

THE WORD IS LOVE

by Mike Cain



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PRODUCTION NOTES

This play is ideal for youth and can be used in a dinner theater, at a special occasion such as a Valentine's Day banquet, or at a family night gathering. It can be performed in the fellowship hall or out of doors. Because it requires little space, few props, and simple costumes, it is ideal to perform on choir tours or mission trips.

Performance time is approximately 45 minutes but may vary because of the number and length of the songs that are chosen.

Stage and Set:

Part I can be performed at floor level or on an elevated stage. In Parts II and III, choir risers could be used for the best effect.

Characters/Costumes:

The appearance and speaking parts of most of the characters are brief. One person could easily play several characters. This play was written for a 20-25 member group, but can easily be altered for larger or smaller numbers.

Part I:

All characters and choir members should wear normal clothing unless their costumes are described below.

Scene 1: BOY 1 — dressed as Charlie Chaplin with mustache, derby hat, cane, vest, tie, trousers; BOY 2 — dressed as Groucho Marx with mustache, heavy eyebrows; GIRL 1 — dressed as ballerina with ballet shoes and tutu; GIRL 2 — dressed as old lady with glasses, hat, purse; DIRECTOR — dressed as French director with beret, mustache, megaphone.

Scene 2: BOY 3 — dressed as an "intellectual" with glasses, carrying a large dictionary; ANGELA — wearing a "Dolly Parton" wig; LITTLE BOY — dressed as a toddler carrying a huge lollipop; GIRL 3, TIM, DEBRA, PATTI, ANGIE.

Scene 3: TODD — carries a book; LISA — both should be dressed as fourth graders; GIRL 3, BOY 4.

Scene 4: SINGER — dressed like Elvis carrying a guitar; BOY 4,

BOY 3, GREG, ANGELA, ANGIE — carries schoolbooks;
DEBRA — carries schoolbooks; RIC, BILL.

Scene 5: PATTI, BOY 2, GIRL 2.

Scene 6: LITTLE GIRL — holding teddy bear and dressed in nightgown in bed; MOTHER, BOY 2.

Part II

All members should change into uniforms or similar dress. Black pants and white blouses with red ties or jeans and T-shirts might be used.

Part III

Choir members may stay in the same dress or change into robes for more variety.

Props

Four poster signs, each with one of the following letters: L, O, V, E; easels on which to place the poster signs; dictionary; several schoolbooks; two chairs to use as desks; American flag and stand; bench or two chairs with quilt and pillow to use as a bed; stuffed bear; glass of water.

Lights/Sound

Two spotlights made from outdoor spots mounted on wooden bases and connected to dimmer switches may be placed on the floor in front of the stage. Two to four microphones are needed.

Additional Helps

In Part III, the members of the cast are asked to tell what God's love means to them. These are some examples:

- 1) God's love is the purest and truest love of all. His love is kindness, understanding, forgiveness, and is everlasting.
- 2) To me, God's love means a feeling of security . . . knowing I never have to face trouble alone.
- 3) God's love helps me through the bad times, cares for me in sad times, makes me happy in good times, and assures me when I feel unloved.
- 4) God's love means that he is a friend that is always near, watching over me and taking care of me and loving me no matter what I do.

PART I
Love for Others

Scene 1

(Song #1, a vaudeville-type tune, is played as the lights come up on stage. Four easels are placed in a row Center Stage.)

BOY 1: *(Dressed as Charlie Chaplin. Enters twirling a walking stick, tottering in the Charlie Chaplin style. Carries the letter "V" printed on a sign. He places it on the first easel, then stands to the right of the sign and faces the audience.)*

(Music changes to song #2, a waltz.)

GIRL 1: *(Dressed as a ballerina. Dances in carrying the letter "E" on a sign. She places it on the easel next to the "V" and twirls on her toes. She stands beside her sign, facing the audience.)*

(Music changes to song #3, a slow, old-fashioned tune.)

GIRL 2: *(Dressed as an old lady. Shuffles in carrying the letter "L" and places the sign on the easel and shuffles over to stand beside her sign.)*

(Music changes to song #4, a fast-paced tune.)

BOY 2: *(Dressed as Groucho Marx. Scurries in imitating Groucho carrying the "O" printed on a sign. He raises his eyebrows and grins at the audience and places his sign beside the others. He stands back and begins to try to read the word that the letters spell. The other three join him and begin to try to read the word. Their backs are to the audience. They begin to sway together as they pronounce the letters very slowly . . .)*

ALL: **V-E-L-O. VE-LO. VELO . . . VELO? What is VELO?** *(They scratch and shake their heads and look at each other, puzzled.)*

DIRECTOR: *(Carrying a megaphone)* **Cut . . . Cut! Cut! You blockheads! Can't you do anything right? Come here.** *(All gather around the DIRECTOR as he whispers to them. They nod their heads and move back to the letters and rearrange them to spell "Love." They line up in front of the letters, backs to the audience, and read the letters again.)*

1 **ALL: L-O-V-E. L-OVE. LOVE!** (*They turn quickly to the audience,*
2 *raise hands over their heads and shout.*) **The word is love!**

3 **GROUP 1:** (*Enters from the left.*) **The word is love.**

4 **GROUP 2:** (*Enters from the right.*) **The word is love.** (*All move*
5 *to position for song #5, any selection about love. Lights out and*
6 *all exit the stage. Move "Love" sign to side or back of stage.*)

7

8

Scene 2

9

10 (*The action is a continuous flow as characters enter and leave*
11 *the stage.*)

12 **BOY 3:** (*Enters from left carrying a large dictionary and sounding*
13 *very intellectual.*) **According to Webster . . . love is a strong**
14 **affection for or attachment to someone; a tender and deep**
15 **feeling of fondness and devotion.** (*He moves across the stage*
16 *and exits.*)

17 **GIRL 3:** (*Enters from right and pauses at Center Stage.*) **We don't**
18 **need a dictionary to define love. Everyone knows what**
19 **love is.** (*She exits to the left. TIM and DEBRA enter from right.*)

20 **TIM:** Did you see that movie on Channel 13 last night?

21 **DEBRA:** Yes, I saw it. It was fantastic. I *loved* it, didn't you?
22 (*TIM and DEBRA exit left.*)

23 **ANGELA:** (*Enters from right moving across the stage as she fluffs*
24 *her hair.*) **Darling, don't you just love my new hairdo?** (*Exits*
25 *left. PATTI and ANGIE enter from right.*)

26 **PATTI:** Ohhh . . . have you seen Jerry's new car?

27 **ANGIE:** You bet I have . . . a black Corvette! Don't you just
28 **love Corvettes?** (*Both exit left.*)

29 **LITTLE BOY:** (*Enters from right, licking a big sucker.*) **I weally**
30 **do wuv lollipops!** (*Exits left.*)

31 **BOY 3:** (*Enters from right.*) **As you can see, love means different**
32 **things to different people. The fact of the matter is that**
33 **we use the word for everything. Maybe we use it too**
34 **much. Maybe it's not special anymore.** (*GIRL 3 enters from*
35 *left.*)

GIRL 3: Love, love, love. I just *love* talking about love . . . romantic love, that is. You know — love between a girl and a (*Sigh*) boy.

BOY 3: Well, let's talk about *that* kind of love. Let's see. Where do we begin? (*Pauses in contemplation.*) Well, romantic love is based on an attraction for the opposite sex. This attraction does not manifest itself immediately upon the arrival of —

GIRL 3: (*Interrupts*) What he's trying to say is that romantic love sometimes grows gradually. Do you remember when you felt your first pangs of *love*? (*Lights off*)

Scene 3

(*LISA and TODD move to the stage bringing two chairs. They are dressed as fourth graders. Lights up.*)

GIRL 3: Do you remember that guy that sat beside you in the fourth grade? You know, the red-headed guy with a wart on his left thumb? He always wore green high-top tennis shoes. He's the only person I've ever known who wore green high-top tennis shoes. Anyway, do you remember the day you were sitting at your desk doing those boring five times threes and six times eights? Out of the corner of your eye, you noticed him. I mean *really* noticed him. He was chewing his pencil eraser, and just when you looked at him, he looked at you . . . and he smiled. Well, it was really a grin. It was a nice grin, you thought . . . and you grinned back.

You felt the first pangs of love. And at that age, there was only one way to know if the guy thought you were special too. (*TODD jumps up from his chair and hits LISA on the head with a book. He runs from the stage.*)

LISA: (*Looking dreamy eyed, sighs*) He *loves me*. (*All move onto the stage as the introduction to the song is played. They sing song #6, any light-hearted, "puppy love" song. Light is off. All*

1 *exit the stage.)*

3 **Scene 4**

5 *(BOY 4 moves to Front Right, and GREG and ANGELA move*
6 *Center Stage.)*

7 **BOY 4:** Later on, when you reach the seventh grade, love is
8 taken more seriously. There are telephone calls, notes in
9 class, and sometimes — love poems.

10 **GREG:** *(Reading to ANGELA)*

11 "You make my heart beat too fast,
12 I think I'm having a chill,
13 You make my face feel feverish,
14 In other words . . . you make me *ill*."

15 *(GREG laughs and ANGELA chases him Off-stage, swatting*
16 *him as they go.)*

17 **BOY 3:** *(Moves to Front Right.)* Did he say *more seriously*? Oh
18 well, love was beginning to bloom. Later in high school,
19 you are very sophisticated about this . . . this thing called
20 *love*. *(ANGIE and DEBRA walk in from the left carrying school books.)*

21 **ANGIE:** Isn't he the biggest hunk you've ever laid eyes on?
22 Those muscles, those eyes, that hair. Every time I think
23 about him I could just die.

24 **DEBRA:** Are you talking about that new guy at school?

25 **ANGIE:** Of course — who else? He is so dreamy . . . and
26 athletic too. I'll bet he makes All Conference this season.

27 **DEBRA:** Well, girl, this must be your lucky day. Here he
28 comes now.

29 **ANGIE:** *(Getting excited)* Where? *(DEBRA points.)* Oh, here he
30 comes. Here he comes. Golly, I could just die. What if he
31 speaks to me? I'll just die. Here he comes. Is my hair OK?
32 Why did I wear this blouse today? The color doesn't do
33 a thing for me. You might know, I have a zit on my chin.
34 Debra, look the other way. Don't stare at him. Pretend
35 we don't see him. *(Whispers)* I could just die. *(RIC and BILL*

1 *walk On-stage from the right talking to each other as they go*
 2 *toward the two girls, ignoring them completely.)*

3 **RIC:** Man, did you see the Saints' game on TV yesterday?
 4 That new quarterback was great, wasn't he? I wish they'd
 5 have a good season this year.

6 **BILL:** So do I, but it doesn't look good. The defense needs to
 7 tighten up. Did you see that play where . . . *(They pass the*
 8 *girls and never look at them. They exit while talking.)*

9 **ANGIE:** Oh, I can hardly breathe! Did you see the way he
 10 looked at me? Oh, he pretended not to see me, but I know
 11 he did. I could just die. You know . . . I think he likes me.
 12 I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he phones me tonight,
 13 and if he does . . . I'll just *die!* *(Girls exit as DEBRA looks at*
 14 *the audience and rolls her eyes in disbelief. Lights off and singer*
 15 *moves to Center Stage.)*

16 *(Lights up. BOY dressed as Elvis sings or pantomimes song #7,*
 17 *any of Elvis' many love songs. Lights off.)*

18 **BOY 3:** *(Moves to microphone Stage Left.)* As times goes by, love
 19 becomes a powerful force. You find that the world
 20 revolves around it — is colored by it. You know you've
 21 got it when . . . *(BOY and GIRL move to microphones.)*

22 **BOY 1:** . . . when you go to *her* sister's piano recital instead of
 23 going to the ball game with the guys.

24 **GIRL 1:** . . . when you go fishing instead of going to the new
 25 Tom Cruise movie.

26 **BOY 1:** . . . when you go for a walk in the park instead of
 27 working on your car.

28 **GIRL 1:** . . . when you want his folks to think that you're
 29 something special!

30 **ALL:** *(Moving On-stage)* When that happens — *wow* — you've got
 31 it . . . *bad!*

32 *(The choir sings song #8, a current popular song about love. A*
 33 *solo may be used. Lights off. Everyone moves Off-stage.)*

Scene 5

PATTI: (*Moves to Stage Left and reads poem from "Sonnets from the Portuguese" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*)

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.

I love thee to the level of every day's

Most quiet need, by sun and candle light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;

I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.

I love thee with the passion put to use

In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith,

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints — I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life! — and if God choose,

I shall but love thee better after death.

(*BOY 2 and GIRL 2 move to Center Stage, hold hands, and look at each other.*)

BOY 2: "To love each other . . .

GIRL 2: "In good times and in bad . . .

BOY 2: "In sickness and in health . . .

GIRL 2: "As long as we both shall live."

(*All sing or a solo song #9, any wedding song. Lights off.*)

Scene 6

(*Scene is set for bedtime.*)

BOY 2: (*Off-stage*) It seems like only yesterday you were playing silly kid's games. Now you have kids of your own, and love takes on a new and deeper meaning. (*Lights up with LITTLE GIRL in bed and her MOTHER sitting beside her.*)

LITTLE GIRL: (*Saying prayers*) . . . and God, please bless Momma and Daddy and bless everybody everywhere.

1 **Amen. Good night, Momma.**

2 **MOTHER:** *(Gives LITTLE GIRL a hug.) Good night, sweetheart.*
3 *(Lights out.)*

4 **LITTLE GIRL:** *Momma! (Lights on.)*

5 **MOTHER:** Yes, dear. What is it?

6 **LITTLE GIRL:** May I please have a drink of water? I'm
7 thirsty . . . *really* thirsty.

8 **MOTHER:** Just a minute. I'll bring you a glass of water.
9 *(She exits, then returns with glass, which she gives to LITTLE*
10 *GIRL.)*

11 **LITTLE GIRL:** Thank you, Momma. I'm so thirsty. *(Takes one*
12 *tiny sip, then returns glass.)*

13 **MOTHER:** *(Smiles, understanding the delay tactics.) You really*
14 *were thirsty, weren't you? Good night. (Turns to leave.)*

15 **LITTLE GIRL:** Night, Momma! *(Lights out) Momma! (Lights on.)*

16 **MOTHER:** *(Slightly exasperated) Did you call?*

17 **LITTLE GIRL:** Yes, Momma . . . I forgot Teddy. I left him in
18 the den. Could I please have Teddy?

19 **MOTHER:** *(Losing patience but still trying to be sweet and under-*
20 *standing) OK, I'll get him for you. (Exits and returns with*
21 *stuffed bear.)*

22 **GIRL:** Oh, thank you, Momma. Teddy would be scared if he
23 had to spend the night alone. G'night, Momma.

24 **MOTHER:** *(Very firmly) Good . . . night! (Lights out)*

25 **LITTLE GIRL:** *Momma! (Lights on)*

26 **MOTHER:** *(Irritated) What is it now?*

27 **LITTLE GIRL:** I forgot to tell Daddy good night.

28 **MOTHER:** He's working late tonight.

29 **LITTLE GIRL:** I know, but will you tell him good night for me?

30 **MOTHER:** Yes, I'll tell him. *(Very firmly) Now go to sleep!*
31 *(Lights out)*

32 **LITTLE GIRL:** *Momma! (Lights on)*

33 **MOTHER:** *(Yells) What?*

34 **LITTLE GIRL:** *(Softly) I love you, Momma.*

35 **MOTHER:** *(Smiles tenderly) I love you too, sweetheart.*

(MOTHER exits and lights dim as LITTLE GIRL sings to her teddy bear song #10, any children's song that talks about love. Lights out. End Part I.)

Intermission: Costume change and scene change.

PART II

Love of Country

Scene 7

(Risers are in place for choir position. An American flag is placed in front with spot. CHOIR is dressed in robes or similar dress. Patriotic music is played as lights come up and BOY 1 comes On-stage and begins.)

BOY 1: From the hills and mountains, to the plains and prairies, to the rivers and oceans, I love America. I am filled with pride each time I hear her national anthem and see Old Glory flutter in the breeze.

(Music for song #11, a patriotic tune, gets louder and the CHOIR enters singing. They take their places on risers. Song ends. BOYS 1 and 2 and GIRLS 1 and 2 take positions near microphones. Patriotic music begins softly playing in background, lights up, and speakers begin.)

BOY 2: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." (From the Declaration of Independence.)

GIRL 1: "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, and secure the blessings of liberty for us and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America." (From the Preamble to the Constitution.)

9 GIRL 1: "and her name
10 Mother of Exiles.

14 **GIRL 1: "Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp! cries she**
15 **With silent lips. Give me your tired, your poor,**
16 **Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,**
17 **The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.**
18 **Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,**
19 **I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"**

20 (At the end of the poem, the music changes to song #13, a final
21 patriotic song. The CHOIR sings. Lights off. Spot remains on
22 flag. Spotlight off. SPEAKERS move back with CHOIR on
23 risers.)

Scene 8

30 *(CHOIR remains on risers. Flag is removed. Microphones are*
31 *handed to CHOIR members to be passed from one to another as*
32 *they speak from their places. Lights up. CHOIR sings song #14,*
33 *a song about God's love. CHOIR begins to speak from their places,*
34 *reading "The Love Chapter."*

35 SPEAKER 1: (*1 Corinthians 13:1-13*) "I may be able to speak the

1 languages of men and even of angels, but if I have not
 2 love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or a clanging
 3 bell.

4 **SPEAKER 2:** “I may have the gift of inspired preaching; I may
 5 have all knowledge and understand all secrets;

6 **SPEAKER 3:** “I may have all the faith needed to move
 7 mountains —

8 **SPEAKER 4:** “— but if I have not love, I am nothing.

9 **SPEAKER 5:** “I may give away everything I have, and even
 10 give up my body to be burned — but if I have not love, it
 11 does me no good.

12 **SPEAKER 6:** “Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous,
 13 or conceited, or proud;

14 **SPEAKER 7:** “love is not ill-mannered, or selfish, or irritable;
 15 love does not keep a record of wrongs;

16 **SPEAKER 8:** “love is not happy with evil, but is happy with
 17 the truth.

18 **SPEAKER 9:** “Love never gives up: its faith, hope, and
 19 patience never fail.

20 **SPEAKER 10:** “Love is eternal.

21 **SPEAKER 11:** “Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope,
 22 and love;

23 **SPEAKER 12:** *(All speak the final word, “LOVE.”)* “but the
 24 greatest of these is love.”

25 *(CHOIR sings song #15, any song or hymn about love. Several*
 26 *speakers are chosen to say a statement about what God’s love*
 27 *means to him or her. They stand in choir position and one by*
 28 *one say his/her part. These statements can be written by*
 29 *participants during a rehearsal. The director chooses the ones*
 30 *that will be presented during the play.)*

31 *(CHOIR sings song #16. It’s best to use a song that includes*
 32 *John 3:16 in the lyrics.)*

33 **ALL:** *(Speak in unison John 3:16)* “For God loved the world so
 34 much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who
 35 believes in him may not die but have eternal life.”



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