

A script from



“The Greatest Story Ever Told”

A Reader's Theatre

by

Eddie James

- What** This is the story of Christ's death on the cross and the events leading up to His ultimate sacrifice. Themes: Easter, Jesus, Sacrifice, Bible, Salvation, Death, Resurrection, Tomb, Disciples, Good Friday, Passover, Last Supper, Messiah
- Who** Reader 1
Reader 2
Reader 3
Reader 4- Jesus
- When** Present
- Wear (Props)** Each Reader should have a black folder for their script. You can also coordinate clothes or have everyone dress in black.
- Why** Mark 14-16
- How** Each Reader should have a strong voice and deliver their lines with feeling and understanding of what they're reading. It's so easy to read scripture in a certain dull tone. So treat these words as you would any other dialogue. You are telling a story, so use these words to paint a picture of the events taking place! Help the audience see what's happening.

*See more notes and tips from Eddie James at the end of this script.

Time Approximately 6-8 minutes

Mark 14, 15, 16

Reader 3: *(To audience) Good Morning! May the story of Jesus encourage you, strengthen you and remind you what He did for us as we celebrate Easter. (Good Friday, Sunrise Service, This Easter Morning, Celebrate the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ... whichever may fit your needs for your service and congregation.)*

Mark 14

Reader1: Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. "But not during the festival," they said, "or the people may riot."

Reader2: Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Reader3: On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

Reader 4/Jesus: "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

Reader 1: When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. While they were reclining at the table eating, he said,

Reader 4/Jesus: "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me."

Reader 1: They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely you don't mean me?"

Reader 2: While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying,

Reader 4/Jesus: "Take it; this is my body."

Reader 2: Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

Reader 4/Jesus: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

Reader 1: Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not."

Reader 4/Jesus: "Truly I tell you, today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times."

Reader 1: But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the others said the same.

Reader 2: They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples,

Reader4/Jesus: "Sit here while I pray."

Reader 2: He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.

Reader 4/Jesus: "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch."

Reader 2: Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.

Reader 4/Jesus: "Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Reader 3: Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping.

Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

Reader 3: Returning the third time, he said to them,

Reader 4/Jesus: "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Reader 1: Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

Reader2: Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard."

Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. The men seized Jesus and arrested him. They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law came together. Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

Reader 3: The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

Reader 1: Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

Reader 4/Jesus: "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Reader 1: The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

Reader 2: They all condemned him as worthy of death. Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him.

***To read the rest of this script and perform it, download the full version at
SkitGuys.com!***

ENDING:

Mark 16

Reader 2: When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

Reader 1: But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

Reader 2: "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

Reader 1: Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Reader 2: When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.

Reader 3: Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.

Reader 1: Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

Reader 2: He said to them:

Reader 4/Jesus: *(Offstage)* "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Reader 1: After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.

Reader 2: Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

Reader 3: *(Back to audience)* This is what Christ did for you. For me. The amazing sacrifice of God for humanity. May it change us. May it help us daily to find ways to go into our own little worlds and make Him famous."

NOTE TO DIRECTOR:

I have tried to put this together with you in mind. Having performed drama in the church, I have a feeling of what you go through to find good content and the limited time you have to put it together. I get that. With this Reader's Theatre you really have "The Passion Play"

done in such a way where your actors have the script in front of them the whole time. The readers/actors have the ability to do different voices for the characters. (The 3 readers need to be animated. They are truly acting out the story of Jesus with their inflections, voices, heart and soul as they re-tell this piece of scripture.)

Blessings to you this Easter Holiday...

Eddie James

www.skitguys.com

Other Notes and Tips:

If you have your Reader's line up across the stage, don't let Reader 4/Jesus stand at the end so he's in the mix as the story gets going.

Have the band or orchestra play a familiar tune underneath this reading to make it even more powerful. A collection of songs put together digitally could be great as background music as well.

Work on music or piece together the scenes from the PASSION OF CHRIST that could display on the screen as the Readers/Actors portray the story...

To show a visual of God's grace after the Resurrection, Tommy and I have a video called, "Grace" which shows only Jesus and Peter as they meet on the beach. This might be a good way to tie up your services. It's short in length and fits right into this Reader's Theatre.