

HAVE YOU HEARD?

by Debora Fedeler



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Have You Heard?

A Holy Week program for children

by Debora Fedeler

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Leader
Young Child 1
Seizure Boy
Food Child
Young Child 2
Resurrected Girl
Young Child 3
Kingdom of Heaven Child
Young Child 4
Blessing Child
Young Child 5
Temple Child
Young Child 6
Gentile Child
Young Child 7
Older Child
Scripture Reader

**The Echo Children may be all the characters or a separate group, depending on the size of your Sunday school department.*

PRODUCTION NOTES

This play is meant to be simple so the story is the focus, not the stage or costumes. Children should dress in black or dark blues. The front of the church or stage should be left undecorated. An older student should be the leader/main reader and stand at a podium or lectern. The other students will eventually gather up front as though around a campfire, and move to the microphone (or Center Stage, if you don't use microphones) to say or read their part. (We allowed the children who could read to read their parts from a black binder. The very youngest memorized their short lines.)

Ours is a small Sunday school, so we have our children scattered throughout the pews for the "echo" parts. They then move up to the front of the church. This way they may sit with their families for the better part of the service if they wish. If you have a large Sunday school, you could have some students do the echo parts and remain in the congregation while other students do the readings up front.

Toward the end of the play, instructions call for the altar to be stripped. Removing any altar coverings and decorations symbolizes the soldiers taking off Jesus' robe prior to his crucifixion, where he was naked and exposed to the crowd's insults. It is a visual reminder of the humiliation of Jesus and the consequence of sin. If this is a new idea for your congregation, you may include a short explanation based on the above in your bulletin.

This play for Holy Week is meant to be solemn, but there are a few places where a little laughter could be generated. This is OK, but don't try to make the play a comedy.

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(The LEADER is in place up front. The ECHO CHILDREN sit with the congregation, scattered throughout, not near each other. Adjust the number of echoes to whatever works for you, but I would suggest at least five and not more than twelve. The echoed words should follow each other quickly and alternate from one side of the church to the other and from front to back.)

LEADER: *(Solemn, serious)* **Have you heard?**

CHILDREN: *(Overlapping and echoing throughout the sanctuary)*
Have you heard?

LEADER: *(Solemn, serious)* **Have you heard? They have taken him. They have taken him to the Romans. *(Pause)* Why?**

CHILDREN: *(In staggered echoes)* **Why?** *(During the following paragraph, if the ECHO CHILDREN are also the characters, the CHILDREN quietly walk up to the front of the church and arrange themselves in a semicircle, as though they are standing around a fire. If a stationary microphone is used, it should be placed in the middle of the area where the CHILDREN stand. Otherwise, a microphone may be handed from CHILD to CHILD when it is his/her turn to speak. The LEADER is stationed at a podium throughout the performance.)*

LEADER: **He is a simple man from a simple town. His father was a simple carpenter. Until a few years ago, only a handful of people even knew he was alive. Then he started to preach. He has traveled to many towns to tell people about God. He talks about God like he really knows God. He says God loves everyone. Why did they take him? He is a good man. A gentle man. He cares for everyone.**

SEIZURE BOY: *(Steps to microphone.)* **He cares for me. I've had seizures for as long as I can remember. I never knew when they would come. Sometimes they made me fall into the fire or into water. It was like something inside me wanted me harmed. My father brought me to see the man, to ask if he could heal me. I had a seizure right there in front of him. This man saw me, but instead of pulling away from me like most people did, he came closer. His eyes were full of caring. He told the demon to leave me, and I suddenly felt light and free. I haven't had a seizure**

1 since. (*Goes back to semicircle.*)

2 **LEADER:** Jesus only wants to help people to be better, to love
3 God better. Why did they take him? He is a good man. A
4 gentle man. He cares for everyone.

5 **FOOD CHILD:** (*Steps to microphone.*) He cares for me. A huge
6 crowd was listening to Jesus on a hill. There must have
7 been thousands of us, maybe even millions! We were all
8 getting hungry. Jesus asked, “How are we going to feed
9 all these people?” I showed my bread and fish to one of
10 his followers, and he took me to Jesus. Jesus smiled at me
11 and asked if he could use my lunch. I said yes. He took the
12 food, gave thanks to God, and fed everyone — everyone —
13 from my little lunch! (*Returns to semicircle.*)

14 **LEADER:** Jesus says we are all important to God. Why did
15 they take him? He is a good man. A gentle man. He cares
16 for everyone.

17 **RESURRECTED GIRL:** (*Steps to microphone.*) He cares for me. I
18 was very sick. I think I died, because I talked with my
19 grandpa who died earlier that same year. The good man
20 called me back to this place. He said my father, Jairus,
21 and my mother still need me. I will go to live with God
22 and Grandpa later. (*Returns to semicircle.*)

23 **LEADER:** The man tells us how God wants us to live — to love
24 God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to
25 love each other as we love ourselves. Why did they take
26 him? He is a good man. A gentle man. He cares for
27 everyone.

28 **KINGDOM OF HEAVEN CHILD:** (*Steps to microphone.*) He cares
29 for me. One day his disciples were talking about who was
30 the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. They talked about
31 doctors and rich people and important leaders, and even
32 themselves. Then this man took my hand and led me to
33 the center of the group and held me up high. This man
34 said we should all be like a child when it comes to
35 believing God. I’m not sure what he meant. Of course we
36 should all believe in God. Why wouldn’t you? I didn’t
37 understand, but his smile was warm and loving, and it
38 made me feel good.

1 YOUNG CHILD 1: (*Joins KINGDOM OF HEAVEN CHILD.*) I
 2 believe in God, too! (*KINGDOM OF HEAVEN CHILD and*
 3 *YOUNG CHILD 1 return to semicircle.*)

4 LEADER: This man talks to everyone — church leaders,
 5 merchants, soldiers, Samaritans, and even tax collectors.
 6 He even takes the time to talk with children. Why did
 7 they take him? He is a good man. A gentle man. He cares
 8 for everyone.

9 BLESSING CHILD: (*Steps to microphone.*) He cares for me. My
 10 parents took me to see him one day to see if he would
 11 bless me, but his disciples said not to bother him. The
 12 good man told them to stop it. He *wanted* to see the
 13 children. He *wanted* to see *me!*

14 YOUNG CHILD 2: (*Joins BLESSING CHILD.*) He wanted to see
 15 me, too!

16 BLESSING CHILD: Jesus blessed *all* of us children. He is very
 17 kind. (*ALL return to semicircle.*)

18 LEADER: This man says God loves us all, and we should love
 19 each other, too. Why did they take him? He is a good man.
 20 A gentle man. He cares for everyone.

21 TEMPLE CHILD: (*Steps to microphone.*) He cares for me. I saw
 22 him come to the temple one day, and he chased out all the
 23 animals and the merchants and the money guys. It was
 24 funny to watch them all run away. This good man said
 25 that God's house is not a marketplace. We kids started to
 26 chant, "Praise God for the Son of David." over and over
 27 (Matthew 21:15). The temple leaders told us to be quiet, but
 28 Jesus said, "Scriptures say, 'You have taught children
 29 and infants to give you praise'" (Matthew 21:16). Then he
 30 winked at me and smiled. (*Returns to semicircle.*)

31 LEADER: The temple leaders do not want to believe that they
 32 are the same as a farmer or a tax collector or, worse yet,
 33 a Samaritan. Is that why they took him? But he is a good
 34 man. A gentle man. He cares for everyone.

35 GENTILE CHILD: (*Steps to microphone.*) He cares for me. I am
 36 not a Jew. Most Jews treat me like I am dirt, or like I
 37 don't even exist. I was really sick, and my mom went to
 38 the good man and asked him to make me well. He said it



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