

“Manger Management”

by
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What For some, the manger has become a mere prop. This lighthearted skit explores the power of the manger and its importance as part of the Christmas season.

Themes: Christmas, Manger, Jesus, Ensemble

Who	Tracy- Adult female	3 Drama troupe members- Various ages
	Alabaster Snowball-Older teen or adult	Phil- Adult man
	3 Elves- Children of various ages	Jane- Adult
	Doreen- Adult female	Marvin- Older man

When Present

Props A manger
5 tables with chairs
1 smaller table with a chair
Power point type remote clicker
Clipboard, various papers, pens etc.

Costumes Tracy's cell phone
Phil's business card
Tracy- Dressed in business formal
Alabaster Snowball- dressed as a Christmas elf (does not have to be a full costume.)
3 Elves- dressed as elves.
Doreen-dressed in a simple Biblical costume.
3 Drama troupe members- all dressed in simple Biblical costumes.
Phil-Adult man, retail-type uniform of some kind (embroidered shirt with company name, etc).
Jane-Adult, business casual
Marvin-Older man, slightly unkempt, older looking clothes.

Why Philippians 2:6-8

How

The manger is DSC. A table for Tracy, at CS. Her table has various papers scattered about, and some on a clipboard. There are 4 other tables. Two at CSL and two at CSR, and all face audience. Alabaster Snowball and 3 elves sit behind one. Doreen and her troupe behind another. Jane seated at another and Phil at the last one. A fifth, even smaller table is behind the rest, USR. Marvin is sitting there. All tables, except Marvin's, need to be fairly close to the manger to cut down on the time various actors get up and go to it.

For Jane's portion, have fun creating the PowerPoint pictures she is describing:

Snow children

Bureaucrat

Inflatable snow globe

One last "mistake" one—re: showing her wearing an ugly sweater making a silly face or an embarrassing family photo, etc.

(Google images can be a good source for ideas for each.)

Stage direction key: (NOTE: stage directions are always from the audience's viewpoint, looking toward the stage. Downstage refers to the front of the stage. Upstage refers to the back of the stage)

USR = Up stage Right

CS= Center stage

CSL= Center stage left

CSR = Center stage right

DSC- Downstage center

Time

Approximately 5 minutes

At curtain, we see Tracy sitting at a table, arranging the papers. She then looks up and speaks to the tables around her.

Tracy: OK, welcome everyone! Thanks for signing up to these series of leadership trainings entitled "Manger Management". I'm Tracy Scott and I'll be your chief instructor. We'll be taking a few breaks and feel free to ask any questions you might have. I hope you all got a handout and have signed in. *(trying to be funny)* And don't forget to turn off your devices or at least set them on stun! *(proud)* My own little joke there. *(silence, annoyed now)* Fine, moving on *(back to a better attitude)*. An opening question to you all... what does the term *(she makes air quotes)* Manger Management *(close air quotes)* mean to you? And if you don't mind, please come forward with your answer, so we can all hear. Let's go around the horn. Santa's helpers, you're up first. I believe we'll be hearing from head elf, Alabaster Snowball and her team. Al?

Al and 3 Elves get up and move to the manger and fan out around it. Al walks and talks as they approach the manger.

Al: Well Tracy, we're always fighting to make sure our boss, the big man, remains front and center at Christmas. You know, it's all about tradition with us. Don't get us wrong, we believe in the Christ child, but we like to have a foot in each boat as it were. You know, the child in the manger thing foot in one boat, and uncontrolled exuberance for material goods. i.e., toys toys toys foot in the other! We've even come up with a new nativity scene that we're test marketing... we replace a few of the barnyard animals with Donner and Blitzen. Stuff like that!

Al and Elves return to their seats.

Tracy: OK, thanks a million Al and team. Next, how about our church drama people? Doreen, you're up.

Doreen and 3 Troupe Members get up and move to the manger and fan out around it.

Doreen: Yes, thanks. Well, um, this is a bit awkward actually. We obviously are pro-manger and all. But it's just, well... do you know how hard it is to come up with an original Christmas play every stinking year that doesn't have a manger?! We've tried non-manger stories, but the congregation rebels. Every time! *(gently mocking)* We want our baby Jesus! Make the manger obscenely large! Use a real baby too, especially one who is teething so it cries the entire time! *(stops, deep breath, settling down)* We do understand, truly. But maybe, when we're doing a Christmas play set like, on the Titanic, that there doesn't always have to have a manger. *(thinking out loud)* Although, maybe there's a floating manger and the hero is saved by hanging onto it and— *(shakes it off)*. See? So, it's uh kind of hard. To manage. You know?

Doreen and Troupe return to their seats.

Tracy: No worries Doreen, we're not judging here, just listening. *(refers to a sheet)* We don't want to forget our retail workers. Phil?

Phil walks to the manger and talks as he walks.

Phil: Thanks much! I think we've gotten a bad rep for being these greedy, all profit and no faith-y kind of companies. Are sales important? Yes, of course. But we're a big tent kind of group, too. We welcome all religious types, you know? The season is swimming with them.

And if we can leverage our need for a fair margin with, you know, whatever warm fuzzy manger messiah message you want to throw out to mister and miz consumer, bing bang boom. Can do! Here's my card *(tosses it into the manger)*, call me. *(then looks up, to others)* I mean you all of course. *(returns to his seat)*

Tracy: Interesting. Thanks Phil. I think we also have a person from the city council, Jane Thomas? Jane?

Jane approaches the manger, walking and talking.

Jane: *(NOTE: PowerPoint picture option described in "How")* Thank you. I actually have a short presentation. *(holds up clicker)* As you all know; we tossed the manger out of public places a while ago. Well, sort of. Actually, we discovered that our old manger *(slide 1)* makes a great place to put our family of multi-national, slash ethnic slash creed slash etcetera snow children! We also have a holiday shrub *(slide 2)* that's decorated with carbon free lights and depictions of free-range bureaucrats *(slide 3)* denying requests for more traditional decorations. Finally, you'll have to drive by and see our inflatable government neutral plain snow globe *(slide 4)*, with pretty much nothing in it. Except pure neutrality. *(then one last slide comes up and it's to look like she accidentally included it)* Whoa! Uh, er, sorry, little mistake there, hee hee. *(screen goes black)*. So, Tracy, we're good! *(returns to her seat)*

Tracy: OK, we appreciate that insight, Jane. You know what *(consulting clip board)*, I think we should move ahead, as there's a lot of material to cover. Now—

Marvin: *(holding up his hand very high)* Ooo! Oo! Excuse me, excuse me, I don't think we've had a chance to answer!

Tracy: *(looking back at him)* Oh, I'm sorry. Uh, who are you with?

Marvin: *(stands)* St. Ann's shelter.

Tracy: *(looking through materials)* I don't see that you've registered—

Marvin: We're a late entry.

Tracy: Well, OK, we have time, I think. So, Manger Management. Quick thoughts?

Marvin: *(excited, runs down to the manger, big personality)* It's...it's a rocket ship! *(big arm movements)* Woosh!! Boom! Ahhhh!

Group at first is stunned, then all, except for Tracy, start to smirk, whispering to each other etc.

Tracy: I'm sorry?

Marvin: The manger! I've been listening to everyone. But look, you can't manage it. You can't hold it down. You can't control its power. You can try, I guess *(referring to others)*, but it's the landing pad God used to deliver his Son, and in turn, it launched such power over sin and death that no one can stop! Many try. But His power and presence is everywhere! *(quieter now)* We see it in the eyes of those we serve. Hope out of hopelessness. Food for a hungry soul. Provision and strength to face the day. Sure, the manger itself started it all, but the Jesus we know and see every day won't be held down. *(pause)* You know?

Silence from everyone for a few beats, then mumbling, nervous coughing, etc., then.

Tracy: *(slightly dismissive)* Um. Well, thank you Marvin. We appreciate your perspective. *(moving on, regrouping)* Tell you what team, let's take a quick energy break and when we come back, we'll take a deeper dive. Five minutes people, five minutes!

Tracy picks up her cell phone and places a call as she exits. Everyone slowly exits as well, talking to each other. Jane stops, turns and starts towards Marvin, but then stops, turns and exits. After exiting, Alabaster Snowball and her team re-enter and tentatively, walk slowly up to Marvin, who does not notice them at first. They get close, curious about him. When they are right beside him, he turns and—

Marvin: Woosh!! Boom! Ahhhh! Right?! *(Al and other elves are startled and run off. Marvin watches them, chuckles, then turns and slowly reflects on the manger, then)* Thanks for landing here.

He then slowly exits and curtain.