet--- Me too! What's for lunch?

Mother-- Fried potatoes, hot dogs and salad.

Henry--- But I...*[claps hand over mouth and says--]* Oh, oh! I almost forgot!

Janet--- It's not my favorite but I'm hungry!

Mother-- Let's pray. Henry, you may pray for us.

[all bow heads]

Henry--- Thank you, God, for food to eat. Amen.

Mother-- While you eat we're going to begin learning some verses to help you remember not to complain. Listen to this.
[opens Bible] "We must not complain as some of the Israelites did--and they were destroyed by the Angel of Death."
[1 Cor. 10:10 TEV] See how the Lord hates complaining?

Janet--- Oooh!

Henry--- I didn't know that was in the Bible!

Mother-- The Israelites were always complaining. But do you know what they complained about the most?

[children shake heads, No]

They complained about the food God had given them--just like you two.

Henry & Janet-- Oh.

Mother-- Here's something else the Bible says. "Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may be innocent and pure as God's perfect children, who live in a world of corrupt and sinful people. You must shine among them like stars lighting up the sky..." *[Phil. 2:14,15 TEV]* You two have been more like storm clouds than stars lately. I want these verses memorized by morning so you can say them at breakfast.

Henry & Janet-- O. K. Mother.

Henry--- And I'm going to try not to complain anymore, too.

Janet--- Me too!

[curtain]

TOPIC: **BEING AFRAID**

SCENE: in the house

PROPS: blanket, Bible,
lightning (made by quickly turning a light on and off),
thunder (a tape recording of the real thing, or made by
striking partly closed hands on the bottom of a cardboard
carton turned up-side-down; Or experiment until you get the
effect that you need.)

CHARACTERS: Janet, Mother
(Besides the puppeteers you will need someone to make the
sound-effects.)

*[Before the curtain opens, begin making thunder and lightning and continue after it opens.
Be sure to make thunder only when no one is speaking]*

[curtain]

[Janet is hiding under her blanket on a darkened stage so that the lightning can be seen]

[have Bible to one side]

Janet--- Oooh, I'm so scared! I hate these thunder storms.
[lightning and thunder] Oooh, there goes that thunder again.
And it's getting worse. Oh, what am I going to do? *[begins to cry]*
Mommy! Mommy! *[between sobs]* Mommy! *[lightning]*
Oh, please Mommy, come here! *[thunder]*

[Mother enters and turns on the light]

Mother-- What's the matter, Janet, dear? *[thunder]*

Janet--- *[jumps up and grabs Mother around the neck]* I'm so scared, Mommy!
[thunder and Janet sobs] The thunder and lightning are so terrible!
[sobs]

Mother-- Now, now, Janet. I'm right here with you. And God is with
you too. *[thunder]*

Janet--- But I don't see why God had to make thunder and lightning.
It awful. It makes me so scared. *[thunder]*

Mother-- Well, I don't know exactly why God made thunder and
lightning. But I do know that it makes people think about
how strong and powerful He is.

*[Janet lets go of her mother to listen but stays very close and jumps every time
the thunder sounds.]*

Janet--- But why does he want to scare me so bad? It makes me want to run and hide. *[thunder] [Janet covers ears]*

Mother-- I don't believe that God is trying especially to scare you. He's made the world to work in certain ways. Sometimes when we don't understand how the world works it makes us scared. When I was a little girl, I used to be afraid too.

Janet--- You were!?

Mother-- Yes, I was, but my mother taught me to pray whenever I was afraid and to repeat Bible verses or sing. It really helps a person not to be so afraid. *[thunder]*

Janet--- But I'm afraid that the house will fall down or something terrible will happen. *[hugs her mother again]*

Mother-- Yes, sometimes the lightning does strike a building. That's true. But that doesn't happen very often. Usually if lightning strikes, it hits a tall tree or a post. *[thunder]*

Janet--- See, I told you something terrible might happen. And it makes me so scared!

Mother-- But we have to use good sense about what to do. People who live out in open spaces put lightning rods on their buildings so that the lightning goes straight down into the ground and does little damage. We have tall trees around our house so we are protected. The lightning would strike one of them instead of our house because they are taller.

Janet--- Oh, I didn't know that.

Mother-- Sometimes people do foolish things, like go out and walk around in a thunder storm or run over and stand under a tree so they won't get wet. But if you follow good rules, there's very little chance of getting hurt by the lightning.

Janet--- But it's the thunder that scares me more than the lightning. It bangs and rumbles so loud. *[thunder]* There, see what I mean?

Mother-- Thunder can't hurt you. It's just the noise that the lightning makes. We see the lightning before we hear the noise. My father always told me that if you hear the thunder, the lightning has already missed you.

Janet--- Really?!

Mother-- Next time you go to the library, you should get a book about thunder storms and we'll read it together.

Janet--- That's a good idea.

Mother-- Now, let's pray together.

[both bow heads]

Dear Father in heaven, thank you for the way you have made the world. Sometimes we don't understand it at all but help us not to be afraid. Help Janet not to be afraid of the thunder and lightning. We know that it shows us some of your great power. Thank you for reminding us of who you are. Amen. *[thunder]*

Now, Janet, let's read some Bible verses. *[opens Bible]*

Here's a good one. You read it Janet.

Janet--- *[reads]* "When I am afraid, O Lord Almighty, I put my trust in you. I trust in God and am not afraid."
[Psalm 56:3,4 TEV]

Mother-- There are many verses about being afraid, but let me read one of my favorite ones. *[reads]* "The Lord is my light and my salvation; I will fear no one. The Lord protects me from all danger; I will never be afraid." *[Psalm 27:1,2 TEV]*

Janet--- I like that one too. In the morning I'm going to start memorizing these verses so that the next time we have a storm I can repeat them to remind me to think about God.

Mother-- That's a good idea. And remember, Janet, that no matter what you may be afraid of, if you just remember to pray and repeat Bible verses, it will help you to overcoming all your fears.

Janet--- Thank you, Mommy, for helping me. Good night. *[hugs]*

Mother-- Good night, dear. Sleep well while God takes care of you.
[leaves]

[light goes out.]

Janet--- *[lightning, and thunder sound at a distance]* Oooh, the storm isn't over yet, but I'm not so afraid now. Thank you, God, for taking care of me. *[Yawn]* I'm sleepy.

[curtain]

TOPIC: WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT?

Based on the story of Mary and Martha: Luke 10:38-42

SCENE: living room

PROPS: colored streamers, a calendar with the 27th as a Sunday, paper, pencil, table, small plastic bowls

CHARACTERS: Sue, Janet, Judy

[curtain]

[calendar on wall; paper and pencil to one side]

[Janet and Sue on stage]

Janet--- *[clapping hands]* Oh, Sue, I'm so excited! Mother has finally decided that I may have a party for my 13th birthday. And she said I can have it on the very day of my birthday.

Sue----- *[clapping hands]* Wonderful, Janet! Birthday parties are so much fun. I'll help you get ready. How much time do we have? What day of the week will it be?

Janet--- I haven't looked at the calendar yet to be sure but I think it's on a Sunday. Let's look. It's the 27th.

[both girls turn toward calendar on wall]

Sue----- *[disappointedly]* Look, Janet, it is on Sunday. How can you have a party on Sunday? We go to church.

Janet--- Oh, that's easy. We'll have it in the afternoon. It won't hurt for us to miss church just this once to get ready for my party.

Sue----- I don't especially like that idea, Janet. Remember the lesson we had just a few Sundays ago about choosing what is most important? Jesus is always present at church even though we can't see Him and I wouldn't want to miss being with Jesus. Besides now we're Christians and you know how important it is to always take part in the Lord's supper so we can have our sins forgiven.

Janet--- But I can't see how missing one Sunday would do any harm. Other people miss church for things they think are important. For me this party is just about the most important thing I can think of right now.

Sue----- Well, I guess you have to decide for yourself but I'm not going to miss church.

- Janet--- But I can't get everything ready all by myself. I need you to help me.
- Sue----- I'll be glad to help you on Saturday and before church on Sunday but I'm not going to stay home from church.
- Janet--- I thought you were my best friend, but I don't think you really care if I have a nice party or not.
- Sue----- Of course, I care. It's just that I care most of all about following what the Bible says about putting Jesus first in my life.
- Janet--- Well, I do too, but this is a special occasion. Let's make some plans. The paper is here. Let's make a list of who to invite. I'm so excited!
- Sue----- O.K. I'll help you make the plans. Here, give me the paper and pencil. I'll write while you talk. You're so excited I don't think that you could spell the names right.
- Janet--- Of course you're the first on the list, Sue. Now let's see..there's Judy. And there's Betty, Jane and Becky...and Rose...and...Jill...and Katie, Greta, Lily and...
- Sue----- Whoa! Not so fast! O.K. Katie...Greta...Lily. How about the boys? Aren't you inviting any boys?
- Janet--- Of course, silly. Boys...John, Fred, George, Ken, Robert, Jim...
- Sue----- Hey, wait! You're going too fast again for me to write them down.
- Janet--- But I don't want to forget anyone. Let's see--add Horace and... *[Close the curtain as Janet is speaking]*
- [Pause]*
- [curtain]*
- [As Janet talks she rushes back and forth, putting up streamers]*
- Janet--- Where have the days gone? Here it is already the day of my party and there's so much to do! I knew it would be this way. There wouldn't be time to go to church and get everything ready too. I want it to be simply perfect. This is such a special birthday. To think that I'm a teenager today! Wow! *[goes off stage and right back]*

I'm so disgusted with Sue. She's supposed to be my best friend. But nothing I said would persuade her how important it was for her to stay with me to help instead of going to church today. It's a good thing she came over to decorate the cake before she went to church this morning. But there is an awful stack of dirty pans and dishes to be done.

Now where did I put those cards and the pins for that neat game that we're going to play when everyone gets here? Oh, I think they're in my room. Better get them now. *[rushes off and can be heard talking off stage]* And I need a blindfold and a tray of little things. *[returns]* How am I going to get it all ready in time?

Am I tired! But I can't rest. There's too much to do! Why oh, why couldn't Sue have stayed to help me just this once? *[rushes around some more]* The morning just hasn't been long enough!

[a knock is heard at door]

Janet--- *[goes to side to answer door]* Sue! Are you here already? Is it that late? Hurry! There isn't a minute to lose. The table has to be arranged and all the fancy little ice cream and cake dishes put out in the kitchen!

Sue----- *[enters]* Calm yourself, Janet. You're so frazzled you won't even enjoy your own party.

Janet--- Well, if I am it's partly your fault for not staying and helping me. And you left all those dirty dishes in the sink.

Sue----- Don't you even want to hear about what happened at church this morning?

Janet--- There isn't time.

Sue----- I'll tell you while we finish up these things. I'll fix the table while you get the party dishes down from the cabinet.

Janet--- Oh, do hurry, Sue. We'll never get it done. *[goes off stage; returns with dishes]*

Sue----- Janet, you will never guess who the preacher was this morning. No one knew he was coming. What a surprise!

Janet--- Tell me! Who? Who?

Sue----- We had thought he was coming next month but somehow the dates got mixed up and he was really supposed to come today. And he was so good...

- Janet--- You don't mean Bob Brown, the man with the puppets?! Oh, Sue, I've been waiting and waiting for him to come back to speak at our church and now I've missed hearing him. Oh, Sue!
- Sue----- Yes, I felt bad that you weren't there but well, you weren't and what could I do?
- Janet--- Oh, Sue. I almost feel like crying.
- Sue----- I understand how you must feel. Be careful or you'll drop those dishes.
- Janet--- *[sets dishes down]* Look at the clock! It's a quarter to 2. The gang will be here any minute. I hope they all come. Everything is ready except I have to fix my hair. *[runs off stage]*
- [a knock sounds at the door]*
- Sue----- I'll go to the door, Janet. *[walks to side of stage]*
Hello, Judy. I'm glad to see you. Come in.
- [Judy enters]*
- Judy---- I guess I'm a little early. Sue, wasn't that a positively great service at church this morning?
- [Janet enters]*
- Janet--- Judy! I'm so glad to see you. I hope the whole gang remembers to come.
- Judy---- Hi, Janet. I'm awfully sorry you weren't at church this morning.
- Janet--- I am too, Judy, but I didn't know Bob Brown was going to be there and anyway I had to get things ready for my party. There wasn't enough time to do it all yesterday.
- Judy---- I'm afraid I have bad news, Janet. You see, well, since you weren't at church a lot of the parents aren't letting their kids come to the party. At first we thought you might be sick but when we found out that you just stayed home to fix up for the party...Well, the parents said that it wasn't right for you to miss church for that reason. And well...they said that their kids couldn't come. It wouldn't be right.
- Janet--- But everything is ready! Oh, Judy, you can't be serious!
- Judy---- I'm afraid it really is true, Janet. I'm so sorry.

Janet--- *[beginning to cry]* Oh..oh...oh! What am I going to do? All the party things are ready for a whole bunch of people *[sob]* and there are only 3 of us here. *[sob]*

Sue----- Janet, I'm so sorry, too. You worked so hard and you even missed church to get it ready. *[puts arm around Janet]*

Judy---- Listen, girls. I just got a terrific idea!

[Janet and Sue turn quickly toward Judy]

Janet & Sue-- What is it?

Judy---- Why can't we simply wait until after church tonight to have the party? We can call everyone up and tell them that the time is changed. I'm sure everyone will come then.

Janet--- I like that idea!

Sue----- I do too.

Janet--- You know what girls? I see now that I was foolish to stay home to get my party ready instead of going to church. I made a bad choice. Why I almost ruined my own party! I should have put Jesus first instead of what I wanted. I could have planned the party for the evening in the first place.

Sue----- I'm sorry I didn't think to suggest it to you.

Janet--- It's not your fault, Sue. I was being so stubborn that I probably wouldn't have listened to you anyway. I'm going to tell all the kids I'm sorry too.

Judy---- Come on girls. Let's start phoning. We've got a lot of people to talk to before it's time to go to church at 6 o'clock.

[curtain]

TOPIC: FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS

The need for following instructions exactly and completely

SCENE: kitchen, dining room

PROPS: file card, bag stuffed to look full, table, small pie made of clay, small Bible

CHARACTERS: Janet, Henry, Mother, Father, Judy

[curtain]

[Janet is in kitchen]

Janet--- This is going to be fun! I have the house to myself. More important I have the kitchen to myself. Everyone is gone for the morning. Mother asked me to get dinner. Just something simple. She said the roast is already cooked so all I have to do is put the potatoes on to cook and fix a salad. That won't take long.

I like working in the kitchen. I like the smell of food cooking especially when I'm the one who is in charge.

Say! I've got a swell idea. Why don't I surprise the family. Mother didn't say anything about dessert but I could fix some. There's plenty of time.

What could I fix? Let me think. *[pause as Janet thinks]* I know what--an apple pie! It's everybody's favorite.

I'll get mother's recipe card. *[leaves and returns with card]*
Here it is.

[a knock sounds at the door] Oh, who can that be? I'm busy.

[goes to side stage to answer door] Hello, Judy. Come in if you want to, but I'm kind of busy.

Judy---- *[enters]* Hi, Janet. What's up?

Janet--- The family's gone and I'm fixing dinner.

Judy---- I love to cook. Let me help.

Janet--- O.K. if you want. I just got out the recipe card to see what I need to make an apple pie. Let's see...*[reads from card]*

6 apples--That seems like an awful lot to peel. I think I'll just put in 4 apples for my pie.

Judy---- Are you sure, Janet? Shouldn't you do what it says?

Janet--- Well, it's my pie so I guess I can put as many apples in as I want. Besides it'll save time. Next it says...*[looks at card]* 3/4 cup of sugar--That's an awful lot of sugar! Just the other day my health teacher was saying that sugar isn't good for you. It will rot your teeth. I don't think I'll put any sugar in my pie.

Judy---- Are you sure you can make a pie without sugar? I never heard of...

Janet--- This is my pie, I said. *[looks at card]* Spices and salt--The spices smell good. I'll put those in but I don't think we need the salt. Grandma can't have salt because she has high blood pressure so we don't need it either.

Judy---- Like you said, it's your pie, Janet.

Janet--- Well, we'd better get busy. You can peel the apples while I make the pie crust. The knife is in the drawer.

[curtain]

[Pause]

[curtain]

Mother-- *[calling as entering, carrying stuffed bag]* Janet! Janet! I'm home.

Janet--- *[entering from other side]* Here I am, mother.

Mother-- Is dinner ready?

Janet--- Can't you smell it? The roast is nice and hot. The potatoes are almost done and the salad is in the refrigerator.

Mother-- Good! I'm hungry. Let's open up a can of string beans, too. What's that strange smell? It's almost like apples. Guess I must have spilled something in the oven last time I used it.

Janet--- Did you get your shopping done, mother?

Mother-- *[as she puts her bag down]* Yes, thanks to your being such a good helper and getting dinner. Why, you even have the table set. Good girl!

Janet--- Judy came over so I put her to work helping me. We had fun.

Mother-- *[giving Janet a hug]* I'm so glad.

Janet--- Here come Dad and Henry. *[goes off stage as says:]* I'll start putting the food on the table.

Mother-- All right, dear. I'll wash my hands and help you.

[curtain]

[place table on the stage]

[curtain]

[4 family members are around the table]

Father-- This is certainly a good dinner. Things are cooked just right.

Henry--- And you fixed my favorite salad. I sure was hungry.

Janet--- I'm glad you like it but don't eat too much. I made a surprise dessert.

Henry--- Wow! That's great sis. What is it?

Janet--- Well, it's everybody's favorite. Can you guess?

Father-- Butterscotch pudding?

Janet--- Oh, Dad, you're teasing. That's not our favorite.

Henry--- Chocolate cake.

Janet--- Guess again.

Mother-- Now I know what I smelled when I came in the house. Let me guess. You made a pie.

Henry--- Apple pie! What a sister! Apple pie! Yummmm.

Janet--- I have it hidden so it would be a surprise.

Father-- This dinner is delicious but now I can hardly wait for dessert, especially if it's pie made by your mother's recipe.

Mother-- Go, bring the pie in, Janet dear.

Janet--- O. K. Mom. *[leaves and returns with pie]* Here it is, everybody!

Mother-- The crust looks lovely, Janet.

Henry--- Who cares about looks? Hurry and cut it, Janet! My mouth is watering.

[Janet sets pie down and makes motions as if handing out pieces]

Father-- It smells good.

Henry--- *[begins coughing]* Oh...Janet...what...is this...a joke?

Mother-- *[alarmed]* Henry, are you all right? What's the matter?

Father-- *[speaks as with mouth puckered up]* Taste the pie, my dear, and you will understand what's the matter.

Mother-- What's all the fuss about? It's just apple pie. Let me take a bite...Oh! Janet, what...did you do?

Henry--- This pie is awful! It's so sour it would make a lemon win a prize for sweetness.

Janet--- Henry, it's not that bad. It's just different, that's all.

Henry--- Well, you can eat the whole thing. I don't want another bite.

Father-- Now, Henry, we'll excuse you from eating the pie but be kind to your sister. She must have made a mistake, that's all.

Mother-- Janet, dear, couldn't you find the recipe card for apple pie?

Janet--- Oh, yes, I found the card but well, you see... I didn't put any sugar in or salt either because I've heard that they aren't good for you. I didn't think we would miss them.

Henry--- Is that why it came out so flat, too, instead of nice and thick?

Janet--- I only put in 4 apples instead of 6. I didn't think it would matter. Peeling apples is a lot of work.

Mother-- I know, but don't you know that if you want an apple pie that can be eaten, you have to follow the instructions of the recipe?

Janet--- I guess I know it now. This pie is disgustingly awful. I don't blame any of you for not wanting to eat it.

Henry--- I'll guess that even the dog will turn his nose up at it.

Father-- Henry, that will be enough.

Henry--- May I be excused, please.

Father-- Just a minute, Henry. Listen, all of you. I don't think everything is totally lost. We can all learn something from this disappointing experience. Why were we disappointed tonight?

Janet--- Because I didn't follow the recipe instructions. I did it my own way.

Father-- That's right, Janet. This all makes me think of what the Bible says. Go get my Bible, will you please, Henry.

[Henry goes off stage and returns with Bible, placing it on table]

Thank you.

Father-- Janet, read Matthew 7:21.

Janet--- *[Janet opens Bible and reads]* "Not everyone who calls me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only those who do what my Father in heaven wants them to do. *[Matthew 7:21 TEV]* Jesus said that. I remember learning that verse in Bible school last year.

Father-- Good, Janet. The Bible says that God and His son Jesus made the rules or instructions about how to go to heaven. If we do what He says, then we get to live in heaven like He promised.

Now, who made the instructions about how to make the apple pie?

Janet--- Mother did.

Father-- Right, and if you want to have an apple pie, you have to follow the instructions. If you don't you get something different and it's not very tasty, is it?

Henry--- I see what you're saying. If we want to have what God has promised we have to do things the way He says, not the way we want.

Father-- Right. Most religious people think the Bible is a great book but they don't think they have to follow exactly what it says. They think they can do things their own way.

Mother-- Sometimes they say that what God says is too hard, so they change it a little to make it easier. That's what Janet did with the pie.

Father-- And when they do things their own way they make a salvation and a church according to their way, not according to God's way.

Janet--- That's what I did. I didn't follow mother's recipe so instead of having a pie according to mother's instructions I made a pie according to my own ideas. And it was awful.

Father-- That's what a lot of people are going to find out on judgment day. What a disappointment they are going to have because they can't enter heaven. They haven't been saved by Jesus' blood because they changed God's instructions. The churches they have made are not according to God. They made churches according to themselves and those churches are awful in God's eyes.

Henry--- I sure don't want God to think that what I do is awful. It's much better to do what He says.

Janet--- Well, I sure learned that lesson today. From now on I'm not going to change the recipe to suit myself. I'm going to follow instructions when I cook anything.

Father-- And we're all going to follow God's instructions in whatever He tells us in the Bible. We're not going to change anything He says.

[curtain]

TOPIC: VISITING THE SICK**SCENE:** on the street, at home, in the hospital**PROPS:** telephone, sound of siren, bed, leg in traction, tiny box**CHARACTERS:** Janet, Sue, Judy, Mother

[curtain]

[Janet, Sue and Judy on the street]

Janet--- I told you I have something else planned this afternoon. I don't have time and that's that!

Sue----- If it were your grandmother you'd go, wouldn't you?

Janet--- That's different. She's in the family. But I can't see why you girls want to visit an old lady who never did anything for you or even ever paid any attention to you.

Judy---- Now, come on, Janet. You make her sound so awful and she really isn't. She's just a sick lady and she's all alone.

Sue----- We thought if some young people went to visit her it would cheer her up. What's so hard about that?

Janet--- Well, I say that her family ought to take care of her.

Judy---- You know that everyone in her family lives far away. They can't come very often, I guess.

Janet--- That's her problem, not mine. Besides, who says she's really sick? Somebody at prayer meeting is always saying, 'Pray for Mrs Brandon' but I don't think she looks sick enough to get all that attention.

Sue----- We're sorry you feel that way, Janet. We thought you'd be glad to be a part of the plans. Almost everyone else in our class is going.

Janet--- Well, like I said, I've got other things to do. Bye. *[leaves]*

[Sue & Judy sadly watch her leave]

Sue----- Too bad. Well, let's go.

Judy---- Yes, it's late. We promised to meet the others at 3:30.

[both leave as curtain falls]

[curtain]

[in the house]

Mother-- *[speaking on phone]* Is this the hospital? Please send an ambulance immediately! My daughter has fallen down the stairs and hurt her leg. The address is 35 First Street, between Third and Fourth Avenues. And hurry! *[hangs up the phone. Hurries to side of stage to talk to Janet off-stage]* Just lie quietly, Janet dear. They are coming soon. What in the world happened?

Janet--- Oh, Mommy, oh, oh, my leg hurts so bad. I slipped on that rug at the top of the stairs. I tried...ouch it hurts...I tried to catch the railing but my hands were full of books and I fell. Oh, why don't they hurry? Mommy, Mommy!

Mother-- Dear little Janet. I'm right here with you. Try to be calm. They'll come as soon as they can. Listen... *[a siren is heard coming from a distance and getting closer]* I hear the ambulance coming now! Just lie still. I have to go open the door so they can get in. *[hurries to other side of stage]*

Right this way. She's in the hall. Do exactly what they say, Janet, dear. I'm right here with you. I'll be with you in the ambulance too. Don't be afraid.

[curtain]

[the siren is heard leaving and getting further away]

[in front of curtain to give time to prepare next scene]

Judy---- *[speaking on phone]* That's right, Sue. Janet fell down stairs and broke her leg! Isn't that awful? *[pause]* She'll probably miss weeks of school! *[pause]* She tripped on a rug and fell with all her books. *[pause]* I don't know how she's going to stand to stay in bed all that time. She hates to be still. *[pause]* Say, that's a good idea. Call the others and I'll be right over as soon as I eat supper. Bye. *[leaves]*

[curtain]

[Janet is in bed in the hospital with leg in cast up in air as in traction]

Janet--- Oh, boy, am I bored! *[sigh]* I've been in this bed for what seems like weeks. I couldn't believe it when Mother told me this morning that the accident happened only day before yesterday. And to think that the the doctor said I'll probably be right here for 10 days at least! *[sigh]* I don't think I'll be able to stand it. *[sigh]*

[knock sounds at door]

Oh, good! Maybe that's someone to see me. Or it might just be the cleaning maid. Come in!

[Sue and Judy enter. Judy is carrying tiny box.]

Sue! Judy! Am I glad to see you!

Judy---- Hi, Janet. Were you lonely?

Sue----- Hello, Janet. Here we are at last. They wouldn't let us come until today. Said you had to get over the shock of your fall first.

Judy---- How are you doing, Janet? That's quite a rig you've got hung there.

Janet--- Isn't it awful? I feel like a ship without a sail with all these ropes and pulleys. And I don't think I can stand being here another minute!

Sue----- It must be hard but it will all come out for good in the long run, don't you think?

Janet--- Well, I sure don't see any good in all this!

Sue----- Yes, I suppose you don't but well...in the future maybe, huh.

Judy---- Look what we brought you, Janet. That new game we were playing over at Linda's house the other day.

Janet--- Say, that's neat. Do you have time to play it with me?

Judy---- Sure. You can choose who'll be first.

[curtain with pause to show time passed]

[curtain]

[Janet in bed in hospital]

Janet--- Here it is 2 weeks I've been stuck in this bed. Sure wasn't the way I had planned to spend the time, but..well...what can I do about it?

I wonder if any of the gang will come to see me today. They sure have been swell. Somebody has been here every single day to talk, to play games, to bring me little gifts. I don't know what I would have done if they hadn't been coming.
[knock] Come in!

[Judy and Sue enter]

Judy---- It's just us again--me and Sue. Come to pester you for a while.

Janet--- I'm sure glad you're here! You know what? I was just now thinking about how great you and all the gang have been to come visit me every day that I've been stuck in this bed. I don't know what I would have done without you.

- Sue----- We've been glad to do it, Janet. Thank you for appreciating it so much.
- Janet--- I've had time to do a lot of thinking, lying here. Remember the day I had the accident? You wanted me to go with the gang to visit Mrs. Brandon and I said I wouldn't go. I was too busy.
- Judy---- Yes, Janet, we remember. You were...well...kind of upset with us about the whole thing.
- Sue----- We went with the others and she was cheered up so much by our visit. We go every Saturday afternoon now to sing for her and read scripture. It gives her something to look forward to every week. It has made us feel good too.
- Janet--- I know how she feels. I sure look forward to your coming every day. It's helped me get through some gloomy, boring days. I never realized before my accident what it was like to be shut away from the rest of the world and unable to do the things you'd like to do. When I get well enough with this leg to be on crutches I'm going to go with you every Saturday to visit Mrs. Brandon.
- Sue----- Oh, that's wonderful, Janet!
- Judy---- See, Janet, we thought something good could come out of your accident. It's just like the Bible says, "We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him."
[Romans 8:28 TEV]
- Sue----- The good is that you have learned to want to follow what Jesus was talking about when he said we should look after the sick and visit them if we want to have eternal life.
- Janet--- Yes, I was reading about that today in Matthew 25. It says that when we do those things for others it's the same as if we were doing it for Jesus Himself. I'm sorry that I was so stubborn and selfish before. You're right, Judy, this accident has been good for me. Thanks girls for being patient with me and for showing me by your example what is the right way.

[curtain]

TOPIC: **GOSSIP**

SCENE: school playground

PROPS: sound of a bell

CHARACTERS: This story requires a large number of characters, but the largest number on stage at a time is 6. Three people can handle the story. It will perhaps require a bit more practice to make the story move smoothly.

Rose, Sue, Janet, Linda, Judy, Mary--school girls,
Miss Roberts--the teacher,
Joe--school boy.

[curtain]

[Sue is on stage as Janet enters]

Sue----- Hey, Janet! Do you know what I heard about Rose?

Janet--- What did you hear? Tell me, tell me, Sue.

Sue----- Promise not to tell anyone?

Janet--- Sure. Come on tell!

Sue----- Well, it's that Judy saw Rose steal some money this morning.

Janet--- Really?! Where?

Sue----- Where we hang our jackets in the classroom. She didn't know Judy could see her from her desk.

Janet--- Whose money did she take?

Sue----- Mary's! Rose must have known that Mary had money in her jacket pocket because she just went right to it, stuck her hand in the pocket and took it out.

Janet--- Are you sure it was from Mary's jacket?

Sue----- Of course! Anybody would know it was Mary's. It was that stripped one she wears all the time. Nobody else has one like it.

[enter Linda]

Linda--- Hey girls, what's new? What are you two whispering about?

Janet--- Oh, Linda, it's terrible! Did you know that Rose is a thief?

Linda--- You're kidding!

Sue----- No, it's true. She stole some money from Mary this morning and she's probably been stealing money from other people, too.

Linda--- Why that's awful! I always did think there was evil behind that pretty face. Wait until I tell my mother!

Janet--- Well, I know I'm not going to play with her anymore.

Sue----- Me either! Who wants somebody like that for a friend?

Janet--- Yeah! Let's warn the other girls, too.

[School bell rings]

Sue----- Oh! Oh! We've got to go in now. We'll talk more after school.

[All hurry off stage]

[curtain]

[pause]

[curtain]

[Linda and Sue are huddled on one side of the stage with their heads together. Rose is all alone on the other side. Miss Roberts comes on stage and walks over to Rose.]

Miss Roberts-- Good morning, Rose. I'm glad to see you at school on time. But why are you standing here all alone? Don't you want to play with the others before school begins?

Rose---- *[sadly]* No, thank you.

Miss Roberts-- Don't you feel well?

Rose---- Oh,...yes,...it's just that...well, they don't want me.

Miss Roberts-- What makes you think that? I thought all the girls in my class were friends.

Rose---- *[sigh]* So did I but since yesterday they won't even talk to me.

Miss Roberts-- Did you have an argument?

Rose---- No. I really can't figure it out. In the morning we were friends but after lunch they began whispering together and looking funny at me.

Miss Roberts-- I see. I'll have to... *[Joe comes running in]*

Joe----- Excuse me, Miss Roberts. There's someone to see you in the office.

Miss Roberts-- Oh, thank you, Joe. Rose, I'll talk to you some more later. *[hurries off stage with Joe]*

[As Miss Roberts leaves, Rose also walks slowly off stage, going the other way. Then the two girls, Linda and Sue move to center.]

Linda--- My mother told me that Mrs. Green told her that she saw Rose in the candy store the other day. She was standing at the candy counter, probably getting ready to steal something.

Sue----- There! See! Even our parents know she's a thief!

Linda--- My mother says something has to be done about it. We can't have a thief running loose like that.

Sue----- I know! What might she steal next? I told my mother about Rose, too. She said she was going to come to see Miss Roberts today.

Linda--- I hope Miss Roberts can do something!

Sue----- Whatever is done, I know I'll never play with Rose again!

[Miss Roberts enters with Rose and Mary.]

Miss Roberts-- Sue, Linda. Come, girls, I want to talk to the four of you together. Something has gone all wrong and we've got to make it right again.

Sue----- Yes, Miss Roberts. You better believe something is wrong!

[everyone gathers around Miss Roberts]

Miss Roberts-- Why aren't you girls playing with Rose? I thought all of you were good friends.

Sue----- We don't like her anymore.

Linda--- My mother doesn't want me being friends with a thief.

Miss Roberts-- What did you say?! Who said Rose is a thief?

Linda--- She steals all the time.

Miss Roberts-- Have you seen her steal anything?

Linda--- No, but...

Miss Roberts-- Then how do you know she stole anything?

Linda--- Sue told me.

Miss Roberts-- And Sue, did you see her steal something?

Sue----- Well, no, but Judy told me she saw her.

Miss Roberts-- What did Judy say she saw?

Sue----- She saw her go to the jackets in our classroom and take money out of the pocket of Mary's jacket. And that's stealing!

Miss Roberts-- Did either of you see Rose take money from Mary's jacket?

Linda and Sue-- [*shaking their heads, say together*] No.

Miss Roberts-- Then let's talk to the person who saw what happened. Sue go get Judy, please.

Sue----- Yes, Miss Roberts. [*runs off and returns quickly with Judy.*]

Judy---- Did you want me, Miss Roberts?

Miss Roberts-- Yes, Judy. Tell me, what did you see Rose do with the jackets yesterday?

Judy---- She took some money out of Mary's jacket.

Miss Roberts-- Are you sure it was Mary's jacket?

Judy---- Sure I'm sure. Only Mary has a striped one like that.

Miss Roberts-- What did she do with the money?

Judy---- Well, I did think it was kind of funny. She took the money up to your desk.

Sue----- You didn't tell me that part!

Miss Roberts-- Mary, did you have money in your jacket yesterday?

Mary---- Yes, Miss Roberts.

Judy---- And Rose took it! I saw her!

Miss Roberts-- Hush a minute, Judy. Now Rose, tell me, did you take money from Mary's jacket?

Rose---- Yes, Miss Roberts, but I didn't steal it. Mary asked me to take it out for her.

Linda, Judy, & Sue-- What?!

Mary---- Yes, that's right. Remember I had to go take a note to my brother's teacher. He's sick. I asked Rose to get the money from my coat while I was gone and pay for my milk for lunch.

Miss Roberts-- So you see, girls? Rose is not a thief at all. She was being a helpful friend. Judy, you did a very bad thing, telling Sue that Rose was a thief.

Judy---- But I thought...

Miss Roberts-- You should have asked Rose what she was doing. Instead you told Sue only part of the story. Sue told Janet and Janet told Linda and you all told your mothers. That's called gossip! I'm glad Sue's mother came to see me about it so I could straighten things out.

Judy---- But it looked like she was stealing.

Miss Roberts-- Maybe so, but the truth was she was not stealing but rather she was helping. What you girls have done is a terrible thing! Do you know what God says about gossip? He says, "With his mouth the godless person destroys his neighbor." [Proverbs 11:9 TEV] You girls have been destroying Rose with your mouths, making people think she is something bad when she is not.

Judy---- Oh, Rose, I'm so sorry. Please forgive me!

Sue----- I'm sorry too. I just remembered that God also says in the Bible to "Love your neighbor." We sure weren't loving Rose when we talked about her like that. I'm going to explain the truth to Janet tomorrow when she comes back to school. What I told her wasn't true. I'm truly sorry.

Linda--- I'm sorry too. Let's all be friends again. And we have to tell our mothers, too, to make things right again.

Rose---- Of course, I forgive you.

Miss Roberts-- And next time one of you sees a problem, talk to that person about it--not to everyone else.

[curtain]