

Spiritual Formation in the Congregation

5 Dramas to Present Spiritual Styles

by

Joel V. Xavier

Puppet Dramas As A Seminar Project

Presented to Professors Craig Van Gelder and Richard Bliese

And members of the Doctor of Ministry Cohort II

Luther Seminary

As a Requirement in

Course CI7512

Pastoral Identity, Leadership, and Spiritual Life

St. Paul, Minnesota

March 19, 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Overview of Project | 3 |
| Reflection #1 | 9 |
| Reflection #2 | 15 |
| Reflection #3 | 19 |
| Drama Scripts Title Page | 23 |
| #1 Soup Kitchen..... | 24 |
| #2 Best Teacher..... | 29 |
| #3 Eve | 34 |
| #4 The Mystic | 39 |
| #5 Like an Elephant | 42 |
| Bibliography | 46 |

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

Taken from the project proposal discussed at the seminar.

1. **Background**

- a. The puppets were created in 1999 for a Lenten series on Global missions.
- b. In 2000 they were used with different characters to introduce the churchwide “Call to Discipleship.” Three of the skits are on the ELCA web site.
<http://www.elca.org/init/teachthefaitth/Dramas.html>
- c. After a three year hiatus, during which we participated in a round robin, I thought it might be effective to bring the puppets back to present ideas, models and concepts of Spiritual formation.
- d. Parallel to these dramas will be sermon presentations. The sermons will be written after the due date for this project.
 - i. Parallel is the operative word.
 - ii. Sermon and drama will each be independent in that the ideas in each will be complete enough to stand alone.
 - iii. This is to model different spiritualities, one that may be informed by story in multi media, one that may be informed by intellect.

2. **Spiritual Formation Goals**

- a. As a part of spiritual formation at Community Lutheran Church
 - i. In a Lutheran heritage that does not have a strong tradition of thinking about spirit and spirituality, one goal of the skits is to provide a non threatening venue to talk about the spirituality of individuals and about being spiritual.

- ii. In a culture that claims individual freedom yet often seeks conformity and uniformity (everyone should wear blue jeans or have a Nike swoosh, drink cola, or coffee, houses built in a time period look similar) a second goal is to identify that there are different expressions of our spirituality. A person does not have to conform.
 - iii. In presenting different dimension of spirituality, a third goal, is for individuals to increase their own spiritual awareness,
 - iv. and being more aware, can share their faith and the community of faith with others.
- b. 4 characters will have distinctly different in spiritual types, using the types in Chapter 3 of John Ackerman's book, *Listening to God*, as models for four of the characters. The word "type" is Ackerman's. In presenting materials I will use other words, such as spiritual dimension or spiritual style
- i. Feeling Spirituality: religion that appeals to tradition, sentiment. Wants everyone's heart warmed like theirs.
 - ii. Being Spirituality: "Mystic quadrant." "Hanging out with God." Quaker.
 - iii. Thinking Spirituality: Sermons, lectures, study.
 - iv. Doing Spirituality: do not go to spirituality classes, many do not go to church.
- c. Through dialogue and stage interaction give concrete stories through which the confirmation student participants and the viewing congregation can differentiate their own spiritualities.

3. **Spiritual Practice Goals**

- a. Through dialogue and stage interaction give concrete stories in which people can see model of spiritual practices which will give spiritual growth,
- b. The primary practice woven in the dramas will be the practice of discernment.
- c. Therefore, within the five dramas include the content of Chapter 5 of *Listening to God*, “Discernment” so that participants and congregation
 - i. Discernment is telling the voice of God from the other voices we hear.
 - ii. Discernment is a way of knowing.
 - iii. Discernment is an art and a gift.
 - iv. Discernment is different for different style of people.
 - v. We don’t learn discernment from a book or a sermon.
 - vi. We know God in our experience, as we gain some practice in listening.
- d. Consciously be faithful in presenting perichoretic images of God in each drama.

4. **Implementation:**

- a. Write the five dramas, approximately 5-7 minutes each, with stage instructions.
 - i. The first four of the dramas will roughly follow this pattern:

1. Introduction of one of the characters and the Spirituality represented in that character.
 2. Each drama will begin with a little monologue introducing the character and the scene. (Similar to scenes in Shakespeare.)
 3. Beginning of scenario.
 4. Interaction of characters involving facets of each of the spiritualities in the context of the scenario. (Showing some relation of spirituality to cultural context.)
- ii. A fifth drama is yet to be revealed. Quite possibly this will move the puppets into the sanctuary. Perhaps an insight by the two characters that do not represent the spiritual styles.
- b. 6 characters will be used.
- i. 4 will represent the spiritual styles outlined in part 3.
 - ii. 2 more will be foils to stimulate discussion. They will not be identified as Agnostic and Atheist, but these categories are assigned to them in the writing process to give them individual approaches to the scenarios.
 1. “Agnostic” is a questioning character. This person will want to know why. “How do you know?”
 2. “Atheist” character is to challenge faith practice and provide the opportunity for defense.

- c. Use a non church scenario for each drama. The scenario will illustrate a facet of one of the spiritualities. Possible scenarios.
- i. At a soup kitchen for “Doing Spirituality.”
 - “I am so fulfilled when I do this.”
 - Bible: *Mission of the Seventy Luke 10:1-12*
 - *Disciples sent to the people.*
 - Motion. As if the puppets of the servers and volunteers working in the kitchen.
 - ii. For “Thinking Spirituality” in the school hall
 - Bible: Jesus reading in the synagogue. Luke 4:16-22
 - Bible: *Mary and Martha. Luke 10:38-42*
 - Conversation about lessons in class & church
 - iii. At a lakeside park watching the sunset for “Being Spirituality.”
 - Bible: Jesus going to the mountain and praying all night. Luke 6:12-16.
 - iv. For “Feeling spirituality” at a sporting event.
 - You should like football the way I should.
 - You should feel the way I do.
 - Bible: Transfiguration. Luke 9:28-36. Only three disciples shared the experience.
 - Motion. Moving along sideline with the plays. (Movement in the worship service.)
- d. Fun twists that could possibly be added to spice things up.

- i. Students play a part write the dramas in class, being presented with the concepts, and an outline of the story.
- ii. Student(s) dress like the puppet(s). Enter into the presence of the congregation.
- iii. Introduction of one puppet each Sunday in church.
- iv. Handout with information about each puppet and the spiritual dimension it represents.
- v. *Video taken of one or more of the dramas.*

5. WHAT WILL BE TURNED IN?

- a. *5 drama scripts with stage instructions.*
- b. *2 or 3 one page reflections.*
 - i. *(Still optional.) If I work with the confirmation class early in script formation, I will write a one page reflection on the process.*
 - ii. *After the first presentation I will write a one page reflection on how the drama worked as a part of the service. This will include an evaluation of what changes might be helpful and what changes are possible.*
 - iii. *Before posting the completed project I will write a one page reflection on the process to the date of posting.*

Reflection #1

Reflection On The First Presentation Of A Drama To The Confirmation Classes.

For Project: 5 Puppet Dramas

Community Lutheran Church

Pastoral Identity, Leadership, and Spiritual Life

January 21, 2003

Doctor Ministry Program - CL7512

Joel Xavier

Method: In the half hour allotted students are to

- 1) Read through the worksheet*;
- 2) Then volunteer for parts;
- 3) Read the drama out loud;
- 4) Next write quick responses to questions;
- 5) Finally discuss responses.

Context: We take about half the class hour to share highs and lows and address questions of life and faith raised by the students. There was a lot of processing on this week. The students had helped at a local nursing home on Sunday. There had been two deaths at the home that Sunday morning. The reading of Matthew 25:31-46 served to connect the drama to their experience at the nursing home. It was a providential example of “Doing Spirituality.” In this discussion there were comments about motivation for service. “If I help them, they might not help me when I am in need.”

Some of the students are carrying a heavy burden. Two talked about needing communion everyday. The same two spoke of failing classes as grades were coming out next week. They need the care of the group. Another student sounded like Job as she spoke of the unfairness of life. Her aunt has terminal cancer. She questions God’s plan for life itself. Why bother. “You work and then you die.”

Reflection on process, content, and theology: (based on the 5 steps of the method.)

1. Read through the worksheet

- a. Process: In one class we did not read through the worksheet before doing the drama. The benefit in reading the worksheet was in the transition from reading lines to students writing their reflections. The second class, the one in which we did not read the worksheet first is less disciplined as a rule. We ran out of time.
- b. Content: I think the questions are appropriate. Small changes can be made each week to tune up the worksheet and keep it visually interesting to the students. There are too many questions for the time. But I think I will keep them as a challenge for us.
- c. Theology: The worksheet sets the stage for the drama as a stage that presents theological framework for life. The students are asked in the read to think about what faith is in the context of life; about what it means to be a spiritual person; about how we put faith into practice.

2. volunteer for parts

- a. Process: This went fairly smoothly. If this bogs down later, I think it will be a matter of students getting into certain characters, and wanting or not wanting to read them. The students did not know about the characters.
- b. Content: n/a
- c. Theology: I assert that we do not choose our basic self. We have some innate and individual spiritual characteristics just as we have given temperament.

3. “Read the drama out loud.”
 - a. Process: I started in both groups reading the stage instructions. The natural progress was for them to start reading through without waiting for the instructions to be read. The students did interact differently with this presentation that with other content pieces we have used. The drama connected with them in ways that I cannot connect as pastor. Students noted a few lines that were uncomfortable. One student wanted a reworking of a certain dramatic piece. It showed that the student was involved in the process.
 - b. Content: One of the students who were not assigned a part made notations of changes that needed to be made. As a whole the students had affirmation for the content of the script.
 - c. Theology: It was a “praxis” moment. While I have not spent time training the students in service, they identified with the serving in the drama. More than one individual had a concept that this was about church. We will change the line, but Buzz said he only comes once or twice a month. One thought that was coming to church. That is a different faith practice.
4. “Write quick responses to questions.”
 - a. Process: About half the students wrote some good responses. They had only five minutes, and in that time they were starting to make their responses verbally. I think having them write responses gives the quiet students a better opportunity to respond. Some did not write anything. I

think the five minutes is about the right amount of time. If I choose to take time away from the community building time at the beginning of the class, it might be good to ask them to write some more after some discussion. 5 minutes of writing, 10 minutes discussion, 5 minutes of writing.

- b. Content: I think keeping basically the same questions will enable the students to dig more deeply in the concepts of faith practices and of different spiritual types. The most insightful written answer was to question number two. “She told Louise about Buzz believing in God and that he has his own way of talking to God spiritually.” I thought the least insightful answer was also to question two. “He had crackers.” However, this is from one of the students who suggested Communion everyday. Might that troubled mind have made the leap from crackers to the Sacrament? The only answer written for number seven, “Which character is most like the way you understand your own spirituality?” is Louise, the character who is anti-faith. The two students who expressed the need for daily communion identified with the anti-faith puppet.
- c. Theology: Six students come out of the drama with a comment that spirituality was the single they remembered. Five students noted either the singing or wrote the words of the song. One might discern a spiritual difference between these groups. Those who wrote something about spirituality may be more cognitive, more intellectual. Those who noted the singing may be more experiential, more feeling oriented.

5. “Finally discuss responses.”
 - a. Process: Some of the students were not able to give their own answers until they heard examples. They responded to the verbal cues. There was also a sense that for some in saying it first they could have permission before they wrote it down. My observation is that the greatest learning was taking place at the boundary between steps four and five.
 - b. Content: For the most part, the written answers were shorter and less insightful than the spoken answers. It would be good to have a recorder who is only writing down the answers that people give.
 - c. Theology: In both classes we were in crunch mode as we got down to the discussion process. For example we did not take time to make a list on the board of actions that are part of faith. When asked about question four, identifying individual spiritual characteristics, the easiest was that Louise did not believe. She worked against the faith of the others. In the written responses, three noted that difference. An equal number noted generally that characters had different ways of being spiritual. Two gave specific examples – one noted the singing – one noted the serving.

Overall: There is never enough time. I think the students were engaged significant consideration of what it means to be a spiritual being, and of how our spirituality is different from the person who may be next to us.

*The worksheet questions with answers given:

1. What is the single thing, the word or phrase or line that you remember at the end of the reading?
 - a. Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.
 - b. Singer Singing
 - c. That is Spirituality
 - d. Jesus Spirituality
 - e. There serving Homeless people.
 - f. Spirituality
 - g. Spirituality
 - h. Carrot Sticks & Jesus loves me
 - i. Jesus loves me, this I know – Singer Sings
 - j. What do you think Guy?
 - k. Spirituality
 - l. This is spiritual
 - m. “Jesus loves me, this I know”
2. Think of the part that you read. What did that character do that can be understood as a part of faith?
 - a. They helped out at a soup kitchen. One person, Singer, sang a church song.
 - b. He had crackers
 - c. He believes in God and tries to get other people to believe in God
 - d. Sang
 - e. He was always talking about God
 - f. Helping serve soup to homeless people.
 - g. Helped serve food to people
 - h. When she sang
 - i. She told Louise about Buzz believing in God and that he has his own way of talking to God spiritually.
 - j. Sing
 - k. He loved God
 - l. Helped just because he cared
3. ***As a class – make a list on the board of acts or actions that have to do with faith.***
4. ***What do you remember from the drama about individual spirituality?***
 - a. Buzz finds his by helping things.
 - b. She didn't believe God was with them.
 - c. She didn't really believe in God.
 - d. Yes, one didn't really believe in God.
 - e. That Buzz has his own way of talking to God Spiritually.
 - f. that everyone is diff.
 - g. That everyone is different in there spirituality
 - h. Singing was their way to Jesus/God.
5. ***What do you remember from the drama about how the different characters helped each other be more spiritual?***
 - a. Ya Guy helped Louise realize relationship
 - b. Buzz had them come to the church
 - c. That they served other people
 - d. They told each other how they talk to God in their own way spiritually.
 - e. They helped each other
 - f. Try new things
 - g. The singer sang church songs
6. ***What do you remember that has to do with practicing faith?***
 - a. When they all help out at the soup kitchen.
 - b. Helping serve soup
 - c. Praying
 - d. When they were helping out at soup kitchen
 - e. Praying
 - f. Serving the soup
 - g. Singing
 - h. When they help at the soup kitchen
 - i. Singing Songs
 - j. Singing Praying
 - k. Helping at soup kitchen.
7. ***Which character is most like the way you understand your own spirituality?***
 - a. Helping people
 - b. Singer
 - c. ?
 - d. Louise
 - e. Helping people
 - f. louise
8. ***What would you change to make the drama easier to understand?***
 - a. Notta
 - b. Nothing that I could see!
 - c. None
 - d. no

Reflection #2

Reflection on the First Presentation of a Drama in the Lenten Service

For Project: 5 Puppet Dramas “As the Spirit Turns” Community Lutheran Church

Pastoral Identity, Leadership, and Spiritual Life

March 4, 2003

Doctor Ministry Program - CL7512

Joel Xavier

Method: The Wednesday Schedule for the students includes:

- 1) Read through the drama just before service.
- 2) Present the puppet drama in the service.
- 3) Practice the drama for the next week.

Context:

The drama is a part of the Wednesday Evening Lent service. We are using an abbreviated Service of the Word from the Lutheran Book of Worship.

Opening Hymn

Lent Dialog from Service of the Word

Apostles' Creed

Prayer of the Day

Hymn 486 – verses 1&2 – Spirit of God Descend upon My Heart

Puppet Drama

Hymn 486 – verses 3&4 – Spirit of God Descend upon My Heart

Sermon

Offering Hymn

Lord's Prayer

Reflections:

- 1) Pre service reading. Some of the students did not understand that they needed to come early to read through the script. The mood then with the group of 8th and 9th graders was a little less than meditative.
- 2) During the service. The students were focused. The reports from the congregation were positive. One student said, “Someone told me we got the point across.” As in the initial reading of the drama, the connection of the drama about “doing spirituality” connected very well with the reading from Matthew 25, “I was hungry and you fed me.”
- 3) New drama practice. After the service students have already been in the church two hours. They are thinking about getting home to homework, etc. We repeat each scene 3 times. What they lack in serious attention to the plot, they may get in repetition. The puppeteers are just getting confidence with the puppets and trying some motions to give their characters individuality.

The repetitive reading gives the students time to think about the ideas presented.

Although we spend more time on presentation than on content the students are reflecting on the character of characters. For example, “Lily is always so negative.” Lily is the character who in concept is atheist.

One of the comments that students have made is that I try to introduce more than one theme in the dramas. Not only does each drama include a spiritual type, characters do make specific reference to spiritual discernment. In this I seek those watching to think not only of static spiritual types, but also of spirituality as process. In this first drama Buzz is sharing his “spiritual doing” with his friends.

SERMON

In the short sermon I also had multiple concepts. I was building on a relationship theme started on Ash Wednesday. Our spirituality is in relationship with each others and with others. On a superficial level, with a doing spirituality like Buzz in the drama, we relate to others by serving them. On Ash Wednesday I called this an “Attitude of Ashes” compared to a cultural winner/loser attitude.

On a faith level, Guy observes that in serving others Buzz is doing this in a concrete relationship with Jesus. (These are not the words from the drama. This is indeed a reflection about how it functioned in the service. I am playing it back in my mind.) In the sermon I described that this faith level is enriched when we take the time to be aware of our individual spiritual gifts.

Finally, in the community, we enrich each other when we take the time to observe the different spiritual traits we each have. When you understand how I function spiritually and I understand your spirituality, we can help each other enter into God’s future. We can participate in the emerging future of God’s Kingdom. (Again, this is not the sermon I preached, but a reflection on the theological direction I think it was going.)

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE.

Two of the dramas are still to be written. It was with purpose I waited. I wanted to live with the drama in worship, to observe the students living with the character of the puppets. There may be room for change.

I will work to avoid my tendency to add too many ideas into the drama. As the groups becomes familiar with the concept that we indeed have individuality in our spirituality just as God has created us otherwise different, I will want to draw the diversity into the unity that we share in Christ. The Christian unity is being modeled in

the interaction of the characters, but the Christ center has not been emphasized. This is in the plan in that the first four dramas each define a spiritual type and the fifth defines the mutual participation of the separate parts in one body.

Reflection #3

Reflection on the process up to the date of posting.

For Project: 5 Puppet Dramas

Community Lutheran Church

Pastoral Identity, Leadership, and Spiritual Life

January 21, 2003

Doctor Ministry Program - CL7512

Joel Xavier

Introduction:

Looking at the approaching Easter Season I am trying to work ahead on the project completion. The contract was to write this reflection for the posting, not necessarily after all the dramas had been presented.

Spiritual Formation Goals:

I did not design an apparatus to measure the success of the dramas.

When the students first read through the dramas they did not know the word discernment. They identified with the characters. Some were quick to vocally identify with Lily and Thomas, the characters who expressed views that were not evangelical. I think the freedom to have those models recognized gave them the freedom to consider all the spiritual styles.

Attendance has been good, average 75. The first week was equal to the Sunday before. There are about ten who we have not been seeing on Sundays who came for the first three Wednesdays. On the third week the High School girl's team was playing at the state basketball tournament! That is some stiff competition.

Spiritual Practice Goals:

As in the formation there is not a device to measure this. When we were just reading through and talking about the dramas, the students were confused with the

concept of discernment. They felt it was enough just to work on the concepts of Spiritual styles. In response I eased up on the goal of familiarizing the congregation with the six concepts about discernment listed in the proposal. However, those concepts were each faithfully introduced and portrayed in the dramas.

The students have reported comments people have made about the content of the Dramas. They have affirmed that there is a message.

Implementation:

The development of the dramas and the plots proceeded pretty much as planned. The one striking variation was the choice to use the old poem about the Blind men and the Elephant for the final scene. What I liked about the poem was the opportunity to emphasize how differently we may each perceive the spiritual process. And the poem is a satire against narrow religious thinking. It was fun to turn the satire inside out.

Four characters were to represent the Spiritual styles. Here are the names with those types:

1. Eve - Feeling Spirituality: religion that appeals to tradition, sentiment. Wants everyone's heart warmed like theirs.
2. Guy - Being Spirituality: "Mystic quadrant." "Hanging out with God." Quaker.
3. Hope - Thinking Spirituality: Sermons, lectures, study.
4. Buzz - Doing Spirituality: do not go to spirituality classes, many do not go to church.

In the process of developing the proposal the cohort was most interested in the two characters who would be foils for the discussion. As the plays developed, it turned out that they have spirituality! They just don't have faith.

5. Thomas - Feeling Spirituality: His “religious experience” was in wrestling and he put his new found spiritual focus to good use in that religion. Thomas was modeled as the agnostic character. (Yes. The cliché of the one who doubts.)
6. Lily - Thinking Spirituality: Lily thinks things in a spiritual way. She just does not connect that to God. Lily was modeled as the atheist character.

An interesting event was when one of the readers noticed and commented that two of the characters were flirting with Thomas; Eve in her drama, and Hope in “Best Teacher.” The student asked me if I planned that. No, it was an accident. But do the nice Christian girls flirt more with the agnostic boys? What does that say about spiritual style?

One big snag in the implementation was when the girl’s basketball team played in a state tournament game on a Wednesday night. Two thirds of the crew went to the ball game. I had about five days lead time. I did not occur to me games would come on a Wednesday. The fourth drama was written to use only 3 puppets at a time and Lily and Thomas were not included at all. (They had so many lines in earlier plays it was planned to be a ‘light’ performance for them.) With some help from the congregation we put on the drama with very little preparation. (I was only a minor nervous wreck.)

Conclusion:

I did not make the sermons part of the project. In part that was to limit the time I needed to get things typed up for submission. The sermons are no longer than the dramas. I find I am preparing them on Wednesdays before church. As expressed in the plan, I work from the lesson and take a parallel route giving Biblical examples for the kinds of spiritual styles we are talking about; giving examples of how understanding

spiritual styles helps us live our own lives in relationship with God and with each other; and noting that respecting differences in these styles helps us to live more closely to each other in community. Our different spiritual styles may give us insight into the community of the Trinity and visa versa.

As I have looked back on the original goals, I say those places where I have strayed from the letter of the plan. All in all, I think the dramas have functioned amazingly well. I think it is a medium that allows the people in general and the students in particular, to try different models of understanding for their own spiritual life.

One of the parents has been taping the dramas. (She has a cheerleader daughter so was not there for the third drama.) I will make that available for the cohort in some way.

AS THE SPIRIT TURNS

Lenten Dramas
2004

Community Lutheran Church
Geneva, Minnesota

#1 Soup Kitchen

#2 Best Teacher

#3 Eve

#4 The Mystic

#5 Like an Elephant

#1

Soup Kitchen

SCENE 1

Line

| # | Character | |
|----|-----------|--|
| 1 | Buzz | <i>(Stair Entrance. Stage hand sound effects like going up stairs.)</i> Good Evening ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to our drama series, "As the Spirit Turns." Allow me to introduce myself. <i>(Continues as others are talking, at the same time, Hope to Lily and Thomas to Guy.)</i> I am Buzz. . . . |
| 2 | Hope | <i>(voice only - no puppet - not directly into mike)</i> <i>(Talks to Lily about something from school.)</i> Can you believe that Martha did that in front of everyone? |
| 3 | Lily | <i>(voice only - no puppet - not directly into mike)</i> <i>(Talks to Hope)</i> I can't believe it! She is such a >>> (goof off, nerd?) |
| 4 | Thomas | <i>(voice only - no puppet - not directly into mike)</i> <i>(Whispers in general.)</i> Hey did you see the Timberwolves game? |
| 5 | Guy | <i>(voice only - no puppet - not directly into mike)</i> <i>(Whispers in general.)</i> Yeah! It was really something. |
| 6 | Buzz | . . . I am the "M" "C" for this evening. We will take turns introducing the drama in the weeks ahead. <i>(Turns around and pretends to address those behind the curtain.)</i> Sh-h-h-h. You have to be quiet back here. I'm trying to do this introduction. <i>(Pause)</i> Sheesh. <i>(Turns forward, and then turns around again.)</i> Can't you show some respect for a person? |
| 7 | Eve | <i>(Voice only - no puppet.)</i> Sorry Buzz. |
| 8 | Buzz | <i>(To the Audience.)</i> As I was saying, each week one of us will begin with an introduction. My name is Buzz. The play tonight is about my spirituality. It is about how I relate to God. Part of our goal tonight is to understand that we are different spiritually. As individuals we relate to God in different ways. And we can grow and learn from each other. <i>(Thomas begins to come in from stage right. When he gets to Buzz he faces him.)</i> I have what some people call a "Doing" Spirituality. I am most aware of God in those times when I am helping other people. I best know the holiness of God when I am helping people. |
| 9 | Thomas | <i>(Loudly.)</i> Are you sure? <i>(Buzz jumps/shakes as if startled.)</i> |
| 10 | Buzz | Oh! <i>(Turns to face Thomas)</i> You scared me. Yes, I'm sure. I make it a point to pay attention in those times when I have thought about God. It is called discernment, spiritual discernment. You're early, Thomas. The play hasn't started |

and the first scene is with Lily. (Thomas walks back out.) That's Thomas. It's his job in these plays to ask if we are sure. The play tonight is called "Soup Kitchen." That's because my friends and I are volunteers tonight at a soup kitchen. Lights! (Stage hands turn out lights.) Places everyone!

11

SCENE 2

12

(Buzz walks to stage left, closer to the wall. Even in the dark, Lily enters from right as if coming up stairs along curtain. She is facing where the organ is.)

13 Lily

It's cold out here. When can we go inside?

14 Buzz

We could go in right now, but I don't know if the others understood that we come in this side door. *(Points to an imaginary door in front of him.)* Lot's of people don't even notice it.

15 Lily

Buzz, I don't know why I let you talk me into this.

16 Buzz

What's the matter, Lily?

17 Lily

Those people lining up at the other door, they aren't very clean.

18 Buzz

I'm not surprised. Half of them are homeless. The other half can't afford to wash their clothes.

19 Lily

Gross. *(Buzz waves at an imagined person across the stage.)* They should take better care of themselves. *(Lily turns to look.)* Who are you waving at? Is someone else here?

20 Buzz

Sure, there's lots of people here. That's old Joe. The guy with the crummy beard. He's the only one I know by name. I see him every time.

21 Lily

Every time! Like you come here a lot.

22 Buzz

No. I only come here to the "soup kitchen" once or twice a month.

23 Lily

(Sarcastic) Well, good for you, Buzz. I suppose you just don't have **time** to come every week.

24 Buzz

(Ignores the sarcasm) I do keep pretty busy. There are some things I do every week. I visit my grandmother at the nursing home, sometimes twice a week. Every week it seems she has some friend who wants me to read a letter, or send an e-mail to their grandchildren. Sometimes I push them somewhere in their wheelchairs.

25 Lily

(Tries to interrupt but Buzz doesn't stop.) I would do that, too, if . . .

- 26 Buzz Then on Tuesday afternoons I work with the after school reading program for first and second grade students. Then there is church choir and Sunday School Sunday morning. Yes! I would like to volunteer here at the "soup kitchen" more often.
- 27 Lily Get a life! I mean, these are good things, but how do you have any time for fun?
- 28 Buzz This is fun! *(Pause. Take a good look at Lily.)* I know it is new for you. *(Put hand on her shoulder for next line.) (Thomas slowly comes in stage right.)* This might not be your idea of having fun, but, when I am doing something for someone else, when I am working here, or on one of my other projects, that is a holy high. *(Big sweeping gesture.)* God is here!
- 29 Lily You're crazy. God isn't here. No one is here. *(Buzz waves again.)* Are you waving at Joe, again?
- 30 Thomas No. He's waving at me. Hi Lily. What's up Buzz? I think the others should be inside. I saw Guy's car around the corner.
- 31 Lily I want to go in. It feels creepy out here. *(Stage: lights out.)*

32

SCENE 3

- 33 *(Puppets all enter. Left to right: Guy - Hope - Buzz - Lily - Eve - Thomas.)*
- 34 Guy *(This is the imaginary serving line. As each puppet imagines a soup kitchen client in front of them they will serve their item, push an imaginary tray, and watch the person go down the line. STAGE: Turn up the lights.)* Yes sir. We are ready to serve. Here's your soup.
- 35 Hope Here are your crackers.
- 36 Buzz Would you like some bread?
- 37 Lily Carrot sticks
- 38 Eve Water or coffee?
- 39 Thomas Please take a seat. *(Points out in front.)*
- 40 Guy Here's your soup. *(Set up rhythm of serving. Repeat the line **off mike** as each of the other characters say their line.)*
Here's your soup.
- 41 Hope Here are your crackers. *(Repeat the line **off mike** as each of the other characters says their line.)*
- 42 Buzz Would you like some bread? *(Repeat the line off mike as each of the other characters says their line.)*
- 43 Lily Carrot sticks. *(Repeat the line off mike as each of the other characters says their line.)*

- 44 Eve Water or coffee? *(Repeat the line off mike as each of the other characters says their line.)*
- 45 Thomas Please take a seat. *(Points out in front.)*
- 46 Eve *(Puppets continue to serve. Without saying lines.)* **"Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so."**
- 47 Lily *(Other puppets freeze. Lily & Eve turn half way toward each other.)* You do have a pretty voice, Eve. I know you just love to sing. I hear you singing all the time.
- 48 Eve Thank you. You have a pretty voice, too. I would like to hear you sing more. Lily, do you ever get the feeling that music is like a special language for talking with God?
- 49 Lily No way! God is for babies. Why do you waste your talent on those corny religious songs?
- 50 Eve I don't feel that way. Sometimes when I am singing it is like Jesus is right here beside me, singing right along with me.
- 51 Lily But how? How do you know it's true? You can't prove it.
- 52 Hope *(Hope steps back to talk behind Buzz who is still frozen.)* Hey! Lily! I am thinking that you have not come to terms with your own ability to discern who God is and how God is active in your world.
- 53 Lily What? Can you put that in English?
- 54 Hope No, and that is the point. We are programmed differently. God doesn't speak to us all in English. Look at Buzz, here. *(Point right at Buzz. Buzz does not move.)* He is in heaven here. I've never seen him more at ease. This is like his spiritual language.
- 55 Lily Right. I think he was trying to explain that to me before we came in. Frankly I didn't understand it. I think Buzz is wasting his life.
- 56 Hope Even if you don't understand, it can still be spiritual for him. In fact you and I can't have the same understanding because we don't know that spiritual language.
- 57 Buzz Pardon me, Hope, but I think Lily does not understand because she doesn't speak any spiritual language. *(Pause. Buzz turns to Lily.)* Lily?
- 58 Lily *(Strong, but not angry.)* Oh, I am spiritual. I am more spiritual than you are, Buzz! I just don't pretend that I am communicating in some spiritual language with some greater power!
- 59 Guy Hey, Buzz. Is it like you are with Jesus when you come here and work? Like Jesus is walking by?
- 60 Buzz Yes. It's like that Bible verse when Jesus said, "I was hungry and you fed me. I was in prison and you visited me."

- 61 Guy That's way cool. I know the sense of being with Jesus, only I don't get it here. I have my own place. But I'm glad you made us come down here, Buzz. *(Looks to the left.)* Hey, look Buzz.
- 62 Buzz What!
- 63 Guy Here comes someone. It can be like Jesus again and he looks hungry. We better be ready to serve.
- 64 Guy Here's your soup. *(Just like before, set up rhythm of serving. Repeat the line off mike as each of the other characters says their line.)* Here's your soup.
- 65 Hope Here are your crackers. *(Repeat the line off mike as each of the other characters says their line.)*
- 66 Buzz Would you like some bread? *(Repeat the line off mike as each of the other characters says their line.)*
- 67 Lily Carrot sticks. *(Repeat the line off mike as each of the other characters says their line.)*
- 68 Eve Water or coffee? *(Repeat the line off mike as each of the other characters says their line.)*
- 69 Thomas Please take a seat. *(Points out in front.)*
- 70 Eve *(Puppets continue to serve. Without saying lines.)* **"Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so."**
- 71 Eve Hey, Hope, *(Serving motions stop.)* would you say singing is my spiritual language?
- 72 Hope What do you think Guy?
- 73 Guy Buzz really meets Jesus here *(Gestures around the whole congregation.)* in these people he serves. If Eve meets Jesus in music the way Buzz meets Jesus in these people - Well, that is spirituality.
- 74 *(Stage: Kill the lights end of drama.)*

#2 Play

Best Teacher

| Line # | Character | <u>SCENE 1</u> |
|--------|-----------|---|
| 1 | Hope | <i>(Lights Off. Stair Entrance. Stage hand sound effects like going up stairs. Lights come on. Hope raises arm out in a dramatic 45 degree gesture.)</i> Welcome back to the "AS THE SPIRIT TURNS." Last week we began to learn that we each have different spiritual characteristics. <i>(Pause. Point at the congregation with the question.)</i> Do you remember Buzz? <i>(Longer pause after the question. See if anyone answers.)</i> |
| 2 | Hope | <i>(Turns 1/4 turn left. SHOUTS)</i> Hey, Buzz. Show your face up here a minute! <i>(Buzz makes a stair entrance. Hope gets really dramatic.)</i> Last week Buzz persuaded us all to go down to the soup kitchen. Let's give Buzz a hand. <i>(Everyone backstage claps.)</i> |
| 3 | Buzz | <i>(Let them clap a little then wave your hand to have them stop.)</i> Hey Thanks. <i>(Repeat the 'Hey Thanks' if they keep clapping. Don't go on until they stop.)</i> If you will excuse me Hope, I'm giving Lily a little last minute coaching with her lines. <i>(Buzz exits as he came in.)</i> |
| 4 | Hope | Buzz is a helping person. <i>(Emotionally.)</i> Right now he is helping Lily. It is more than just being helpful. This is part of his spirit. For Buzz, when is helping other people, it is like Jesus is right there. This is spirit. Buzz called it a "Doing Spirituality." At the Soup kitchen It was something we could see. We saw a change in Buzz. It was like his face was shining. <i>(Points to herself for these two "I's")</i> I understand that I don't get the same powerful experience that he does. |
| 5 | Hope | I have what is called a "Thinking Spirituality." If you <i>(Points out to congregation)</i> have a spirit like mine <i>(Points out to self)</i> this will make sense to you. <i>(Move right and point down to the lecture.)</i> My favorite part of the worship service is the reading of the lessons. I <u>think</u> about the <u>words</u> . <i>(Starts moving and pointing to the pulpit side.)</i> |
| 6 | Thomas | <i>(Thomas comes up stairs on stage right. Crosses 1/4 of the stage, continues to faces Hope and waits.)</i> |
| 7 | Hope | With the lessons I am thinking of what the words mean for today. Then the pastor starts preaching. I am focused on what the pastor is saying. <i>(point to head. Go slowly with this.)</i> I am <u>thinking</u> about my life with God through what the pastor says. |
| 8 | Thomas | <i>(Teasing)</i> Who are you focused on, Hope? <i>(Pause.)</i> Why do I think that you are really watching the football player sitting two pews in front of you? |

- 9 Hope *(Turns to Thomas with teasing politeness.)* Oh, hello Thomas. The answer to your question has three parts.
- 10 Thomas It sounds like a thinking answer already.
- 11 Hope First, *(hold up one finger.)* you are assuming that what goes on in your head is how everyone else thinks. Therefore, if you are not thinking about the scripture reading *(points to the lectern)*, you assume no one else is. That is false. Second, *(hold up two fingers. Lily moves slowly and gently toward Thomas.)* you are taking a doubtful attitude, instead of taking a learning attitude. AND Third, *(hold up three fingers. To the audience)* Count them, three. AND Third, you think that because he is a football player I might be more interested in spending time with him than I am in you.
- 12 Thomas *(Backing off while Hope keeps coming. Starts answer and then begins going down stair along stage right wall.)* I'm thinking that it is a positive thing that it is time for the play to start. I'll see you in scene two.
- 13 Hope *(Turns to audience. Make certain Thomas is gone.)* Do you think I was too hard on Thomas? I think that when he questions things, his goal is not the learning. He's just being a smart aleck. But, *(pause)* Thomas might be worth watching. He might be Thinking deeper than I think he is. How do you understand someone like Thomas? *(Points back where Thomas left. Pauses.)*
- 14 Hope Now that I think about it, It isn't enough for me to listen to the lessons *(point to lectern)*, and listen to the sermon *(point to lectern)*, it takes someone like Thomas to help me test the ideas in conversation. *(Pause.)* NOW, it is time for the play! Imagine you are in a Social Studies classroom. *(Lights dim to darkness during next line.)* You will have to imagine the teacher, too.
- 15 *(Hope takes the stair out.)*
- 16

SCENE 2

- 17 *(Enter Buzz, Eve, and Lily facing forward. Buzz stage left. Eve in the center. Lily on the right. Eve has her hand raised. In this scene (2secs) means pause for imaginary teacher speaking. Something like the adults in Peanuts who never really have lines. Lights ON.)*
- 18 Eve Mr. Evenrude. Mr. Evenrude. (2secs.) How can you say abortion has to be legal? God tells us that every life is valuable. God hates abortion.

- 19 Lily *(Turns straight to Eve.)* No, Eve! God didn't tell you that. Your church told you that. It isn't the same thing. *(Quickly turns straight forward. 3secs.)* I'm sorry, Mr. Evenrude. I'll raise my hand next time. *(Buzz raises his hand.)* But I think a woman has a right to choose. One group of people can't make everyone do it their way just because they say God wants. They can't know what God wants.
- 20 Buzz *(Waives his hand when Lily stops talking. 3secs.)* I agree with you, Mr. Evenrude, that abortion should be legal. But I agree with Eve, too. God hates abortion.
- 21 Lily *(Turns straight to Buzz.)* No, Buzz! You can't know what God wants. *(Quickly turns straight forward. 3secs)* I'm sorry, Mr. Evenrude. I'll raise my hand next time. *(Buzz raises his hand.)* Are you going to let these two talk about some god, *(Eve raises her hand.)* right here in the school? They can't know what God wants.
- 22 Buzz *(Waives his hand when Lily stops talking. 2secs.)* Lily! I'm on your side on this issue. I agree that a woman has a legal right to choose.
- 23 Lily *(Turns straight to Buzz.)* No, Buzz! You're not on my side because. . . *(Quickly turns straight forward. 1secs.)* I'm sorry, Mr. Evenrude. I will raise my hand next time. *(Buzz raises his hand. Eve still has her hand up.)* Buzz, you're not on my side because you are still judging it to be wrong. If you aren't living that person's life you can't know what is right or wrong.
- 24 Eve *(2secs. Doesn't turn toward Lily)* Some things are just wrong. We agree that murder is wrong. We agree stealing is wrong. Some of us listen when God teaches us what is right and wrong. When we do something wrong, it hurts other people, it causes trouble in the world. Some people just do what they think is right for them. Then if they are told the right thing to do, they just say, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Mr. Evenrude." But they don't stop doing what is wrong, because in their own mind they aren't doing anything wrong. It is one thing to not raise your hand, but how do you say, "I'm sorry," to a baby that never gets a chance to be alive.
- 25 Buzz *(Waives his hand when Eve stops talking. 3secs. Hand down, then talk.)* I disagree with Lily if she is saying anything is all right because it is my experience. Some of the people at the soup kitchen sometimes steal just to have something to eat. I can understand it, but we know it is still wrong.
- 26 *(If we have a bell, the bell rings to end the class. Lights go off.)*
27

SCENE 3

- 28 *(from stage left to right Thomas, Hope, Lily, Guy.)*
29 Thomas Take it easy on the locker Lily. It's only made out of steel.

- 30 Hope What's the matter Lily? Are you mad about something?
31 Lily I can't believe that Mr. Evenrude let Eve and Buzz go on and on with all that religious stuff, in class.
- 32 Hope What kind of religious stuff?
33 Lily It was all, "we have to do this and this because God tells us to." That religious stuff makes me sick.
- 34 Hope What kind of thing were they saying you have to do?
35 Lily Well, it wasn't like they were telling me I have to do something. We were talking about abortion. It was like everyone who has an abortion is going to hell. And like I'm going to hell because I think a woman has a right to choose.
- 36 Guy That's not fair, Lily. I don't remember them saying anything about anyone going to hell.
37 Lily They said abortion is wrong.
38 Hope Don't they have a right to have that opinion and to express it in class?
39 Lily But they said they know it is wrong because that is what "God" says. I argued that it is not what God says but it is what is pounded into them at church.
- 40 Thomas Right! Hope, how do you know all that stuff is true?
41 Hope Lily, it isn't like you to get this upset about religious stuff. We go back and forth about it all the time. You don't agree with me but you listen to me.
- 42 Guy I think Lily is a little sore because Eve teased her about how Mr. Evenrude kept telling her she needed to raise her hand.
43 Lily Shut up! Guy!
44 Hope Lily, I read the Bible and God teaches me through the reading. You don't get mad about that. Was it that different with Buzz and Eve?
45 Lily It was more their attitude. (Pause.) You listen to me. You don't always agree with me, but you think about what I say. Eve kept saying it had to be her way.
- 46 Guy It seems to me you have something of an attitude yourself, Lily.
47 Lily Guy, don't you have to go to basketball or something?
48 Guy Hey, I'm sorry if I was out of line. But that discussion was pretty intense. (Pause) Yeah, I'm going to be late. See you later. (*Buzz exits right via stairs.*)
- 49 Hope Lily, one reason you and I get along is because we are both thinking kinds of people. Even in my faith and in my spirit, thinking is an important of how I am spiritual. Buzz and Eve are different.
- 50 Thomas (*Moves in front of Hope to speak.*) You can say that again. (*Faces congregation. Makes the coo coo circles with his hand by his head.*)
- 51 Hope (*Ignores Thomas. While facing and talking to Lily, Hope pushes Thomas toward left by backing into him.*) Last week Buzz had you come down and help at the soup kitchen. It wasn't just about helping other people. That's when he is most aware of God. He

- 52 Thomas hoped the rest of us would also experience that holiness. *(Thomas moves back around Hope to be between the girls.)* I don't remember feeling any of that holiness.
- 53 Lily Yes you do. You told me the next day you thought you would go help at the soup kitchen again this week. Buzz calls spiritual and holy. You and I just call it, 'feeling good about helping people.' It's a 'feel good' thing.
- 54 Hope To you it is just 'feeling good', because you haven't understood it as relationship with God. With Buzz it isn't about the 'feeling good about it.' He is an action person. It is when he is serving that he is most in tune with God. That is the relationship he would like you to have. *(Pause.)* With Eve, it is about the relationship. She sings the friendship she has with God.
- 55 Eve *(Starts singing before entrance.)* Go tell it on the mountain. *(Enters stage left / wall stairs)* Over the hills and everywhere. Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.
- 56 Hope Hi, Eve. Lily and Thomas were telling me about Mr. Evenrude's class.
- 57 Thomas Like, you can't be sure about this God stuff.
- 58 Hope You're right. One person does not know it. But when you put us together, Buzz, Guy, Eve, myself; we each live in relationship with God in a different way, but it brings us together because we find it all comes together in Jesus.
- 59 Thomas "yada, yada, yada."
- 60 Hope *(Laughing)* That's funny, Thomas.
- 61 Eve No it's not. Thomas is just being rude.
- 62 Hope But it is funny because the word 'yada' is Hebrew. It is an old Bible word. It's funny because Thomas is saying, "I know. I know. I know."
- 63 Lily How can you know? Hope, you can't really know this stuff.
- 64 Hope In the church, when we put our differences together, we are assured that we do know what God wants us to be doing. It is called a process of discernment. It is not just the doing that Buzz does best. It is not just the feeling that Eve has. It is not just the thinking and understanding that I like. We find the Spirit of God moving us together. And when we are on the same path we do know that God is leading us.

#3 Play

Eve**SCENE 1**

| Line # | Character | |
|--------|-----------|--|
| 1 | Eve | <i>(Lights Off. Stair Entrance. No sound effects like going up stairs. Eve sings a selected verse or refrain that clearly expresses faith. While she is singing Hope quietly comes up the stairs on the left. Then Buzz comes up the stairs on the right.)</i> |
| 2 | Eve | <i>(Lights come on.)</i> Welcome back to the "AS THE SPIRIT TURNS." I am Eve. It is my turn to "MC" the drama. Our plays are stories that show how spiritual discernment is different for different people. Buzz and Hope are here to remind us of their spiritual styles. <i>(Turns to Buzz on the right.)</i> Thanks for being here Buzz. |
| 3 | Buzz | No problem, Eve. My gift in spirituality is in doing. |
| 4 | Eve | I was wondering, Buzz, was there a first time that you realized that this was your spirituality? |
| 5 | Buzz | What do you mean a first time? |
| 6 | Eve | You might think this is strange, Buzz, but I can remember when I had a spirit experience. It was like when some of the disciples were on the mountain with Jesus and his face began to shine. My experience was in choir in third grade. We were singing "Let there be Peace on Earth" and suddenly I felt Jesus giving me that wonderful peace. That was like a first time. |
| 7 | Buzz | Eve, that's cool, but no. I can't think of the first time. I'm looking ahead to the next time. Eve? |
| 8 | Eve | Yes, Buzz? |
| 9 | Buzz | That was a cool song. Sometime, would you come to the nursing home with me and sing it to my grandma? |
| 10 | Eve | Sure, but we need to move on now. Would you get the others lined up for the play? |
| 11 | Buzz | You better believe it! <i>(Heads down the stairs.)</i> |
| 12 | Eve | <i>(Turn around to face Hope.)</i> Thanks for waiting, Hope. Do you THINK you could remind the folks about your spiritual style? |
| 13 | Hope | I THINK I can, Eve. Mine is a "thinking spirituality." I want to understand everything and that includes my faith and my relationship with God. |
| 14 | Eve | I asked Buzz if he remembered a first time that he really knew Jesus was with him while he was helping people. Do you remember the first time your spirituality was important? |
| 15 | Hope | I was thinking about that after you asked Buzz the question. I think I |

have experienced the kind of event that you described, this sudden sense of Jesus as friend, feeling Jesus right there with you. But I really don't remember a first time. It is more important to me to understand what Jesus has done for me, and what Jesus teaches about life.

- 16 Eve Thank you Hope. That was very. . . That was very thoughtful. Would you go down and tell the others we are just about ready?
- 17 Hope I THINK I can.
- 18 Eve Did I remember to introduce myself? I am Eve. Mine is a "Feeling" Spirituality. I wish that Hope and Buzz would feel it the way I do. (Pause. BIG SIGH.) But, Hope has taught me to understand that just as our personalities are different; our spirits are different as well. So none of us has it all. As we share our spiritual gifts together we are more complete.
- 19 Eve It is time for our play about feeling spirituality. The first scene is in the school bus on the way to school. (*Lights out.*)
- 20

SCENE 2

- 21 (*The puppets are lined up in pairs facing stage right. Each pair is close. Leave about four feet between pairs. They are sitting in the school bus on the way to school.*)
- 22 *Buzz - Guy*
- 23 *Thomas - Hope*
- 24 *Lily - Eve*
- 25 (*When the light goes on they make small random up and down movements. When stage hand says "up!" All the puppets make a big, 6 inch, jump. When talking in this scene puppet may bounce. Others are like statues.*)
- 26 (*3 Ups from stage hand.*)
- 27 Buzz HEY, Bus driver. Hey Lyle, (UP) You have to go back! (1sec) I think you missed a bump!
- 28 Thomas Hope. Do you have your math assignment?
- 29 Hope Of course.
- 30 Thomas Great! I didn't get it done. Can I copy your answers?
- 31 Hope Of course . . . NOT.
- 32 Thomas (*With big fake emotion.*) Oh, Hope! You hurt my feelings.
- 33 Hope (*Mimics Thomas fake emotion.*) Oh, Thomas! (*Back to normal.*) You don't have any feelings! If you did you would not be manipulating me with that old hurt feelings line.
- 34 Thomas I do have feelings! If I don't get this turned in today I don't get to wrestle tonight. You should come watch me wrestle. (Turns to the back.) Hey Eve! Are you going to the wrestling meet tonight?
- 35 Eve I have to. The Band is playing.

- 36 Thomas Have to? What's not to like about wrestling? This is the purest competition. It is one on one. May the best man win! It is about strength and skill. Hope? How about you? Don't you love wrestling?
- 37 Guy *(Turns around toward Thomas.)* Basketball is better! It is a team sport. You have to help everyone work together.
- 38 Thomas Who asked you? *(Guy turns back)* I asked you Hope.
- 39 Hope Say Thomas, do you remember the first time you wrestled?
- 40 Thomas I remember the first day. It was third grade. Guy's brother was my size even though he was two years older. I had to wrestle with him. He must of pinned me ten times. But I loved it. I knew I would be a wrestler.
- 41 Hope *(Turns around to talk to Eve.)* Did you hear that Eve? Did you hear the experience Thomas just described?
- 42 Eve What do you mean?
- 43 Hope Thomas's story about wrestling and that great feeling he got, and still celebrates in his life; that story sounds like your story in choir in third grade. I think his spirituality is like yours. He has a "feeling spirituality."
- 44 Lily Did you hear that Thomas? Hope figured out that you do have feelings after all. You have a feeling spirituality!
- 45 Thomas *(Turns to Hope.)* Great! Hope, does that mean I'm a Christian?
- 46 Hope No. It means you're human.
- 47 Thomas Well, that's progress. Can I copy your math paper now? *(Lights out! Guy & Lily stay for next scene. Others stair out.)*
- 48

SCENE 3

- 49 *(Guy & Lily are "on mike." Move away from the others. The "others" both puppeteers and speakers are background noise for wrestling meet.)*
- 50 Others *(Talk to each other. Talk about school. Talk about sports. All talk at once to sound like a crowd. Watch for CUT sign from stage crew. When talking starts then turn on lights.)*
- 51 Lily Hi, Guy.
- 52 Guy *(Guy is nervous about Lily being friendly.)* Oh, hi, Lily.
- 53 Lily Thomas talked me into coming to the wrestling meet. Did he talk you into it, too?
- 54 Guy No. My brother did. . . about ten years ago when he was wrestling.
- 55 Lily Oh. Then you know about the sport. Would you mind explaining what's going on? *(Stage Crew signal CUT!)* I think it's starting.
- 56 Guy Yeah, well, Thomas is going to wrestle second.
- 57 Others *(Not too loud into hands like it is from across the gym.)* We've got spirit yes we do. We've got spirit how 'bout you? *(Repeat the cheer, not into hands. Loud but not screaming.)*
- 58 Lily I've never noticed that cheer before?

59 Guy Huh?
 60 Lily That cheer is about spirit. Were you listening on the bus?
 61 Guy Listening to what?
 62 Lily When Hope said she thought Thomas had a spirituality like Eve.
 63 Guy Yeah, I thought it was pretty cool. I had never thought about **Thomas** having a spirituality.
 64 Lily That's what I'm talking about, the cheer, "We've got spirit." I just never thought of the cheer being about, you know, real spiritual stuff.
 65 Guy Well, it is a different use of the spirit. In sports it is about getting fired up and focused for a good physical performance. The spirit is at its best when the focus is on God.
 66 Lily Why does it always have to be about God? Can't you people give it a rest?
 67 Guy No.
 68 Lily Just no?
 69 Guy No, we can't give it a rest. It is who we are. It is not enough for us to just be spiritual, to have spirit. It would be like having a glass without water. God is the water that fills our glass.
 70 Lily No offense, Guy, but I still think this God stuff is for babies.
 71 Guy It's your choice. Here comes Thomas. *(Pumps arm with cheer.)* GO THOMAS! *(Lights out.)*

72

SCENE 4

73 *(Lights up. No one there. Thomas enters left stairs. Stage sound effects. Thomas walks slowly across stage. When 1/3 of the way across Eve comes up the stairs. Lines start on the stairs.)*
 74 Eve Thomas! Thomas! Thomas! Thomas! *(Thomas turns.)* You were really good!
 75 Thomas Thanks. I've wrestled that guy every year for eight years and I never beat him before. This was one of my goals.
 76 Eve That's really great. *(Pats him on the shoulder, then hand down. Long, long pause. They have more to say but don't know how to talk to each other.)*
 77 Thomas *(Clears his throat. That's a signal for them to speak. They say each others names at the same time.)* Eve.
 78 Eve Thomas. *(Pause)* Go ahead. What were you going to say?
 79 Thomas You won't laugh at me?
 80 Eve No, you know I'm not like that. I only laugh when you're funny.
 81 Thomas I'm thinking that one reason I won today is because I connected to my spirit. I was thinking all day about how I am spiritual. *(Pause.)* I put my spirit into the match.

- 82 Eve That's only a taste of what spirituality can be Thomas. There are lots of spiritualities around. There is the old hippie spirituality. There is the New Age spirituality. You have discovered your spirituality.
(Pause.)
- 83 Thomas Right on! It is good to be spiritual.
- 84 Eve But you are only touching the surface of this spirituality. I believe the real thing is when our spirit is touched with God's Spirit. It is the difference between night and day.
- 85 Thomas Eve, I think I understand your religion better than I ever had before.
(Pause) But that doesn't mean I accept it.
- 86 Eve That's cool, Thomas. *(Pause)* Well, I have to go. My ride's waiting.
(Eve pats him on the shoulder again.) I really enjoyed watching your match. See you tomorrow. *(Lights out. Puppets out via stairs.)*

Series

AS THE SPIRIT TURNS

#4 Play

The Mystic**SCENE 1**

Line

| # | Character | |
|----|-----------|---|
| 1 | Guy | <i>(Lights Off. Stair Entrance. Sound effects like going up stairs. Guy stands quietly while lights come up so slowly. Finally Buzz comes up the stairs on the left.)</i> |
| 2 | Buzz | Hey, Guy. |
| 3 | Guy | <i>(Finger in front of mouth.)</i> sh-sh-sh-sh |
| 4 | Buzz | <i>(Long wait. - - -Buzz moves up close to Guy, then whispers.)</i> Hey Guy. You're supposed to be doing the introduction. |
| 5 | Guy | <i>(Back to normal voices.)</i> Buzz, do you know about the Quakers? |
| 6 | Buzz | What do the Quakers have to do with this play? |
| 7 | Guy | When the Quakers gather for worship they enter the church quietly and there is one primary rule. |
| 8 | Buzz | <i>(Pause.)</i> And that rule is? |
| 9 | Guy | Don't talk, unless what you have to say will improve on the silence. |
| 10 | Buzz | Guy. We have one primary rule in scene one of our dramas. |
| 11 | Guy | <i>(Pause.)</i> And that rule is? |
| 12 | Buzz | When you are the M C you have to get the show on the road. <i>(Buzz exits.)</i> |
| 13 | Guy | Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to "As the Spirit Turns. Pardon me for interrupting the silence. My name is Guy and I am the M C this evening. Buzz has already been on stage. Did you know that Buzz and I are brothers? <i>(Pause.)</i> Yes, we are both Baptized into Jesus Christ. That makes us brothers. <i>(Pause.)</i> True: we have our spiritual differences. Buzz is at his spiritual best when he is serving someone else. We have called that a "Doing" spirituality. I am at my best in some kind of quiet place meditating. Mine is a "mystic" spirituality, more about that later. |
| 14 | Guy | <i>(Turns to the back and calls for Eve and Hope.)</i> Eve. . . . Hope. Would you come on stage and be introduced. Please. <i>(Eve enters stage left. Hope enters stage right. Stay toward the outside.)</i> |
| 15 | Eve | <i>(Waves)</i> Hello again I'm Eve. |
| 16 | Guy | Eve has the feeling sort of Spirituality. |
| 17 | Hope | <i>(Waves)</i> Hi! I'm Hope |

18 Guy Hope has the "Thinking" style of spirituality. Thanks for coming up. *(Hope and Eve exit on the stairs.)*

19 Eve You're Welcome, Guy.

20 Guy We are ready for tonight's edition of the serial drama, "As the Spirit Turns." Lights please.

21 **SCENE 2**

22 *(Guy is on stage left looking out. Does not move at all. Buzz comes up stairs along the right wall, "runs" across stage from right to left down stairs on the other side. Repeats the whole process. Enters one more time and stops 2 feet from Guy.)*

23 Buzz *(Pants a view breaths - He's been running.)* Hey Guy, want to run around the lake with me?

24 *(No reaction from Guy. Buzz, without touching Guy tries to look in his face, Then looks exactly in the direction Guy is looking. Then looks back at Guy.)*

25 Buzz Hey, Guy. Are you okay?

26 Buzz *(FINALLY, Buzz taps Guy on the shoulder.)* Hey, Guy!

27 Guy OH! Hi Buzz. I'm sorry, I was just thinking.

28 Buzz No you weren't. You were - like - gone. You were a million miles away. What in the world were you thinking?

29 Guy Well, You know Buzz; it's hard to put into words really.

30 Buzz No it's not. You just say, "I was thinking about how we messed up in Mr. Evenrud's class and now we have to write five pages about the constitutional right to free speech."

31 Guy I wasn't thinking in words Buzz. It is kind of hard to explain.

32 Buzz You were daydreaming about a date with. . . I don't know who are you daydreaming about these days.

33 Guy *(Slowly.)* I wasn't thinking about a person or in pictures or images. It is kind of hard to explain.

34 Buzz Okay. I think I have it this time. It is your spiritual thing.

35 Guy Yeah, I guess.

36 Buzz So what is it like?

37 Guy Have you ever been in what they call a zone, when everything just works? Like in a basketball game and every pass works every shot goes in.

38 Buzz I know the concept. Can't say I've ever been there in basketball.

39 Guy Now instead of basketball it is the whole universe.

40 Buzz That sounds crazy.

41 Guy I told you, I can't describe it, but I know it is about being spiritually in tune with God. *(Pause.)* The Spirit is at its best when the focus is on God. *(Pause)* Did you want something?

42 Buzz Yeah, Do you want to run around the lake with me?

43 Guy Sure. Let's go for it! *(Lights)*

44 **SCENE 3**

45 *(Hope and Eve are at stage right. Lights come on. Buzz comes in from left. Says line from across the stage and then approaches Hope and Eve.)*

46 Buzz Hey, Hope.

47 Hope Hey, yourself, Buzz.

48 Buzz Hi Eve.

49 Eve Hi Buzz.

50 Buzz Can I ask you two a religious question?

51 Hope Sure.

52 Buzz Have you ever been there when Guy like really zones out?

53 Hope Did he give you a scare, Buzz?

54 Buzz Yeah, at first he didn't even hear me.

55 Eve Did you ask him about it? He really has trouble putting it into words.

56 Buzz You're telling me! He tried to compare the game of basketball to the whole universe.

57 Eve That's a new one! It is worth asking him, every time, because he really is experiencing closeness with God in a spiritual way. He tries to explain it to me when I ask him, but it is so different from the way I feel things. *(Pause.)* Hope, have you ever talked with Guy about those experiences of his.

58 Hope Big time. I haven't seen him in one of those zones, but he told me about them. Guy thought maybe it wasn't Christian. He wanted me to go with him and talk about it with the pastor.

59 Buzz So what did the pastor say?

60 Hope She said Guy had the most natural mystic meditation she had even been around. There is a long history of mystics in the Christian church. She gave Guy some books to read. *(Pause.)* But passed them all over to me, because reading that is more my thing.

61 Buzz So he's really okay?

62 Hope He's better than okay. He's like a mystic genius. Many religions have mystic influence.

63 Eve He is like our mystic influence.

64 Buzz He said something about focus.

 Hope He often says, *(boldly)* "The spirit is at its best when the focus is on God."

| | | |
|------|-----------|--|
| | Series | AS THE SPIRIT TURNS |
| #5 | Play | <u>Like an Elephant</u> |
| Line | | <u>SCENE 1</u> |
| # | Character | |
| 1 | Thomas | (Thomas and Lily enter. Lights come up.) |
| 2 | Lily | Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen. I am Lily. |
| 3 | Thomas | And I am Thomas! We are the Co-MC's for this evening. |
| | Lily | If you have been with us for these little dramas you may have noticed that each of the other characters has a certain kind of spirituality. |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | Thomas | We have spirituality, too. |
| 6 | Lily | Of course we do. What brought that on? |
| | Thomas | You said each of the others has a kind of spirituality. In the process of doing the dramas we learned about our own spiritual nature. |
| 7 | | |
| | Lily | I remember when you were on the bus. And you pretended that your feelings were hurt. |
| 8 | | |
| | Thomas | Then Hope figured out that my experience in wrestling was a spiritual experience, like Eve's experience of music. |
| 9 | | |
| | Lily | Yes we were all convinced that you have a feeling kind of Spirituality. |
| 10 | | |
| | Thomas | And you have a spirituality like Hope. You both like to think things through. You are so intellectual. |
| 11 | | |
| | Lily | It's true. Even though we are not religious like the others, we are still spiritual. So what now? Where do we go from here? |
| 12 | | |
| | Thomas | We're supposed to be introducing the drama for today. |
| 13 | Lily | Right! . . . Ladies and gentleman, tonight's performance begins with a poetry reading. (Lights go out while Lily and Thomas go to far left.) |
| 14 | | |
| 15 | | SCENE 2 |
| 16 | Thomas | The Blind Men and the Elephant |
| | Lily | By American poet John Godfrey Saxe, born 1816 and died 1887. |
| 17 | | |
| | Thomas | The poem is based on a fable that was told in India many, many years ago. |
| 18 | | |
| | Thomas | It was six men of Indostan |
| 19 | | |
| | Lily | To learning much inclined, |
| 20 | | |
| | Thomas | Who went to see the Elephant |
| 21 | | |
| | Lily | (Though all of them were blind), |
| 22 | | |
| | Thomas | That each by observation |
| 23 | | |
| | Lily | Might satisfy his mind. |
| 24 | | |

Thomas (DO WE HAVE DARK GLASSES FOR THE BLIND
 PUPPETS? Buzz enters stage right. Walks into the wall
 Then speaks to audience patting the wall with his hand.)
 The First approached the Elephant, And happening to fall -
 25 Against his broad and sturdy side, - At once began to bawl:
 Buzz "God bless me! But the Elephant Is very like (pause) a wall!"
 26 (Buzz exits down stairs.)
 Lily (Hope enters CENTER stage. Moves her hand and arm a
 27 along a spear.) The Second, feeling of the tusk, Cried,
 Hope "Ho! What have we here - So very round and smooth and
 sharp? - To me 'tis mighty clear - This wonder of an
 Elephant - Is very like (pause) a spear!" (Hope exits down
 28 stairs.)
 Thomas (Guy enters CENTER stage. Do a snake dance with free
 arm.) The Third approached the animal, And happening to
 take - The squirming trunk within his hands, - Thus boldly up
 and spake:
 29
 30 Guy I see,
 31 Thomas quoth he,
 Guy "the Elephant Is very like (pause) a snake!" (Guy exits down
 32 stairs.)
 Lily (Eve enters CENTER stage.) The Fourth reached out an
 33 eager hand, And felt about the knee.
 34 Eve What most this wondrous beast is like Is mighty plain,"
 35 Lily quoth he,
 Eve "'Tis clear enough the Elephant - Is very like (pause) a tree!"
 36 (Thomas exits down stairs.)
 Thomas (Buzz enters CENTER stage. Makes a fanning motion at the
 37 end.) The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear, Said:
 Buzz "E'en the blindest man - Can tell what this resembles most;
 Deny the fact (?)- who can(?) - This marvel of an Elephant -
 38 Is very like (pause) a fan! (Buzz exits down stairs.)
 Lily (Guy enters CENTER stage. Swings on rope tail!) The Sixth
 no sooner had begun About the beast to grope, - Than,
 39 seizing on the swinging tail That fell within his scope,
 40 Guy "I see,"
 41 Lily quoth he,
 42 Guy "the Elephant Is very like (pause) a rope!"
 43 Thomas And so these men of Indostan Disputed loud and long,
 44 Lily Each in his own opinion Exceeding stiff and strong,
 45 Thomas Though each was partly in the right,
 46 Lily And all were in the wrong!
 Thomas
 47 & Lily (Together) THE MORAL:
 48 Thomas So oft in theologic wars, The disputants, - I ween,
 49 Lily Rail on in utter ignorance

50 Thomas Of what each other mean,
 51 Lily And prate about an Elephant
 Thomas Not one of them has seen! (Pause. Then the lights fade.
 52 Thomas and Lily Exit.)

SCENE 3

(Hope and Buzz enter stage right. Then lights come up.)
 55 Hope Hey Buzz, Were you offended by that poem in English class?
 Buzz No, I'm not offended by elephants. I kind of like elephant
 56 jokes. Did you hear the one about . . .
 57 Hope (Break in when he starts last sentence.) I'm serious Buzz!
 58 Buzz I'm sorry Hope. What offended you about the poem?
 Hope These weeks we have been talking with Thomas and Lily
 about how we are different and they chose that poem. (Guy
 59 comes in stage left and waits.)
 60 Buzz I'm still sorry Hope. I don't see what you're getting at.
 Hope There's Guy. (Points to Guy.) Let's ask him. (Heads over to
 Guy. Buzz comes along.) Hey Guy! Were you offended by
 61 that poem in English class?
 Guy Offended because Lily and Thomas picked up on all our talk
 62 about how we are each different spiritually?
 Buzz Oh! I get it! The six blind men end up with very different
 ideas of the elephant. (Pause. Put hand out like pushing
 them away.) . . . No! Wait! Don't say anything! It's coming
 to me! (Pause) The poem ended, (Pause) by saying none
 of the theologians was right. They were all blind! Is that it,
 63 Hope? Did I get it?
 Hope Yes, Buzz. Now let Guy answer my question. Were you
 64 offended by that?
 Guy No. I wasn't offended, because I know we don't believe in
 four different God's. We depend on each other. My
 meditation leads me back to doing some of the thinking
 65 about God that you do.
 Buzz And, Guy, there is a part of me that understands why you
 meditate. It's not like I'm jealous and want to be a monk or
 anything, but I can relate to the meditation.
 66 Hope Right! You help me think it through. I was going with the
 conclusion that they used the poem to make fun of our faith.
 Really, it only makes fun of those who think they have all the
 right answers. So, do you think they meant it to say they
 67 understand that we are all different?
 Guy How could I think that? What I know is that Eve was going to
 68 ask Thomas about it. (Lights.)
 69 SCENE 4

(Lights up. No one there. Thomas enters left stairs. Stage sound effects. Thomas walks slowly across stage. When 1/3 of the way across Eve comes up the stairs. Lines start on the stairs.)

70
71 Eve Thomas! Thomas! Thomas! Thomas! (Thomas turns.)
72 Thomas What's up, Eve?
73 Eve I was wondering about that poem.
74 Thomas Did you like it? Cool Poem; shows how we are all different.
75 Eve But it ends with everyone being wrong.
76 Thomas Yeah, Lily got hung up on that too. She didn't want to offend Hope. I told her not to worry.
77 Eve Why not to worry about a poem that ends with everybody being wrong?
78 Thomas You're sounding like Hope and Lily; thinking and analyzing it too much. Eve, put your feeling into it. (Pause)
79 Eve I don't understand what you're trying to say.
80 Thomas Let me try to say it a different way. Your spiritual styles are like doors you each go through to be with God. You go through the doors and you are with the same God together. The six blind men never go through the door. They just get to the door and say this is what it is like.
81 Eve I think you have the feeling right Thomas. In fact, I think you defined what the church is all about. In the church all the different spiritual styles and all our different lives connect into one big life. That is Jesus.
82 Thomas You know, Eve. It's kind of scary.
83 Eve What?
84 Thomas For the first time in my life, that church stuff you talk about is starting to make sense.
85 Eve Just wait until you enter the door. Just you wait!

Bibliography

Ackerman, John, *Listening to God: Spiritual Formation in the Congregation*. Bethesda: Alban Institute, 2001. 166 pp. ISBN 1-56699-245-1