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“Father-ese?”

by
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- What** In this humorous skit, Abby, Harry, and Frank call an interpreter to help them understand some of their father’s phrases in preparation for Father’s Day.
Themes: Father’s Day, Parenting, Kids, Family
- Who** Abby- child or adult playing a child
Harry- child or adult playing a child
Frank- child or adult playing a child
Voice- adult
- When** Present Day
- Costumes and Props** Crumpled Piece of Paper
Slip of Paper with Phone Number
Table with 3 Chairs
Telephone
3 Piggy Banks
Cash/Coins
Marble
- Why** Proverbs 1:8; Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6; Proverbs 23:22
- How** This skit is a comedy and actors should use timing and intent to perform lines with humor. While adults can play the characters, actors should make attempts to dress/act the developmental age of characters.
- At the beginning of the skit, the table is sitting center stage and the chairs are placed around it (left, right, and behind the table). The phone is on the table with the piggy banks, slip of paper with phone number, marble, and money. The crumpled paper is in Frank’s pocket.
- The interpreter is a speaking part off-stage. Actors should ensure that they are interacting with one another but avoid turning away from the audience.
- Time** Approximately 5 minutes

The skit opens with Harry seated stage left at the table, Abby seated stage right at the table, and Frank at the center rear of the table. They are shaking their piggy banks and trying to empty all their money onto the table.

Frank: How much do you have, Harry?

Harry: *(disappointed)* 20 cents.

Frank: 20 cents!?

Harry: *(defensive)* What?! I'm 5. I have needs.

Frank: *(resigned)* Fine. Abby, how much do you have?

Abby: *(shaking her empty piggy bank and looking down at the table)* Looks like 20 dollars and 35 cents...and an old marble.

Frank: How'd that get in there? Never mind, I don't want to know. Okay, I have 25 dollars and 12 cents. That should get us a couple of hours.

Abby: Are you sure this is what Dad wants for Father's Day?

Frank: I'm positive. Mom said that he told her he wishes we would just listen for one minute so he could stop herding cats.

Harry: *(confused)* Dad herds cats?

Frank: Exactly. How can we listen to him when we have no idea what he's talking about half the time?

Abby: Okay, you're right. Remember yesterday when he asked if we lived in a barn? Really, what does that have to do with the price of tea in China?

Both Frank and Harry look at Abby as if they are unsure who she is and what she is talking about.

Abby: *(sheepish)* Oh, sorry. It was something dad said yesterday, and I thought I'd try it. Anyway, Dad thinks we live in a barn?

Harry: *(concerned)* Wait. Maybe he's...you know...maybe he's getting forgetful.

Frank: Nope. He remembered yesterday that we were supposed to clean our rooms.

Abby: *(disgusted)* Yeah and we actually wanted him to forget that.

Harry: Good point.

Abby: So, how do we find this guy?

Frank: I Googled it. Here we go. *(Pushes paper towards Harry)* Call this number, Harry.

Harry: *(pushes paper back)* You call.

Frank: *(pushes paper back)* No, you call.

Abby: *(as if in charge, grabs paper)* I'll call. *(Pulls phone toward herself and dials number, clearing throat)*

Frank: Put it on speaker!

Abby: *(annoyed)* Just a second! *(Places phone in middle of table and presses speaker button)*

Voice: *(professional tone)* Hello. This is Helpful Interpreting Services. We are the premier phone interpreting service. I will be happy to connect you to a language interpreter. What language do you need, please?

All look at one another in a panic as if unsure.

Frank: Umm...Father...uh...ese, please?

Frank shrugs at siblings and they shrug back.

Voice: *(pauses, confused)* I'm sorry. Can you repeat that?

Frank: *(uncertain)* Fatherese?

Voice: I'm sorry, sir. In what country do they speak this language?

Harry: *(excited to know an answer)* Virginia!

Abby: *(rolls eyes)* He means America. Sorry, he gets his states and countries mixed up still.

Harry: *(mumbling as if embarrassed)* I'm only in kindergarten.

Voice: *(warmth in voice as if now understanding what is happening)* I see. How can I help you? Did you need some interpreting services?

Frank: Yes, thank you. You see, our dad speaks his own language, and we never understand...and he has a lot to say so we need to pay attention.

Abby: Right. Mom says if he cleaned as much as he talked, the house would be spotless.

Voice: *(laughingly)* I understand. Is your dad there?

Frank: No. We wanted to surprise him for Father's Day by listening to everything he tells us to do tomorrow. We just need some help knowing what that is.

Voice: Oh. I see. And what exactly are you struggling with?

Abby: *(to Frank)* Do you have the list?

Frank: Yes, right here. *(Searching in pockets)* Just a sec. *(Pulls crumpled note from pocket and tries to flatten on table)* Here you go. *(Hands to Abby)*

Abby: Should we just read you the list?

Voice: Sure.

Abby: First one...he usually says this one in the store. "Money doesn't grow on trees."

Voice: Got it. That one is easy. That means stop asking me to buy things at the store.

Frank: *(leaning to read paper in front of Abby)* "Your face is going to freeze that way?"

Voice: Stop pouting.

Harry: Oh, hey you're good at this!

Voice: Thanks! Lots of practice with Fatherese.

Abby: Next, "hold your horses." And by the way, we don't have any horses.

Voice: It means, be patient.

Frank: Okay...what does this one mean? "You're not made of sugar, you won't melt."

Voice: I imagine it means you don't need an umbrella and get out there and wait for the school bus even if it's raining before you miss it.

Frank: Oh, that makes so much more sense now. How about "put a sock in it." You should know that I did try to put a sock in it and he did not like that at all.

Voice: *(laughing)* I can just imagine. It's actually a way to say be quiet.

Abby: Hmmm...is that similar to "knock it off?" Because just like the sock, he doesn't really want anything knocked off.

Voice: Exactly! You're catching on. It means stop whatever you're doing.

Harry: How about, "Hay is for horses?"

Voice: It's a way to say that you should use someone's name—don't just call out "hey." It's impolite.

Frank: Any idea why he keeps asking me if my legs are broken?

Voice: It means get up and do it yourself.

Abby: How about, "Someone better be bleeding?"

Voice: Don't interrupt me right now.

Frank: This helps so much. We really appreciate it. That covers a lot of it. How much do we owe you?

Voice: It's your lucky day because we are having a special for first time callers for Fatherese. So...free of charge today.

Harry: *(pumps arm in victory)* Yes!

Frank: *(dryly)* Yeah, Harry, you saved 20 cents.

Voice: *(curious)* By the way, is there anything that your dad says that you do understand?

Harry: Sure. He says, "I'm the luckiest dad in the world."

Frank: *(proudly)* And that he has the best kids.

Abby: *(scrunches face)* That reminds me of something else he says that makes no sense to me.

Voice: What is it?

Abby: You're the apple of my eye.

Voice: That one's easy. It means I love you.

Harry: Good because he says that one a lot.

Voice: *(laughing, warmly)* Good luck tomorrow. It sounds like you all are going to be very prepared for Father's Day!

Kids: Thanks! Bye!

Abby: Okay guys, next year we may need to call near Mother's Day. There are a few questions I have about mom.

Harry: Like why she says, "Go to bed, I'm tired."

Frank: Exactly, or "go ask your dad" when he was the one that sent us to her in the first place.

Abby: *(shakes head with a sigh and places elbows on table while resting chin on hands)* Parents. They are so hard to understand.

Lights down.

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