

VOICES OF TODAY

by Maria Feely



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PRODUCTION NOTES

Synopsis: Light and jovial in tone, each sketch can be used for morning worship, evening worship, or a special program. Many sermons may be drawn from the text and scriptural references.

“Christian Company C,” “The House of Beauty,” and “Psychics Today” may be linked together as part of a “television” program. “Ten Great Suggestions!” requires more playing time and a large cast, but it is very rewarding, both in terms of message and audience response. “Be All You Can Be” and “The Black Box” are a natural pairing. Both speak of the push-and-pull between career and Christianity. “The Tri-Centennial” is a good choice for Earth Day or any program about our responsibility for God’s creation.

Cast: Either women or men may perform the roles in most of the sketches. Although bosses and bullies are often typecast as men, they could be women as well. “Ten Great Suggestions!” requires at least one man to play Moses. “Christian Company C” is gender specific. Placing extras in nonspeaking roles gives newcomers valuable experience. Extras can add “good chaos” to “The Black Box,” more soldiers to “Christian Company C,” and more questioners to “Ten Great Suggestions!”

Playing time: “Ten Great Suggestions!” and “Be All You Can Be” may run ten minutes. Others are three to six minutes long.

Props: Although props are minimal, wherever possible, props should be used because the set must be implied. A set of different-sized black boxes for “The Black Box” may be made by spray-painting cardboard boxes. The golden calf in “Ten Great Suggestions!” may be made by spraypainting a pinata (purchased in a party store) gold. A tree in a planter that can be carried is a must for “The Tri-Centennial.”

Costumes: “Psychics Today” and “House of Beauty” call for dressing up TV-host style. “Christian Company C” suggests similar outfits to show uniformity. “Be All You Can Be” and “The Black Box” casts should dress to reflect their characters. Although “Ten Great Suggestions!” can be done in modern dress, it provides a wonderful contrast if the characters wear biblical robes while delivering their very modern lines. Characters in “The Tri-Centennial” could wear something to indicate that they are in the future.

Lights: No special lighting is required, although if theatrical lighting is available, most sketches would benefit from a blackout at the end.

Music: No special music is required.

Sound Effects: No special sound effects are required.

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Be All You Can Be

CAST: Ten speaking; two nonspeaking

Reporter — A sophomore girl

Bodybuilder — A “strong” guy

Beauty — A very pretty, well dressed girl

Star — A “wanna-be”

Somebody — Another “wanna-be”

CEO — A whiz kid in business clothes

Karma — A New Age guru

Superstar — A male athlete

Married — A girl with only matrimony on her mind

Christian — A freshman who puts faith first

Registrars — Two (Nonspeaking, optional)

Narrator

TAILORED TO FIT: Parts may be cut to accommodate group size without affecting the message. Most parts may be played by either females or males. Registrars may double for the last two parts.

SET: (Optional) A long table with two chairs behind it and a sign that says, “College Freshman Registration Today.”

PROPS: Notebook and pen for REPORTER; basketball for SUPERSTAR; suitcase for BEAUTY; papers and pens for REGISTRARS; list for SOMEBODY.

HINT: It helps for REPORTER to have the script on her clipboard for reference. Others can use the same trick. The first time this was performed, the actors had their scripts on a notebook or clipboard and the audience didn’t suspect a thing.

SCENE: REPORTER is Center Stage. She should write in her notebook as interviewees respond. She could drop this as soon as audience gets the idea. Students wait in two lines in order of appearance. For instance, BODYBUILDER would be first in one line, BEAUTY would be first in the other line, and so on. REGISTRARS sit at table. They look at each student’s papers, give out “schedules,” etc. REGISTRARS could double as the

last two interviewees. To keep blocking simple, REPORTER remains Center Stage. Students walk past her and are stopped for questioning.

REPORTER: This is my first assignment for the college newspaper, and it's so easy. All I have to do is ask freshmen about their future plans. And where better to find freshmen than on the first day of freshmen registration? (*Stops BODYBUILDER.*) Excuse me, I'm working for the campus newspaper. What do you want to be?

BODYBUILDER: I want to *Be All You Can Be*.

REPORTER: *Be All You Can Be*? Oh, I see. Would that be the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, or the Marines?

BODYBUILDER: I don't care. Just as long as my body is a lean, mean fighting machine. Of course, I'm in pretty good shape already. (*Flexes muscles.*)

REPORTER: Yes, you are ... but I don't think you understood the question. (*BODYBUILDER moves away. REPORTER stops BEAUTY.*) Excuse me, I'm a reporter for the campus newspaper. What do you want to be?

BEAUTY: I want to *be* beautiful. Isn't it obvious?

REPORTER: Well, sure, we all want to be beautiful, but ...

BEAUTY: Some of us are more likely to achieve that goal.

REPORTER: (*Insulted*) What? (*Recovers.*) Are you just moving in? Why do you have a suitcase?

BEAUTY: This isn't a suitcase. It's my beauty regimen. Makeup. Hairspray. A change of clothes for every class. Matching handbags. An iron. A mirror. Everything a woman needs to look her best.

BODYBUILDER: (*To BEAUTY*) And you do. Can I carry that for you?

BEAUTY: Why, thank you. (*She hands BODYBUILDER the bag and turns away as he lets it fall to the ground as if very heavy. They exit.*)

REPORTER: Some people are so stuck on themselves. (*Stops*

- 1 STAR.) Excuse me, I'm interviewing people for the
2 college newspaper. What do you want to be?
- 3 STAR: I want to be *a star*.
- 4 REPORTER: A star? Oh, are you studying drama?
- 5 STAR: Drama, music. Whatever. I don't care. I just want to
6 see my name up in lights! I want to hear my birthday
7 announced on *Entertainment Tonight!* I want fans
8 stalking me! (*Exits.*)
- 9 REPORTER: Moving right along. (*Stops SOMEBODY.*) Excuse
10 me. What do you want to be?
- 11 SOMEBODY: I want to be *somebody*.
- 12 REPORTER: Somebody?
- 13 SOMEBODY: I want to be *somebody*. You know, a great
14 politician who brings about world peace, or maybe the
15 scientist who discovers a cure for the common cold.
16 Imagine me: *Time* magazine's Person of the Year.
- 17 REPORTER: What's your major?
- 18 SOMEBODY: This year or last year or the year before that?
19 Because I have changed my major three times. This is
20 my third year as a freshman.
- 21 REPORTER: (*Frustrated*) Just do me a favor and pick a major.
- 22 SOMEBODY: OK, my mom wrote some down for me. (*Reaches*
23 *in pocket.*) A kindergarten teacher? Is she kidding?
24 Imagine an important person like me a kindergarten
25 teacher. I don't think so. (*Exits.*)
- 26 REPORTER: Why can't someone just say a banker or a
27 teacher or something? (*Stops CEO.*) Excuse me, what do
28 you want to be?
- 29 CEO: I want to *be* successful. Someday I will be CEO of a
30 major corporation.
- 31 REPORTER: What type of business are you interested in?
- 32 CEO: I don't care ... just as long as I get rich. Filthy rich!
33 Gotta go. Time is money, you know. (*Exits.*)
- 34 REPORTER: Well, at least he/she's normal ... (*Stops KARMA.*)
35 Excuse me. What do you want to be?

- 1 KARMA: I be ... therefore I am.
- 2 REPORTER: *(To self)* Why me?
- 3 KARMA: It is not what you *want* to be, but that you *exist* that
- 4 matters.
- 5 REPORTER: What I am asking you is: What do you want to
- 6 be in the future?
- 7 KARMA: The future is past. The past is tomorrow. Tomorrow
- 8 is the future. The future is today. Only in the land of
- 9 enchantment can you find true happiness. Have a nice
- 10 day. *(KARMA exits.)*
- 11 REPORTER: Yes ... and you have fun at Disney World ...
- 12 This day cannot be real. *(Stops SUPERSTAR.)* Excuse me,
- 13 what do you want to be?
- 14 SUPERSTAR: I want to *be* on every box of cereal in America.
- 15 REPORTER: Say that again?
- 16 SUPERSTAR: I want to *be* on every box of cereal in America.
- 17 I want to be a sports superstar. My name will be on
- 18 baseball caps. People will fight over my trading card.
- 19 Everyone will be wearing my brand of sportswear. I will
- 20 be the next Michael Jordan.
- 21 REPORTER: Are you on a team?
- 22 SUPERSTAR: Football, baseball, basketball. You name it, I
- 23 play it.
- 24 REPORTER: Are you off to a game now?
- 25 SUPERSTAR: Actually, I'm going to catch a game on TV.
- 26 Want to join me? *(Puts his arm around her. She pushes his*
- 27 *arm off.)*
- 28 REPORTER: I'm working. Good luck with your future plans.
- 29 SUPERSTAR: I'll be over here *when* you change your mind.
- 30 *(Remains nearby.)*
- 31 REPORTER: *(To MARRIED)* Excuse me, I'm with the college
- 32 newspaper. What do you want to be?
- 33 MARRIED: I want to *be* married. That's why I'm here.
- 34 REPORTER: You want to get married?
- 35 MARRIED: Yes, I hope to get my M-R-S right after I get my

1 bachelor's degree.

2 **REPORTER:** Who is the lucky guy?

3 **MARRIED:** *Who?* I'm not worried about *who*. I'm worried
4 about *when*. I'm not getting any younger, you know! *(To*
5 *SUPERSTAR)* Hey, *(Name)* let's go get that Coke now.

6 **SUPERSTAR:** Sure. *(Puts arm around her.)* You know, someday
7 you will see my picture on a Coke can.

8 **MARRIED:** Wow ... *(Exits with SUPERSTAR.)*

9 **REPORTER:** *(Upset)* Why is this happening? I can't get one
10 person to give me a simple answer. I'll never get this
11 story. Never. My career in journalism is over.

12 **CHRISTIAN:** Hi, are you OK? *(REPORTER shakes head.)* Are
13 you a freshman, too? It's so hard to pick out your classes
14 and get the times worked out. Is that it? What's wrong?

15 **REPORTER:** I'm *not* a freshman. I'm a sophomore on my
16 first assignment with the college newspaper, but I can't
17 get a story. All I get are crazy answers to a simple
18 question.

19 **CHRISTIAN:** What are you asking everybody?

20 **REPORTER:** *(Readies pencil to paper.)* What do you want to be?

21 **CHRISTIAN:** Uh-oh. I don't know. I don't have a major yet.
22 But I can tell you what I really want to be, if you won't
23 laugh.

24 **REPORTER:** I have heard it all today.

25 **CHRISTIAN:** I want to be a Christian. A really dedicated
26 Christian. If I do that, everything else will work out
27 because God will be directing my life.

28 **REPORTER:** You sound so certain.

29 **CHRISTIAN:** I am certain about being a Christian, but right
30 now I have no idea what classes to take.

31 **REPORTER:** Well, come on. Maybe I can help you with that.

32 **CHRISTIAN:** *(Laughs.)* I knew God would provide. *(Exits with*
33 *REPORTER.)*

34 **NARRATOR:** What is your dream? To become a movie star or
35 a sports star or just to become successful in business?

Whatever you are thinking about doing in life, just remember you can't truly succeed in college or career or marriage until you become a Christian and allow God to lead your life. After all, if God isn't leading your life, who is?

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The Black Box

CAST: Seven characters; four or more extras

Narrator

The Worker — A “suit” who works in an office

The Salesman (Or Saleslady) — He/she may join the
Players if desired.

Players (The Office): Boss — Another “suit”

Mother (Or Father)

Wife (Or Husband)

Son (Or Daughter)

Extras — Four or more persons to
construct the “office walls”

TAILORED TO FIT: The number of required characters is very
flexible and can accommodate more or less players according
to your needs. Parts are written for male and female but
may be changed with the stroke of a pen to the opposite
gender’s pronoun.

SET: One folding chair Center Stage for WORKER

PROPS: One small black box; one large black box. (Suggestion:
Spraypaint black two different sizes of square cardboard
boxes, or substitute a small dark tape player with headset for
the smaller box.)

*(WORKER is seated Downstage Center. NARRATOR is off to
one side.)*

NARRATOR: There once was a person who worked in an
office. Actually, it was more like a cubicle than an office.
*(PLAYERS rush in to form a tight semicircle around the
WORKER as his “office walls.” They position themselves
behind him and at his right and left, so he remains visible to
the audience. BOSS and WIFE are in front — one at his right
and one at his left.)* Yes, his cubicle was crowded and the
office was noisy.

(PLAYERS speak in a round. BOSS begins. WIFE ends. Each

- 1 *player repeats his / her lines two times and then continues more*
 2 *quietly so the audience can hear the next person. WORKER*
 3 *looks around nervously as each one speaks.)*
- 4 **BOSS:** I'll need that report by tomorrow.
- 5 **MOTHER:** We miss you. Please call us.
- 6 **NEXT:** Don't call us. We'll call you.
- 7 **NEXT:** Your report is late.
- 8 **NEXT:** The package didn't arrive.
- 9 **NEXT:** Looks like somebody better put in some overtime.
- 10 **NEXT:** You can't take vacation now.
- 11 **SON:** What did I do wrong, Daddy?
- 12 **NEXT:** Don't look to me for sympathy.
- 13 **NEXT:** I do the work and you get all of the credit.
- 14 **NEXT:** The boss is on line one. The boss is on line one.
- 15 **NEXT:** You have twelve new messages.
- 16 **WIFE:** Will you be working late again, dear? *(ALL continue*
 17 *loudly.)*
- 18 **NARRATOR:** Until one day when a salesman brought him a
 19 little black box.
- 20 **SALESMAN:** *(Enters by turning WIFE out as a door. He shouts.) It*
 21 *sure is noisy in here. (Snaps fingers and all are quiet. They*
 22 *continue to mouth the words.)*
- 23 **WORKER:** Wow! This is great. How did you do it?
- 24 **SALESMAN:** Just turn on this little black box. It sends off
 25 white noise and blocks out annoying phone calls, angry
 26 coworkers, and complaining bosses. You don't hear
 27 what you don't want to hear.
- 28 **WORKER:** How much is it?
- 29 **SALESMAN:** For you? It's free! *(Hands him the box.)*
- 30 **WORKER:** Thanks a lot!
- 31 **SALESMAN:** If you want to be successful, you had better
 32 keep it going full-time.
- 33 **WORKER:** Ah, peace and quiet. This really does block out
 34 the noise. *(PLAYERS mouth words. WORKER works without*
 35 *interruption, pantomiming typing on keyboard, looking*

1 *through stacks of paper, making phone calls, etc. PLAYERS*
 2 *soon cease mouthing words.)*

3 **NARRATOR:** Of course he did great at work, and one day his
 4 boss came to him and said:

5 **BOSS:** Hey! You deserve a raise. *(Shakes WORKER's hand.) In*
 6 *fact, you deserve a bigger office. (She spreads her arms*
 7 *wide and the office grows; i.e., in unison, PLAYERS take a step*
 8 *backward to form a slightly bigger "office.")*

9 **NARRATOR:** So the worker began taking the small box on
 10 the bus. *(He takes the box and stands up. He and the*
 11 *PLAYERS pantomime the bounce of the bus while holding an*
 12 *imaginary overhead safety bar.) He found he could ignore*
 13 almost everyone and talk only to the people important
 14 to him. Then one day he decided he needed it for the
 15 people he loved, too. *(All hands down, no more bus, as WIFE*
 16 *walks to him.)*

17 **WIFE:** How was your day, dear?

18 **WORKER:** Oh, fine. How was yours? *(Looks at his watch.)*

19 **WIFE:** Terrible. I could really use your help ...

20 **WORKER:** *(Turns on box.) I've got a lot of work to do. (He takes*
 21 *his seat again and goes back to work. WIFE returns sadly to*
 22 *her place in the semicircle.)*

23 **NARRATOR:** He worked so hard. He got another raise and
 24 another office.

25 **BOSS:** Good job! You'll be running the company someday.
 26 *(BOSS shakes WORKER's hand and throws out her arm and*
 27 *the PLAYERS take a step backward in unison to show a bigger*
 28 *office.)*

29 **NARRATOR:** Then he got another raise. *(BOSS shakes*
 30 *WORKER's hand, then throws out arm. PLAYERS take a step*
 31 *backward in unison to depict a larger office.) And another.*
 32 *(BOSS shakes WORKER's hand, then throws arm. PLAYERS*
 33 *step back as office grows.) But the box didn't grow.*
 34 *(PLAYERS, beginning with BOSS, repeat the round of lines.)*

35 **BOSS:** I'll need that report by tomorrow.

- 1 **MOTHER:** We miss you. Please call us.
- 2 **NEXT:** Don't call us. We'll call you.
- 3 **NEXT:** Your report is late.
- 4 **NEXT:** The package didn't arrive.
- 5 **NEXT:** Looks like somebody better put in some overtime.
- 6 **NEXT:** You can't take vacation now.
- 7 **SON:** What did I do wrong, Daddy?
- 8 **NEXT:** Don't look to me for sympathy.
- 9 **NEXT:** I do the work and you get all of the credit.
- 10 **NEXT:** The boss is on line one. The boss is on line one.
- 11 **NEXT:** You have twelve new messages.
- 12 **WIFE:** Will you be working late again, dear? (*ALL continue*
13 *loudly.*)
- 14 **SALESMAN:** (*Shouts.*) Hey, it sure is noisy in here. (*Snaps*
15 *fingers. Silence.*)
- 16 **WORKER:** My box isn't working ...
- 17 **SALESMAN:** I brought you a bigger one. (*Hands it to him.*)
18 Listen to that beautiful silence.
- 19 **NARRATOR:** Now the worker couldn't hear anybody who
20 couldn't help him in his career.
- 21 **SON:** (*Places hand on WORKER's shoulder.*) Daddy, will you
22 play ball with me? (*WORKER carelessly tosses SON's hand*
23 *off. SON returns to his place in the semicircle.*)
- 24 **WIFE:** (*Places hand on WORKER's shoulder.*) Honey, please call
25 me back. The teacher called from school and we have a
26 real problem. Don't make me go by myself this time.
27 Please ... (*WORKER carelessly tosses WIFE's hand off. WIFE*
28 *returns to her place in the semicircle.*)
- 29 **MOM:** (*Places hand on WORKER's shoulder.*) Son, I really need
30 your help. This is the second heart attack that your
31 father has had, and we really need you. (*WORKER*
32 *carelessly tosses MOM's hand off. MOM returns to her place in*
33 *the semicircle.*)
- 34 **NARRATOR:** Then one day his boss came to him and said:
- 35 **BOSS:** Well, you got my job. I should have known you would.

- 1 **You are ruthless. Good-bye.** *(She returns to the semicircle*
 2 *and turns her back to the WORKER.)*
- 3 **WORKER:** *(Stretches arms in air. Clenches fists as in victory.) Yes!*
 4 *(As he stretches, the PLAYERS turn their backs on the*
 5 *WORKER as the BOSS did.) I made it to the top!*
- 6 **NARRATOR:** **The box had worked. The worker was a complete**
 7 **success. And now he was happy.** *(As NARRATOR speaks,*
 8 *WORKER becomes dejected.)*
- 9 **WORKER:** **But I'm not happy. My wife left me. My kids hate**
 10 **me. My dad died and I wasn't even there. My mom is**
 11 **hardly speaking to me. The only friends I have are the**
 12 **people who want something from me. And my old**
 13 **friends hate me because I used them to get my**
 14 **promotions.**
- 15 **SALESMAN:** *(Enters.) Hey, how's that box? Need a new one yet?*
- 16 **WORKER:** *(Angry) I thought you said the box was free. I*
 17 **thought you said it would get me everything I ever**
 18 **wanted.**
- 19 **SALESMAN:** **You have to pay for everything sooner or later.**
 20 *(WORKER puts his head in his hands. SALESMAN exits.*
 21 *PLAYERS freeze.)*
- 22 **NARRATOR:** **Hear now the words of Matthew 6:19-21. "Don't**
 23 **pile up treasures on earth, where moth and rust can**
 24 **spoil them and thieves can break in and steal. But keep**
 25 **your treasure in Heaven where there is neither moth**
 26 **nor rust to spoil it and nobody can break in and steal.**
 27 **For wherever your treasure is, you may be certain that**
 28 **your heart will be there too!"**
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Ten Great Suggestions!

CAST: Seven characters

Moses

The Crowd: Journalist

Freeloader

Boss

Curser

Scarlett

Brutus

SET: Podium for MOSES. Stairs or chairs for CROWD.

PROPS (Suggested): "Golden Idol" — buy a donkey or bull piñata and spray paint it gold; Ten Commandments — (Optional) Make stones by cutting Styrofoam and spray painting them with a stone-colored paint; small notebook and pen for JOURNALIST.

COSTUME: Biblical dress

NOTES: Although this is played for laughs, the purpose of this skit is very serious. MOSES is often sarcastic, but never when he is quoting the Bible. Dressing the characters in biblical-era clothing is a nice reminder that we may be "civilized," but we face the exact same problems as any other group of people.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES: Exodus 20:1-17, King James Version. Some references are slightly altered to make them easier to read.

(A small crowd in biblical dress talk together until they are interrupted by BOSS. Then, as if they are at a press conference, they pantomime microphones and shout questions. Each character should stand when they speak and sit when they finish their lines. Where noted, CROWD should echo each other's sentiments with lines like "That's right" and "You go, girl," etc. MOSES remains standing. He is as dignified as possible despite the proceedings, but it is OK for him to be funny.)

BOSS: *(At podium)* **Your attention, please. May I have your attention, please?! *(The CROWD watches him.)* Moses is coming with a prepared statement. *(CROWD shouts***

1 *questions.)*

2 **JOURNALIST:** Is it true that God spoke to Moses on Mount
3 Sinai?

4 **FREELOADER:** What's happening with the Middle East?

5 **CURSER:** Is the Pharaoh really dead?

6 **SCARLETT:** When will we get to the Promised Land?

7 **BRUTUS:** What's for dinner?

8 **BOSS:** Wait for Moses and let him answer your questions.

9 *(MOSES enters and takes the podium. BOSS sits. CROWD*
10 *stands and continues to ask questions.)*

11 **MOSES:** Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming today.

12 I'll take your questions after I finish my prepared
13 statement. *(CROWD quiets.)* God spoke to me on Mount
14 Sinai. He has given me *ten great commandments* to give
15 you. He spoke to me, saying ...

16 **JOURNALIST:** Excuse me, Moses. I am a reporter with the
17 *Daily Sandflies News*, and I was just wondering: Why do
18 you call them the *ten great commandments*? Shouldn't
19 you call them the *ten great suggestions*?

20 **FREELOADER:** Yeah, nobody should tell you how to live.
21 *(CROWD agrees.)*

22 **MOSES:** God can tell you how to live because he is the one true
23 God. Thus the word *commandments* ... *(JOURNALIST tries*
24 *to get his attention.)* Yes?

25 **JOURNALIST:** And which god is that?

26 **MOSES:** Listen to me and you will understand. God spoke to
27 me saying: "I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out
28 of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no
29 other gods before me." This is the first commandment.

30 **JOURNALIST:** Sir, sir! I just wanted to check. Does that
31 mean that we should no longer capitalize the word *god*
32 unless we are referring to the one true God?

33 **MOSES:** Well, yes. But it means a lot more than that.

34 **JOURNALIST:** I was just checking because a lot of my
35 readers, well, they put their trust in Baal, Buddha, even

- 1 crystals. It's a New Age, you know.
- 2 **MOSES:** God is very clear that he is the one and only God.
- 3 You need to be clear on that point, too.
- 4 **JOURNALIST:** OK, but my readers may not like it.
- 5 **MOSES:** Let's move on. Commandment number two: "Thou
- 6 shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any
- 7 likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is
- 8 in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the
- 9 earth."
- 10 **FREELOADER:** *(Interrupts.)* Ooo! Ooo! Ooo!
- 11 **MOSES:** Yes, what is it?
- 12 **FREELOADER:** Does that mean I cannot worship —
- 13 hypothetically, of course — a golden donkey? *(She hugs a*
- 14 *golden "calf" as if it were a stuffed animal.)*
- 15 **MOSES:** No!
- 16 **FREELOADER:** A golden horse?
- 17 **MOSES:** No!
- 18 **FREELOADER:** A golden elephant?
- 19 **MOSES:** Absolutely not.
- 20 **FREELOADER:** A golden giraffe? A golden orangutan? A
- 21 golden monkey? A golden calf?
- 22 **MOSES:** Aren't you listening? The answer is *no*.
- 23 **BOSS:** There goes my golden calf business.
- 24 **FREELOADER:** God isn't very flexible, is he?
- 25 **MOSES:** Not on this point. The rest of the commandment is
- 26 this: "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor
- 27 serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God,
- 28 visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children
- 29 unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate
- 30 me. And showing mercy unto thousands of them that
- 31 love me, and keep my commandments."
- 32 **FREELOADER:** *(Interrupts.)* Wait a minute. That sounds good.
- 33 **MOSES:** Finally, you are being reasonable.
- 34 **FREELOADER:** Yeah, I like that part about the sins of the
- 35 father being visited on later generations, because that

1 means *we* aren't responsible for our actions. It's our
 2 grandfather's fault! (*CROWD agrees loudly.*)
 3 MOSES: No ... that means that if you forsake God now, your
 4 children and later generations may pay for your
 5 mistakes. Do you want that on your conscience?
 6 FREELOADER: Is that a trick question? You're trying to trip
 7 me up, aren't you?
 8 MOSES: Where was I? Number three: "Thou shalt not take
 9 the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will
 10 not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain."
 11 CURSER: Hey! Excuse me ... Does that just refer to cussing?
 12 MOSES: Well, no. There is more to taking his name in vain
 13 than that.
 14 CURSER: So if you kill in God's name or you steal in God's
 15 name or you cheat in God's name or ... something like
 16 that. He would consider that wrong?
 17 MOSES: Yes, God certainly would consider that wrong.
 18 CURSER: What about holy wars, bombing clinics,
 19 concentration camps and that sort of thing?
 20 MOSES: Can I make it any plainer? The answer is no.
 21 CURSER: Shoot. That takes all the fun out of religion.
 22 MOSES: Moving along. Number four: "Remember the
 23 sabbath day, to keep it holy."
 24 BOSS: Now wait a minute, Moses. That is very unfriendly
 25 toward business.
 26 MOSES: Business?
 27 BOSS: First he shuts down my golden calf business, and now
 28 he wants to tell me to close on Sundays.
 29 CROWD: Boooo ...
 30 MOSES: Yes.
 31 BOSS: And let my workers have a day off?
 32 CROWD: Yeah!
 33 MOSES: Yes.
 34 BOSS: I don't think so.
 35 MOSES: The Lord says, "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all

- 1 thy work. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord
2 your God.”
- 3 **JOURNALIST:** Are you saying that we have to spend our day
4 off worshipping God? What about sports? What about
5 recreation? What about free time?
- 6 **MOSES:** You have the other six days of the week. Now,
7 number five: “Honor thy father and mother, that thy
8 days may be long upon the land which the Lord God
9 gives thee.”
- 10 **SCARLETT:** Wait a minute. I am all grown up. I don’t need to
11 honor anybody. My parents have their life and I have
12 mine.
- 13 **MOSES:** Didn’t they take care of you when you were young?
- 14 **SCARLETT:** It was their *job* to take care of me. It’s not my
15 job to take care of them. Besides, I am too busy to rush
16 home and check on their every need.
- 17 **MOSES:** And I am supposed to lead these people to form a
18 new country. Where was I? Oh, yes. Listen carefully.
19 Number six: “Thou shalt not kill.”
- 20 **BRUTUS:** Oh, come on. There are times when any red-
21 blooded man has to kill. Like if your wife runs around
22 on you. (*Shoves SCARLETT.*)
- 23 **SCARLETT:** Or somebody steals your ox. (*Shoves BRUTUS.*)
- 24 **BRUTUS:** Or somebody makes you really, really mad. (*Shoves*
25 *SCARLETT.*)
- 26 **SCARLETT:** Or you need to get rid of some worthless bum
27 who is going to ruin everybody’s life. (*She and BRUTUS*
28 *get into a shoving match. CROWD encourages it.*)
- 29 **MOSES:** Stop it! Stop it! *Thou shalt not kill* is a very
30 important commandment!
- 31 **BRUTUS:** OK, but I’m not giving up my slingshot.
- 32 **SCARLETT:** That’s right. Slingshots don’t kill. (*Threatens*
33 *BRUTUS.*) People do.
- 34 **MOSES:** I can’t believe how you people are arguing. This is
35 not a debate. This is the word of God. Now please try to

- 1 **behave on this one. Number seven: "Thou shalt not**
 2 **commit adultery."** (*Absolute silence until CURSER stands*
 3 *up and whistles a tune briefly.*) **Do you have something to**
 4 **say?**
- 5 **CURSER:** Something to say? To tell? To confess? No ... no ...
- 6 **MOSES:** Good. I'm glad to see you have the decency not to
 7 **argue about this one.**
- 8 **SCARLETT:** Wait! I have something to say. I'll put up with all
 9 of that "one true God" stuff, if you insist. And I'll honor
 10 my father and mother, *if I have to*. But you are really
 11 getting into some personal issues here!
- 12 **FREELOADER:** That's right. It's my life. I can do what I
 13 want. (*CROWD agrees.*)
- 14 **BRUTUS:** I'm curious. Does this also refer to magazines and
 15 videos?
- 16 **MOSES:** What is with you people? I can't even remember
 17 what number I'm on.
- 18 **BOSS:** Number eight.
- 19 **MOSES:** Number eight: "Thou shalt not steal."
- 20 **BRUTUS:** OK, I have another question. If you by accident ...
 21 accidentally ... fall over your sandals and trip and fall
 22 into somebody's purse of gold, and you by accident ...
 23 accidentally ... *take* some of the gold ...
- 24 **MOSES:** Is this a question or a confession?
- 25 **BRUTUS:** Question or confession? Never mind!
- 26 **FREELOADER:** What if nobody knows you took it? Who
 27 does it hurt? How can that be wrong? (*CROWD agrees.*)
- 28 **MOSES:** Stealing is wrong whether you are caught or not.
- 29 **JOURNALIST:** Wouldn't it be fairer to create some loopholes?
 30 How about time off for good behavior? (*CROWD agrees.*)
- 31 **MOSES:** No, no, no! *I'm not talking about crime. I'm talking*
 32 *about sin*. All right, listen up. I'm getting close to the
 33 end. Number ten.
- 34 **BOSS:** No, sir. It's number nine.
- 35 **MOSES:** Number nine: "Thou shalt not bear false witness

1 against thy neighbor.”

2 **BOSS:** What? How am I supposed to get ahead if I don't tell
3 a lie or two about my competitors? For instance, let me
4 just tell you something *she* did the other day ...

5 **MOSES:** Stop! Stop it right now!

6 **JOURNALIST:** Excuse me, but telling each other's secrets,
7 even if they aren't true, is a very important part of
8 modern society.

9 **MOSES:** That's called gossip. And I already told you, God says
10 no false witness. (*Quietly*) Let's see ... finally, number ten.

11 **CURSER:** (*Does a drum roll.*) And now number ten!

12 **MOSES:** Cut that out ... number ten says: “Thou shalt not
13 covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy
14 neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant,
15 nor his ox, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.”

16 **SCARLETT:** (*Interrupts.*) I don't covet the wife, the manservant,
17 maidservant, the ox, and that's OK, right? But it doesn't
18 say anything about coveting my neighbor's husband!

19 **MOSES:** Why didn't God tell me there would be days like this?

20 **CURSER:** Doesn't covet mean envy? That's just human
21 nature. Right, folks?

22 **CROWD:** Right!

23 **CURSER:** We see something that somebody else has and we
24 want it. Right?

25 **CROWD:** Right!

26 **CURSER:** There is just no way that God cannot tell us how
27 to *feel*. Right?

28 **CROWD:** Right!

29 **MOSES:** Let me ask all of you a question. What does coveting
30 lead to?

31 **BOSS:** Sometimes coveting causes me to bear false witness.

32 **SCARLETT:** Sometimes coveting leads me to adultery.

33 **BRUTUS:** Sometimes coveting leads me to hurt someone to
34 get what I want. (*Threatens SCARLETT.*)

35 **CURSER:** But that doesn't make coveting wrong. I just

1 refuse to *vote* for that one. (*CROWD agrees.*)
2 **MOSES:** You don't get a *vote*. Listen! You either worship God
3 by obeying his commandments, or you do not worship
4 God at all. God knows we are sinful. That's why he has
5 given us the Ten Commandments. God is giving you a
6 chance to redeem yourself. It is *up to you* whether you
7 choose to follow God or not.
8 **JOURNALIST:** So what you are saying is these are really
9 just ten great *suggestions*!
10 **MOSES:** That does it! You would think God could have given
11 me the formula for aspirin while I was up there on
12 Mount Sinai. (*Exits.*)
13 **BOSS:** Look, he left the Commandments! (*CROWD moves to*
14 *pick up Commandment tablets.*)
15 **JOURNALIST:** Quick! Let's change them while no one's
16 looking!
17 **CURSER:** Yeah, like, what's God going to do? Leave us in the
18 wilderness for forty years? (*CROWD exits, laughing and*
19 *talking.*)
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Psychics Today

CAST: Three characters

Cara Carrington — A typical infomercial interviewer

Mandy — An actress paid for her endorsement

Christian — A true Christian in name and deed

SET: Three nice chairs or a couch and chair.

COSTUMES: CARA is well dressed. MANDY is flashy. CHRISTIAN wears nice, casual clothes.

SCENE: CARA sits between CHRISTIAN and MANDY on the set of an infomercial.

CARA: Hi. Welcome to Psychics Today. I'm Cara Carrington, and I'm talking to people about their *free* call to Psychics Today hotline. The only hotline that's really hot! Tell us all about your call, Mandy!

MANDY: At first I was skeptical, but my personal psychic was so sincere. I couldn't believe that she knew everything about me. She said I was young and attractive and smart. She knew my credit history, my brand of toothpaste, even the last movie I rented. It was like she had a computer in her head. She said that she saw money and power and a good-looking man in my future. *(Leans forward and waves at CHRISTIAN.)*

CHRISTIAN: *(Waves back reluctantly.)* How nice for you ...

CARA: Wow! It really sounds like your psychic knows what she's talking about. Would you recommend Psychics Today to others?

MANDY: In a heartbeat. Psychics Today has really touched my life. It's like having your own crystal ball. And it's only five dollars and ninety-nine cents a minute. All you need is a phone and an open *wallet*!

CARA: *(Whispers angrily.)* That's *mind*! And open mind!

MANDY: That's what I said.

CARA: *(To audience)* All you need is a phone and an open

- 1 mind. Call Psychics Today, today! The only hotline
 2 that's really hot! Now let's talk to Christian. What did
 3 your psychic say?
- 4 CHRISTIAN: At first I was afraid to call because the Bible
 5 warns people not to try to foresee the future. Then I
 6 figured, "Why not?" So I went to dial the phone.
- 7 CARA: Good for you. What did your psychic say?
- 8 CHRISTIAN: When I got to the phone, I decided to pray
 9 about it.
- 10 CARA: You prayed about calling your psychic?
- 11 CHRISTIAN: Yes, I prayed, but I didn't get an answer right
 12 away. So I reached for the phone. I reached, and ... and ...
- 13 CARA: And what did your psychic say?
- 14 CHRISTIAN: I didn't call because I heard a voice in my head
 15 that said I shouldn't call. Maybe it was my psychic. What
 16 do you think?
- 17 CARA: A voice in your head isn't your psychic.
- 18 MANDY: That's for sure. Psychics aren't free.
- 19 CARA: (*Hisses at MANDY.*) Be quiet.
- 20 CHRISTIAN: Are you sure that it wasn't my psychic? The
 21 voice said (*Spooky*) "Christian, Christian. I know
 22 everything about you. I know your problems and I know
 23 the solutions." (*Normal*) Isn't that what your psychic says?
- 24 MANDY: Wow, you must be psychic, because that's what my
 25 psychic said to me.
- 26 CARA: Listen, you two, just read the cue cards.
- 27 CHRISTIAN: Then the voice said: (*Spooky*) "You don't need to
 28 make a call for five dollars and ninety-nine cents a
 29 minute. You don't need to make a call. You don't need to
 30 make a call. You don't need to make a call."
- 31 MANDY: I don't need to make a call ... I don't need to ...
- 32 CARA: (*Shakes her.*) That's right. You don't need to because you
 33 already have. But our viewers do need to make a call.
 34 (*Turns toward imaginary camera.*) Call the number on your
 35 screen right now. Operators are standing by.

CHRISTIAN: Wait! I've got a better idea. Just close your eyes in prayer and let God speak to you. Or open your Bible to the gospels and read what Jesus says. If you really want to know the future, I can tell you.

CARA: No one can know the future. Wait! I didn't say that. What I mean is ... Never mind! I don't care what you say.

CHRISTIAN: I'm sorry. I've been pulling your leg. I just came on the show to say that I already know my future. My future is everlasting life in Christ. Without Christ as your Savior, all futures end in death.

CARA: You just lost your commission, buddy. You should have called Psychics Today like you were paid to do.

CHRISTIAN: Oh, I can't do that. I told you: The Bible warns us about fortune-telling. The whole thing is a giant waste of time and money.

CARA: *(Gasps.)* Where is my producer? Who hired this guy?

CHRISTIAN: I wish you knew Christ. If you did, you could have the name Christian, too.

CARA: *(Angrily)* That's all the time we have for now. *(Goes back to her TV voice.)* You've been watching Psychics Today, the only hotline that is really hot! Don't forget. All you need is a phone and an open wallet! I mean, a mind! You need a mind. Do you mind? *(She pushes past CHRISTIAN and exits right as he speaks. MANDY quietly exits left.)*

CHRISTIAN: A mind is a terrible thing to waste ... and so is a future. Wait up! I have so much more to tell you. *(Exits right.)*

Christian Company C

CAST: Four characters

Sarge — A well-meaning but bossy Christian

Homer — A Christian with a big heart

Girl Recruit — A Christian

Guy Recruit — A Christian

SET: None.

PROPS: A whistle for SARGE; "political" button for GUY RECRUIT that says, "Save the Small, Spotted, Outback, Hopping Birds"

COSTUMES: You may wish to choose clothes that indicate uniformity, but uniforms are not necessary.

SCENE: SARGE leads his two RECRUITS in military formation, marching them back and forth without a purpose. When he speaks to RECRUITS or HOMER, he gets in their face.

SARGE: (*Blows whistle.*) **Company, halt!** (*Walks back and forth angrily.*) **You have all enlisted in Christian Company C, am I right?**

RECRUITS: (*Together*) **Yes, sir!**

SARGE: And you have all stated that Christ is your Lord and Savior. Am I right?

RECRUITS: Yes, sir!

SARGE: I can't hear you.

RECRUITS: Yes, sir!

SARGE: You call yourself Christians? You bunch of sloppy, no-good bums. Why, you don't even dress like Christians! (*To GUY RECRUIT*) Get rid of that political button, soldier. It does not express *our Christian values!*

GUY RECRUIT: Sir, it just says, "Save the Small, Spotted, Outback, Hopping Birds."

SARGE: You heard me!

GUY RECRUIT: Yes, sir! (*Removes "political" button.*)

SARGE: My job is to make good Christian men out of you. (*To*

- 1 **GIRL RECRUIT** Are you listening, soldier?
- 2 **GIRL RECRUIT:** Yes, sir. (*Flirts.*) But, uh ... um ... I'm a girl.
- 3 **SARGE:** Well ... *good Christian women*, then. The point is:
- 4 you follow, I lead. You don't even get dressed in the
- 5 morning without checking with me. Is that understood?
- 6 (*HOMER enters during this speech and is looking for a place to*
- 7 *hide. Finally he tries to hide behind one of the RECRUITS*
- 8 *when SARGE spots him.*)
- 9 **RECRUITS:** (*Together*) Yes, sir!
- 10 **SARGE:** Homer Kyle, Homer Kyle, Homer Kyle. Why are you
- 11 late?
- 12 **HOMER:** Well, gawl-ly, Sarge. I was just out doing my
- 13 Christian duty by serving the poor at the mission.
- 14 **SARGE:** And did I give you my permission to go AWOL?
- 15 (*Pronounced "a-wall."*)
- 16 **HOMER:** I wasn't on a wall, sir. I told you, I was downtown
- 17 at the mission.
- 18 **SARGE:** Homer, who gave you permission to serve the poor?
- 19 **HOMER:** Well, Jesus made that real clear in the Bible. He
- 20 said, "As you have done it unto the least of these my
- 21 brothers and sisters, you have done it unto me"
- 22 (*Matthew 25:40, author's paraphrase*). That means that a
- 23 Christian should help his fellow man or woman,
- 24 depending upon who that might be at the time.
- 25 **SARGE:** I see. And you thought that you would just leave
- 26 this company of Christians and helps others *without my*
- 27 *permission!*
- 28 **HOMER:** Yes, Sarge. Gawl-ly, ain't a Christian supposed to
- 29 follow his conscience?
- 30 **SARGE:** (*Shouts in HOMER's face.*) This is the stupidest, most
- 31 lame-brained, idiotic, silliest stunt you ever pulled,
- 32 Homer. (*With emphasis*) You are like a *little child*.
- 33 **HOMER:** Thank you, Sarge.
- 34 **SARGE:** Thank you?
- 35 **HOMER:** Jesus says, "Truly I say to you, unless you become



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