

# Instructions

A "Narrator" should read each Act individually. Starting with an explanation of the Storyline and Script for which the storyline takes place. The Narrator should then choose people to act out the characters in his/her narration, stopping at the end of each Act to explain what is happening (The Big Picture).

## The Great Play

### ACT 1

**Storyline:** Creation

**Script:** Genesis 1-2

**Characters:** 1 **God**, 2 **God's Creation** (i.e light, dark, land, trees etc.), 3 **Man** (a.k.a Adam).

- “At the beginning of God’s creating...
- There was light and dark...then the first day ended.
- Then God created the water and skies...and the second day ended.
- There was land & seas...God liked what he saw!
  - There were also plants, trees, fruits, and veggies...and the third day ended.
- On the fourth day there was night & day, stars, moon, & sun...God liked what he saw!... and the fourth day ended.
- God made birds and fishies and liked them too!
  - He told them to scatter about multiply
  - Fifth day ended
- God made land animals...again, God liked what he saw.
  - Then He made man in his image.
    - He asked man to take care of His creation and keep it on the right path.
      - The man said “Yeah, sure, I’ll be your guy”.

- God looked at what he had made and was pumped up!
- Sixth day ended.
- Then God took a break from working and showed us how to chill. This was on the seventh day.

## **ACT 2**

***Storyline:*** The Fall

***Script:*** Genesis 3-11

***Characters:*** 1 **God**, 2 **Tree of Life**, 3 **Snake**, 4 **Woman** (a.k.a Eve), 5 **Man** (a.k.a Adam)

- Everything was in its proper place in God's creation...it was the way it was intended.
  - God pointed to one tree and told the people that he made that they were NOT to eat from it.
    - Even this one tree was where it was intended.
  - But, the shrewd snake came to one of the people and twisted what God had said about the tree and fruit and what they could and couldn't eat.
    - She corrected him and explained how God had forbid them to eat from this tree, but the snake, who was a very good talker, lied about the consequences of eating from this tree.
    - The woman gave in and tried it. Then the guy came along & tried it, too.
      - He was kind of dopey, so it didn't take much to convince him to try it.
    - This was the first time God's creation was used in a way that it was NOT intended.
  - God was NOT amused. He called the people together and told them: "This changes everything".

- Other really bad stuff started to happen: murder, nastiness, general meanness and badness.
- God's creation, that he was so stoked about, was no longer the way He intended it to be.
- Soon others began to use God's creation in ways that were NOT intended.
- And God was sad!

### **ACT 3**

***Storyline:*** Israel

***Script:*** Genesis 12 through the rest of the Old Testament

***Characters:*** 1 **God**, 2 **Israel** then **Maccabees** (2-3 people for this character), 3 **Abram**, 4 **Egypt** then **Antiochus Epiphanies**, then **Pompey** (2-3 people), 5 **Tent of Meeting** then **Tabernacle** then **Temple**

- God wanted his creation to be reformed back to the way it was.
- I guess he figured that if man messed it up, man could help put it back.
- So, God talked to this guy, Abram, who was an ancient Iraqi, and told him something similar to what he had told the people in the first act: that he would be the beginning of a nation that would set the world back to the way God created it to be.
- God told Abram that he would make him fruitful, multiply his family & would give him an amazing land....kinda like Disney Land without all the weird people in costumes.
- Abram said "okay, yeah, sure, I'll be your guy."
- God did all sorts of stuff to make Abram and his descendants into a nation.
- He sent them to Egypt, where they grew and grew and grew.

-But some people in Egypt didn't like immigrants and wanted to pass legislation to send them back to their poverty stricken homeland...

-No, actually, they enslaved them.

-But God sent someone to get his people the heck out of Egypt.

-So they got out, it was pretty dramatic, lots of stuff happened...

-Yahweh (that was the name God was going by now) made a deal with this nation...he would be their God and redeem his creation through them if they would act like the people of Yahweh.

-They said "yeah, sure, we'll be your people."

-Yahweh made his presence known to Israel throughout their history.

-First, when they were running the heck out of Egypt, he was in a pillar of fire during the night and a pillar of cloud during the day.

-Whenever their leader went into his tent to meet with Yahweh, this cloud would cover the whole tent. This kind of freaked people out when it happened...they called the tent, the "Tent of Meeting"...because it was a tent and they went there to have meetings with Yahweh.

-Then, Israel built a stronger place for Yahweh's presence, but one that was still mobile.

-It was more luxurious and beautiful, but they could fold it up and move around...kind of like a circus tent with lots of trinkets and gold in it...they called this the "Tabernacle", which meant "place of Divine dwelling"...because it was the place where the Divine was dwelling.

- When they were finished building the Tabernacle, the presence of God in the form of the cloud left the tent of meeting and went into the Tabernacle.
- Finally, many years later, after lots of stuff happened that we don't have time to talk about now, an Israelite king came along and built an actual permanent building that Yahweh could stay in for good.
  - It was big and lavish and really cool....they called it the Temple.
  - When it was finished, God packed up his cloud and moved it into the Temple, resting in the Holy of Holies, or God's Bedroom.
- This house was super cool and very lavish and ornamented...but it never made it into MTV "Cribs".
- Here's why:
  - Israel didn't do a very good job keeping its side of their bargain with God.
    - They dabbled with other gods, oppressed their own poor and helpless, and forgot their identity to act like the people thru whom Yahweh would set His creation back to the way it was intended.
  - God was NOT amused by this and sent some nations to bully Israel, you know, rough em up a bit.
    - Well, it was more than a bit:
      - Eventually Israel as a nation was destroyed along with its Temple.
      - Many people were kidnapped and taken to live in the conquering countries.
      - The people eventually returned and set up their country again, and even rebuilt their ruined Temple, but it was never the same. The presence of God never returned to this new Temple...plus it

was waaaay smaller than the old one, since Israel didn't have the cash to afford something bigger.

-Then, as if Israel hadn't been through enough, a very big bully named Antiochus Epiphanies tried to stamp out Judaism.

-He even conquered Jerusalem and did some pretty insulting things in the Temple.

-Some very tough Jews, the Maccabees, kicked his butt right out of Palestine.

-This was kind of like their War of Independence. The Jews were very proud of their win and they started celebrating it every year, right before Christmas.

-Even though they had this great victory, they knew they were still in some form of exile, because Yahweh had not yet re-established his reign that would bring about the re-ordering of the world through them, that he had promised oh so many years ago.

-About a hundred years later, another big bully named Pompey came. He was Roman and they were the new big dogs on the world block.

-He, too, conquered Jerusalem and defiled the Temple.

-It was just more proof that Yahweh hadn't yet returned to set up his kingdom.

-So, the Jews waited, and waited, and waited. It had been almost 600 years since they were sent into the doghouse. They wanted out. They wanted God to act, and they preferred that it be sooner rather than later.

-In the meantime, they did their best to at least ACT like God's people, still killing and burning animals, celebrating the parties Yahweh had told them to have,

keeping the chill day Yahweh gave them, and obeying the kosher laws.

-Still, all these things really did was remind them of Yahweh's promise to deliver them and to establish his reign of the whole world through them.

-So, they waited and waited, and got a little impatient as time went on.

## **ACT 4**

***Storyline:*** Jesus

***Script:*** Gospels, parts of rest of the New Testament

***Characters:*** 1 John, 2 Jesus,

-Then, one day a guy named John came along, he was pretty alternative, almost Goth, and started to proclaim that this long-hoped for kingdom was coming soon.

-The people listened to him and got pretty excited.

-It must have been kind of a bummer when this guys' message got his head chopped off.

-Then, another guy named Jesus came and said the same thing!

-He was different, though, in that he started to do other things that symbolized that this kingdom was coming.

-Jesus proclaimed that this kingdom was coming, but he did things and taught things that were not exactly what people expected.

-He started acting in ways to show that all sorts of people would be invited to share in this kingdom.

-He made people who were outcasts because of their disabilities and their illnesses well, showing everyone that these types were invited.

-He ate and hung out with some really rough crowds, showing everyone that these types were invited.

- He even talked to the ladies...not in the smooth way (**Insert a guys name that is in your group**) does, but in a way that showed everyone that these types were invited.
- He talked to people who were not part of the right religion, showing everyone that these types were invited.
- He taught stuff about Yahweh's reign that was not what the Jews expected.
  - He taught about joy, contentedness, healing, humility, devotion, and most often, love.
  - He said that this is what the kingdom really looks like.
- Most people were confused by what Jesus said.
  - They followed his insistence that the kingdom of Yahweh was coming, but it sure as heck didn't look like what they expected...it was like they saw a movie star without their makeup on...recognizable, but maybe a bit disappointing.
    - They were confused by the fact that this long awaited kingdom wasn't turning out the way THEY wanted it to.
- Oh yeah, and Jesus also told the Jews that they were in a world of hurt if they didn't give up their ideas of what the reign of Yahweh looked like and adopt his ideas...he used to say this in this way "REPENT!"
  - He said other things that were harsh, too. He really riled up lots of people about his view of kingdom, which was only made worse by the fact that they had been so excited at first about what he had been saying.
- Jesus knew he was poking at a hornet's nest. He constantly talked to his disciples, and anyone else who

would listen, that he was doing this on purpose and that it was all part of the plan.

-He told them and others that he would die and raise again, and that this would kick off the whole kingdom thing that he kept preaching.

-Eventually Jesus died, just as he predicted he would.

-This would have been a major bummer if it ended there.

-But it didn't.

-He rose from the dead, which could have been a little creepy, but it was part of his plan all along.

-Then he sat down and explained all this stuff to his disciples, to tell them that he had accomplished all that he set out to do, to bring about the reign of Yahweh through his own death, burial, and resurrection.

-He also told them that they were now the people of this reign, of this kingdom, and that they were to act like it.

-Then he told them to go and invite the whole world to come into the kingdom.

-This was, then to be their response: to be the people of God's kingdom and to proclaim that this kingdom is now here because of Jesus' death and resurrection!

-They were to act like, really ACT LIKE, God's people by relying on the Holy Spirit, not a Law Code, like Israel had

-He kind of left it up to them to decide what it meant to live like this.

-When Jesus told them this, they said "“yeah, sure, we'll be your people.”"

-They were amazed and shocked! God had acted at last, his reign was here, & they were now the people through whom Yahweh would use to set his creation back on track.

## **ACT 5**

**Storyline:** The Act we live in. Began at first Easter and day of Pentecost.

**Script:** The New Testament is the first scene of the Act. The ending is already sketched out in Romans 8, 1 Corinthians 15, and revelation 21 & 22.

**Characters: US!!**

-So, basically, Jesus' disciples did all that he had told them to do.

- They preached that God (yes, he seems to have changed his name again) is one God, that he is restoring the world to its original intended state

- They said things like "God reigns on earth" and "Kingdom" when they talked about this.

- They told people that this came about because Jesus had died on the cross but rose from the dead.

- They tried their best to act like people who were already part of this amazing reign (or kingdom).

- They told the world that everyone is invited into this kingdom, that everyone can be a part of God recreating this world back to its intended state.

- They did this by telling people to REPENT, just like Jesus had.

- They meant that it was time for people to give up their idea of what it meant to be human and adopt Jesus' idea.

- They said this meant to love God, to hold people and God's creation in high regard, but to care most about the thing that God himself cared most about in his creation: people.

- They called this "making Jesus Lord".

-They said that if people would do this, they would be part of this great God-movement and would also get to spend the rest of eternity with God when God finally does the complete this extreme makeover, home edition.

This continues on to today. We are to continue on with this mission to proclaim God's kingdom through Jesus and to act like, really ACT LIKE, people who belong to God's kingdom.

-We have to use all the acts of this play to figure out what this looks like...the script has ended, now we must improvise using what we have of the story.

It's ACT 5 and you are the star.. go ahead.. make it an amazing finish!

-This story demands a response. God has invited us, and everyone else for that matter, to be the new people through who he will finally restore his creation to its intended state.

-Being a Christian means saying "Yeah, sure, I'll be your person/people".

-Our mission to proclaim this kingdom & our responsibility to ACT LIKE, to BE kingdom people is built into the story.

-The story doesn't tell us how exactly we are to do this, but it does give us the previous script to use. We're supposed to do it in a way that is consistent with the story that unfolded before us.

-Our job, then, is to figure out what our lives, both as a group & each one of us individually, will look like as we act out our part of the play.

-This requires us to discuss it here in our devotionals, to discuss it when we see each other

outside of this time, and to ask ourselves, and for each one of us to ask our self what this means.

-All three components, together, will help us stay true to the story as our guide and help us to remember our mission and our responsibility.

-This is what we are here to do.