

KNOWING JESUS

by Beth Troop



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Knowing Jesus

A youth sunrise service
by Beth Troop

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(In order of appearance)

Mary, Jesus' mother

Peter

Matthew

The Woman at the Well

The Woman with the Hemorrhage

One of the Five Thousand (Man)

Adulteress

Martha

Modern-Day Person(s)

3
PRODUCTION NOTES

Knowing Jesus depicts the ways in which nine people knew Jesus in their lives, representing the many ways we experience Jesus in our own lives.

The program is simple in its presentation because it requires no props and only simple costumes. It should be performed by adults and/or older youth. The role of the Modern-Day Person could be shared by two speakers, one man and one woman, who alternate statements, or it may be done “popcorn style” by persons scattered throughout the congregation.

Each monologue speaker enters quietly and separately from the one before. As each speaker finishes, he or she exits in a different direction from which he or she entered, symbolizing that we do not leave the same as we came once we know Jesus. An alternative setting would be at an outdoor Easter sunrise service with an empty cross behind the speakers. Again, after each speaker finishes, he or she leaves by a different way than he or she entered.

Costumes: Biblical-period dress for first eight speakers; modern dress for last speaker(s).

Set: The stage is bare except for a cross and two microphones, one on either side of the stage, for characters’ entries from left or right. A music stand may be set up by each microphone on which to place each speaker’s part for reference if necessary.

Lights: The lighting is dim among the audience but sufficiently bright enough up front so that each speaker is visible. The cross is dark until noted later.

Scripture: Passages quoted from the Bible come from the *New Living Translation Life Application Study Bible*, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved. *Mary:* Luke 2:6-20, Matthew 2:9-11, Luke 2:41-47, John 19:25-27. *Peter:* Matthew 4:18-20, John 1: 41-42, Matthew 26:69-75. *Matthew:* Matthew 9:9-13. *The Woman at the Well:* John 4:4-26. *The Woman with the Hemorrhage:* Mark 5:25-34. *One of the Five Thousand:* John 6:1-15. *Adulteress:* John 8:1-11. *Martha:* Luke 10: 38-42, John 11: 17-44.

Presentation Time: 20-25 minutes

(MARY enters and stands before a microphone.)

MARY: I knew Jesus the moment he was born, a helpless baby in my arms. His earliest earthly lodging was in a stable among the animals, with straw as a mattress. My heart was filled with joy the moment I set eyes on him, and I knew that he was more than just a baby boy; he was God in the flesh who came here to save the world. I treasured this child in my arms, knowing that the time we'd have together was brief and that someday he would give his life for all of us. The sight of him brought me immediate joy. When we were visited by shepherds from the fields who had heard of his birth and later by wise men from the East, I knew even more assuredly that my son was meant for far more than what this world could offer.

I proudly watched him as a young boy working alongside his earthly father, Joseph, learning the carpentry business, and saw him teaching educated men in the temple — the house of his heavenly Father. I knew him as a man, spreading the Word of God and sharing his love with all who would listen. I cried the day he hung on the cross for the sins of mankind, but I rejoiced when I heard of his resurrection as our Lord and Savior. He was my human son, but more importantly, he was — he *is* — the Son of God. (MARY exits in opposite direction from her entrance. PETER enters and stands before a microphone.)

PETER: I knew Jesus first as a friend who called my brother Andrew and me to follow him.

"Come, be my disciples," he said, "and I will show you how to fish for people!" We were ordinary fishermen, doing our job and making a simple living. What did *we* know about preaching and teaching?

Jesus said to me, "You are Simon, the son of John — but you will be called Cephas (meaning 'a rock')."

His words never left me. I knew he was offering something we could not find on our own, so Andrew and I dropped our nets and followed him.

1 In our time together, Jesus prepared me to become a
2 leader among the disciples and in the church — one so
3 unlikely to be a leader, considering my lack of such
4 skills and the cowardice I displayed when I denied
5 Jesus three times as he was led away to his death. Yet
6 he forgave me, as he forgives us all.

7 Over time, I knew Jesus as much more than just a
8 friend. He became my teacher and my Lord and Savior.
9 He knew me and my potential much better than I knew
10 myself, and because of his love and tremendous mercy
11 and patience, I developed into a leader in the early
12 church and devoted my life to sharing the Good News of
13 Jesus with others. *(PETER exits in opposite direction from
14 his entrance. MATTHEW enters and stands before a
15 microphone.)*

16 MATTHEW: Jesus stopped to talk to me one day when I was
17 sitting in my tax collection booth. As a Jew collecting
18 taxes for the Romans, I was despised by my own people.
19 It was well known that I did what all successful tax
20 collectors did — I collected what was required for the
21 Romans but also charged enough to line my own
22 pockets. I had to make a living too, but everyone felt I
23 was just cheating them. Truth is, I *did* collect quite a bit
24 more than I needed to. But meeting Jesus changed that.
25 He called me to follow him, so that same day I invited
26 Jesus and his disciples to my house for dinner with
27 many of my friends — other despised tax collectors and
28 “notorious sinners,” as we were called. When the
29 Pharisees saw Jesus enjoying a meal with us, they
30 asked how he could eat with people like us.

31 Jesus simply replied, “Healthy people don’t need a
32 doctor — sick people do. I have come to call sinners, not
33 those who think they are already good enough.”

34 In spite of how unethical I had been, Jesus still felt I
35 was worthy of his mercy. He changed my life. At that
36 moment I chose to abandon my lucrative salary and
37 give my life completely to him. I knew Jesus as the One
38 who turned my sinful life around. Though others saw in

me only a worthless cheat, Jesus looked into my heart and drew from me a desire to follow him and lead a more fulfilling, upright life. (*MATTHEW exits in opposite direction from his entrance. THE WOMAN AT THE WELL enters and stands before a microphone.*)

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL: I met Jesus at the well of Jesse. I was filling my water bucket and was shocked when he began to talk to me, a woman — a *Samaritan* woman, no less — something that went against societal customs. He asked me for a drink, then he started talking about “living water” that he said he’d give me. I did not understand his meaning at first, but I thought he was going to make my life easier so I would not have to trudge to the well every day. It soon became clear, however, that he meant *himself* as the living water. He told me to go get my husband, but I told him I didn’t have one. He already knew that — and he also knew that I already had five other husbands and wasn’t even married to the man I was living with now, which made me uncomfortable. So I tried to change the subject and asked him about a Jewish custom of worship, but he saw through that. Soon he had me thinking about my life, my habits, my choices, and how I could accept him, the Living Water, into my life. He saw a thirst in my soul that I didn’t even realize I had.

When Jesus’ disciples arrived, I dropped my bucket and ran back to the village to tell everyone about this man I had met. Without a doubt, he was the Messiah! From that moment I knew Jesus as a compassionate counselor who looked beyond outward appearances and did not judge my choices but guided me back in the right direction by cutting to the truth. Such a moment stayed with me forever. (*THE WOMAN AT THE WELL exits in opposite direction from her entrance. THE WOMAN WITH THE HEMORRHAGE enters and stands before a microphone.*)

THE WOMAN WITH THE HEMORRHAGE: I knew Jesus as my Great Physician. Sick, poor, and destitute, I was

1 willing to do just about anything for help. I had gone to
 2 all the doctors I could find, but not one truly helped me.
 3 They just succeeded in taking all my money and leaving
 4 me without a cure. Jesus was my last hope.

5 When I saw Jesus passing by in the crowd that day, I
 6 thought, "If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed."
 7 As soon as I did that, I knew my illness had left me.

8 I didn't think Jesus would notice that I had touched
 9 his robe, because so many people were pressing around
 10 him, but he quickly turned around and asked, "Who
 11 touched my clothes?"

12 Almost too scared to answer, I cowered at first, then
 13 I fell at his feet and confessed that it was I who had
 14 touched him. Instead of getting upset, Jesus knew my
 15 need and showed me such mercy.

16 With compassion in his voice he said, "Daughter,
 17 your faith has made you well. Go in peace. You have
 18 been healed."

19 Without having reached out to Jesus, I might not
 20 have lived much longer. My energy was waning and my
 21 money was gone. Because of him, I was given the gift of
 22 renewed life. (*THE WOMAN WITH THE HEMORRHAGE*
 23 *exits in opposite direction from her entrance. ONE OF THE*
 24 *FIVE THOUSAND enters and stands before a microphone.)*

25 **ONE OF THE FIVE THOUSAND:** I knew Jesus as my
 26 provider on a day when I didn't have enough food for
 27 my family while we traveled. I am one of the five
 28 thousand who followed Jesus after hearing of his
 29 amazing miracles, and I witnessed one of his miracles
 30 myself. I had brought my wife and son with me, and we,
 31 along with many others, climbed a hillside where we
 32 knew Jesus had gone, to sit as close as we could to him
 33 while he rested with his disciples. We were so thrilled to
 34 be close to Jesus that we lost track of how late it was
 35 getting. One of Jesus' disciples suggested that he send
 36 us away to find food, but Jesus disagreed. He told his
 37 *disciples* to feed us! I could not imagine where they
 38 would buy enough food for all of us.

1 Then I saw a boy holding a basket with five loaves of
 2 bread and two fish who walked up to Jesus and offered
 3 it to him. What a beautiful gesture from one so innocent
 4 — but I still did not see how that would help such a
 5 large crowd. Yet Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to
 6 God, and passed them around. He did the same thing
 7 with the fish, then passed the basket. Next thing I knew,
 8 we all had eaten our fill and never ran out of food. In
 9 fact, twelve baskets of leftovers remained!

10 I had hoped to see Jesus perform a miracle that day,
 11 but I never thought that I would actually be *part* of it.
 12 He knew our needs and provided at just the right time!
 13 (*ONE OF THE FIVE THOUSAND exits in opposite direction*
 14 *from his entrance. ADULTERESS enters and stands before a*
 15 *microphone.*)

16 ADULTERESS: I knew Jesus as my defender. One morning I
 17 was dragged to the temple by religious leaders and
 18 accused of adultery. Jesus was there, and the religious
 19 leaders asked him what should be done. The law of
 20 Moses dictated that I should be stoned as my
 21 punishment, but the leaders asked Jesus what *he* would
 22 do. Instead of replying right away, though, Jesus knelt
 23 to the ground, picked up a stick, and drew with it in the
 24 sand. The religious leaders kept persisting, wanting an
 25 answer.

26 Jesus finally rose to his feet and said, “All right, stone
 27 her. But let those who have never sinned throw the first
 28 stone.”

29 The expectant faces of all my accusers suddenly
 30 turned to shock. They looked around at one another,
 31 and one by one they dropped their stones and walked
 32 away without saying a word. Soon, only Jesus and I
 33 remained.

34 “Where are your accusers?” he asked. “Didn’t even
 35 one of them condemn you?”

36 “No, Lord,” I replied.

37 Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.”

38 Without a doubt Jesus saved my life! He was not

afraid to defend and forgive me. From that point on it was up to me to make better choices for my life and turn from my sinful ways. My new life began on the day I thought it would end. I learned that with Jesus, all things are possible, and no one is beyond the reach of his forgiving love. (*ADULTERESS exits in opposite direction from her entrance. MARTHA enters and stands before a microphone.*)

MARTHA: Jesus was my friend and comforter while he walked this earth, and I loved him as much as I loved my brother Lazarus and my sister Mary. Many think of me as someone who placed works before faith, but I have always been a practical person, handling tasks as they needed to be completed. When Jesus visited us one day and I complained about Mary not helping me in the kitchen, Jesus calmly replied that Mary had chosen right to spend time at his feet, listening to his words. I never forgot that and realized that work doesn't buy us a ticket to heaven. Sometimes the work must wait in order for us to refresh our souls in the presence of Jesus.

When Jesus returned following Lazarus' death, I left my house to meet him. His presence alone comforted me, and his words strengthened me. In my heart I knew that he was the Son of God and that because of him, someday I would see Lazarus again.

Jesus said to me, "Your brother will rise again."

"Yes," I said, "when everyone else rises, on resurrection day."

He reassured me that all who believe in him will not die, but have everlasting life. "Do you believe this, Martha?" he asked.

"Yes, Lord," I replied. "I have always believed that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God."

I ran to get Mary, and together we showed Jesus the tomb where Lazarus was buried. Even Jesus wept when he saw the tomb, for he loved my brother so much. He



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