

MORE PUPPET-TIME PARABLES

by Jeanne Fogle



CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

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PARABLES**

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PRODUCTION NOTES

These puppet plays were especially written for elementary age performers, though older children or even adults can perform them for primary or preschool audiences, or for adults.

All performers love an audience, but an audience is not essential to the production of these plays. They may be used as an in-class teaching tool with or without a stage or props. The Bible lessons they teach are for the performers as well as the audience. We suggest you adapt these plays to fit your own unique situation.

If you do choose to use these plays for audience presentation, you will find they work very well for children's church, children's sermons, and a Sunday school opening.

The scripts included in this packet provide a wide variety of theatrical production technique opportunities. They can be staged with all the frills or quite simply according to the circumstances of the puppet show equipment you have available.

On a practical level, it is not very likely that your puppet workshop has all of the puppet characters indicated in these scripts. In most instances, it is not necessary that you have them. We suggest you adapt what characters you have to fit the parts or make several "generic-type" puppets that, with a bit of costume added, can become almost anybody.

Many performances of these plays were done with great success using a wide assortment of commercially made puppets. This approach is the easiest and quite acceptable, but, of course, the best way is to construct your own. When everyone is involved in puppet making, the entire project takes on special significance. There are several books and filmstrips explaining and demonstrating how this can be done at low cost. Puppet construction is as great a joy as puppet performance. It's an activity that children will long remember.

The stage props can be constructed from poster board and colored. If the props are to be placed on the stage, a piece of wood can be added to the base. Better still, mount the prop on a dowel rod that can be inserted into a slot on the stage floor. This keeps the prop from falling off the stage if bumped (which happens all too often).

If the parts aren't memorized, scripts can be pinned to the inside of the curtain of your puppet stage for the puppeteers to read.

Most of all, be creative! These scripts are only the beginning place. They have been used many times and they work, but your success depends on your adaptations.

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The Mustard Seed

A puppet play based on Matthew 13:31

CHARACTERS: Narrator; Mustard Seed (very tiny); Mustard Plant; Bean Seed; Bean Plant.

BACKGROUND SCENERY: A field.

PRODUCTION NOTES: Stick puppets or finger puppets may be used to tell this story.

NARRATOR: One of the questions that people most often asked Jesus was, "What is the Kingdom of Heaven like?" Jesus found many different ways to tell people about the kingdom. One was to compare it to a mustard seed.

MUSTARD SEED: Hi!

BEAN SEED: Hi! Who said that?

MUSTARD SEED: Me. I'm over here.

BEAN SEED: (*Looking closely*) Over where? I don't see anything.

MUSTARD SEED: Here — I'm right here.

BEAN SEED: Oh, I think I see you now. What in the world are you, a speck of dirt or what?

MUSTARD SEED: (*Proudly*) No, I'm a mustard seed.

BEAN SEED: A mustard seed! You've got to be kidding!

MUSTARD SEED: No, that's what I am all right. Who are you?

BEAN SEED: I'm a bean seed and, as you can see, I'm a whole lot bigger than you.

MUSTARD SEED: You sure are!

BEAN SEED: I'm just going to settle in this nice, warm soil and then I will start to grow.

MUSTARD SEED: Me too! This looks like a great spot to grow into a *big* tree.

BEAN SEED: (*Laughing*) Ha! Ha! Ha! You? You are going to grow? Ha! Ha! Ha! Maybe you will grow to be a whole inch high! Ha! Ha! Ha!

1 **MUSTARD SEED:** No, really. I may be little now but just wait
2 and see. I think you will be surprised.

3 **BEAN SEED:** *(Sarcastically)* I doubt it. Now, I don't mean to be
4 rude but I have to get to work and start growing here. I
5 really will get big. *(SEEDS disappear and PLANTS appear,*
6 *small at first and then continuing to grow. BEAN PLANT looks*
7 *down on MUSTARD PLANT.)* Hello, down there. Well, at
8 least I can see you now.

9 **MUSTARD PLANT:** I'm coming. I will catch up. Just wait and
10 see. *(Pause. Now as large as the BEAN PLANT.)* Hi! Well,
11 here I am. We are the same size now.

12 **BEAN PLANT:** Holy Moses! How did you do that? *(MUSTARD*
13 *PLANT keeps growing until it is a big tree.)* Unbelievable!

14 **MUSTARD PLANT:** I made it! Can you imagine? I was the
15 tiniest of all the seeds and look at me now! I have grown
16 into the largest of plants with branches where birds can
17 come and find shelter.

18 **NARRATOR:** The Kingdom of Heaven is like that. You
19 cannot see it but the seed is sown in the hearts of people.
20 It grows and grows until it becomes strong and healthy
21 and it spreads more seeds which will grow and grow.
22 There is no end.

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The Unforgiving Servant

A puppet play based on Matthew 13:23

CHARACTERS: Narrator, King, Servant, Joe.

BACKGROUND SCENE: Outside of a palace.

PRODUCTION NOTES: This play may be performed with any type or combination of puppets. Children may wish to act out the roles in this story.

NARRATOR: Jesus taught that when someone does something wrong to you, you should forgive that person. How many times should you forgive? One? Two? Ten? Twenty-five? How about seventy times seven? Four hundred ninety? That is a lot of times to forgive someone, but that is what Jesus said to do. Jesus told a story about forgiveness. It goes something like this:

One day a king decided to balance his accounts with his servants. Time to call in those I.O.U's.

(Scene opens with KING and SERVANT Onstage.)

KING: I see here that you are far behind in your loan payments and you owe me money, much money, much, much money. In fact, you owe me ten thousand dollars.

SERVANT: Business has been bad, sir. The cost of living just keeps going up. The kids need braces and we had to get a larger camel so my wife could drive the kids in the kindergarten camel pool.

KING: Well, I am sorry. Business is bad all around, but I need my money so you will have to pay me.

SERVANT: There is no way. I am nearly bankrupt. I just cannot pay you. You can't get blood out of a turnip.

KING: Then, I have no other choice. You will have to sell your house, your camel and all of your other possessions.

SERVANT: No! Please, sir! My wife and the kids will go crazy.

- 1 **KING:** Then I will have to sell you, your wife and the kids.
2 You will all become slaves. That is the only way to settle
3 this large debt.
- 4 **SERVANT:** *(On his knees and very upset.)* Oh, please, sir, not
5 that. Sell my house, my camel, my golf clubs, but, please
6 sir, spare me and my family. Please, sir, give me a little
7 more time and I will pay you everything I owe. I am very
8 sorry about this.
- 9 **KING:** *(Thoughtfully ponders situation.)* Ummm, Ummm. I do pity
10 you. I really do and so I'm going to forgive you.
- 11 **SERVANT:** You will?!
- 12 **KING:** Yes, and one thing more. I forgive your debt as well.
13 I'm going to erase it from my books. Your slate is clean.
- 14 **SERVANT:** Oh, thank you, sir. How can I ever thank you, sir.
15 Thank you, thank you, thank you. *(KING and SERVANT*
16 *leave stage.)*
- 17 **NARRATOR:** Now the servant could hardly believe his good
18 fortune and he went on his way relieved of the problem
19 of his big debt. Later, that same day, he met one of his
20 friends along the way.
21 *(SERVANT enters from one side of stage. JOE enters from*
22 *opposite side.)*
- 23 **SERVANT:** Aha. There you are. Hey, Joe, don't we have a little
24 business matter to settle?
- 25 **JOE:** Business matter?
- 26 **SERVANT:** Yes. The matter of the two thousand dollars you
27 owe me.
- 28 **JOE:** I can't pay it just now. Business has been terrible, but
29 I will pay you when I am able. Please forgive me for being
30 late with my payments.
- 31 **SERVANT:** *(Seizes JOE by the throat.)* I will not, you crook! That
32 money is mine and I mean to have it. I am going to the
33 sheriff and have you thrown into jail until you can pay
34 me. I want my money *now*. *(Grabs JOE and takes him*
35 *Offstage.)*

1 **NARRATOR:** Well, when the other servants found out what
2 happened, they really felt sorry for Joe. They told the
3 king what had happened to see if he could help out a
4 little. The king called the first servant back.

5 *(KING and SERVANT enter.)*

6 **KING:** Good day again. All is going well, I trust?

7 **SERVANT:** Fine, sir. Fine, sir. Thank you, sir.

8 **KING:** All in not fine. You are a wicked man. You owed me ten
9 thousand dollars and I forgave you because I felt sorry
10 for you. I even cancelled your debt. Then, you turned
11 right around and refused to excuse Joe for the two
12 thousand dollars he owed you. I forgave you, but you
13 could not forgive another. Now, you are going to jail and
14 you will have to stay there until you can pay me the ten
15 thousand dollars you owe me.

16 **SERVANT:** How can I raise that much money? I'll never get
17 out of jail.

18 **KING:** You should have thought of that when you refused to
19 show any mercy or kindness to Joe. The sheriff is on his
20 way.

21 **NARRATOR:** God forgives each of us over and over again,
22 so we must forgive our brothers and sisters over and over
23 again.

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The Lost Coin

A puppet play based on Luke 15:8-10

CHARACTERS: Eliza; Justina, her friend; Phineas T. Buster, salesman; Cully, the wonder machine.

PROPS: Coins, small broom, pocket flashlight.

BACKGROUND SCENE: Inside of a house.

PRODUCTION NOTES: This play may be performed with any type of puppets. It also may be performed with the children assuming the roles.

NARRATOR: When Jesus was preaching and spreading his message of love and caring, he sometimes met with dishonest tax collectors, sinners and others who were not exactly candidates for citizens of the year award. Well, this made the religious leaders furious to see Jesus meeting and talking — and horrors — even eating with these low-grades! So Jesus told a story.

ELIZA: *(Enters stage and talks to audience.)* Hello. You came to visit. How nice. Oh — I'll just bet you came to see my ten beautiful silver coins. I'd be delighted to show them to you. Here they are. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine — nine! *(Apologetically)* Let me count again. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. *(Getting excited)* I must have made a mistake. Can you help me count? One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. Oh no! I've lost one of my beautiful silver coins. Where can it be? I must find it!

I know. It must have fallen into my clothes or in my shoes. I'll just shake a little here. *(Shakes all over.)* Where can it be? *(Knock at the door; JUSTINA enters.)*

JUSTINA: Hi there, Eliza. I just came by to see if you wanted to run down to the bazaar. They are having a two-for-one

1 sale on colored beads to go with all the new spring
2 fashions. (*Pauses a minute.*) You look upset. Whatever is
3 wrong?

4 **ELIZA:** I am upset. I have lost a silver coin. I had ten. Now I
5 have nine. I can't imagine where it could be.

6 **JUSTINA:** Oh posh! You still have nine. Why waste energy
7 worrying over one little old lost coin. You can look later.
8 Sales don't wait. Come on.

9 **ELIZA:** Oh, I couldn't. I must find it. You go ahead. I am too
10 worried.

11 **JUSTINA:** Well dear, worries make wrinkles. Ta ta.

12 **ELIZA:** (*To audience*) Excuse me, please. I will try to find the
13 lost coin to show you. Maybe if I sweep the floor, I will
14 find it. (*Sweeps floor.*)

15 No luck. Where can it be? Maybe it's in the fireplace.
16 (*Looks there.*) No luck. Maybe it's in the fish tank. Yuk — no
17 luck. (*Knock at the door. Enter PHINEAS T. BUSTER leading*
18 *a furry ball on a leash.*)

19 **PHINEAS:** Good afternoon, Madam. I am Phineas T. Buster,
20 here to demonstrate Cully, a powerful new cleaning
21 machine. (*Furry ball growls.*) Down boy! Low
22 maintenance — easy to use. (*Furry ball growls.*) Down boy!
23 Just turn Cully loose and he will clean up every bit of
24 dirt on your floor — spit spot — he eats *anything*. (*Furry*
25 *ball growls.*) Down boy! Here, let me demonstrate.

26 **ELIZA:** He eats anything?! *Oh no!* My silver coin. He will eat
27 it. Get that monster out of here! (*She pushes PHINEAS and*
28 *CULLY out the door.*)

29 I'll just look one more time very slowly. This time I
30 will use a lamp to help me see in all the dark corners.
31 (*Uses flashlight and looks all around.*) Can it be? It is! I found
32 it. Oh hooray! Hooray! I found it. My lost coin . . . I found
33 it! (*Runs to door and calls.*) Justina, Mr. Buster, friends.
34 Good news. I found my coin. I am so happy.

35 **NARRATOR:** God is like this. Whenever we stray and do

**wrong, God searches for us everywhere — never giving
up but looking and looking until we are found. Then God
is happy to have us back again.**

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The Great Banquet Feast

A puppet play based on Luke 14:15-24

CHARACTERS: Narrator; Master; Hubert, the servant; Lady Guest; Business person; Farmer; Husband; Other guests.

BACKGROUND SCENE: Front lawn of a large fancy house.

PRODUCTION NOTES: Any type or combination of puppets may be used for this play. Stick puppets or finger puppets that are made by the children may be used since there are many characters. This is also a good play to interpret dramatically with the children directly assuming the roles, since all children could have a part.

NARRATOR: One Sabbath day, Jesus was sharing a meal with some people and discussing the Kingdom that God has promised to followers of the Word. One man who was listening said, "What a wonderful privilege it would be to be able to get into the Kingdom of God." Jesus told a story about this.

MASTER: *(Enters middle of stage.)* Oh, I do feel good. Everything is going well. Business is great. Shares in my tent construction company have just gone up fifty points on the stock market. I'm getting good mileage out of my new camel. My family is healthy and happy. My sons keep their hair nice and long and I have so many wonderful friends. Life is good. *(Pauses a bit.)* I should give a party to celebrate just being alive. Not just a little cookout, but a really big party! A big, big party. That's it — I'll give a great banquet feast. *(Calls Offstage.)* Hubert!

HUBERT: *(Enters)* Yes, sir.

MASTER: I'm going to have a big party and invite everyone to come and share it with me. I'll want strolling musicians, fancy waiters and a twenty-one-course meal.

HUBERT: A twenty-one-course meal, sir?

- 1 **MASTER:** Well, maybe that is a bit much. Seventeen courses
2 will do. And I want a fountain in the middle of the room —
3 a fountain made of bananas and huckleberries.
- 4 **HUBERT:** Huckleberries, sir?
- 5 **MASTER:** Well, maybe huckleberries are not too substantial.
6 Get crab apples. And I want you to send invitations to
7 all my friends — get the list from the missus. You will
8 need to invite all my business acquaintances — get the
9 list from my secretary. And send invitations to the town
10 dignitaries — good for business, you know. Friday night
11 at 8:00 sharp. Let's get busy. We have a lot of work to do
12 to get ready. (*Puppets leave stage.*)
- 13 **NARRATOR:** And so the master and his servant worked very
14 hard to prepare this special banquet feast for all of his
15 friends.
- 16 **MASTER:** (*Enters*) Well, all is ready. Where are my guests?
17 They are probably planning to be a little late — that's
18 fashionable, you know. Very thoughtful of them. (*Calls*
19 *Offstage.*) Hubert! Tell everyone to come — the banquet is
20 ready. (*Leaves stage.*)
- 21 **HUBERT:** (*Enters, sees a LADY walking by and stops her.*) Excuse
22 me, ma'am. My master says to come now for the banquet
23 is ready.
- 24 **LADY:** (*Surprised and flustered*) Now! So soon! I didn't think it
25 would start so soon. I don't have my hair and nails done
26 yet. I simply can't come now. Please excuse me. (*She*
27 *hurries off.*)
- 28 **HUBERT:** (*Sees a BUSINESS PERSON walking by and stops*
29 *person.*) My master says to come — the banquet is now
30 ready.
- 31 **BUSINESS PERSON:** (*In an important manner*) Oh, I can't
32 possibly come. I just bought some turnip fields on the
33 south edge of town and I have to go check them out. You
34 will have to excuse me. (*Hurries off.*)
- 35 **HUBERT:** (*Sees a FARMER passing by and stops FARMER.*) My

1 master says all is ready. Please come to the banquet
2 prepared for you.

3 FARMER: (*Seems distracted.*) Me! Oh! I forgot! I just bought
4 five pair of oxen today. The former owner said they could
5 plow an acre in forty-nine minutes flat. I'm dying to see
6 what these babies can really do. Please do excuse me.
7 (*Hurries off.*)

8 HUBERT: (*Sees a nervous man hurrying by and stops him.*) The great
9 banquet is ready and my master asks that you come now.

10 HUSBAND: (*Very nervous*) Uh — oh — ah — you see, I have
11 this little problem. I just got married and my wife is sort
12 of the nervous type. I have to get home right now. Please
13 excuse me. (*Hurries off.*)

14 MASTER: (*Enters*) Where are all my guests?

15 HUBERT: Well, sir — they can't come. They all asked to be
16 excused. One wasn't ready, one just bought some cows,
17 one just got . . .

18 MASTER: (*Interrupting*) What? They can't come? My friends?
19 After I prepared this wonderful feast for them. They are
20 really ungrateful. I am really angry. Well, I know what
21 we'll do. Go out into the street in town and bring me the
22 poor, the crippled and the blind. They won't be too busy
23 to come. Bring beggars and outcasts too.

24 HUBERT: Beggars and outcasts, sir? Are you sure?

25 MASTER: I certainly am. Tell everyone to come. All is ready.
26 My house shall be filled with those who are not too busy
27 to enjoy this wonderful feast I have prepared for them.
28 (*MASTER and HUBERT leave stage.*)

29 NARRATOR: (*As HUBERT leads many others across stage*) And
30 so the master's house was filled with the poor, the lame,
31 the blind and the outcasts. Everyone had a wonderful
32 time. Those who were invited but did not come missed
33 the wonderful feast the master had prepared for them.
34 People who have no time for God's kingdom now will
35 never see it, but those who come to God will be fed.

The Laborers in the Vineyard

A puppet play based on Matthew 20:1

CHARACTERS: Narrator, Master, Workers.

BACKGROUND SCENE: An orchard or outside of a farmhouse.

PRODUCTION NOTES: This is a good play to use with a large group as there are many roles. Stick puppets or finger puppets made by the children are good choices for this play. It also may be performed with the children themselves acting out the roles.

NARRATOR: The people who met and talked with Jesus asked him many questions about what God was really like. Jesus told this story:

One morning a master went out at sunrise to hire people to work in his vineyard.

MASTER: *(Two WORKERS and MASTER enter.)* I need help. The grapes are ready to be picked. If you come and work for me today, I will pay you twenty dollars.

WORKER 1: Sure, I need the money.

WORKER 2: Sounds fair to me. Where's the field? *(All leave stage.)*

MASTER: *(Re-enters and looks at oversized watch.)* Eight o'clock already. I need to get more workers. *(Calls Offstage.)* Anyone want an honest day's work? I'll pay a fair wage. *(Two WORKERS enter.)*

WORKER 3: I want to work. My rent is due tomorrow.

WORKER 4: Me too. What do you need done?

MASTER: Join the others in the field and the foreman will tell you what to do. *(Paces back and forth.)* Ten o'clock — they have been picking five hours. There are more grapes than I thought. *(Calls Offstage.)* I'm looking for more grape pickers. Anyone interested? I'll pay a fair wage. *(Three WORKERS enter.)*



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