

A script from



“Eyewitness: The Story of a Promise Kept”

An Easter Play for Children
by
Carrie Varnell

SYNOPSIS

It's two days after the resurrection of Jesus and the disciples are a little on edge about what will happen next. As they hide away and lay low until things calm down, they reminisce about their time with Jesus. Narrated from the perspective of a young girl, this simple play is a "what if" about the events after Jesus' death on the cross. Hear "eyewitness testimonies" from some really fun characters.

TIME

Approximately 25-30 minutes; This script is 15 pages long

CAST

NOTE: *This play was written to be performed by adults for children. However, it can be changed to be played by children. If you choose to have children play the characters, I would recommend that the characters Estelle and Ruth be played by older teenagers or even adults who can play an old woman.*

Rebecca: A young girl, approximately 12-17. She is the narrator of the story.

Thomas: Disciple; has a hard time having faith.

James: Disciple

Peter: Disciple; loves fish.

John: Disciple; he is the "voice of reason" within the group.

Andrew: Disciple

RS 1: Roman Soldier 1; gruff

RS 2: Roman Soldier 2; also very gruff

Citizen 1: Passerby

Citizen 2: Passerby

Citizen 3: Passerby

Citizen 4: Passerby

Ruth: Very old woman, we're not sure how old, but she's been around longer than most people as has her friend, Estelle; has seen a few things in her time; Jewish; can speak with a New York accent. Think Edith Bunker from All in the Family.

Estelle: Friend of Ruth; she is also very, very old; Jewish; can speak with a New York accent. Similar in character to Ruth.

Mary: The mother of Jesus

Mary M: A follower of Jesus

F1: Follower 1; Saw Jesus on the road to Emmaus; talks like a surfer “dude”.

F2: Follower 2; Another who saw Jesus on the road to Emmaus; talks like a surfer dude.

Jesus: The Christ; comes in at the end.

COSTUMING

All characters should wear Biblical-type costuming. **Follower 1 (F1)** and **Follower 2 (F2)** should wear Biblical robes, but can also wear something to indicate their “surfer dude” personalities. For instance, when originally performed, they wore knit caps with black string twisted together to look like dread locks. Our church already had costumes for the Roman Soldiers. If you don’t have these, then I would suggest checking with another bigger church who might have a costume room, or even your local theatre. They are usually willing to rent out costumes for a minimal fee.

SET DESIGN AND PROPS

Scene 1: City street in Jerusalem. This can be in the aisle of the audience. ***See how to make a palm tree on page 21.**

Scene 2: A room where the disciples are hiding out. You can use a table that is low to the ground and pillows to sit on. You can also use short stools covered in fabric or milk crates covered in fabric to fix any blocking problems or site problems that can come with sitting on the floor of a stage.

Scene 3: A quiet room where Mary is alone and thinking about Jesus as her baby. This can be somewhere off of the stage on the floor level in front of the audience. She can sit in a simple wooden chair with a simple blanket that might have belonged to Jesus.

Scene 4: The city streets of Jerusalem. This can be on the floor level in front of the audience or in the aisles.

Scene 5: Same as Scene 4. Get creative about the different settings and where to put your characters. They can be placed all over your auditorium or playing space. The two old ladies, Estelle and Ruth, are pushing a cart that they use to sell their wares, so you can have all sorts of things

hanging off of it and inside it. We had a fake rooster sitting on top of it and named him Archibald.

Scene 6: The room where the disciples are hiding out.

Scene 7: Same room.

Scene 8: Begins in the room, but Peter runs out and through the streets of Jerusalem and to the tomb. He then runs back to the room.

Scene 9: The room where the disciples are hiding out.

Scene 10: Same room.

From the Author:

My Dad is a Children's Pastor and always likes doing fun and creative things for the kids on Easter Sunday. For two years in a row we performed this play during the Children's Worship. Some things in this play are straight from Scripture and some are "what if's".

One thing I love to do is create an environment throughout the room. Our space was the children's area at our church and had a small stage at one end. We had the children sit on the floor so that they were free to turn around and watch other scenes going on around the room. The aisles and the floor level in front of the stage were set up like the streets of Jerusalem and the stage level was the room where the disciples were hiding. The narrator interacts with the children during the play and even gets them to respond a couple of times. This takes some bravery and someone who can control the situation, but it's so much fun hearing what the children come up with. We also had the Roman Soldiers in the audience and the kids loved it!

Any blocking in the play is what was originally done, so feel free to change whatever you need to in order to fit your space and event.

I also used a lot of music for scene transitions and to add to the "Jerusalem" feel. There are many soundtracks that you can pull music from to use as transitions between scenes. Two soundtracks that have great music with a Middle Eastern feel are "The Passion of the Christ" and "The Nativity Story". We used a song from Riverdance for scene 8 where the disciples run to Jesus' tomb. There are a couple of times in which Rebecca sings quietly, in scenes 3 and 6. We used the lullaby from "The Prince of Egypt" for scene 3 and a shortened and slower version of "Israel" or "Hine Lo Yanum" for scene 6 (Maranatha has a version of this song you can find on You Tube).

I sincerely hope you have as much fun as we did performing this play.
Carrie Varnell

Scene 1

Rebecca enters with a basket of food. She is on her way to the room where the disciples are hiding. She addresses the audience.

Rebecca: Oh. You shouldn't be out on the streets at such a late hour! Pilate has set a curfew and if the guards see you they might arrest you! We must hurry and get indoors. I have just come from my aunt's getting some bread for the disciples, the followers of Jesus.

With all the chaos and excitement, the markets closed early today and we needed food. What's all the excitement about? Haven't you heard? The man they called Jesus has been crucified a couple of days ago. My mother wouldn't let me go to witness it as so many others did, including my brother.

I had met him- Jesus- just the other day. He had just come to town a few days ago and, boy let me tell you, that was a sight! We had already heard of all the amazing things he had done and I couldn't wait to meet him! I touched his hand as he passed and he looked at me and smiled. I've never felt like that before in my life and I knew! Somehow I just knew that he was the Messiah! The one our scriptures promised would be sent by God to rescue us. People were waving palm branches and shouting *(she shouts)* "Hosanna!" *(Catches herself and looks around nervously)* Oh.

We had heard of all the amazing things that Jesus had done- healing the sick and the blind and teaching thousands of people! The Jewish leaders and the government rulers didn't like what he said or what he did. The priests were afraid that he would come and take over! So they had Jesus arrested and put on trial. And then they sentenced him to death. When Jesus died, the sky turned black even though it was the middle of the day!

Jesus had followers, or disciples- 12 of them. They are waiting for me now to bring them their supper. I should go and you should go too! The Jewish leaders are keeping an eye out for anyone who followed Jesus. Shalom! Peace be with you!

Rebecca makes her way to the "room" as the LIGHTS come up on stage where we see John, Thomas, James and Peter sitting around a table. HOUSE LIGHTS dim.

Scene 2

Thomas: We should probably gather all of our belongings and see if we can make our way out of the city.

James: No. It's still not safe. Governor Pilate's men will be on the lookout for anyone who was even SEEN with Jesus. We should wait here a while longer while things calm down out there.

Peter: *(With full mouth)* Let them come. I'm not afraid. It's better than sitting around and waiting for nothing! *(Goes rummaging for sword in a box...pulls loaves of bread and other misc objects. No sword is found.)*

John: Peter, calm down. Besides, what if Jesus comes back? Remember what he said?

Thomas: John, you saw what I saw. He's not coming back.

Knock at the door.

John: Who's there? *(Peter draws his loaf of bread like a sword.)*

Rebecca: It's Rebecca. I brought food.

John: Did anyone follow you?

Rebecca: No, I don't think so. I did see someone in the street, but I don't think they meant any harm. They didn't even know what had happened today.

Thomas: Foolish girl! We told you not to speak with anyone! You could put us all in danger!

Rebecca: I'm sorry! I thought-

John: It's alright. There is no harm done. We should all do a little better at calming down and not jumping at every little noise, eh Thomas? Whatever happens, happens. It is all the Lord's will and it is in his hands. Now run along home and be very careful. Be sure that no one sees you.
(Rebecca exits)

Thomas: Do you think she'll reveal us to anyone? How do we know we can trust her?

John: Thomas, brother, don't lose heart. Jesus told us all that would happen didn't he? Why can you not be still? What is it that bothers you?

Thomas: I guess I just can't believe that he is gone. I wish none of this had happened.

James: I know brother. I think we all miss him.

John: We just need to be patient. It's only been two days since Jesus died, but I feel like it's been so long since we talked with him.

Andrew: Being cooped up with you all is enough to drive us all crazy. I'm tired of being patient. I wonder if anything will be different today.

Thomas: I doubt it.

Rebecca: Now the disciples were hiding because they were afraid that the Jewish leaders would find them and arrest them because they were followers of Jesus. They remembered what Jesus had told them- that he would be crucified on a cross, but then he would come back to life after 3 days. After seeing him being beaten up and then die on the cross, they began to lose hope. How would you feel? *(takes a few answers, then...)* They missed Jesus so much! Well, let's find out what happens!

James: *(Remembering)* You know for a carpenter, he sure knew how to fish.

Peter: *(Warming and laughing at the memory)* You know, I saw this man once with a dancing fish. Turns out he just had is strung up with a line and jerked it around. But Jesus...wow! All he had to do was give a command and the fish practically turned themselves in! Jesus didn't even have to get into the boat, or even fiddle with the nets! He just stood on the bank and told *us* where to throw the net!

Ahhh, Jesus loved the boats and the lake...talking about fishing...eating fish...watching fish. Just us and him. Together. With the fish. I think that's what I'll miss the most- the times when it was just us alone with him. Fishing.

John: Yes, we've learned a lot just by sitting and... *(looks strangely at Peter)* listening to him.

Andrew: I will always remember his miracles. Remember the boy...what was his name...that brought the bread and...

Peter: Fish!

Andrew: Right...fish. We were all sitting on the hillside while Jesus was preaching and the crowd was getting very restless and hungry. Jesus saw the boy and asked if he could use the boy's lunch to feed the people.

Thomas: We all thought he was crazy.

Andrew: Right. It would have taken the bakers for miles around baking all week and fishermen from all over saving their catch from the week to feed all those people! But somehow as he broke the bread there seemed to be more and more and we fed everyone that was there.

James: There must have been thousands.

John: That was pretty amazing.

Peter: Lots of fish.

John: That was Jesus for you.

Andrew: Amazing just doesn't seem to describe him or the things that he did. Wherever we went he would heal people of their sicknesses.

Matthew: Or make the blind to see and the lame to walk.

John: I will never forget the little girl. She was so young and her father was so sad. He didn't know if Jesus was really the Messiah, but he did have faith that he could perform a miracle. He asked Jesus if he could heal his daughter who was sick and near death. By the time we got to their home it was too late. The little girl had died.

Andrew: So what happened?

John: Jesus asked her parents why they were crying- that the girl was hadn't died but was only sleeping! The crowd that had gathered laughed at Jesus. I'll never forget it. He went inside and sat next to the lifeless little girl. He took her hand and leaned over and began to sing softly to her. She opened her eyes and smiled at Jesus and he asked her if she wanted some breakfast.

Peter: Fish? *(Other disciples glare at him.)*

James: News about Jesus spread so quickly after that.

Matthew: Hey, remember the time that we were all in the boat and the storm blew up?

Thomas: Now let's see...was that when we were sailing from the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, or on the river...or that time when the big tornado came down and then...

Matthew: No, remember? We saw a figure coming towards us on the water.

James: Peter thought it was a ghost.

Peter: Hey, I wasn't the only one.

Matthew: *(Not paying attention to Peter)* That's right. But as the figure got closer, we realized it was Jesus.

John: He sure knew how to make an entrance, didn't he?

Matthew: Jesus spoke, and the storm stopped!

James: And then Peter thinks he can walk on water too.

Peter: I did too!

James: For like three seconds.

Peter: I could have gone longer!

Thomas: I doubt it.

Andrew: Thomas, you doubt everything!

Peter: Well, it was not one of my prouder moments. Walking on water is not an easy thing to do. You should try it sometime and we'll see how far you get! Not enough fish to step on.

James: You sank because you took your eyes off the Master. You lost your faith. We should all remember our faith...now more than ever (*directed at Peter*).

Peter: (*Offended, threatening James with his bread*) My faith is strong. I dare anyone of you to question my love and loyalty to the Master.

Thomas: I seriously doubt that your loya...

Andrew: (*Interrupting, glaring at Thomas*) No one is questioning you Peter. I believe you. At least you got out of the boat. No one else dared try.

John: Thomas, weren't you trying to hide under the nets in the bow of the ship? And the rest of you? What were you doing? Even me.

Thomas scowls, the other disciples grow silent.

Peter: I feel as if I've failed him. He told me...

Andrew: Told you what?

Peter: He told me that while we are here in Jerusalem that I would deny knowing him.

Andrew: You didn't, right? You didn't did you? Peter? Peter?!

Peter: (*Annoyed and hurt*) Yes!! Yes. I did it. And not just once...three times! He knew that I would fail him. I can't imagine what he must think of me.

John: Peter, don't be discouraged. Jesus loves you as if you were his own brother.

Lights on stage dim. Everyone on stage is still; Light on Mary. Rebecca is in front of audience.

Scene 3

Rebecca: Mary was Jesus' mother. She had been there when Jesus died on the cross. That night she sat and remembered all the wonderful things that Jesus had said and did. Nobody knew Jesus like Mary did. Before Jesus was born an angel had visited her to tell her that she was going to have a baby and that she was to name him Jesus. From that moment on she knew that her boy would be special- that somehow he would change the world. It was so hard for her to watch other people say such horrible things about Jesus. No mother wants to see her son be ridiculed and hurt. That night as she sat and thought about Jesus she remembered him as her little boy.

*Rebecca sings lullaby; she can also hum softly as **Mary** rocks her "baby".*

Rebecca: Mary also prayed that night. She prayed for her son and that God's will would be done.

*Lights fade to black on **Mary**; Back to the stage.*

Scene 4

Matthew: Sshh quiet. It sounds like someone is outside.

*HOUSE LIGHTS fade up; STAGE LIGHTS dim; **Matthew** listens at the door; Everyone on stage is very still during this next scene. **Roman Soldiers** and **Citizens** are crossing by each other in front of audience on the "city street".*

***Roman Soldier 1** stops **Citizen 1**.*

RS1: You there!

Citizen 1: Yes? What's this all about?

RS1: We are looking for some men who call themselves the disciples of Jesus. Do you know where they are?

Citizen 1: No. I don't know who you're talking about. *(Quickly leaves)*

***Citizen 1** and **Citizen 2** are walking together and pass by the **Roman Soldiers**.*

RS2: *(Stopping another passerby)* Stop right there in the name of Caesar!

Citizen 2: Sir, what is it?

RS2: Do you know the whereabouts of the ones who follow Jesus?

Citizen 2: No, sir. But I did see the one called Peter earlier in the day.

RS2: Where did you see him?

Citizen 3: He was in the streets...in the marketplace. We don't know where he is now.

RS2: Is this the truth?

Citizen 3: Yes sir. Please, I don't know anything more.

RS2: It is a crime against Rome to harbor wanted men. I hope for your sake you are telling the truth! *(They leave quickly)*

RS1: *(Pointing to audience)* That goes for the lot of you! If anyone sees the disciples of Jesus, they must immediately report them!

Scene 5

Enter Ruth and Estelle pushing their fruit cart that they use to sell their wares. (Note: We had a fake stuffed rooster, "Archibald", attached to the top of the cart. You can use whatever you have as your Archibald.) They walk right past the soldiers unafraid. The soldiers are surprised that these two women would not pay them any attention.

Ruth: Come on, honey. I'd like to get home before Archibald here gets a chill.

Estelle: Ruth, how many times do I gotta tell ya, that rooster is dea—

Ruth: *(Interrupting)* Don't say it!

Estelle: Alright, but you're only foolin' yourself, honey.

RS 1: *(Coming up behind the ladies and proclaiming...)* Halt! What are you doing out so late!

Estelle: What do you mean scarin' two old ladies in the middle of the night! You ought to be ashamed of yourselves!

Ruth: She's right! Let me tell you something right now *(she walks over to the soldier and smacks him lightly across the face as a Jewish mother would do)* I know your mutha *(mother)*! And if she knew what you were out here doin' she'd come out here and throw you over her knee...

There are seven page omitted from this preview. To read the rest of this script and perform it, download the full version at SkitGuys.com!

ENDING:

Jesus appears from behind a scrim.

NOTE: The Bible says that Jesus appeared in the room. This will take some creativity with your stage and lighting. For more information about how to use a scrim, check out a link on eHow: http://www.ehow.com/how_2120768_use-theater-scrim.html

Jesus: Maybe I can be of some assistance.

Rebecca: It was Jesus! He was alive and standing in the room with all of his followers! Even though the doors had been locked he was there! Everyone was so amazed, they couldn't believe their eyes! He showed them the wounds in his hands and feet so they'd believe. Now Thomas, known as the doubter, did not believe when he had heard that Jesus was no longer in the tomb. Even though Mary had told him what they had seen, he wouldn't believe it until he had seen it.

John: Thomas, look who's here.

*It takes **Thomas** a minute to realize it's **Jesus**.*

Thomas: It can't be.

Jesus: Thomas, come see the wounds in my hands.

Thomas: Lord! It is you!

Jesus: You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who haven't seen me and believe anyway.

Rebecca: Jesus stayed with his disciples for 40 days. Each disciple was changed forever because they had witnessed Jesus dying on a cross and then was raised from the dead. Jesus had kept his promise just as He said he would.

***Matthew** walks downstage and addresses the audience.*

Matthew: Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Love your neighbor as you love yourself."

***Peter** walks downstage and addresses the audience.*

Peter: And that we should always forgive one another just as he is faithful to forgive us our sins.

***James** walks downstage and addresses the audience.*

James: We should show how much we love the Lord by serving one another and doing good things.

***John** walks downstage and addresses the audience.*

John: For God loves you so much that he gave his one and only son so that if you believe in him you will not perish, but have eternal life.

Andrew walks downstage and addresses the audience.

Andrew: While we were with Jesus, sometimes we had problems believing that he was the Son of God.

Thomas walks downstage and addresses the audience.

Thomas: But Jesus told us, "If you have the faith of even a very small seed, you can move mountains."

Rebecca: On the 40th day, Jesus met the disciples on a mountain. He said...

Jesus walks downstage and should be in the center of the disciples.

Jesus: "Go and make disciples of all the nations. Teach the new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even until the end of the earth."

The End.

How to Make a Palm Tree

Needs:

Carpet rolls- cardboard roll from a carpet store; store may be glad to get rid of some

Lunch size brown paper bags

Tape

Stapler

Umbrella

Green bulletin board paper

Brownish green tempera paint

Scraps of burlap material or sand-colored fabric

Stand for tree: we have used microphone stands, flag poles, pvc pipe anchored in large vegetable cans full of cement that we used for holding signs during VBS.

Cut the bottom end of the paper bag so that it's open at both ends and thread down the carpet roll. Scrunch first one all the way to the bottom of the roll and staple it so it won't fall off. Keep scrunching the bags until the roll is covered. You will want to cut the rolls so they are varying heights like real palm trees. Slide the roll over your stand.

Now for the top. Your base for that is an umbrella - people have lots of them lying around and are glad to give them to you. Otherwise go to a dollar store.

Cut individual palm leafs from the green bulletin board paper. Slit the edges of the leaves about 2-3 inches from the edge to give it the palm look. Then with your greenish brown tempera (or a brown marker) make the veins in the leaf. Then attach those to the umbrella from the top with some sort of packing tape or duct tape. Make a roll of tape (or use double stick tape), attach to the plastic knob on the top and stick the leaf there. Leaf should hang down below the umbrella. After you have the fullness (may take 8-10 leaves) you desire, staple the leaves to the fabric of the umbrella. For a more realistic look, don't staple them flat. You can buckle the leaves (or as my southern mother says “pooch” them) to make them stand out in random places. Slide the umbrella into the top of the cardboard carpet roll.

Wrap the base of the can with burlap to look like sand.

Now you're in Jerusalem! Shalom!