

THE ORDINARY MADE EXTRAORDINARY

by Beth Bronson Troop



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The Ordinary Made
Extraordinary

A sunrise service in readings and pantomime

by Beth Bronson Troop

CAST OF CHARACTERS

READER 1

READER 2

(Actual number of readers determined by available participants)

MARY

JOSEPH

SHEPHERDS

(Any number)

JOHN THE BAPTIST

JESUS

DISCIPLES

(Up to twelve, may be doubled from other parts)

SINFUL WOMAN

PRODUCTION NOTES

This drama requires no memorization as each passage may be read. The presentation time is approximately twenty minutes.

Cast

The number of readers and actors is flexible depending on how many participants are available. Small groups might use only one or two readers and assign actors multiple roles. Large groups may have one reader for each passage and a separate actor (or actors) for each. As each passage is read, an actor pantomimes the action of the biblical character where indicated.

Costumes

You will need period clothing for each biblical character: robes, head coverings, and sandals for Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, Jesus, Disciples, and Sinful Woman. John the Baptist should wear a short, fur-lined or flannel outfit to represent camel's hair clothing. All characters should wear contemporary clothing under their robes for the ending, when all appear in modern attire.

Setting

A wooden cross stands at the front — or two long pieces of wood lean against a surface. A microphone is ready on a stand or pulpit. A music stand to hold the scripts is optional if pulpit is not available. A large rock may be displayed to represent the tomb enclosure if preferred. Otherwise, a drawing is displayed or a projection of a tomb may be shown when indicated.

Props

Wooden cross (if already stationed in church or
at worship site) or two large pieces of wood
Microphone
Music stand (optional) or pulpit
Broom
Hammer
Perfume bottle
Large stone (to represent tomb — optional)
or drawing or projection of tomb
Small doll wrapped in a blanket to represent Baby Jesus
Canes for shepherd staffs

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READER 1: "Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel; and whose power is in the skies. Awesome is God in his sanctuary, the God of Israel; he gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!" (*Psalms 68:34-35*).

READER 2: "The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 'Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words.' So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him.

"Then the word of the Lord came to me: 'Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done?' says the Lord. 'Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so you are in my hand, O house of Israel.'" (*Jeremiah 18:1-6*).

READER 1: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth" (*John 1:14*).

READER 2: God is awesome beyond measure. He can take the ordinary, even with all its imperfections, and make it extraordinary. Every piece of Jesus' journey, from his birth to his resurrection, may have had ordinary beginnings, but God transformed the ordinary into the extraordinary, far surpassing what could have been accomplished by earthly standards. Listen now as we are reminded of the power and majesty of God's holy plan throughout history. (*Each of the following parts may be read by a separate reader or continue with READERS 1 and 2, depending on available participants. ACTORS enter according to directions given while READERS speak. Each READER should wait to begin until each ACTOR is in place.*)

6
MARY

1
2
3 READER 1: (*MARY walks to the front carrying a broom and begins*
4 *sweeping.*) Mary was an ordinary girl who played with
5 friends and helped with chores around the house. As a
6 young teen, she was engaged to be married, as was
7 customary in her culture for girls her age. Perhaps life
8 seemed routine and predictable as she grew into the
9 role of a young woman, soon to be someone's wife.
10 (*MARY acts astonished and looks up when the ANGEL begins*
11 *speaking to her.*) But one day an angel of the Lord visited
12 Mary, the "favored one," and told her that she would
13 become the mother of Jesus, even though she was still a
14 virgin: "You will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
15 and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will
16 be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God
17 will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He
18 will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his
19 kingdom there will be no end" (*Luke 1:31-33*). (*MARY*
20 *kneels in prayer.*) The moment Mary accepted God's will
21 to bear a child conceived by the Holy Spirit was the day
22 she changed from being one of many women to an
23 extraordinary woman of history, for she would become
24 the mother of our Lord and Savior. It was not easy for
25 her — barely more than a girl and not yet married — to
26 accept God's will for her life, but accept it she did:
27 "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me
28 according to your word" (*Luke 1:38*). How blessed was
29 she and the rest of the world because of that important
30 decision. (*MARY exits with broom.*)
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38

7
JOSEPH

READER 2: (*JOSEPH walks to the front holding a hammer and pantomimes hitting a nail.*) **Joseph was a carpenter, doing his job from day to day, preparing to marry his young fiancée, Mary. Everything seemed to fall into place until he discovered that Mary was pregnant — and he was not the father. (JOSEPH stops his work and appears angry.) He had planned to quietly divorce her until God’s angel visited him in a dream and told him to go ahead with the wedding. (JOSEPH lies down and closes his eyes.) “But just when [Joseph] resolved to [divorce Mary], an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins’” (Matthew 1:20-21). (JOSEPH wakes up and kneels in prayer.) Joseph’s life became extraordinary when he agreed to take this woman, pregnant with the Holy Spirit’s child, as his wife and raise the child as his own. (JOSEPH exits with hammer.)**

BABY JESUS

READER 1: (*MARY and JOSEPH walk to the front, with MARY holding BABY JESUS. They stare admiringly at the baby like doting parents.*) **Jesus was a baby like any other, but born into humble means in a cold stable surrounded by Mary and Joseph, sheep, and cattle. Like all newborns, he surely cried, and he was needy and dependent. He would have been seen as an ordinary baby, were it not for the heavenly announcement of his birth to shepherds, who came from the fields to visit him; the angels, who pronounced his birth and stood watch over the divine child; and his mother, who knew the truth of Jesus’ beginnings on earth and treasured all these**

things in her heart. He was special, and though his parents, especially his mother, knew the importance of this baby's birth, he surpassed everyone's expectations of what was to come. (*MARY and JOSEPH exit.*)

SHEPHERDS

READER 2: (*SHEPHERDS enter holding staffs and sit or lie down at the front.*) Shepherds watched over their flocks as on any other still, dark night. None expected the miracle that would change their night and their lives from ordinary to extraordinary. On the night of Jesus' birth, angels visited the shepherds, proclaiming the good news of the Messiah. (*The SHEPHERDS jump up in surprise and stare upward, as if listening to the angels.*) These lowly shepherds became the first people outside the stable to know of this wondrous event. They immediately followed the star that shone over the stable in Bethlehem to behold the sight of this child for themselves. (*SHEPHERDS exit quickly.*) God made it clear from the moment of his son's birth that all, regardless of wealth or social status, would be welcome and shown mercy through Jesus Christ.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

READER 1: (*JOHN THE BAPTIST enters and stands at the front.*) John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin, yet their biological connection is not what is most remembered. Both John and Jesus were meant for service that transcended this world. Though John lived humbly in the wilderness, (*JOHN THE BAPTIST puts his arms up as if proclaiming Jesus' coming.*) his voice rang out strongly, proclaiming the coming of the Messiah and baptizing those who sought forgiveness, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy as "the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the

way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (*Mark 1:3*).
(JESUS enters, and JOHN THE BAPTIST points down the
aisle toward him.) When Jesus appeared one day and
 asked to be baptized by John, John felt unworthy,
 saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come
 to me?” (*Matthew 3:14*). But he did as he was asked, and
 Jesus’ true nature as the Son of God was revealed at
 that moment. *(JESUS kneels and bows his head. JOHN THE*
BAPTIST dips down hand as if dipping into the river and then
raises hand over JESUS for pouring the water onto JESUS’
head three times, or pantomime an immersion baptism, if
preferred. BOTH stand quietly until the end of the passage.)
 John never faltered in his faith, even when he faced an
 untimely death. Though a man of humble means, he
 provided an extraordinary ministry that led to the
 beginning of Jesus’ own ministry. *(JOHN THE BAPTIST*
exits.)

JESUS

READER 2: *(JESUS walks slowly among congregation, smiling,*
holding out his hands to some, shaking some hands, patting
some on the back, as if interacting with those to whom he is
ministering.) Jesus grew up as a carpenter’s son, working
 in Joseph’s trade until he was thirty. Many in Nazareth
 knew Jesus and his family. He seemed as ordinary as
 everyone else. But after John baptized him, something
 amazing happened. “And when Jesus had been
 baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly
 the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit
 of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.
 And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, the
 Beloved, with whom I am well pleased’” (*Matthew 3:16-*
17). Thus began Jesus’ extraordinary ministry that
 touched people in unexpected ways. He reached out to
 adulteresses, tax collectors, lepers, and the blind —
 those despised by society. He drew women into

1 conversations, respecting their words and wanting
 2 them to be saved as much as men. His closest followers
 3 were a ragtag group with varied backgrounds and
 4 experiences. He healed the sick and crippled, reminded
 5 us to examine our own lives before judging others, and
 6 showed the world what true love and forgiveness look
 7 like. (*Stands at the front, raises both arms, and looks upward.*)
 8 Though he carried no possessions nor displayed any
 9 signs of earthly wealth, he was the most extraordinary
 10 human to ever walk this earth. He took up the cross,
 11 died, was buried, and rose again in victory for the sake
 12 of us, the undeserving, revealing the unfathomable
 13 depth of his grace and mercy. (*JESUS exits.*)

14 15 16 DISCIPLES

17
 18 **READER 1:** (*The DISCIPLES walk to the front and stand with one*
 19 *another, appearing to talk among themselves.*) Jesus did not
 20 call educated religious leaders to be his disciples, but
 21 ordinary men, most of them fishermen. Each was busy
 22 making a living when Jesus entered their lives and
 23 invited them to be his disciples, saying, “Follow me.”
 24 Some knew each other beforehand, some did not. Some
 25 were related, some were not. But all were intrigued by
 26 this Jesus who taught so well and appeared to be their
 27 hope for overcoming Roman rule and oppression. They
 28 listened and learned and witnessed to others while
 29 Jesus walked among them, but it’s likely that they did
 30 not truly understand the significance of their role — or
 31 Jesus’ — until he was crucified. In fact, Peter, whose
 32 emotional outbursts and impulsive comments often
 33 derailed his spiritual journey while he was with Jesus,
 34 became a strong leader in the new Christian church
 35 following Jesus’ death and resurrection. Though the
 36 twelve disciples may have felt as ordinary as anyone
 37 else, their lives were changed forever once they knew
 38 Jesus, and they did extraordinary things as they grew

in the Lord and brought others to Christ. (*DISCIPLES exit.*)

SINFUL WOMAN

READER 2: (*SINFUL WOMAN enters with head bowed, holding bottle of perfume. Her head remains bowed throughout.*) As Jesus ate dinner at the home of Simon, a Pharisee, a woman known for her sinful ways came into the home and approached Jesus. (*SINFUL WOMAN kneels and carries out actions indicated in passage as if Jesus were in front of her.*) While Jesus reclined at the table, the woman “stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment” (*Luke 7:38*). This woman was an outcast. It is clear that Jesus’ message of love and forgiveness had filled her heart, and she wanted to turn her life over to him. By opening the perfume, releasing its fragrance, she made her presence known to everyone in the room. Already viewed as a person who lived an immoral life, she took a chance on exposing her sin to all, including Jesus, in order to experience the mercy that only Jesus could offer. Jesus used this moment to teach about judgment and forgiveness, and before the woman left, he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven” (*Luke 7:48b*) and “Your faith has saved you; go in peace” (*Luke 7:50b*). She was one of many sinners whose stories we remember today because of their responses to Jesus, whom they recognized as their only hope for true forgiveness. The fragrance of the perfume that reached everyone in the room led her to be noticed and gave her story extraordinary meaning that reaches us even today. (*SINFUL WOMAN exits with head still bowed.*)

TWO PIECES OF WOOD

READER 1: (*READER 1 points out the cross or two pieces of wood displayed nearby.*) They were just two ordinary pieces of wood, cut and used for the same purpose as other pieces many times before: execution. Perhaps they came from a strong cedar or pine tree, but in reality, their source is insignificant. At Golgotha, Jesus was nailed upon them and crucified for the sins of all humankind, transforming these pieces of wood into a symbol reminding us of the immense sacrifice God made through his son, and which Jesus accepted according to God's will. They were the tools used in Jesus' earthly death to fulfill God's great plan to reconcile humans with him. To this day, the cross reminds us that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (*John 3:16*).

THE TOMB

READER 2: (*A large stone, drawing, or projection may be displayed to represent the tomb if preferred. If using a stone, READER 2 should lift it or point to it.*) Carved out of stone, Jesus' tomb was not unlike others in the area. Joseph of Arimathea donated the tomb for Jesus' body after his crucifixion. Jesus was wrapped in burial cloths and laid in the tomb, as was customary following a person's death. In spite of Roman guards that stood watch beside it, a stone rolled in front did not make it stand out among others. On the morning of the third day, women visited the tomb, but when they arrived, the stone had been rolled away, the Roman soldiers had fled, and Jesus was not there. The tomb was empty! An angel proclaimed, "I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said" (*Matthew 28:5b-6a*). This ordinary



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