

FIVE EASY PIECES ON PRAYER

by Jeannie Alexander



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Five Easy Pieces on Prayer

A sketch collection
on talking to God

by Jeannie Alexander

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PRODUCTION NOTES

Prayer is a communication skill with God that takes a lifetime to master. These short dramatic pieces have messages woven in to explore that communication. Remember that a good director allows enough room for expression but provides enough authority to make practices effective. Use these sketches as a framework, and let your youth group develop the characters as they see them.

Young people have their own special ways of communicating that are often beyond the grasp of other age groups. For that reason, their drama productions should be an expression of their communication in their own special "language." Let them insert language that is comfortable and meaningful for them on a personal basis. Discuss the significance of each sketch and the effect that each might have on the audience. And then let your actors soar—experimenting with words, voices, sounds, props, and any other device they wish to use.

And since the subject is prayer—begin each session of practice and performance with it. Talk to God first!

Spiritual Fast Food

CAST AND COSTUMES: Eight young people with varying dress to identify activities and personalities. If you have a minimum of actors, have them change accessories and return. The announcer may wear a fast-food hat.

SET AND PROPS: Table with assorted fast food bags, banner across front: "Over 1 Billion Served."

(PERSONS 1-8 stand in a slightly diagonal line. All are waiting, in character, till turn at the "fast food window," which can be imaginary or a small table with props.)

ANNOUNCER: Do you ever consider how God must feel when all we do is ask for things? Well, welcome to McGod's!

PERSON #1: I'd like a double order of forgiveness and, uh, one large blessing with joy on the side. Can you make it to go? *(Glances at watch, grabs bag, and hurries Off-stage, right.)*

PERSON #2: *(Mimes smoking cigarette, drops it, and mashes it with foot.)* I've been sort of sick lately. Could you give me ... *(Coughs and holds chest painfully)* aaaah, one healing and a peace that — whadduyacallit? Oh yeah, "peace that passes understanding," whatever that means. *(Scoops up bag and leaves, left.)*

PERSON #3: *(Anxiously)* Is your offer of free salvation good? Whew! *(Relieved, then squints one eye, as if considering new idea.)* Well ... is it still good next week? *(Happily)* Fine, then! *(Pause, listening)* Oh no! I'll just wait. I'm in no hurry, as long as I can get it later. No problem. *(Sharply)* No, I said never mind! I have stuff to do now. *(Yelling to Off-stage as he leaves, right)* Hey, guys, wait for me!

PERSON #4: Could you get me a "happy mile"? *(Takes bag and looks into it.)* Oh, darn. The prize this week is patience ... that's what it was last week! *(Whining)* When are you

gonna change the prize in the happy mile? *(Pause)* If you have next week's happy mile prize, can I go ahead and have that now? Oh, c'mon ... please? *(Shrugs in disappointment and leaves, left.)*

PERSON #5: I'd like some wisdom ... and make it really quick, would you? I know I should have studied, but history is sooo boring. *(Sighs impatiently.)* Hurry up! I need it *now*. If I fail this test, I'll be grounded till the next millennium. *(Grabs bag and hurries Off-stage, right.)*

PERSON #6: Hey, can I special order some strength? *(Flexes arm and feels the muscle proudly.)* And this time hold the gentleness. That makes it *way* too sweet for me ... yuck! OK! Coach says, "Take no prisoners!" *(Trotting off, left)* Goooo team!

PERSON #7: *(Counting off on fingers)* I'll need some patience to deal with my family, endurance, wisdom, oh, and forgiveness. Yeah, just a large order of generic forgiveness for ... whatever. I know this is a big order, but I have to stock up. You see, I don't plan on coming by till probably next Wednesday night. *(Substitute performance date.)* *(Grabs bag and leaves, right.)*

PERSON #5: *(Enters)* Yeah, I'm back again ... could you give me some more wisdom? I blew the test and I have to ace the make-up! And it had better work this time, or I'll lose faith in the whole business! *(Frowns and picks up last bag.)* Till next time ... Oh — *(Pauses and bows head)* Amen. *(Walks off.)*

One of the Crowd

CAST AND COSTUMES: Five actors (dressed similarly, if desired.)

SET AND PROPS: No props or set pieces are needed, but lighting could be very effective with this sketch — perhaps a single spot for each spoken part, enlarging as the actors link together at the end.

(ACTORS 1,2,3,4, and 5 walk out very closely with arms linked.)

ALL ACTORS: *(Together)* Did you ever feel that when you pray, you sort of split into a lot of different people? *(Drop arms and spread across stage, assuming different body poses.)*

ACTOR 1: God, you are really awesome. You are so big, and I am just a tiny, insignificant ... well, you know what I'm talking about. You made me. That's pretty fantastic. Not just that you made me, I mean. Although I want to say thank you for that ... for making me. And so many wonderful things. How did you do all that? That's funny isn't it? As if I could understand how, even if you explained it to me. Pretty complicated, isn't it? Not to you, of course. But I just want to tell you — I'm learning to appreciate your world ... and I thank you for being the Creator of all of it. I want to worship you because you are the source of everything!

ACTOR 2: You know everything, right? So you know what I did already. But I just have to tell you, because I am really ashamed. And really embarrassed. Wow, I didn't know I had it in me. I guess I was caught up in the moment ... I didn't even think about it. It sure is easy to mess up, isn't it? I know you understand that. I mean, Jesus was tempted in the same way, wasn't he? That's why I can pray through him — that's the great part! I really am sorry, and I want to do it all differently next

1 time. I know I can if you help me. That's a good feeling.
2 I want to confess to you because I have sinned.

3 **ACTOR 3:** Thanks, God! I just want to say that! I have so
4 much to thank you for! Things are going pretty well for
5 me. My life, my family, my friends ... I know you're the
6 one who gives me all the good things in life. And even if
7 things aren't going so well sometimes, I know you're the
8 one who's going to help me through. And that's great
9 too! So ... thanks. I wish I could somehow tell you how
10 much I appreciate all of this, but it just comes out
11 thanks! So ... well, thanks, God!

12 **ACTOR 4:** You know that old song that I've heard my
13 grandmother sing, "What a friend we have in Jesus"?
14 Those words ran through my mind when I thought
15 about my best friend this morning. I woke up thinking
16 about him ... worrying and hoping that he would get
17 better. Lord, I am so worried for him. Are you watching
18 him? I'm sure you are, but I just want you to take care
19 of him ... keep him safe ... make him feel better. So
20 between friends, can you help him out?

21 **ACTOR 5:** Oh, God, I need your help. I'm so glad that you're
22 there for me to talk to. Day or night, you're ready to
23 hear me and reach out to me. I don't know what to do
24 right now. Everything is going wrong. Unless you reach
25 out and change things, life is going to be a really big
26 mess around here. I realize how much I need you, how
27 much you support me and take care of me. And I want
28 to ask you now to help me with this problem.

29 **ACTOR 1:** So you see ... whether you worship, confess,
30 intercede, plead, or give thanks ...

31 **ACTOR 2:** *(Begins to link back up with ACTOR 1.)* When your
32 prayers take all kinds of turns, and you pray in many
33 different ways ...

34 **ACTOR 3:** *(Links up with first two)* Just as if you are a lot of
35 different voices talking to God almighty, the King of

1 **Kings ...**

2 **ACTOR 4:** *(Continues linking.)* **He hears everything.**

3 **ACTOR 5:** *(Links up.)* **Every praise, every request, every**
4 **confession.**

5 **ALL ACTORS:** *(Together)* **Because he is an awesome God!**
6 *(They leave, closely linked.)*

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Going Postal

CAST AND COSTUMES: Mail Carrier, New Guy (or Girl), optional Off-stage voice. Uniform-type costumes may be worn if available.

SET AND PROPS: Table and large box with several letters inside. One envelope needs to be fancy, another big, and one should be empty. The rest may be standard envelopes.

NEW GUY: (*Introduces sketch.*) **This is not a real situation. What you are about to witness is totally ... unreal. Really, really unreal. You see, God doesn't actually run a postal system. But sometimes, don't you feel like your prayers get stuck in the dead letter office? Work with me people ... we call this little drama *Going Postal*. (MAIL CARRIER and NEW GUY sit at table.)**

MAIL CARRIER: (*Talking to NEW GUY, who responds nonverbally*) **You'll love this job. I've been doing this forever, and I still enjoy coming to work every single day. But I'll need to go over a few things with you so you'll know how we do things up here. You see, we have to check out all these prayers. (*Sets big box down in front.*) Some of them have their problems. They're not addressed right, or maybe they just don't get delivered at the right time. So they end up here. Not all prayers make it upstairs! Hey, that would make a really good motto, wouldn't it? Or maybe a hit country song, anyway!**

Here's a good example. (*Opens up an envelope.*) See what's in here? Nothing. Empty as the front pew in church! We see a lot of these in here. Can you believe somebody went through the motions of sending up a prayer ... then just stopped? No greetings, no praise, no requests ... just empty. So you know what we do with that? (*Wads it up, tosses it backward, and gets another envelope.*)

Oooh! (*Sarcastic*) Look how fancy! This is a good example of publicity work — big words, glittery delivery ... this may get a lot of attention on earth, but it doesn't get very far up here. Sometimes a crumpled one, all messed up and stained with tears, goes "whoop" right on through, and these big expensive ones get stuck down here! (*Wads it up and tosses it.*) It's all a matter of sincerity ... you'll learn that pretty quickly in this job!

Oh, look at this one. Address problem. To god ... with a little "g." Pretty sad, huh? This pray-er doesn't even recognize God as the one in charge. We get far too many like that! Oh, that person probably thinks a lot of things are really important, but God is not one of them. How can he pray to him if he doesn't even recognize him? Almighty God! The big one, the only one ... Big "G"! Here — you do it! (*Hands letter to NEW GUY, who tosses it backward and reaches for another.*)

This is interesting. Now, see, this is a big one. Lots of requests, lots of praise. You'd think we'd have to investigate to find out why it's here, but nope. First thing you do is look down at the end. Hmmm, the key phrase I'm looking for is "In the name of." Yep, here it is. "In the name of all that's good and decent." Like this guy has ever done anything good and decent. None of us have! Except Jesus — so you look for his name. When we check the big ones, all the flattery and appreciation don't amount to much, and all the so-called awards and good deeds are pretty much useless. This guy didn't rely on the Savior Deliverer. That's how you get through — with the right Deliverer! Go for it! (*NEW GUY takes it and tosses it backward and MAIL CARRIER gets another.*)

Here's one we can actually get into ... "Dear God, are you crazy?" (*NEW GUY reaches to throw it away.*) No, wait — I've seen these before. Sometimes there's a chance! Hmmm ... seems sincere, uses the big "G" and the name

1 of Jesus Christ ... yes, just as I thought. I don't usually
2 check the whole thing, but I want you to see ... (*Optional*
3 *Off-stage voice or MAIL CARRIER reads.*)

4 "Dear God, are you crazy? How could you do this to my
5 friend? I've been praying for him so long, and I trusted
6 you to save him. Lord, the drugs and wild lifestyle — I
7 prayed you would take all that away, and now it's too
8 late. It's a good thing that I never got into all that with
9 him ... Oh, I see. You kept me safe. I could have easily
10 gotten into all those bad things as well. But you
11 protected me. God, thank you. If only you could have
12 helped him too, but it was his choice, wasn't it? Please
13 help me bear it now, God, because I feel like my heart is
14 going to break in two big, raw pieces. Help me in the
15 name of your son, Jesus. Amen." (*MAIL CARRIER sighs,*
16 *carefully refolds the letter, and wipes a tear from his eye.*)

17 Here's the part of the job I like the best. Come with me,
18 and we'll hand-deliver this. The boss will want to take
19 care of it immediately. Hey do you want to drive the
20 little blue truck? Those big, fluffy clouds are fun to
21 drive through! C'mon — I'm telling you, you're gonna
22 love this job! (*They exit.*)

Deja Views

CAST AND COSTUMES: Announcer, Actor, and Prayer — no special costumes needed.

SET AND PROPS: Since there are no stage props or set pieces, spotlighting would dramatize this sketch well.

(ANNOUNCER faces audience, flanked by ACTOR and PRAYER. ACTOR and PRAYER deliver their lines directed diagonally from the ANNOUNCER, oblivious to each other.)

ANNOUNCER: If you think you don't know how to pray, let us show you how you're an expert *already*. Have you ever been here?

ACTOR: Mama! I feel awful. I think I've got a temperature, and my head hurts ... and my stomach — oooh! It doesn't feel so good, Mom ... I think I'm sick! Oh Mom! Do something to make me feel better ...

PRAYER: God, would you reach down with your healing hand and make me well again?

ACTOR: Dad ... can you fix this? I broke it! You know it's my favorite ... I just can't do without it. And now it's all messed up ... Fix it, please ... please ... please!

PRAYER: Heavenly Father. I have made a big mistake — help me make things right again.

ACTOR: *(Mimes telephone)* Hello? Is this the complaint department? Well, I'd like to get something off my chest! *Aaaargh!* Thanks. I feel a lot better!

PRAYER: Oh God, I am so frustrated! Please take care of this problem — I need your help!

ACTOR: I'm sorry, officer. Yes, I know I was speeding ... Yes, sir ... I understand that there are laws that I'm not supposed to break. I'm ready to take my punishment ... and I'll try really hard to never do it again!

PRAYER: Lord, I'm sorry I've done wrong. Please forgive me and help me through the consequences of my

1 actions.

2 **ACTOR:** Excuse me, Professor, can you explain that again? I
3 just don't understand. I know we've been over this
4 several times, but I just don't get it! I don't know if it's
5 just me, or if this stuff is really complicated, but it's so
6 hard to figure it out! Can you just tell me again how this
7 is supposed to work?

8 **PRAY-ER:** Almighty God — I know you are the Creator and
9 you know all things. Can you help me understand just a
10 little about your will in my life?

11 **ACTOR:** You know, I think you're my very best friend, and I
12 just want to talk. You're the only one who knows how I
13 really feel. Do you know how much I appreciate that? I
14 don't know what I'd do if I didn't have a friend like you!

15 **PRAY-ER:** Father, how blessed I am, that I can share my
16 innermost thoughts with you. How wonderful it is that
17 you love me like a friend!

18 **ACTOR:** I'm glad you had time for a counseling appointment
19 with me. I don't know what's best for me right now. Can
20 you give me some advice on what I should do? I know I
21 need to think about my future, and I just don't feel like
22 I'll make the right decisions on my own. I need some
23 help!

24 **PRAY-ER:** Lord, you control the future, and you want what's
25 best for me. Lead me and help me with my life decisions.

26 **ANNOUNCER:** Do you get the connections? Every day you
27 communicate your joys and your troubles with people
28 around you. You get into trouble, you make decisions,
29 and you experience life. You share all that with others.
30 And you can pray the same way! When you pray, you
31 can approach almighty God as comforter, counselor,
32 healer, deliverer, and friend.

33 **ACTOR:** Don't be timid about approaching the throne of
34 God in prayer ...

35 **PRAY-ER:** Because through Christ — you're already there!

Hearing Voices

CAST AND COSTUMES: Depressed Christian, Seeker (no special costumes necessary), and one Off-stage Voice.

SET AND PROPS: Bench and briefcase or backpack.

(Traffic noises open scene as DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN sits on the bench, waiting for the bus, sighing and looking generally sorry for himself, head in hands. SEEKER comes in and sets down briefcase or backpack determinedly and surveys DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN inquisitively, then shrugs and sits. Traffic noises fade away.)

VOICE: *(From Off-stage)* Remember the joy? *(SEEKER is startled and looks around. DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN is oblivious.)*
You've forgotten the joy!

SEEKER: *(Jumps a little.)* What was that?

DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN: *(Seems a little embarrassed.)* You heard ... something?

SEEKER: *(Puzzled)* Well, I thought I did. Twice!

DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN: *(Shows signs of realizing what's happening.)* What was it ... the thing you heard?

SEEKER: A voice ... and it said, "Remember the joy" the first time, then it said, "You've forgotten the joy!" Did you hear it?

DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN: *(Shakes his head uncertainly.)* Why, uh ... it probably was, uh, maybe ... uh ... *(Finally admitting)* Yes.

SEEKER: Hey, wait a minute! Am I on *Candid Camera*? That's it! Ok, where did you hide the ...

DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN: It's not *Candid Camera* ...

SEEKER: Good! *(Relieved)* 'Cause I am having a really bad hair day ... But, ok ... where did the voice come from then?

DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN: *(Points to heart and hesitates, embarrassed.)* AAhhh ... in here.

1 **SEEKER:** Excuse me?

2 **DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN:** It came from in here. The voice is
3 inside me.

4 **SEEKER:** (*Scoots over as far as he can on the bench.*) That's what
5 I thought you said.

6 **DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN:** Oh, it's ok. A lot of people have ...
7 er ... a Voice inside them like that.

8 **SEEKER:** (*Thinks he understands.*) Oh ... sure! I have a voice
9 like that too. It says weird stuff sometimes ... like (*Use*
10 *funny voices for these phrases.*) "Take the last donut, you
11 deserve it," or "Sleep five more minutes — just five
12 more minutes!"

13 **DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN:** (*Shaking his head slightly*) It's not
14 that kind of voice.

15 **SEEKER:** Oh. (*Disappointed, then curious*) So ... what kind of
16 voice is it then?

17 **DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN:** (*Quietly*) Er, it's sort of
18 supernatural ...

19 **SEEKER:** Super-who? Like Super-man? ... Super-Xena
20 Warrior Princess? I hate to burst your bubble, but
21 things like that ... they're fake. You know, like special
22 effects!

23 **DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN:** (*Embarrassed laugh*) No ... it's for
24 real — the voice is real. I thought I was the only one
25 who ever heard the one inside me ... but it's real!

26 **SEEKER:** So what do you call this voice? Does it have a
27 name, like Irving or Elizabeth? Or maybe it's a celebrity
28 voice like Clint Eastwood. (*Raspy*) "Do you feel lucky?"

29 **DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN:** You're making fun of me ...

30 **SEEKER:** Oops, sorry ... no, I am really interested. Tell me
31 more.

32 **DEPRESSED CHRISTIAN:** Well, people call it different
33 names: the Comforter, Holy Spirit, the Helper ... I guess
34 some folks might even identify it as the voice of God ...

35 **SEEKER:** The voice of God?



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