

A MIRACULOUS LIFE

by Shelly Sellepack



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A Miraculous Life

A children's program on
the life and ministry of Jesus

Arrangement and narration by Shelly Sellepack

CAST OF CHARACTERS

NARRATOR

9 READERS

DISCIPLES:

**Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew,
Matthew, Thomas, James, Thaddaeus, Simon, Judas**

JESUS

PHARISEE 1, 2, and 3

MARY

BRIDE

GROOM

HEAD SERVANT

SERVANT 2 and 3

THE WOMAN (who was sick)

RICH MAN

POOR WOMAN

CHILD (with loaves and fish)

SOLDIER 1, 2, and 3

PILATE

BARABBAS

CROWD INSTIGATOR

USHER 1, 2, 3, and 4

Note: Several children can play two or even three of the parts.

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PRODUCTION NOTES

Some suggestions for the directors:

- Write Jesus' lines on individual index cards. These will aid him in memorizing them, and he can keep them with him during the production if he needs to.
- The narrator should take her place up front before the service starts.
- The children can join the disciple group at any time, making a crowd. This way, all of the children are up front for most of the production.
- Place reader scripts face up on a podium or small table near the microphone. Place a small basket on the floor next to the microphone. When each reader is finished, he or she may discard the script into the basket. It is helpful to write each reader's name at the top of his or her script.
- The stage directions may need to be tailored to the additional parts each reader plays. For example, instead of joining the others, a reader may need to exit and change costumes or join the Pharisees.
- The script was written to be performed on Palm Sunday. This can be changed quite easily by omitting the use of palms and changing the various congregational hymns.

Props

Scene 1: You will need four fishing poles and nets, and possibly extras if the older children use them during the "Fishers of Men" song. Matthew needs an abacus or coins and a ledger and pencil.

Scene 2: You will need several clear pitchers. Some should be empty. One should be partially filled with water. Another should have an envelope of powdered red drink mix (dry) in the bottom. You will also need towels for the Servants to place over their forearms and plastic cups.

Scene 3: You will need a bag full of coins and a purse with two pennies (in preparation for scene 4).

Scene 4: Place a metal bowl or offering plate on the altar (the metal enhances the clanging of the coins).

Scene 5: You will need a basket containing small loaves of bread. You will also need other baskets filled with bread cubes, hidden under a cloth on the altar. (The number will vary according to the size of the congregation.)

Scene 6: You will need rhythm instruments if you wish for the

children to play them with the song. You will also need a bag of money for the Pharisee (in preparation for scene 7).

Scene 7: None.

Scene 8: Place a loaf (from scene 5) and an empty chalice on the altar.

Scene 9: Pilate needs a bowl of water and a towel for his arm. You will also need palm branches, dyed Easter eggs, or another gift to pass out to the congregation as they exit.

Costumes

The children may dress in simple biblical robes, headpieces, and sandals.

Set

This drama is mainly performed on an empty stage. Before it begins, you will need to place Matthew's table and chair at Stage Right.

Songs

1. Processional song of your choosing (if performing on Palm Sunday, the song should relate to that). "Fishers of Men"
2. "I've Got Peace Like a River." This song may be found in collections of children's Christian songs.
3. The Doxology.
4. Solo to be played by one of the children on the instrument of his or her choosing.
5. "Love the Lord Your God." This camp song may be found on the Internet using one of the search engines. If it is unfamiliar to you, you may substitute another song with the theme of loving God that is more familiar.
6. "On a Hill Far Away" (Otherwise known as "The Old Rugged Cross," this song may be found in many hymnals.)

SAMPLE BULLETIN

**Worship Celebration
Palm Sunday**

Time **Date**

Announcements

Prelude

Hymn of praise and children's processional **###**
Name of congregational hymn

Our Sunday School Presents: A Miraculous Life

The calling of the first disciples **Matthew 4:18-22**

Children's song: "Fishers of Men"

The calling of Matthew **Luke 5:27-28**

Eating with sinners **Luke 5:29-32**

The wedding in Cana of Galilee **John 2:1-11**

The healing of the poor woman **Mark 5:24b-34**

The passing of the peace
Please join us in passing the peace of Christ to others.

Children's song: "Peace Like a River"

Offerings **Mark 12:41-44a**

The receiving of our tithes and offerings

Doxology

The feeding of the five thousand **Matthew 14:13-21**

The children will be passing around baskets of bread. Everyone is encouraged to take a piece and eat when you are ready. Agape is the Greek word for love. This feast is in remembrance of the loving care Jesus has shown for our daily lives and the lives of those around us.

The most important commandment of all **Mark 12:28-34**

Children's song: "Love the Lord Your God"

Judas sells out **Matthew 26:3-4, 14-16**

Passover and the New Covenant **Matthew 26:20-29**

Prayer and betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane

Jesus is taken to Pilate **Matthew 27:11-24**

The Crucifixion **Matthew 27:50-54**

Hymn of response: "On a Hill Far Away"

The children's recessional

Blessing and Benediction

Narrator: We have heard what Jesus taught, we have seen his miracles, and we have felt God's grace. Now let us go and share Jesus' story with the world.

Congregation: Amen

PROCESSIONAL: Sing a congregational hymn appropriate for Palm Sunday while children (except for Jesus) process, waving palm branches. Peter, Andrew, James, and John come forward, pick up their fishing poles and net, and fish. Peter and Andrew are at Stage Left. James and John toward the Center. Narrator sits either on the platform or near the microphone. The rest of the children sit in front row(s).

Scene 1

NARRATOR: Just a few short months ago, we celebrated Christmas, the time when the Messiah was born. Then we thought about stars and mangers and shepherds, and a little baby who came to bring peace on earth. During the Easter season, we focus on the man Jesus, and what he gave up to save us all. (*JESUS begins walking up the aisle.*) Today, we will take a look at Jesus' last three years on earth, what he taught us and what he did. The story of Jesus' ministry begins not in a grand temple or a crowded marketplace, but in a fishing town by the Sea of Galilee.

READER 1: While Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw two brothers. One was Simon, also known as Peter, and the other was Andrew. They were fishermen, and they were casting their net into the lake. Jesus said to them: (Matthew 4:18-19)

JESUS: (*To PETER and ANDREW*) Come and follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. (*PETER and ANDREW set their poles and nets down and follow JESUS, walking toward JAMES and JOHN.*)

READER 1: Right then the two brothers dropped their nets and went with him. Jesus walked on until he saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in a boat with their father, mending their nets. Jesus asked them to come with him too. Right away they left the

1 **boat and their father and went with Jesus** (Matthew
 2 4:20-22). (*JAMES and JOHN stand and lower their poles
 3 and nets, but still hold them. The four follow JESUS back
 4 to Stage Left, where PETER and ANDREW pick up their
 5 poles again. JESUS stands off to the side, as if he is
 6 teaching.*)

7

8 **SONG:** “Fishers of Men” (*All CHILDREN stand and sing while
 9 doing the motions. The DISCIPLES and older children can
 10 use fishing poles and nets instead of doing the motions.*)

11

12 (*PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, and JOHN stay with JESUS
 13 in a group at Stage Left. MATTHEW sits at a table at Stage
 14 Right. He has an abacus [or stacks of coins] and a ledger
 15 and pencil. All other CHILDREN return to their seats.*)

16 **READER 1:** Later, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector
 17 named Levi (who was called Matthew) sitting at the
 18 place for paying taxes. Jesus said to him: (Luke 5:27)

19 **JESUS:** Follow me.

20 **READER 1:** Levi left everything and went with Jesus (Luke
 21 5:28). (*MATTHEW leaves his pencil and ledger behind,
 22 following JESUS to the center. The rest of the DISCIPLES [or
 23 all the children except PHARISEES] get up, joining the others
 24 on the floor in the center. Three PHARISEES enter when
 25 READER 1 continues, walking to stand behind the
 26 DISCIPLES and JESUS, whispering and pointing.*) **In his
 27 home, Levi gave a big dinner for Jesus. Many tax
 28 collectors and other guests were also there. The
 29 Pharisees and some of their teachers of the Law of
 30 Moses grumbled to Jesus’ disciples:** (Luke 5:29-30a) (*The
 31 PHARISEES walk to the group and point at JESUS and the
 32 CROWD he is with.*)

33 **PHARISEE 1:** Why do you eat and drink with those tax
 34 collectors and other sinners? (Luke 5:30)

35 **JESUS:** (*Standing, all are focused on him, wondering what he*

1 *will say*) **Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick**
 2 **people do. I didn't come to invite good people to turn**
 3 **to God. I came to invite sinners** (Luke 5:31-32). *(The*
 4 *PHARISEES move to the left and stop.)*

5 **PHARISEE 1: What is he talking about?**

6 **PHARISEE 2: I have no idea.** *(PHARISEE 3 shakes his head*
 7 *and shrugs. All CHILDREN freeze while NARRATOR*
 8 *speaks.)*

9

10

Scene 2

11

12 **NARRATOR: Jesus was about thirty years old when he**
 13 **called the first disciples. They were Simon (whom he**
 14 **called Peter), James, John, Andrew, Philip,**
 15 **Bartholomew, Matthew (who is also called Levi),**
 16 **Thomas, James, Thaddaeus, Simon, and Judas, who in**
 17 **the end betrayed Jesus.**

18 **Jesus had some startling things to say about who he**
 19 **was, and the disciples dared to believe in him. But**
 20 **Jesus had not yet performed any miracles. Until, that**
 21 **is, Jesus attended a certain wedding reception ...**
 22 *(MARY takes her place next to JESUS at Center Stage, and*
 23 *the BRIDE and GROOM stand together at Stage Right. The*
 24 *SERVANTS get their towels and pitchers — pitchers should*
 25 *be clear, one partially filled with clear water, one or more*
 26 *empty as props, and one with powdered drink mix hidden in*
 27 *the bottom [the mix will be a gray color, but should be cherry*
 28 *or red berry, so as to turn red when mixed with water]. The*
 29 *pitcher with the mix is to be held by the HEAD SERVANT.*
 30 *The rest of the CHILDREN and DISCIPLES gather around*
 31 *JESUS, holding plastic cups. They are festive, as they are at*
 32 *a wedding feast. The three PHARISEES walk around the*
 33 *group, whispering to each other and shaking their heads.)*

34 **READER 2: Three days later Mary, the mother of Jesus,**
 35 **was at a wedding feast in the village of Cana in Galilee.**

1 Jesus and his disciples had also been invited and were
 2 there. When the wine was all gone, Mary said to Jesus,
 3 “They don’t have any more wine” (John 2:1-3). *(MARY*
 4 *pulls on JESUS’ sleeve, urging him to help. JESUS shakes*
 5 *his head. The CHILDREN dump their cups upside down,*
 6 *showing they are out of wine. The SERVANT(s) with the*
 7 *empty pitcher(s) should do the same, shrugging their*
 8 *shoulders. The BRIDE and GROOM look upset, shrugging*
 9 *their shoulders and shaking their heads.)*

10 Jesus replied, “Mother, my time hasn’t yet come. You
 11 must not tell me what to do.” Mary then said to the
 12 servants, “Do whatever Jesus tells you to do.” At the
 13 feast there were six stone water jars that were used by
 14 the people for washing themselves in the way that their
 15 religion said they must. Each jar held about twenty or
 16 thirty gallons. Jesus told the servants to fill them to the
 17 top with water. Then after the jars had been filled, he
 18 said, “Now take some water and give it to the man in
 19 charge of the feast.” The servants did as Jesus told
 20 them, and the man in charge drank some of the water
 21 that had now turned into wine. He did not know where
 22 the wine had come from, but the servants did. He called
 23 the bridegroom over and said, “The best wine is always
 24 served first. Then after the guests have had plenty, the
 25 other wine is served. But you have kept the best until
 26 last!” This was Jesus’ first miracle, and he did it in the
 27 village of Cana in Galilee. There Jesus showed his
 28 glory, and his disciples put their faith in him (John 2:4-
 29 11).

30 *(While READER 2 is speaking, JESUS points at the*
 31 *SERVANTS, and they go to JESUS’ side, bringing their*
 32 *pitchers. SERVANT 2 dumps the water from his pitcher into*
 33 *the pitcher with the drink mix, held by the HEAD SERVANT.*
 34 *It should turn red like wine. Everyone gasps. The HEAD*
 35 *SERVANT pours a cup, tastes, and gives the thumbs up!*

SERVANTS take pitchers and towels to the director waiting on the left side, who will take the liquids out of the sanctuary. Two CHILDREN should collect the cups and set them aside. The PHARISEES continue scowling at the group, arms crossed. All others sit in a group around JESUS.)

Scene 3

NARRATOR: After that day, Jesus performed many signs and miracles, and word about his ministry spread like wildfire. Some were excited about this great healer and teacher. Some were nervous about what his words might mean. Some found joy and peace in his touch. Others grew anxious and let pride get in their way. Many of the stories of Jesus' ministry of miracles and healing went something like this:

(All CHILDREN stand. JESUS is teaching. While READER 3 is speaking, WOMAN stands off to the side. She tries to get through the crowd to see Jesus, but she can't. WOMAN finally makes her way to the center of the mob, then hangs back, with a look of wonder and joy on her face.)

READER 3: Many people followed (Jesus) and kept crowding around. In the crowd was a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years. She had gone to many doctors, and they had not done anything except cause her a lot of pain. She had paid them all the money she had. But instead of getting better, she only got worse. The woman had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him in the crowd and barely touched his clothes. She had said to herself, "If I can just touch his clothes, I will get well." As soon as she touched them, her bleeding stopped, and she knew she was well. At that moment Jesus felt power go out from him. He turned to the crowd and asked, (Mark 5:24b-30)

JESUS: Who touched me? *(Everyone backs away from JESUS. At the appropriate time, WOMAN steps forward, kneeling*

28 (JESUS, the DISCIPLES slowly move to the left side and sit
29 down. JESUS acts as if he is teaching.)

30 **READER 4:** (*After making sure RICH MAN and POOR*
31 *WOMAN are ready*) **Jesus was sitting in the temple near**
32 **the offering box and watching people put in their gifts.**
33 **He noticed that many rich people were giving a lot of**
34 **money** (Mark 12:41). (*RICH MAN walks forward, swinging*
35 *his jingling money bag, strutting, and smiling. RICH MAN*

14 **NARRATOR:** Let us now give our tithes and offerings to
15 God with a generous and thankful heart. Will the
16 ushers please come forward? (*Offering is received, using*
17 *older children or youth as ushers, followed by the Doxology*
18 *or another children's song. While the Doxology or a song is*
19 *being sung, CHILD exits down center aisle.*)

22
23 *(JESUS, the DISCIPLES and CROWD move Center Stage.)*

29 **READER 5:** After Jesus heard about John (the Baptist's
30 death), he crossed Lake Galilee to go to some place
31 where he could be alone. But the crowd found out and
32 followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus got out
33 of the boat, he saw the large crowd. He felt sorry for
34 them and healed everyone who was sick. That evening
35 the disciples came to Jesus and said, "This place is like

1 a desert, and it is already late. Let the crowds leave, so
 2 they can go to the villages and buy some food.” Jesus
 3 replied, “They don’t have to leave. Why don’t you give
 4 them something to eat?” But they said, “We have only
 5 five small loaves of bread and two fish.” Jesus asked his
 6 disciples to bring the food to him, and he told the crowd
 7 to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and
 8 the two fish. He looked up toward heaven and blessed
 9 the food. Then he broke the bread and handed it to his
 10 disciples, and they gave it to the people. After everyone
 11 had eaten all they wanted, Jesus’ disciples picked up
 12 twelve large baskets of leftovers. There were about five
 13 thousand men who ate, not counting the women and
 14 children (Matthew 14:13-21). *(While READER 5 is speaking,*
 15 *JESUS takes the basket from CHILD, raises it to heaven, then*
 16 *lowers it, turning around so his back is to the audience.*
 17 *Baskets of bread cubes are hidden behind JESUS on a table*
 18 *or the altar. JESUS uncovers these, and the CHILDREN*
 19 *respond in wonder.)*

20 **NARRATOR:** When we offer to Jesus what we have, his love
 21 transforms it into all we could ever need. In celebration
 22 of the miracles of Jesus, both those of long ago and
 23 those in our lives today, please join us in this agape
 24 feast. You may eat your bread as soon as you receive
 25 it. *(JESUS passes the baskets to teams of two CHILDREN*
 26 *each. [The number of baskets depends on the size of your*
 27 *congregation. In smaller churches, two children go down the*
 28 *center aisle, while the other team members go down each of*
 29 *the side aisles. Four teams can be used in larger churches,*
 30 *with two teams beginning in the rear or halfway back. One*
 31 *team may be needed for the choir loft, and one child is*
 32 *needed to pass bread to the other children, who remain up*
 33 *front.] While the feast is being served and eaten, one CHILD*
 34 *may play a musical solo. The CHILDREN return to the front*
 35 *when finished, giving baskets back to JESUS, who places*

2
3
4

5 (The DISCIPLES and JESUS move to the right, and JESUS
6 is teaching them. The PHARISEES gather on the left side,
7 whispering among themselves, looking at JESUS with anger
8 and hatred.)

9 **NARRATOR:** Jesus' ministry lasted only three years before
10 he made the final trip into Jerusalem. The disciples
11 couldn't quite understand God's plan, even though
12 Jesus tried to explain it to them. The religious leaders
13 were getting very nervous, and they began plotting how
14 they could get rid of Jesus.

15 **READER 6:** One of the teachers of the Law of Moses came
16 up while Jesus and the Sadducees were arguing. When
17 he heard Jesus give a good answer, he asked him,
18 “What is the most important commandment?” Jesus
19 answered, “The most important one says: ‘People of
20 Israel, you have only one Lord and God. You must love
21 him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.’ The
22 second most important commandment says: ‘Love
23 others as much as you love yourself.’ No other
24 commandment is more important than these.” The man
25 replied, “Teacher, you are certainly right to say there is
26 only one God. It is also true that we must love God with
27 all our heart, mind and strength, and that we must love
28 others as much as we love ourselves. These
29 commandments are more important than all the
30 sacrifices and offerings that we could possibly make.”
31 When Jesus saw that the man had given a sensible
32 answer, he told him, “You are not far from God’s
33 kingdom.” After this, no one dared ask Jesus any more
34 questions (Mark 12:28-34). *(While READER 6 is speaking,*
35 *the PHARISEES walk up to JESUS, talking to him with*



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