



Listen *to the* Stories

Four Bible Stories Retold with Exercises for Group Discussions

Lee Bee Teik

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LISTEN TO THE STORIES : FOUR BIBLE STORIES RETOLD
WITH EXERCISES FOR GROUP DISCUSSIONS

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The Lord said to Ezekiel,
"Son of man, set forth an allegory and tell
the house of Israel a parable."

Ezekiel 17:2

Then Ezekiel said,
"Ah, Sovereign Lord! They are saying of
me, 'Isn't he just telling parables?'"

Ezekiel 20:49

Preface

Many stories have been told of the Jesus of Nazareth. Adults and children all over the world adore and worship Him.

This book is another attempt to portray the multifaceted wonder of this Person, the Son of God and the Son of Man, as He lives among us in history and mingles with the crowd of which we are an integral part.

Furthermore, as Malaysians are now flourishing in the creative arts, I hope that these few readings and short plays may act as one more catalyst to motivate some local churches or small Christian groups to write and act out their own sermons or lessons against a Malaysian background. I believe that some aspect of the reasonableness, beauty and reality of the true God will be revealed through acting or the creative expression of words. This is because our Creator did and does still speak to His

people through parables, metaphors, stories and even symbolic dreams, which the people of Bible times understood easily. Human nature has not changed that much since then. I also believe that those who seek to serve Him through this path will be surprised by His joy!

At this point, I would like to thank Khoo Chock Seang and the team of performers at the Sungei Way Subang Methodist Church for their encouragement and hard work in presenting the play called "Resurrection in the Valley of Dry Bones" in 1994. That incident acted as the stimulant for me to write more stories for the Master.

May you also be blessed by His presence as you read...watch...hear...feel...think and, maybe, perform for Him!

Tell Me the Stories of Jesus

*Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear;
Things I would ask Him to tell me if He were here;
Scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea,
Stories of Jesus, tell them to me.*

*First let me hear how the children stood round
His knee,
And I shall fancy His blessing resting on me;
Words full of kindness, deeds full of grace,
All in the lovelight of Jesus' face.*

*Into the city I'd follow the children's band,
Waving a branch of the palm tree high in my hand;
One of His heralds, Yes, I would sing
Loudest hosannas, "Jesus is King!"*

William H Parker

1885

I

Father, *WHY* have You left Me in the Lurch?

IDENTIFYING IN PAIN

[A Play]

This story may be used as part of an outreach programme for thinking young people and adults in our fast-paced, impersonal and materialistic society.

Cast : Narrator
Singer
Jesus ...as an infant
...as a 12 year old boy
...as an adult in his 30's
Mary ...as a teenage girl
...as a woman in her 40's
Joseph...silent actor
2 religious teachers...silent actors
Bride...silent actor
Bridegroom...silent actor
2 ladies...silent actors
3 disciples...silent actors
Servant
A Guest
3 postgraduate students ...Grace
...Maniam
...Ah Kheong

Scenes I and II are on stage.

Scenes A to E belong to a pretaped play flashed on a white screen facing the audience.

Scene I

The University of Malaya Cafeteria

Maniam appears gloomy when Ah Kheong joins him for a drink at a table.

Ah Kheong : Hi, Maniam, how are you? Haven't seen you for a few days...

Maniam : Well...not too good...

Ah Kheong : What's the problem? Girls after you again?

Maniam : Oh no, that's the last thing I need for a long, long time!

Ah Kheong : What's up, then? Maybe I can help you...

Maniam : I never told you this...there's this girl
I was hoping to marry...but she just
told me that she's found someone
more suitable for her!

Ah Kheong : I'm sorry to hear that. Time will
heal...it's better that she says it
now than later, isn't it?

Maniam : I know, Kheong...it's just that Mum
keeps pestering me to get married
so that she can die in peace! And
each time my relationship with a
girl ends, she blames it on me...
that depresses me even more...I
don't know what to do!! I suppose
she's all that I have since Dad
walked out on us when I was a little
boy. Life simply isn't worth living!
What good will a Master's degree
do me? All Mum can think of is
that it will bring me a higher
dowry! I'm not for sale!

Ah Kheong : Don't feel like that, Maniam...you are my good friend. Why don't you follow me to Grace's for a video show tonight?

Maniam : No, no, Kheong...I know you're trying to be helpful...but I will only pull your mood down in my present mess.

Ah Kheong : No problem at all, mate...in fact, you'll be doing me a favour...Can you pick me up?.

Maniam : O.K. Ah Kheong...I don't feel like facing Mum's music at home tonight, anyway!

Scene II

At Grace's Home

The show is about to start. Maniam, Grace and Ah Kheong are facing the audience diagonally. The screen on stage faces the audience and depicts a family room scene.

(Stage lighting : Dim)

SCREEN : SCENE A

Background : A table for changing diapers, a chair and a simple wooden cradle.

Narrator : This is a story of the historical Jesus, commonly known as Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph and Mary. He is the Son of God who became a man like one of us so that He may save us from our sins and eternal death...which is complete separation from the holy and all-loving God, the Creator and Father of all mankind.

The story is based on historical events recorded in the first four books of the New Testament, commonly known as the gospels or good news according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. But who is this Person Jesus, really? If He really exists and is relevant to us today,

WHY did His Father God forsake
Him near His moment of death?
Well, maybe the Singer can shine
some light on Him for us...

Male Singer : [He is in common modern clothing
and appears from the right side
of the screen strumming a guitar.
Facing the audience and with the
spotlight on him, he begins to sing
near the centre of the screen.]

TWO THOUSAND YEARS

1. *It was just two thousand years ago
He walked through Galilee,
The eternal God had stepped below
In human form to be;*

[While Singer continues, Joseph and Mary,
in Jewish attire, emerge from the left side of
screen, with Joseph carrying infant Jesus. He
occasionally tosses Him up for all to see. Jesus
gurgles and cackles - use sound effect. Then Mary
takes over and changes baby's diaper.]

*Born of a lowly Hebrew maid,
A carpenter He was by trade;
He came down,
Two thousand years ago:*

Chorus: *They tell of Jesus' glory,
Who met Him in the way;
And it is no idle story,
For He lives in me today:
He gives me peace and purpose true,
A power that's old but ever new;
God came down,
Two thousand years ago.*

2. *It was just two thousand years ago
He died on Calvary;*

[Flash a slide of the cross on Calvary
superimposed on the screen.]

*It was for sin He suffered so,
Though innocent was He.
My sin and guilt lay on His head;
My penalty He bore instead;
He suffered, two thousand years ago.*

3. *It was just two thousand years ago
An empty tomb was found;*

[Flash a slide of an empty tomb
superimposed on the screen.]

*The stone was rolled away we know,
The powers of hell are bound;
My risen Lord is now on high,*

[Flash a slide of Jesus...personified
and blurred...high and lifted up on
clouds.]

*He lives that we may never die,
He triumphed!
Two thousand years ago:*

© Richard Bewes / Jubilate Hymns
Youth Praise No 32

[Flash a slide of Jesus...personified
and blurred...glorified on the throne
in heaven!]

[Lights Off on screen. Spot lights on actors on stage.]

Grace : It's rather boring, Ah Kheong!
[Yawns...]

Ah Kheong : Wait, Grace, another scene is coming...

[Lights off actors on stage; lights on screen.]

SCREEN : SCENE B
IN A SYNAGOGUE LIBRARY

Background : A shelf with thick books and a table with books opened and strewn on it. A twelve year old boy sits with open book on his lap and is asking two middle-aged bespectacled men questions. The boy is deep in thought but is obviously thoroughly enjoying Himself.

Narrator : Adolescence! What a bewildering time for a young boy like Jesus, the eldest son of Joseph and Mary... what with hormonal changes, the start of acne problems and an uneasy feeling whenever His friend's

sister pops into His house. He wishes to become more independent of His parents, and yet knows He is still very much dependent on them for love and daily neccessities...

But He may be comforted to know that boys and girls at this stage of growth are very much like newly formed butterflies trying to free themselves from the webs that seem to entangle them in their old cocoons of late childhood...

I wonder how Jesus still finds time and concentration to read the Old Testament; what with younger brothers running all around Him shooting at each other like our Sunday school boys and girls, calling out to Him to join in or to act as peacemaker! Yet, nothing can stop Him from learning about the true God who is so real to Him...in fact, He thrives on knowing Him as His Father, to the exasperation of Joseph and Mary, at times!!

[The library door opens...in rush Mary with Joseph panting behind...when they see the group in serious discussion, they stop near the door, embarrassed and yet relieved...and quietly signal to Jesus to go to the door...]

Mary : My son, my son, how long have you been here?? Our religious celebrations in the temple ended hours ago! Why are you still talking to the Sabbath day teachers? Your father and I have been searching for you like mad...in and out of the traffic jams...up and down from Auntie Ai Lee's house, trying to trace Uncle Vincent's pajero and Uncle Kheng's car for you! Don't you do that to us again! Understand?

Jesus : O Mu-um! Why are you so worked up? Didn't you know that I must be in My Father's house?
[Aside, in a whisper to Mary...]
Some of those teachers do not really know who God is! Come on, let's go home...I'm hungry! I promise not to do this again, Mu-um!

[Lights off on screen; spotlight on actors on stage.]

Grace : Ha, Ha, Ha! Jesus certainly sounds like my kid brother Jason!

Ah Kheong : Patience, Grace...I'm sure you ladies will like the next scene. It's about a wedding...

Maniam : Oh No! I'm getting out of here!!
[Posturing to leave his seat]

Ah Kheong pulls him back while someone shouts in the background:

SHHHH...we want to listen!

SCREEN : SCENE C
A WEDDING AT CANA

Background : Dark

Narrator : About eighteen years have flown by. Jesus is now thirty years old. He has just been baptised by His cousin

John, who was born to Uncle Zechariah and Aunt Elizabeth just a few months before His own birth to Mary and Joseph.

Mary's family has swum through the strong currents of life in Nazareth... but God held them together. You see, Joseph died several years ago leaving Mary to care for her small sons and daughters. Thankfully, Jesus was already in His early teens then...He bore the tensions of having to stay home to be the breadwinner for His earthly family while awaiting to fulfil the personal vocation that He believed was from God His heavenly Father. Jesus' filial piety resembled that of a South-East Asian. Such a heavy responsibility, placed on the shoulders of the eldest son of a Middle-Eastern family, only served to discipline and mould Him into the mature young man that He now is.

Repeatedly, matchmakers appeal to Mary to make a match for Him... but...Mary, remembering what the angel had told her concerning God's purpose for Jesus, wisely refrained from pressuring Him either way. Only the Holy and Almighty God could decide on the course of Jesus' life. So, for now, Mary is really glad that Jesus is with her at a wedding in Cana...even though He has His newly-found disciples tagging along...

[Lights switched on screen immediately to a happy wedding celebration scene...colourful, gay, with music from stringed instruments filling the air.)

The newly-weds sit on the right of the screen with a group of young men, including Jesus and Singer, chatting and eating. Occasionally, they laugh at the top of their voices! A large table with scrumptious food and costly crockery separate the newly married couple and the young men. A servant serves the guests.

A curtain separates them from those on the left who are in a smaller room with large water pots on the floor. Colourfully dressed women, including Mary, admire one another while adjusting their hairdos...]

Suddenly, panic hits the small room when a servant rushes in to report:

Servant : Ladies, ladies, what should I do? My master musn't know...we have run out of wine for the guests...only water left...I miscalculated the amount we would need...also, we did not expect Jesus to bring His thirsty disciples!

Mary : Hush, my brother...I know what to do...

[Mary stands at the slightly drawn curtain to try to get Jesus' attention and then beckons to Him to enter the small room...]

Jesus : [Sees His mother and says to His friends...]

Excuse me a moment...

[He walks into the small room].

What is it, Mum?

Mary : Jesus, you need to help the host...we
have run out of wine...

Jesus : Not here, Mum...I have performed
miracles only at home! It is not time
for Me to go public yet!!

Narrator : [While Mary turns and wrings her
hands...]

But Mary, having seen Jesus grow
up for thirty years, knows that it is
now time for Him to do His Father's
work in public...what is there to wait
for? He has been baptised!

Mary : [To servant...]
Do whatever He tells you...
[and exits through the left].

Jesus : [Waits for Mary to leave, and mumbles to Himself.] She is right... [Turns and approaches the servants...]

Fill these jugs with water! Then ladle out the drinks and serve them to the guests...hurry...or they may suspect something's wrong.

[The servant fills the jugs as fast as possible...to the delight of the guests! One of them, half-drunk, shouts...]

A Guest : Yummmmm...this is sweet...how come you keep the best wine till the end???

[Turning to the Bridegroom who stares in surprise...] I'm glad to be here tonight...and late too!! Come, let's have a song to go with the wine!!!

Singer : [Jumps into the centre of the stage and serenades:]

A Wedding Prayer

*In this place, Lord,
Our praises we bring
With hearts of thankfulness
And joy adoration
We thank You
For the hearts You have joined
We thank You
For the lives You have united as one
As they start their lives together
As they put their hands in Your
hand...*

Chorus:

*We pray for blessings from above
To fill their lives
We pray for love of the Father
To flow through their hearts
We pray for joy of the Spirit
Peace of the Son
And in your presence
Each day they'll find
New strength to see them through.*

*In this place, Lord,
Our worship we bring
To You, our Lord and King,
And Rock of our Salvation,
To You, and only You, will we sing
For You alone are worthy
Of all praises and song
You're the one who made this union
You're the source of love eternal...*

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[Lights off screen; spotlight on actors on stage.]

Maniam : Well...in a way, Ah Kheong, Mum
will be able to identify with your God
better.

Ah Kheong : How?

Maniam : She's always dreaming of a grand
wedding banquet for me!

Background : SHHHHHH...Shame on you big
fellows!

SCREEN : SCENE D
THE GARDEN OF
GETHSEMANE

Stage : Dark

Silence : For 30 seconds

Narrator : [Slowly and deliberately.]

After three short years of a public ministry of preaching, teaching and healing, Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Man, fast approaches the very purpose for which He is sent by His Father in heaven to fulfil... Having lived as a son of Joseph and Mary, as a brother to their sons, a neighbour to many others, and a serious threat to the religious leaders, He has felt the burden of our broken sin-sick world more than any other person has or ever will.

However, His last and final task is not accomplished yet...it all depends on His action in the next few

hours...will He be able to go on to love His Father and His people till the end...or will He retreat because of fear or disgust as He experiences intense suffering that threatens to overcome Him as wave after wave of the darkness of sinful human hatred, individualism, selfishness, ambition, and ungodly pride engulf Him. These pains come not only from His enemies, but also from His beloved disciples who fall asleep when He needs their support and prayers most...

[A dim light dawns on the figures of three sleeping disciples on the far left...]

[Lights on Jesus kneeling by a rock, silhouetted in the centre near the front.]

Jesus : [Speaks with intense emotion from a heavy heart...]

My Papa, I know that You love Me...
and will always do. When we agreed

on this plan for Me to die for these people that You and I both love so much...to die for them so that they might be forgiven of their sins and be reconciled with You...I did not know that it would be so painful... but now I know...

It is so hard to love those who mistreat Me, My Papa...they accuse Me without cause...even my brothers, sons of Joseph and Mary, think that I perform miracles to show off and challenge Me to go to Jerusalem at such a time as this...when they know that the religious leaders who hate Your laws are looking out for Me so that they can kill Me!

Papa, do I have to bear all their sins in My body, in my soul and in My spirit? Is it not enough that I have borne the brunt of the sins of humanity already while I live as a Man?

Papa, do I have to be hung like a common criminal on a rugged Roman cross while they ridicule, slap, spit on me and taunt Me...when all I have done for them is to love them, even when they wrong Me? O Papa, Papa, WHY do they have to tell lies about Me, distrust Me, try to trap Me with My own words... and...worst of all...twist Your word to Your people, enticing many to believe in them instead of in You!

[Pause]

Yet, My Papa, You know that the worst is yet to come...I cannot bear to be separated from You...I have never been left alone by You before...Yet, You cannot behold the evil of the sin of the world laid on Me...In a way, I am glad that my earthly father is not here to see Me like this...but MARY...what about Mary who loves Me so much...how will she feel...Pa, please send

someone to take care of her after I die...

[Jesus weeps in agony...PAUSE]

Papa, if it is possible for Your mission to save the world to be fulfilled without My dying on the cross...please take the cross away from Me...NEVERTHELESS...Papa, Not My will BUT YOURS BE Done!!!

[At once, sound effect: thunder of doom and judgement...]

[Pause]

[cont.] Father, Father, WHY have YOU FORSAKEN ME?! WHY have You left Me in the lurch?

[Lights off screen; spotlight on actors on stage.]

Maniam suddenly becomes still, appears dazed... and then begins to sob uncontrollably...

Ah Kheong : Why, Maniam, why are you crying?

Grace : Don't be such a baby...it's just a show!

Maniam : [Slowly and meditatively]
When Jesus cried, "Father, Father...", I suddenly recalled the scene when my father walked out on Mum and me...I'd better not say anything more...

Ah Kheong : I understand...Come on, let's go for some fresh air...

The three friends get up to leave the hall and stop momentarily to chat.

Maniam : Kheong, I really appreciate your kindness in wanting me to know your God...I think I need to find out why that cry on stage struck such a sensitive cord in me. I need to find out for myself why I suddenly feel as if this Jesus understands my pain...But I want to assure you that I

realise that the story of Jesus hasn't ended...His father could have left Him for a very different reason.

Ah Kheong : Yes, Maniam, for a very different reason indeed. When you're ready, just let me know and I'll be glad to share this good news with you.

Maniam : [Grabbing his friend's shoulders and leaving together..]
Thanks, Kheong, I'll let you know...

Grace : I think I'd like to know too...count me in!

Both guys : Bye, Grace...thanks for the evening...

Grace : Bye, see you in college!

[Lights off stage]

THE END

EXERCISE

1. Who do you identify with most in the play? Ah Kheong the sincere believer and a friend in need, Maniam the seeker or Grace the religiously insensitive?
2. Read Matthew 26:36-46
 - a. Do any of the scenes or speeches strike a cord in you? If so, why?
 - b. Picture the geographical positions of these three groups of people in your mind or draw a representation of them on paper:
 - a. the eight disciples
 - b. Peter, James and John
 - c. Jesus in His Father's presence
 - c. Imagine the words that Jesus spoke to the first two groups and those He spoke to His Father. Follow through to find out what the disciples did after receiving those instructions.
 - d. Feel with Jesus in His response to the disciples' attitude.

- e. Feel with Him through His three prayers to the Father. Identify any change in His first two prayers that led Him to repeat the second prayer. Ask yourself why the change happened.
3. Who do you identify most with: the eight disciples, the other three or with Jesus? Why?
4. In what way(s) can you identify with the Son of Man, Jesus, in His emotions, thoughts and prayers, while in the Garden of Gethsemane, remembering that it was as a human being like us that He faced the cross?
5. Could Jesus' prayer be your prayer in your present situation?

II

The Woman at the Well

CROSSING BARRIERS WITH GOD

[Readings]

Suggestion : This dialogue may be used as part of a teaching seminar in order to help participants identify with the characters in the Bible.

Readers : Narrator
 Jesus in Jewish attire
 The Samaritan woman in Jewish attire
 Commentator
 Five men from the town of Sychar

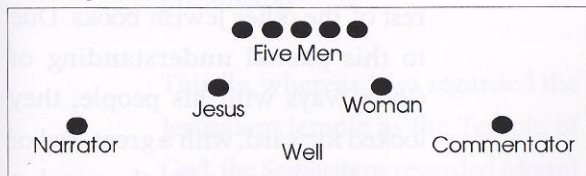
Female

Soloists : [Soprano singers]

Curtains Up

Venue : By Jacob's Well

* Readers' positions:



Front of Stage

* Readers read with verbal and bodily expressions whenever necessary.

THE STORY BEGINS

[Narrator and Commentator take their places on stage]

Narrator : Let us consider the background of the Samaritan woman whom Jesus met, as recorded in John 4:1-42.

The Samaritans were a mixed race descended partly from the 10 tribes of Israel, partly from non-Jewish immigrants, the Assyrians. They inhabited the central Palestine of Bible times, between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north.

Their faith and daily living was based on the first 5 books of the Old Testament alone. They rejected the rest of the other Jewish books. Due to this partial understanding of God's ways with his people, they looked forward, with a great deal of speculation, as to who the prophet mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:18 could be.

Conflict points, therefore, arose in the Samaritan woman's mind when she talked with Jesus, a Jew through Joseph's line:

Firstly, the Rabbis or Jewish teachers would not hold a conversation with women...considered second class citizens.

Secondly, Jews, especially men, were scrupulous about contracting defilement or impurity from others, especially if the "others" were not of pure Jewish blood. Impure objects used for food or drink needed to be purified before they could use them. But Jesus asked the woman at the well for a drink from her vessel, presumably.

Thirdly, whereas Jews regarded the Jerusalem temple as the Temple of God, the Samaritans regarded Mount Gerizim, in Samaria, as the place of worship. Gerizim was part of a

scene of great solemnity when Israel finally entered Canaan. On Mount Gerizim the 12 tribes were blessed (Deut. 11:29, 27:12).

Jesus, however, showed her and His disciples that everyone needed His sacrifice for salvation by expressly including the Samaritans, with the Gentiles (including us) and Jews, in His commission to preach the Gospel (Acts 1:8).

The Samaritan woman's beliefs, influenced by her religious, cultural and racial backgrounds, were:

...God was particular about where His people should worship Him. He was sort of a perfectionist, fussy about outward details.

...she was of less value to God than the Jewish men, both because she was not of pure Jewish blood, and also because she was a woman.

...she should be ashamed of being herself, even among her kinsfolk, because of her having been divorced 5 times already, and was now living with another man.

...morally, her kinsfolk were better than she was. She could have felt that they had true friends while she was lonely; they were unfair to her for not listening to her side of the story behind all those 5 divorces, and then blaming her for not being able to be faithful in her relationships. She probably hated men.

It was about noon when Jesus, tired out by the journey from Judea on the way to Galilee, sat by Jacob's well.

[The Narrator tells the story through the reading of parts of John chapter 4 taken from the New International Version of the Bible while the Commentator gives a running commentary on the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman.]

Narrator : One day, Jesus had to go through Samaria to get to Galilee. Soon He came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as He was from the journey, sat down by the well.

[“Jesus” takes his position on stage.]

Narrator : It was about noon. His disciples had gone into the town to buy food, when a Samaritan woman came to draw water....

[The Samaritan woman takes her position on stage.]

Commentator: It was hot and quiet by the well. Why did she choose such a time to draw water? Didn't she like to meet the other women from town? Was it her normal routine?

Narrator : Jesus said to her...

Jesus : Will you give Me a drink?

Commentator: Doesn't sound unusual unless we understand her background.

Narrator : The Samaritan woman said to Him...

Woman : You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?

Commentator: She did not hesitate to verbalise her low self-esteem. It was already part of her to view herself in those terms.

Jesus seemed to be breaking all religious, racial, cultural and social norms! He had better watch out...

Narrator : Jesus answered her...

Jesus : If you knew the gift of God and who it is who asks you for a drink, you would have asked

Him and He would have given
you living water!

Commentator: Jesus was quick to catch the opportunity to lift the conversation to a higher plane by hinting at His identity and linking it to living water.

Narrator : The woman said...

Woman : Sir, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can You get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?

Commentator: At first playfully suggesting that Jesus was talking rubbish, she then tried to boost her self-esteem by identifying herself as a descendant of Jacob, third in line from Abraham. She thus had the guts to challenge Jesus about His identity.

Narrator : Jesus answered...

Jesus : Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Commentator: Jesus, sensing that her self-defence mechanism was on the alert, refused to be dragged into a fruitless argument as to whether Jews or Samaritans were more favoured by God. Instead, He brought her back to the theme of living water...while at the same time using her type of jestful language...gushing up to eternal life. (Don't you think that His hand would be gesturing in demonstration of that fountain of living water as well?)

Narrator : The woman said to Him...

Woman : Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water!

Commentator: Flowing along in a relaxed mood, she cynically asked for that living water (that will never run out) and might have half-hoped that it could be real...so that she did not need to tire herself by walking to draw and to carry water in the hot sunshine, with no one else to help or to chat with most of the time.

Narrator : He told her...

Jesus : Go, call your husband and come back!

Commentator: Jesus matter-of-factly told her to call her husband to help if she was so tired of the chore.

Narrator : The woman replied.

Woman : I have no husband!!

Commentator: She snapped back immediately... the boil in her life had been touched...how could He mention that word "husband"...suddenly, her inner feelings of anger and hatred were roused, and her truer self surfaced.

Narrator : Jesus then confirmed that what she said was true, and told her why.

Jesus : You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.

Narrator : The woman said...

Woman : Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the

place where we must worship
is in Jerusalem.

Narrator : Jesus declared...

Jesus : Believe Me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.

Commentator: Feeling trapped, and sensing that Jesus was some sort of prophet, the woman quickly went off at a tangent, posing a question about

the place of worship. Did she talk about something else to avoid facing her real needs? Or was she now genuinely interested in spiritual things?

But, Jesus, seizing the golden opportunity, immediately used her point of contention and turned it into a clarification of who the Father really is...He is Spirit and those who desire to worship Him must worship Him in spirit (sincerely) and in truth (according to His revelation of Himself).

Narrator : Then the woman, shrugging her shoulders, said...

Woman : I know that Messiah, called Christ, is coming...

Commentator: Again she tried hard to postpone having to face the truth about God's holiness...in case He punished her for her sins...for if

she had not received mercy from her own people, how could she receive mercy from God! As yet, her idea of God was still distorted, out of shape...so she dismissed this strange prophet by appealing to the higher authority who hadn't come yet...the Messiah!

Narrator : Then Jesus declared...

Jesus : [Slowly] I who speak to you am He...!

Commentator: [Excitedly] Completely beyond her expectations, this stranger said to her in the gentlest and most gracious manner, with eyes full of forgiveness and total acceptance (not like those who usually accused her), "I am He...I am the Messiah ...and I have forgiven you all your sins, and will heal you of your wounds so that you can live the life God gives you all over again... God's way...not Jacob's way or

Jerusalem's way or your way...
but the true God's way!"

Narrator : [As if an anticlimax...]

Then the disciples returned...but the Samaritan woman was so stunned by Jesus' revelation that she forgot about her water jar! John recorded that she went back... not she ran back...Most certainly she was thinking hard as she took her time to walk back to her old friends, her old neighbours and her old lifestyle...what should she do?

The real Messiah came as a man to her...so humble, so pure...and yet He needed her to give Him a drink...He did not punish her, He did not look down on her, did not take advantage of her...but accepted her as a woman, with the promise of giving her life eternal! This reasoning could have led to her telling her people about what had just happened, as fast as she could...

Woman : If I tell them later, they won't believe me...they seldom do... and it will be near impossible to live a new life here...the place I love...my home...but if I tell them now...they can see and hear Him for themselves...it would be good for them if they knew the Messiah as I have known Him!

Narrator : With that, she shouted to the townsfolk,

Woman : [Turning to the 5 men behind her, she loudly calls out...]

Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done...

[Then softly, to herself, and looking at the audience...]

Who cares what they think now,
He has forgiven me!

[Loudly...]

He cannot be the Messiah, can He?"

Narrator : [Excitedly] Oh wasn't their curiosity instantly aroused! "Everything she has ever done? What is it that we have not heard before? Let's go and hear for ourselves!" So they actually left the city to look for Jesus!

Commentator: So different from our evangelistic campaigns!

Narrator : [At a normal pace...]

Meanwhile, Jesus was talking to His disciples about doing His Father's will, that it was food to Him...and about harvest...but they did not understand what He was talking about...till later...

Further, John tells us that the people at first believed that Jesus was the Messiah because of the

woman's testimony...fantastic, we might say...but...after 2 days with Jesus in their own town, her fellow Samaritans told her emphatically,

Five Men : We no longer believe that He is the Messiah because of what you told us...but because of what He has told us...

Commentator: And one can only imagine what Jesus told them about themselves.

Five Men : HE IS Really the SAVIOUR Of The WORLD!"

Commentator: This was even more fantastic for the woman by the well, for one who was so grateful to the Saviour for having completely forgiven her all her sins and accepted her into His Father's house!!

[Stage darkened as spotlight shines on singers of duet.]

To Be A Church Alive For Jesus

*We come before You, holy Father
Our lives, our all we bring,
surrendered to You
Send down Your holy Fire
Sanctify Your church
That we'll be vessels fit for use
Grant this, our hearts' desire,
O Lord...*

Chorus:

*To be a church alive for Jesus
In the power of the Spirit
Equipped, empow'ed
In the strength of the Lord
Tearing down
All the works of the enemy
To be a church
That's moving forward
In the power of the Spirit
With hearts on fire
For the Gospel of Christ
Proclaiming Life
And the dawning of His kingdom.*

*And as we press on
To the task at hand
Give us the will to be
Of one heart and mind
The bond of love be strengthened
In the face of trials
The Cross to ever be our focus
Grant this, our hearts' desire
O Lord...*

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Curtains Down

The End

[The narrator or preacher for the day may take over here.]

[The narrator or preacher for the day may take over here.]

EXERCISE

1. Think about some lessons gleaned from the readings.

a. The significance of Jacob's well

Jacob represents the old and partial understanding of who God is...He was very strict...His people were to obey His laws 100% or they could not partake of His promises.

b. Well water represents stagnant water, even though it comes from underground streams or reserves. It is limited in its ability to keep supplying us with a drink in order that we may continue to live.

In contrast:

Jesus represents the new and complete understanding of who God is...the Almighty and holy God who knows that His people have spoilt their own lives by repeatedly

sinning against Him and will never be able to please Him 100 % again (like Adam and Eve before they fell) if left on their own. Yet, He loves them so much that He sent Jesus, His only begotten Son, to come and die in their place, so that He could save them from their sins and bring them back home to His Father forever; back to Him who is now our true Father through Jesus' death and resurrection! It is this intimate and continuous knowledge of God as our Father through knowing His Saviour Son that constitutes the living water that Jesus talks about. He is the God of justice and yet of everlasting and unconditional love indeed! Such is the real character of God that Jesus showed to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well about 2000 years ago.

2. Look at the chart on the next page. It summarises the perceptions of the Samaritan woman before and after she met Jesus.

	Old Self	Meets Jesus	New Self
VIEWS OF GOD	Distant Perfectionist	Received attention, respect and consideration	Holy, Pure Truthful Forgiving Unassuming Personal
VIEWS OF SELF	Of little value Ashamed Abused Trapped Guilty Lonely	Valued Cleansed Befriended Respected Forgiven Released	Born again Purposeful Joyful Loved Valued Empowered
VIEWS OF OTHERS	Unkind Unjust Too busy for her Disgusting Hated them	All included in God's grace and truth	All need God's forgiveness and holiness

Two things happened to the Samaritan woman after she received God's eternal life and the renewal of her understanding of God:

- a. She was no longer afraid of others' unfair treatment of her, others' slander and jeers, or their rude comments about her past life. Her hatred of men turned into hope that they too would meet her Saviour!

A person is not able to sincerely wish for the good of the person who has hurt her without first taking the step of forgiveness, irrespective of her existing negative feelings. God will change these to positive feelings after she has decided to forgive even though it might take a longer time for this to take effect. But the will to forgive has to come from the one who has been wronged.

The Samaritan woman decided to forgive. God had forgiven her so much that for her to forgive those men was so insignificant in comparison.

- b. She did what she could to influence the townsfolk, some of whom had wronged her badly, so that they could meet Jesus for themselves. Imagine what would have happened if the Samaritan woman decided not to tell them about Jesus so that they would not be saved? Serve them right? No, no! After having been forgiven by the Messiah, she forgave those who had wronged her. As she walked towards all who knew her, she decided to share her newly found Saviour with them so that they might rejoice also! She no longer desired to attract attention to herself but to the Messiah!

3. Ask yourself these questions:

- a. Am I using all my God-given gifts, natural or spiritual, to influence others for God ...so that they will be attracted to Him and not to me? If so, give all praise and thanks to Him always! If not, then the second question is:

Is there something that I have not sorted out in my life that is preventing me from so sharing Him with others? Is He teaching me to take life one step at a time...not according to my own agenda, but according to His agenda?

- b. Do I love Him enough to become vulnerable for Him in the ministry of reconciliation in our society today?

III

Who is My Neighbour?

THE GOOD INDONESIAN LABOURER

[A Play]

This story may be used as part of a sermon.

OBJECTIVES

1. To be reminded of and to consider afresh His ageless message of love for the unlovable, beauty for the ugly, riches for the poor, forgiveness for the sinner.

[Psalm 72, 74; Jeremiah 22:16]

2. To ask God for the first time or once more:
“Lord, lead me to someone who is poorer, sicker, less educated than I am, has less shelter than I have, and knows less of Your love than I know...in my family, in my church, in my neighbourhood...so that I may share with them some of my riches, my health, my education, Your welcoming unconditional love...to the extent that they will know that it is really YOU who cares for them.

Cast : Storyteller
Family of 3
Labourer
Youth 1,2,3
Girl
Towkay and wife
Medical student
Taxi driver
Reader A
Reader B

Words and : Soundscape - Background sounds

Meanings : Freeze - Stop moving at any given
body position

Setting : Kampung Sungai Buloh...8:00 p.m.

[Stage lights dimmed.]

Scene I

At the Window

[On the right half of the stage, a family of three is having dinner around a table, chatting in Chinese. They are separated from the left half of the stage by a dividing wall.]

Storyteller : A businessman's family is feasting on
a scrumptious dinner in a brightly-lit
room.

[From the left of the divider, an Indonesian labourer walks in...tired after a hard day's work. He appears shabby, he is thirsty and hungry...and smells the aroma of good food exuding from the window of the family's dining room...He peeps through the curtain...and smacks his lips...]

Labourer : Mmmmmm sedapnya...tetapi isteri
ku tiada disini...makanannya lebih
sedap...Ku rindukan dia...duduk
dikampung...terlalu jauh...

[He turns away...the sight of cosy family life is too painful to watch for long...he mutters and walks away...]

Lebih baik beli nasi bungkus!

Scene .II

Along a Path

[Soundscape: Kampung insect sounds.]

Storyteller : In the stillness of the night, three kampung youth are arguing as to who is the strongest and the richest...

Youth 1 : Hey Ah Kheng, my Mum gave me 20 ringgit today...she won the mahjong game last night...want a treat?

Youth 2 : You are a Sissy...still need mother to give you handouts! You know how I get my money? Here, by using these...

[He pulls back his sleeves to show his muscles.]

Youth 3 : Aiya...don't show off, Mike, seeing is believing!

Storyteller : Plop, Plop, Plop...comes the sound of footsteps. The three youth push each other aside into the shadows while a girl approaches...

Youth 2 : [Gesturing to the other two...and showing his muscles]
You want proof? Saya tunjuk!

[Actions are fast as they are not premeditated, but expressed impulsively. Youth 2 punches the girl on the head, she falls, yelling out in pain...while he robs her of her bracelet and handbag...He is about to pull off her necklace when a whistling of "Bengawan Solo" is heard...]

Storyteller : The Labourer strolls onto the stage innocently...while the youth pull each other and scamper away...Labourer then hears groaning...goes near to investigate...and is shocked to see a girl bleeding from the temple. The poor girl is scared, thinking that he is one of the thugs, and covers her head quickly...!

Labourer : Aiyo...Nonya kena dirompak! Kasihan
...Ta'payah takut...Siapa yang kacau
mu?

Girl : Ta'tahu...tolong panggil police...
ibubapa di Ipoh...Encik, tolonglah
saya! Kepala sangat sakit!

Labourer : O.K., O.K...Saya pergi...

Storyteller : The Labourer walks to the side of the
stage to flag down a vehicle.

First comes a rich Towkay with his diamond-
studded wife.

Towkay : No, darling, no...he may be a thug...
better shoot off!

Storyteller : The rich couple did not stop.

Labourer : Adoi...sombonglah towkay itu!
[Turns to girl and pleads...]
Jangan mati, Nonya...tahan sedikit!!

Storyteller : Next comes a young medical student on his way to see his girlfriend.

Medical Student : [With a stethoscope dangling from his neck...]

Better not stop...Suzie will not talk to me for days if I'm late! No, no...no time...must be punctual for my date... someone else will surely help them..

Labourer : Inilah hospitaliti Malaysia?

[The Labourer shakes his head in disbelief...!]

Storyteller : Then comes a taxi driver. He is stopped by the Labourer and gets down to open the boot of his taxi, thinking that the girl is a piece of luggage by the roadside. He then sees her condition and waves in protest...

Taxi Driver : Saya ta'mahu angkat! She will mess up my car! Look at all that blood...no other passenger will use my taxi again...so smelly...Saya mesti cari makan, you know...

Labourer : Encik, tolonglah! Nonya ini...dia akan mati...dirompak orang jahat... Saya bayar...saya bayar 10 ringgit!

Taxi Driver : 50 ringgit!

Labourer : 15!

Taxi Driver : 35 ringgit!

Labourer : 20!

Taxi Driver : 30 ringgit!

Labourer : 25!

Taxi Driver : O.K.

[He leans forward to help carry the girl into the taxi.]

Labourer : Alamak! That's my one day's gaji for slogging in the heat...(pause) ...never mind...besok cari kerja lagi...she needs to get to hospital urgently!

[The Taxi driver and Labourer help to move the girl into the car.]

(Stage lights off)

Storyteller : Who is my neighbour?

Reader A : The King said, "Come, you that are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you gave Me clothing, I was sick and you took care of Me, I was in prison and you visited Me...Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of My family, you did it to Me..." (Matt.25:21-46)

[Spotlight on the Girl, slumped in pain. Freeze.]

Storyteller : But Lord, how much should we help someone in need just like we are helping You?

[Spotlight on Labourer trying to help girl. Freeze.]

Reader B : Jesus sat down opposite the offering bag and watched the crowd putting money into the offering bag. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small ten cent coins. Truly, I tell you, this widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.” (Mark 12:41-44)

Storyteller : Do we dare to go and find out who else we may help each day, each week, each month? Foster a child? Adopt a baby? Live among the poorer ones? Open our homes for tuition and tea? Open an orphanage or a home for abused girls...and boys? Perhaps all the Lord desires to see us do is to befriend the lonely teenagers in our neighbourhood? “Lord, what do You say?”

[Spotlight on all actors gathered in questioning postures in centre of stage. Freeze.]

Hymn : *"When the Poor Ones"*

[To be sung as a solo by a singer with a deep clear, warm voice, accompanied by the plucking of guitar strings.]

1 *When the poor ones who have nothing
Share with strangers,
When the thirsty
Water give unto us all,
When the crippled in their weakness
Strengthen others...*

Chorus *Then we know that
God still goes that road with us;
Then we know that
God still goes that road with us.*

2 *When at last all those who suffer
Find their comfort,
When they hope
Even though hope seems hopelessness,
When we love
Though hate at times
Seems all around us...*

3 *When our homes
 Are filled with goodness in abundance,
 When we learn how
 To make peace instead of war,
 When each stranger that we meet
 Is called a neighbour...*

*English Translation © 1980
The United Methodist Hymnal Publishing House
United Methodist Hymnal No 434*

[Lights off...Actors leave stage.]

THE END

SUGGESTIONS

- A. Use the following hymn at the close of the service:

O Young and Fearless Prophet

1 *O young and fearless Prophet of ancient Galilee,
Thy life is still a summons to serve humanity;
To make our thoughts and actions
Less prone to please the crowd,
To stand with humble courage
For truth with hearts uncowed.*

2. *We marvel at the purpose that held Thee to
Thy course
While ever by the hilltop before Thee loomed
the cross;
Thy steadfast face set forward
Where love and duty shone,
While we betray so quickly
And leave Thee there alone.*

3. *O help us stand unswerving against war's
bloody way,
Where hate and lust and falsehood
Hold back Christ's holy sway;
Forbid false love of country that binds us to
His call,
Who lifts above the nations the unity of all.*
4. *Stir up in us a protest against our greed for
wealth,
While others starve and hunger
And plead for work and health;
Where homes with little children cry out for
lack of bread,
Who live their years sore burdened
Beneath a gloomy dread.*
5. *O young and fearless Prophet,
We need Thy presence here
Amid our pride and glory to see Thy face appear;
Once more to hear Thy challenge above our
noisy day,
Again to lead us forward along God's holy way.*

AMEN

S. Ralph Harlow

- B. A prayer of confession, for our lack of good works out of love for God, may be placed at an appropriate time during the time of worship.

EXERCISE

1. Read Luke 10:25-37. With whom do you identify most? Why?
2. Read again Matthew 25:21-26. Do you identify more with the goats or the sheep? Do you think that the King in the first passage was unjust? If not, how would you argue your case?
3. Read Mark 2:41-46. What do you think Jesus really meant when He said that the woman had given all that she had? Do you, like the woman, sense the joy of giving? If not, how do you feel when you have to give back to your loving God some of your hard-earned money or something you treasure?
4. Read Matthew 6:43-48, 6:1-4 and 6:19-34. What may the Holy Spirit be saying to you with respect to the needy around you...whether they be in need of caring or material necessities?
5. Since God already knows everything about you, why not have a discussion with Him over your answers to the questions above?

IV

Resurrection in the Valley of Dry Bones

JESUS IS ALIVE!

[An Easter Play]

The following story is based on the accounts of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, particularly those recorded in the gospel of John, chapters 20 and 21.

OBJECTIVES

1. To remind the audience that the resurrection of Christ was not only real 2000 years ago, but relevant and real to us now, at the end of the 20th century and till He comes again.
2. To clarify the fact that Jesus' words to His disciples then are also meant for us now. They express His desire to be close to us, to be welcomed in our daily lives, not to be treated as if we need to keep Him at a distance

away from our joys and sorrows, our laughter and tears, our work and play, just because He is enthroned on high. However, we also need to be reminded that He is the Master, we are the servants. Hence, He is not at our beck and call. We are not to cry to Him only when we need His help and then leave Him alone when we feel we can manage on our own. We are to live each day in cooperation with Him, doing things with Him and for Him in intimate companionship and oneness of purpose...to glorify and please the Father and the Son...which will also be for our temporal and eternal good.

3. To show some practical aspects of His commands to us...to love one another as He has sacrificially loved us and to love others as ourselves...so that others may know that He is the Son of God and will desire to become His children too (e.g. by the way we care for children - our own children, orphans and even abandoned babies in our Malaysian society, or by the way we treat our employees as our equals in the sight of God). Therefore, we must love in ways He chooses, not in ways that we alone choose.

Cast (Age):

- Father : Mr. Tan/Kok Chye (40's)
(Grumpy, doubting)
- Mother : Mrs. Tan/Mei Lan (40's)
(Emotional, caring, with a-high pitched voice)
- Daughter : Patricia (15)
(A typical local teenager, observing, assessing)
- Hairdresser : Daisy (30's)
(Practical with a medium-pitched voice)
- Maid : Li Li (20's)
(Trusting, with a low-pitched voice)
- Blind boy : Ah Meng (10) (sings)
- Jesus : Man (30's)
(Sings, has a deep kind voice)
- Story-teller: (Has a clear and expressive voice)
- Pianist
- Dancer/
- Mimer : (In the finale, Dancer may lead the congregation in a dance of praise and worship.)

RESURRECTION IN THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

Storyteller : Friends and members of the body of Christ, let me present to you a play concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Person who directs history, and who is the only begotten Son of the most high GOD.

The actual event took place in the Middle East, near to the city of Jerusalem.

Though we may not see Him with our eyes, yet His disciples all over the world know that He is still alive through the experience of His living presence with them each day. As we celebrate His presence with us, we would like to share this joy with you.

Allow us, therefore, to transpose the resurrection story, which historically took place about 2000 years ago, so that it now occurs in the year 1996 A.D. (to be replaced with year of current performance), in Heritage City, situated in the symbolic Valley of Dry Bones.

The characters are played by Jesus and His friends:

The Tan family

- Father, Kok Chye
- Mother, Mei Lan
- Teenage daughter, Patricia

Others

- Daisy, the Hairdresser
- Li Li, her Maid
- Ah Meng, a blind orphaned boy
- Man, personifying our beloved Jesus

Friends, we shall now move right into the dining room of the Tan family...on the third day after the controversial execution of Jesus of Nazareth, apparently son of a carpenter called Joseph, but in reality, the Son of the living GOD!

SCENE I

The Tan family at breakfast
on a Sunday morning

Storyteller : Mr. Tan, a close disciple of Jesus, is disillusioned after Jesus' public execution at Conflict Prison. He is scared, frustrated and lost.

Mrs. Tan is disappointed that her hopes of having an open home for continuing discussions, such as when Jesus was alive, are now at an end.

Both are grumbling and arguing, blaming each other for their beloved Master's death.

Mr. Tan : I gave up my job as manager at the Mirama Hotel when Jesus needed me. I thought that His work would prosper...look at all the deliverance and healings He performed day and night. That was great! Everyone had plenty to eat and plenty to do. So many parables to entertain us too. He even

talked about the living bread and living water that will make us live forever. Now see what He got Himself into? Accused wrongly for nothing ...didn't fight for His rights, suffered the death of a most wanted criminal ...and nothing left for us! What am I going to do? Go back to my old job? My boss will definitely laugh at me for being so bodoh...throwing away a secure job with partnership opportunities just to follow this carpenter's son who was not even seminary or college trained. Freelance pastor, they called Him...and with not a cent in His pocket...It's your fault, Mei Lan, it's all your fault. Why did you invite Him home in the first place?

Mrs. Tan : O.K., O.K., Kok Chye, have you no heart? Don't you realise that I am missing His presence? How He loved our children, comforted us when Patricia fell sick and then healed her...how He spoke up for those oppressed by their bosses, while teaching the young workers to respect

their superiors even when mistreated so that God's love might touch their hardened hearts?

I wish He were here right now... that would give those cruel Bible teachers, and those leaders who told lies about Him and accused Him, a real fright...but in case what He said about His coming back is true ...better keep your mouth shut! At least, let me grieve in peace.

[Teenage daughter, Patricia, comes in for breakfast and switches on the radio to listen to the 8:00 a.m. news at the same time. Eating and listening...]

Patricia : SHHHHH Mum, let me listen to the news...see if they mention anything about Jesus...

Mrs. Tan : [Gets up to go out.] I might as well go and have my hair washed and set. Kok Chye, pick me up at the hairdresser's for Bible class at 10:00 a.m. Huh...whether Jesus is alive or not, I want to be on time for He always was!

[Curtains down....furniture reshuffled]

SCENE II

At a Hair Salon

Storyteller : Daisy, the Boss, is arranging the place for business. She makes sure that the front door is securely locked. Various people have been popping in to ridicule her about her friend Jesus. She is very upset and confused, wondering how to respond to their rude comments... "You are silly to have befriended such a guy...listening to him and giving away so much money to the poor and needy just because He said so...look what's happened to Him? A liar, a swindler... blah-blah-blah-blah...!!!"

[Knock, knock, knock...]

Daisy : Who's that?

Mrs. Tan : Me, Mei Lan! Why isn't your shop opened yet? It's past 8 o'clock!

[Daisy opens the door, lets her in, and continues sweeping.]

Daisy : Aiyah...Mei Lan, don't you know how I feel?

[Then she continues pensively...]

The whole neighbourhood knows that Jesus often came here to have a haircut. He was so friendly, never complained when He had to queue up, listened to the other customers, joked with them, advised them when they had problems about their children and treated them with so much respect that they really liked Him very much.

[A second customer comes in, is ignored, sits on a vacant chair, and waits patiently.]

(cont.) But now that He has been executed after that awful unfair trial, everyone who enters through this door laughs at me for still believing in what He

said...that He alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life...that no one can go to God the Father unless taken by Him. Honestly, Mei Lan, do you believe that He will come back from the dead?

[Suddenly, Daisy notices the presence of the newcomer...turns to see His back...but still continues to clear up the things on the table and asks routinely...]

Daisy : By the way, Mei Lan, would you like to order some breakfast?

Mrs. Tan : No thanks, I just had some before I came.

Daisy : [In the direction of the Man.]
A plate of Char-Koay-Teow, Ah Chek?

[He nods in silence.]

Mei Lan : [Flicking through a magazine listlessly.]
Where's your maid, Li Li? Off today?

Daisy : [Putting away a tray and giving a big sigh...]

Haaaaiih...Li Li has taken some flowers to place on Jesus' tomb for us.

[She wipes a tear from her eyes with the back of one hand, fighting hard to control herself. Then she walks to the doorway and yells...]

Char-Koay-Teow one plaaaaate!

[Recognises someone outside and beckons him in.]

Hi, Ah Meng! Come in, Come in...yes, we have two customers...maybe they want some peanuts.

[A blind boy enters, holding a white stick.]

Ah Meng : Peanuuuuuts...Peanuuuuuts...anyone want some tasty, crunchy fresh peanuuuuuts?

Mrs. Tan : Not today, my dear boy...too sad to munch for fun...Besides, you'd better wait a little longer. Li Li will be back soon and may have some news about the place where Jesus was buried. He was so good to you, wasn't He, Meng?

Ah Meng : Yes, Auntie, I really miss Him...in fact, He said that when He met me again, He would teach me how to sing one of His favourite songs. I wish I had a Papa like Jesus.

[Starts to sing...stepping to the foreground, with minimal action but appropriate facial expressions.]

"Only a Child"

*I'm only a child,
In the heart of the town;
Living on my own,
Begging along the way.
I miss my Dad...and I miss my Mum,
There seems nowhere long I may stay...*

Chorus:

*Then I met this Man,
In the heart of the town;
And He spoke to me
And sometimes with me played*

*Yes, I'm only a child,
In the heart of the town;
Selling peanuts for food I want to pay.
You're my friends,
Please don't at me frown,
I need to sit even if nothing to say...*

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[Others freeze while he sings...then all look despondent, lost and hopeless...Ah Meng then continues...]

I really feel like the boy in this song...But now Jesus is gone...no use talking...need to earn some extra money for a pair of slippers...see, this one sudah pecahlah.

[Lifts up his left leg and points to the loose strap with his right hand. Then he notices the new man...and just as he was about to ask him to buy his peanuts, Patricia rushes in excitedly and heads for his Mum. As he breaks the news of Jesus' Resurrection, Mrs.Tan, Daisy and Ah Meng freeze...staring unbelievably at him. Man keeps still in chair.]

Patricia : [Excitedly]

Mum, Mum...the news...the news this morning, they say that Jesus' grave is empty...soil in place...several people have seen Him walking in the streets of Heritage City...the Police dug up his grave...coffin there...but body not there...They are all scared...but I am HAPPY! JESUS IS ALIVE!! What He said has come true! Death could not hold Him because He is perfect, He never did anything wrong at all!

God raised Him up from hell! In fact, HE IS THE SON OF GOD! Can you believe it? He...our friend...the Son of God!!!!!!? He really died for our sins,

in our place...so we won't have to be sent to hell if we trust Him to forgive our sins and take us home with Him to God! I am born again in Christ, Hurray, I'm born again!!

[Li Li rushes in, panting...Others unfreeze.]

Li Li : [Very, very excited]
Tau-Keh-Neoh, Tau-Keh-Neoh...I...
I...I...met Je...Je...Je..Jesus! Did not recognise Him...But He called me...Li Li...I turned and saw Him...looks, different...voice, the same...firm...kind...gentle, just the same...

[Others freeze as she speaks...then the Man turns, stands up and speaks to them with outstretched arms....]

Man : Peace be with you, my friends.

[All unfreeze and turn to His direction slowly as they recognise His voice...facial expressions change from disbelief to sheer JOY!]

All : JESUS! JESUS OUR LORD!!

[ALL kneel before Him to worship and reach out to Him...but He shakes His head and says...]

Man : Please don't hold on to Me yet...I have not gone to the Father...but I have something to say to all of you, My dear friends.....

[All freeze...Just then, Mr. Tan pops his head into the doorway and is about to call for his wife, when he sees them...and he, realising that the Saviour is risen, quickly and embarrassedly runs to kneel before Him, saying...]

Mr. Tan : My Lord and my God, I am very sorry for doubting You. Will You please forgive me?

Man : Kok Chye, I saw you before you came in. I have forgiven you...Go, and sin no more. Now, let Me ask you a question...Are you willing to serve only Me?

[All on stage kneel, facing Man and sing to Him, preferably in four-part harmony]

My Jesus I Love Thee

*My Jesus, I love thee,
I know Thou art mine;
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer,
My Saviour art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Saviour 'tis now.*

*I love Thee because
Thou hast first loved me,
And purchased my pardon
On Calvary's tree;
I love Thee
For wearing the thorns on thy brow;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus 'tis now.*

*In mansions of glory
And endless delight,
I'll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright;
I'll sing
With the glittering crown on my brow;
If ever I loved Thee, Lord Jesus 'tis now.*

William R. Featherstone
& Adoniram J. Gordon

[As soon as song ends, Jesus walks over to Ah Meng, puts His arms around him, turns him in the direction of Mrs.Tan, leads him to her and says.]

Jesus : Come...Ah Meng, your mother

[Goes to Mei Lan and brings her towards Ah Meng, saying...]

Mei Lan, your son...

[Both Ah Meng and Mei Lan change their facial expression of wonder to delight, with Mei Lan taking the initiative to hug Ah Meng. Daisy and Li Li watch with joyful smiles in agreement, nodding their heads...as Patricia lifts Ah Meng up and shouts...]

Patricia : My Brother! Let's dance!

All : *Revival's Fire*

*We the church of Jesus Christ
Pledge anew this day
Allegiance to our Lord
The Redeemer of our lives
Oh, let the Fire from on high
Fall afresh on us
Bringing us to new heights
Of obedience to the Lord...*

Chorus:

*Revival's fire ignite us
Increase our passion for Jesus
A passion that will burn brighter
Through the years
A zeal to bring to fulfilment
The Father's vision, His burden
To fill each land, ev'ry nation
With the knowledge of the Lord.*

*Stir our hearts let faith arise
As we heed Your call
To launch into the task
Standing firm upon Your word
To realise the riches of
Our inheritance
The authority and pow'r
We have in Jesus' Name...*

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[Ends with a shout of joy and happy triumphant faces!!!]

Storyteller : Jesus said to Martha:

“I am the Resurrection and the Life.
He who believes in Me will live, even
though he dies; and whoever lives
and believes in Me will never die. Do
You Believe This?”

(Silence...10 seconds)

The End

EXERCISE

1. Read John chapter 11.

How has the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth affected your life in the last 10 years, 1 year, 1 month, 1 week or 1 day?

2. What is it in the above play that strikes you most? Why?
3. How then would you show your response to Him who is alive right now, where you are?

References for Creative Ministries

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Michael Green (Copyright). 1992 by Oliver-Nelson Books.
3. *Pucuk Harapan...A Resourcebook for Drama in the Malaysian Church...* by Adele Finney and the Seminari Theoloji Malaysia Drama Group, 1987. This book and an accompanying video cassette tape are available at the Seminary Theoloji Malaysia in Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

Listen To the Stories is a simple collection of four gospel stories retold and rewritten to fit our twentieth century Malaysian Christian understanding. It is an effort which writer, Dr Lee Bee Teik, hopes will prove to be an encouragement and launching pad for others to also try their hand at Christian drama and creative arts.

This little book of parables attempts to present Christ not as someone remote and far away, but as a person close and familiar. Readers will be pleased to see that His life story is transported into contemporary Malaysian life in a way which reflects His humanity and immediacy. Jesus is someone who loves to mingle with the thronging crowds, becoming one of them in order to show them the way home.

DR LEE BEE TEIK is the founding director of Reconre Ministries. She earlier laid down the practice of medicine to be with her children. In 1992, the Lord called her to the writing ministry and then to minister to His fulltime workers through pastoral counselling and quiet retreats. Her other areas of service include the training of lay pastoral counsellors and the faciliating of personal or small group quiet retreats and seminars. Dr Lee is married to Bishop (Dr.) Hwa Yung of the Methodist Church in Malaysia and they have three adult children.

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