



JR HIGH SPEECH SAMPLE MATERIALS

2015/16

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Important Information

THANK YOU



Thank you for participating in ACSI's Junior High Speech Meet. The ACSI regional office is here to help you in every way possible. Please don't hesitate to call for assistance.

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ACSI Student Activities enhance learning beyond the classroom by equipping Christian schools and educators while challenging students toward God-honoring applications of their leadership skills, fine art talents, and academic abilities.

Dramatic Poetry (3–5 minutes The selection must be memorized.)

Selections taken from the biblical book of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, or Ecclesiastes or other poems are to be dramatic. The presentation is to consist of an introduction and the selection, all within the 3-to-5-minute time limit.

The student should make the poem “come alive” by mentally becoming the character(s) in the selection. The student’s vocal and facial expressions must reflect the emotions of the situation. Limited gestures are permitted to enhance the presentation, but gestures should not draw attention away from the message. The student should remain standing in one place. (The selection is not to be acted out, as in a play.) The student’s eye focus should be with, or in the direction of, the audience.

The Great Surprise: The Story of Zacchaeus

by Mary Warren (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1964)

Zacchaeus was a publican.
He served a hated king,
Collecting gold and silver
To pay for everything,
Like soldiers, roads,
and city walls,
and statues carved from stone.

Some publicans took extra gold
And kept it for their own.
Most people hated publicans.
They said:
“They’re mean!”
“They cheat.”

And so good people turned away
Whenever they would meet
The publicans around the town
Or walking down the street.

When Jesus met a publican,
He smiled and greeted him.
He didn’t care
what others thought

Or if they acted grim.
He loved all kinds of people.
He was friendly with the mean,
the selfish,
and the sickly,
and those who were not clean.

He knew so many couldn’t choose
The sort of life they had,
And many others didn’t know
That they were being bad;
And even if they knew inside,

It made his heart feel sad.
Zacchaeus once was going home
When there, along the way,
He saw a crowd and, curious,
He thought he’d rather stay.
“You say this man is Jesus?
May I go near to see?”

I want to know what He is like ...
But—OW! You’re trampling me!
Please tell me what this huddle
And this muddle is about.” He begged,
and teased,
and pushed,
and squeezed,
and then began to shout:
“I’m chief collector For the King!
How dare you leave me out.”

Zacchaeus ran and climbed a tree.
He wished he weren’t so small;
But Jesus saw him there and stopped.
Zacchaeus heard him call:
“Come down, Zacchaeus, right away,
And take me home with you.”
The people stared with angry looks
And some began to stew.
They muttered, “What a place to pick—
The home of such a fake!
Don’t tell us Jesus doesn’t know—
He does for goodness sake!
It is a mystery to us ...
The friends He likes to make!”

Zacchaeus climbed down happy
With a sparkle in his eyes.
He shivered from excitement.
He felt a bigger size!
It made him feel so popular!

A messenger soon ran
Ahead to tell the news of this
To all Zacchaeus’ clan.
A feast they started to prepare;
The servants roasted meat.
When Jesus got there later on,
One washed His dusty feet;
Another brought a lovely robe.

Then it was time to eat.
It took a while to eat such food!
They sat and talked, and when
Zacchaeus saw how Jesus’ love
Could change the hearts of men,
He said to Jesus:
“I don’t think
Of anyone but me!
The extra money that I take,
It’s very plain to see,
Makes others poor, and here I sit
As wealthy as a King!
Before another day goes by,
I’ll do an honest thing.

My clothes and food and all I own
I shall divide in two.
I’ll take half to the poorer folk
And ... I know what I’ll do!
What I owe to any man
I’ll multiply by four.
I’ll start to pay my debts today,
And I will cheat no more!”
His children shouted out: “Hurray!”
“I’ll share some toys of mine!”
His wife and servants also cheered:
“We think this sounds just fine!”

When Jesus rose to leave, He said:
“I’ve had a splendid stay!
Zacchaeus, it does give me joy
To know you feel this way,
And you will find that this has been
A very special day!”

Humorous Poetry (3–5 minutes. The selection must be memorized.)

Poems are to be humorous. The presentation is to consist of an introduction and the selection, all within the 3-to-5-minute time limit.

The student should make the poem “come alive” by mentally becoming the character(s) in the selection. The student’s vocal and facial expressions must reflect the emotions of the situation. Limited gestures are permitted to enhance the presentation, but gestures should not draw attention away from the message. The student should remain standing in one place. (The selection is not to be acted out, as in a play.) The student’s eye focus should be with, or in the direction of, the audience.

Note: Some selections may be too short to meet the minimum time requirement. Students may use one of these in combination with another short piece, probably on a similar theme or by the same author. Also, caution them against reading/reciting too fast, reminding them that appropriate pauses will often increase the effectiveness of a presentation.

Casey’s Revenge

by James Wilson, being a reply to the famous baseball classic, *Casey at the Bat*

There were saddened hearts in Mudville
for a week or even more;
There were muttered oaths and curses—
every fan in town was sore.
“Just think,” said one, “how soft it looked
with Casey at the bat!
And then to think he’d go and spring a
bush-league trick like that.”

All his past fame was forgotten; he was
now a hopeless “shine,”
They called him “Strike-out Casey” from
the mayor down the line,
And as he came to bat each day his
bosom heaved a sigh,
While a look of helpless fury shone in
mighty Casey’s eye.

The lane is long, someone has said, that
never turns again,
And Fate, though fickle, often gives
another chance to men.
And Casey smiled—his rugged face no
longer wore a frown;
The pitcher who had started all the trouble
came to town.

All Mudville had assembled; ten thousand
fans had come
To see the twirler who had put big Casey
on the bum;
And when he stepped inside the box, the
multitude went wild.
He doffed his cap in proud disdain—but
Casey only smiled.
“Play ball!” the umpire’s voice rang out,
and then the game began;
But in that throng of thousands there was
not a single fan

Who thought that Mudville had a chance;
and with the setting sun
Their hopes sank low—the rival team was
leading four to one.

The last half of the ninth came round, with
no change in the score;
But when the first man up hit safe the
crowd began to roar.

The din increased, the echo of ten
thousand shouts was heard
When the pitcher hit the second and gave
“four balls” to the third.

Three men on base—nobody out—three
runs to tie the game!
A triple meant the highest niche in
Mudville’s hall of fame;

But here the rally ended, and the gloom
was deep as night,
When the fourth one “fouled to catcher”
and the fifth “flew out to right.”

A dismal groan in chorus came—a scowl
was on each face—When
Casey walked up, bat in hand, and slowly
took his place;

His bloodshot eyes in fury gleamed; His
teeth were clinched in hate;
He gave his cap a vicious hook and
pounded on the plate.

But fame is fleeting as the wind, and glory
fades away;
There were no wild or woolly cheers, no
glad acclaim this day.
They hissed and groaned and hooted as
they clamored, “Strike him out!”
But Casey gave no outward sign that he
had heard their shout.

The pitcher smiled and cut one loose;
across the plate it spread;
Another hiss, another groan. “Strike one!”
the umpire said.

Zip! Like a shot, the second curve broke
just below his knee—
“Strike two!” the umpire roared aloud;
but Casey made no plea.

No roasting for the umpire now—his was
an easy lot;
But here the pitcher whirled again—was
that a rifle shot?
A Whack! A Crack! And out through space
the leather pellet flew,
A blot against the distant sky, a speck
against the blue.

Above the fence in center field, in rapid
whirling flight,
The sphere sailed on; the blot grew dim
and then was lost to sight.
Ten thousand hats were thrown in air, ten
thousand threw a fit;
But no one ever found the ball that mighty
Casey hit!

Oh, somewhere in this favored land dark
clouds may hide the sun,
And somewhere bands no longer play and
children have no fun;
And somewhere over blighted lives there
hangs a heavy pall;
But Mudville hearts are happy now—for
Casey hit the ball!

Dramatic Reading (Prose only, no poetry; 3–5 minutes)

The dramatic reading is to consist of an introduction (title and author) and the selection, all within the 3-to-5-minute time limit.

The student will make the presentation “come alive” by mentally becoming the character(s) and relating the drama of the situation through facial and vocal interpretation of the material. The material is not to be acted out, as in a play. The student will remain standing in one place. Gestures should be very limited.

A manuscript must be used effectively, and the student must maintain a certain amount of eye contact: 60 percent eye contact with the audience, 40 percent reading of the manuscript. The student is required to hold the manuscript.

Selections may be cut from a play, an essay, a Bible story, etc. (All poetry must be presented in the poetry category.)

Note: Some selections may be too short to meet the minimum time requirement. Students may use one of these in combination with another short piece, probably on a similar theme or by the same author. Also, caution them against reading/reciting too fast, reminding them that appropriate pauses will often increase the effectiveness of a presentation.

The Chest of Broken Glass

Responsibilities of parents and children toward each other change with age. This tale is about that time in life when caring about someone means taking care of them. The obligation to “honor thy father and mother” does not end when father and mother grow old.

Once there was an old man who had lost his wife and lived all alone. He had worked hard as a tailor all his life, but misfortunes had left him penniless, and now he was so old he could no longer work for himself. His hands trembled too much to thread a needle, and his vision had blurred too much for him to make a straight stitch. He had three sons, but they were all grown and married now, and they were so busy with their own lives, they only had time to stop by and eat dinner with their father once a week.

Gradually the old man grew more and more feeble, and his sons came by to see him less and less. “They don’t want to be around me at all now,” he told himself, “because they’re afraid I’ll become a burden.” He stayed up all night worrying what would become of him, until at last he thought of a plan.

The next morning he went to see his friend the carpenter and asked him to make a large chest. Then he went to see his friend the locksmith and asked him to give him an old lock. Finally he went to see his friend the glassblower and asked for all the old broken pieces of glass he had.

The old man took the chest home, filled it to the top with broken glass, locked it up tight, and put it beneath his kitchen table. The next time his sons came for dinner, they bumped their feet against it.

“What’s in this chest?” they asked, looking under the table.

“Oh, nothing,” the old man replied, “just some things I’ve been saving.”

His sons nudged it and saw how heavy it was. They kicked it and heard a rattling inside. “It must be full of all the gold he’s saved over the years,” they whispered to one another.

So they talked it over and realized they needed to guard the treasure. They decided to take turns living with the old man, and that way they could look after him, too. So the first week the youngest son moved in with his father and cared and cooked for him. The next week the middle son took his place, and the week after that the eldest son took a turn. This went on for some time.

At last the old father grew sick and died. The sons gave him a very nice funeral, for they knew there was a fortune sitting beneath the kitchen table, and they could afford to splurge a little on the old man now.

When the service was over, they hunted through the house until they found the key, and unlocked the chest. And of course they found it full of broken glass.

“What a rotten trick!” yelled the eldest son. “What a cruel thing to do to your own sons!” “But what else could he have done, really?” asked the middle son sadly. “We must be honest with ourselves. If it wasn’t for this chest, we would have neglected him until the end of his days.”

“I’m so ashamed of myself,” sobbed the youngest. “We forced our own father to stoop to deceit, because we would not observe the very commandment he taught us when we were young.”

But the eldest son tipped the chest over to make sure there was nothing valuable hidden among the glass after all. He poured the broken pieces onto the floor until it was empty. Then the three brothers silently stared inside, where they now read an inscription left for them on the bottom: Honor Thy Father and Mother.

Humorous Reading (3–5 minutes)

The humorous reading is to consist of an introduction (title and author) and the selection, all within the 3-to-5-minute time limit.

The student will make the presentation “come alive” by mentally becoming the character(s) and relating the humor of the situation through facial and vocal interpretation of the material. This is not acting, as in a play.

The student will remain standing in one place. Gestures should be very limited.

A manuscript must be used effectively, and the student must maintain a certain amount of eye contact: 60 percent eye contact with the audience, 40 percent reading of the manuscript. The student is required to hold the manuscript.

Selections may be cut from a play, an essay, a Bible story, etc. (All poetry must be presented in the poetry category.)

Note: Some selections may be too short to meet the minimum time requirement. Students may use one of these in combination with another short piece, probably on a similar theme or by the same author. Also, caution them against reading/reciting too fast, reminding them that appropriate pauses will often increase the effectiveness of a presentation.

The Brass Cannon

by Robert Benchley, should be read very quietly and gravely, including the punch line.

One is reminded (and, let us be quite frank about it, when I say “one is reminded” I mean “I am reminded”) of the business troubles of the man who polished the commemorative brass cannon in Ypsilanti, Mich. (I have always heard that it was Ypsilanti, Mich. But I am willing to retract if it is not true.) It seems that the residents of Ypsilanti, Mich., shortly after the Civil War decided that some sort of monument should be placed in a public square to remind future generations of Michigan’s part in the great struggle. So a large brass commemorative cannon was placed on the common (if there is a common in Ypsilanti) and a veteran of the war was engaged, at a nominal salary, to keep this cannon in good condition. He was to polish it twice a week and see that small boys did not hide in it. Aside from this, his time was his own.

This business routine went on for twenty-five years. The veteran was faithful at his task of polishing the commemorative brass cannon, and its splendor and shining surface were the admiration of everyone who visited Ypsilanti, Mich., during those twenty-five years, to say nothing of the natives. “The commemorative brass cannon of Ypsilanti, Mich.,” became a byword throughout the state for expressing how shiny a commemorative brass cannon could be made.

One evening, during the veteran’s twenty-sixth year of service, he came home to supper at his usual hour (4:30), but his wife noticed that he was more depressed than was his wont. He hardly touched his food and sat in moody contemplation of the backs of his polish-stained hands. His wife was worried, “What is it, Joe?” she asked. “What is the matter?”

“Oh, nothing, my dear,” said her husband, and turned in a brave attempt to finish his cutlet.

“Come, come,” said the companion of his twenty-five years of labor (he had married immediately on getting the job of polishing the commemorative brass cannon), “I know that something is wrong. You are depressed.” The gray-haired man put down his knife and looked his wife in the eye.

“You’re right,” he said, as he took her hand in his. “I am depressed. Things haven’t been going very well down at the cannon lately.”

“You don’t mean that you’re fired, Joe!” she said fearfully.

“No, no! Never fear about that,” was his reply. “They couldn’t fire me. I know too much. They would be afraid that I might make trouble. But I am discouraged about my work. I don’t seem to be getting ahead. For twenty-five years I have been polishing that cannon and putting everything that I had into making it bright and shiny. I have done my job well—no one can deny that. But recently I have got to thinking. What is it leading to?”

Where am I getting? Where is the future in polishing commemorative brass cannons?” And the old man broke down and cried.

His wife was silent for a minute. Then she stroked his head and said, “I know, Joe. I have worried a little myself. And I have figured it out this way. In the last twenty-five years we have saved a little money. I have put aside a dollar here and a dollar there when you didn’t know about it. We have quite a tidy little nest egg in the bank now, and here is my suggestion: Let’s take that money, buy a cannon, and go into business for ourselves!”

Costumed Dramatic Monologue (3–5 minutes. Must be memorized.)

The costumed dramatic monologue is to consist of an introduction and the selection, all within the 3-to-5-minute time limit.

The student will mentally become one character in the selection, talking to an imaginary person (who does not speak). The student's vocal and facial expression must reflect the drama of the situation. A minimal amount of movement is permitted, but it should enhance the selection, not detract from it. The material is not to be acted out, as in a play. The student should be comfortable with handling the props so that they add to the presentation rather than draw attention away from the message of the selection.

The student's eye focus should be with, or in the direction of, the audience, with minimal exception. (The student should focus on an imaginary person located slightly above the heads of the audience, or slightly to the right or left. The student should have a forward stance.)

The student is limited to one costume and/or two props. A costume is required during the entire presentation. If an article of clothing is removed during the presentation, it then becomes a prop.

Note: Some selections may be too short to meet the minimum time requirement. Students may use one of these in combination with another short piece, probably on a similar theme or by the same author. Also, caution them against reading/reciting too fast, reminding them that appropriate pauses will often increase the effectiveness of a presentation.

Mary Magdalene

from *Heart Cries* by Mary Lou Carney

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary of Magdala went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said; "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" (John 20:1–2).

O God—when will this nightmare end!

Is there no limit to the cruelty of the Romans, the treachery of the Sanhedrin? Now they have taken his body!

The spices I have brought to anoint him lie at my feet in mocking silence. Isn't it enough they scourged him humiliated him crucified him? Did they then have to steal his mangled body from Joseph's tomb, denying him even the rites of burial?

But what do they hope to gain?

This makes no sense, no sense at all ...but then nothing in Jerusalem has made sense these last few days.

Only a week ago Jesus rode into the city while the people waved palm branches and pledged their allegiance, shouting "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Such allegiance!

Those are the same people who only a few days later clamored for the release of that scum Barabbas—and demanded that Jesus be crucified.

I cannot bear to think my Master will not have the simple rites of death!

God, I hate them!

I hate them all—those pious, scheming priests that self-centered Sanhedrin.

Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put Him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. "Woman," he said, "Why are you crying, who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). Mary of Magdala went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" — (John 20:11–16, 18a)

They are all hypocrites whose mouths mumbled scripture while their hearts planned his murder!

Oh, to be a man—a man with the courage and strength of Samson! Then I would rip out the hearts of those cowardly dogs who cluster in the Temple licking their chops savoring their victory.

And my laughter would drown the sounds of their death groans.

How my mouth waters for the taste of vengeance!

But even as my anger burns, O God, I hear the voice of my gentle Jesus saying, "Love your enemies."

Love! How is that possible?

Standing here in the garden, I feel the flush of rage on my face, the rush of blood that leaves my hands tingling for revenge.

I can't do it.

I can't love those enemies—the very ones who nailed my Rabboni to the cross!

O God, you whom Jesus called Father, free me from this consuming hatred as once your son freed me from Satan's evil spirits.

God of all power, allow me,—somehow—to complete this last act of devotion.

Teach me anew to trust you—or my hopes and dreams will remain as dead as the crucified Christ.

Costumed Humorous Monologue (3–5 minutes. Must be memorized.)

The costumed humorous monologue is to consist of an introduction and the selection, all within the 3-to-5-minute time limit. The student will mentally become one character in the selection, talking to an imaginary person (who does not speak). The student's vocal and facial expressions must reflect the humor of the situation. A minimal amount of movement is permitted, but it should enhance the selection, not detract from it. The material is not to be acted out, as in a play. The student should be comfortable with handling the props so that they add to the presentation rather than draw attention away from the message of the selection.

The student's eye focus should be with, or in the direction of, the audience, with minimal exception. (The student should focus on an imaginary person located slightly above the heads of the audience, or slightly to the right or left. The student should have a forward stance.)

The student is limited to one costume and/or two props. A costume is required during the entire presentation. If an article of clothing is removed during the presentation, it then becomes a prop.

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Can You Hold Please?

From *Drama Skits and Sketches* by Youth Specialties (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997)

A man or woman is seated at an office desk covered with paperwork, which obviously consumes the worker's time. A telephone and calculator are on the desk; a wall calendar hangs conspicuously within arm's reach. The phone rings.

Hello, Nancy speaking ... Jesus? Jesus who? ... uh huh ... *(Phone rings)* Can you hold please? *(Switches lines)* Hello, Nancy speaking ... Oh, hi honey ... Sure, what do you need? ... uh huh ... yeah, I'll pick it up. White or whole wheat? ... Okay ... right, and four rolls of pastel blue two-ply ... Sure, I'll run by there ... oh, I forgot about that ... yes, I'll meet you at the restaurant at, oh, say eight tonight ... okay, see you then ... *(Crosses Monday off calendar)* ... bye-bye, sweetheart. *(Returns to the original call)* Thanks for holding. Okay, how can I help you? ... Are you looking for a donation? ... What's the cause? *(Phone rings)* Sorry, can you hold again? *(Switches lines)* Hello ... yes sir ... yes sir ... of course, Mr. Jones ... Thursday? ... Sure, I don't see why not. How late do you think it will run? ... uh huh ... okay, Thursday it is. *(Crosses Thursday off the calendar and returns to first caller)* Thanks for waiting. Now what did you say you wanted? ... *(Cradles the receiver on her shoulder, occupies herself with paperwork as she listens, obviously apathetic about the call)* ... uh huh ... and this is for which cause? *(Phone rings)* I'm sorry, can you hold please? *(Switches lines)* Hello, Nancy here. How are you, Sue? ... Really? Great! So you're joining the health club, too? ... Yeah, gotta take some pounds off, as usual ... I'd love to give you a ride on Tuesday ... okay ... *(Crosses Tuesday off)* ... Bye. *(Returns to original call)* All right now, what is it you're wanting? ... *(Writes memos and notes obviously unrelated to her conversation, punches calculator keys)* ... Gee, I don't know ... yeah ... well, I'd rather not get involved right now ... *(Phone rings)* ... Can you hold please? *(Switches lines)* Hello?... Hi, Tom ... yeah, I thought the kids responded well to my lesson last Sunday ... sure, we'd better get down to planning that retreat ... Friday night's open ... Okay, Tom, see you Friday *(Returns to original call)* Hello? You know, I just don't think I ... yes, I know, but ... That's true, but ... of course ... I understand, but I still don't want ... *(Phone rings)* I'm sorry, can you hold please? *(Switches lines)* Hello, Nancy speaking ... Hi, Miriam ... it is? ... where is it showing? ... all right, I'll get the tickets for ... let's see ... *(Studies calendar and crosses off Wednesday)* ... for Wednesday ... okay, bye. *(Returns to first call)* Yeah, I'm back ... yes I know it doesn't require much time, but I ... I know that ... look, I'd rather ... no, you're not asking too much, it's just that I ... *(Phone rings)* Can you hold please? *(Switches lines)* Hello, Nancy here ... hi, honey ... oh, no, I forgot all about it ... yes, I remember now ... Brian's weekend soccer tournament ... *(Crosses Saturday and Sunday on the calendar)* ... yeah ... make sure he finishes his homework as soon as he gets home from practice tonight ... okay ... bye-bye, honey. *(Returns to original call)* Look, I've — *(Aloud but to herself)* Funny, he hung up ... *(Looking at calendar)* ... oh well, I was too busy anyway. *(Hangs up phone, puts on coat, and walks out, briefcase in hand)*

Visual Aid Speech (3–5 minutes. Must be memorized.)

The visual aid speech must use published material to teach a Bible story or a Christian truth.

The presentation is to consist of an introduction and the speech, all within the 3-to-5-minute time limit. The introduction must include the Scripture verse(s) and/or the Christian truth to be portrayed. The student should integrate the use of aids while speaking to and glancing at the audience.

Students may use flannel graph, chalk talk, object lesson, charts, etc., to teach the Bible story or Christian truth (no electronic equipment).

This category is also for the individual student working with puppet(s). (All students in this category must work individually, without assistance). Audience participation or the use of volunteer(s) is not permitted.

Students must supply their own equipment.

Note: *Some selections may be too short to meet the minimum time requirement. Students may use one of these in combination with another shorter piece, probably on a similar theme or by the same author. Also, caution them against reading/reciting too fast, reminding them that appropriate pauses will often increase the effectiveness of a presentation.*

Real or Counterfeit?

From *Teaching with Objects* by Carl E. Lindgren (Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press)

Bible Verses: Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My father who is in heaven (Matthew 10:32–33, NKJV).

Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven (Matthew 7:21, NKJV).

Materials: Play money from the dime store and a real dollar bill.

Lesson: Printing one’s own money is called counterfeiting, and one who prints his own money is known as a counterfeiter. One of the most notorious counterfeiters in our country for some years was a man known to government agents simply as number 880. They assigned this number to him before they knew his name or identity. However, he was the object of one of the greatest manhunts in the government’s history.

Most counterfeiters print a large sum of money in big bills—\$10, \$20, or \$50—and try to get rich overnight. But number 880 was different. He printed only \$1 bills. He passed only a few each month and always to different persons. Soon his fake dollars were showing up all over New York City.

Now, you might think that counterfeiting \$1 bills isn’t so bad. But the government didn’t feel that way. Counterfeiting is breaking the law. Government men set traps for the counterfeiter all over the city. Somehow number 880 always managed to escape. The FBI searched for nearly ten years before they finally caught him—and then it was only by accident.

Number 880 lived alone in a New York apartment with only an old dog for company. He had tried, years before, to earn a living by picking up junk and scrap metal. But this had not brought in enough money to buy food for himself and his dog. So he decided to print his own money on a small hand printing press in his kitchen. This had worked fine for ten whole years.

But one day while he was out, a fire started in his apartment. Not much damage was done, but the men who cleaned up the rubbish threw out a pile of counterfeit money and the plates from which the bills were printed. They thought the bills were only play money.

Some boys found the bills and took them home. Their father recognized [the bills] as counterfeit money, so he called the police. They, in turn, called government agents, who hurried to the apartment. Imagine their surprise when they found a sweet-looking man in his 70s with a big smile, looking for all the world like a kindly old grandfather! No one would ever suspect him of being a counterfeiter. Yet he was. The printing press and counterfeit bills were ample evidence.

In court, old number 880 told the judge he never meant to hurt anyone. After all, he had passed out only \$1 bills. But the \$1 bills had added up. In ten years number 880 had passed more than \$7,000 worth of fake money. Don’t you see that number 880 had broken the law just the same by passing \$1 bills as if he had passed \$100 bills? His lawyer asked the judge to have mercy on him because the counterfeiter was more than 70 years old. The judge did feel sorry for the old man, but counterfeiting is no joke; it is a serious offense. As a counterfeiter, he had to be punished. So this kindly old man, who kept insisting that he had not meant to be dishonest, went to prison to pay for his crime.

(Show play money.) This money is marked nonnegotiable, which means that it cannot be used for real money. It is printed on purpose to be used for play money. But a counterfeiter doesn’t mark his money nonnegotiable. He makes his imitation money look as much like real money as he can, in order to trick or cheat people. He tries to pass it off as the real thing.

No doubt, all of you smugly feel that you will never be tempted to print your own money and become a counterfeiter, like old number 880. But do you realize that you can easily become a spiritual counterfeiter by pretending to be a real Christian when you are not?

Judas was such a counterfeiter. He walked and talked and ate and lived with the Lord Jesus and the other 11 disciples for three years. But Judas was only pretending to be Jesus' devoted follower. It seems he never really loved the Lord Jesus or surrendered to Him. When he saw an opportunity to get some easy money, he betrayed the Lord Jesus. His kiss in the Garden of Gethsemane was the act of a counterfeiter, for that kiss was a signal to Jesus' enemies, not a sign of real love. Anyone who merely pretends to be a Christian is a counterfeit Christian. (*Hold up a real dollar bill and a play one.*) It is easy to tell the difference between play money and the real thing. But it is not so easy to tell the difference between a real Christian and one who is only counterfeit. Some seem-to-be-so Christians deceive themselves and others by being able to quote many Bible verses from memory. They may even know all the Bible stories in their Sunday school lesson book and have a perfect attendance record at Sunday school and junior church. Some counterfeiters have been known to read their Bible every day and perhaps give a faked testimony in the evening youth group at church.

Can they count on getting into heaven because they know all the right words and sound like real Christians? They may have fooled everyone—even themselves. No, if they have never confessed to the Lord Jesus that they are sinners, nor received Him as Savior, they are only faking. They only seem to be Christians.

They may imagine, like old number 880, that they are hurting no one. And they may get away with this counterfeiting for most of their lives. But the Lord tells us that everyone will someday have to stand before God, the great Judge. He knows those who are true Christians and those who are counterfeits.

Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven." Counterfeit Christians who have never received the Lord Jesus as Savior cannot really do the will of the Heavenly Father.

Although God, the great Judge, is loving and merciful, and does not want to punish anyone, He is also fair and just. As surely as the judge had to punish old number 880 for counterfeiting money, God will have to punish those who are only counterfeit, seem-to-be-so Christians. Their punishment will be much worse than a jail sentence, for they will be forever separated from the Lord Jesus and those who love Him.

(*Again hold up a play dollar bill.*) No matter what I do to this play money, it will never be real. But the Lord Jesus can change a counterfeit, seem-to-be-so Christian into the real thing! If you would like to be a real Christian today, won't you just now ask the Lord Jesus to forgive your sins and be your Savior? He will make you a real Christian. Then your memory verses and Sunday School lessons, your testimonies and Bible reading will have real meaning. Then, instead of punishment, there will be everlasting happiness with the Lord Jesus reserved in heaven for you.

Puppets (4–7 Minutes. The presentation must be memorized.)

The puppets presentation must teach a Bible story or a Christian truth. This category is for a team of students (two or more) working with puppets—hand, marionette, dummies, etc. (Students are not to dress/act as puppets.)

The presentation must begin with an introduction that includes the Scripture verse(s) and/or Christian truth to be portrayed. The entire presentation must be given within the 4-to-7-minute time limit. (The minimum/maximum time is increased to allow for the incorporation of various speakers and the manipulation of the puppets.) Judging will be based on the presentation, not the quality/construction of the puppets.

Students must supply their own materials and equipment. (Host schools are not required to provide a puppet stage, but some may have one available; check with the chairperson.)

Students may use published material or write their own script. However, nonpublished scripts must be approved by the school coordinator for content and for adherence to category rules.

A Foolish Young Man

from *You Can Do Christian Puppets* by Bea Carlton (Colorado Springs, CO: Meriwether, 1989)

Puppets:

• Noah • Young Man • Wife • Minister • Scientist

(Noah moves onto stage with hammer in hand. Hammer may be secured to part of a movable arm and hand with wire or a heavy rubber band. Begins to hammer. Young Man enters from the other end of the stage.)

Young Man: Say there, old man, what is that strange thing that you're building?

Noah: I'm building a boat.

Young Man: A boat? Way up here on the hillside? How will you get it down to the river?

Noah: I'm not building it to float on the river. A great flood is coming on the earth, and I plan to save myself and my family in this ark.

Young Man: How do you know this?

Noah: God told me. God told me how to build this boat, and he said that rain would fall from the heavens and cover the whole earth.

Young Man: Ha-ha-ha. Who ever heard of such a thing? Water covering the whole earth. Ha-ha-ha. I think you're crazy.

Noah: A flood is coming whether you believe it or not. God said so and I believe God! Every living thing that is not in this ark will be killed by the waters.

Young Man: (Scoffingly) Why would God destroy the people he made?

Noah: Because people have become so wicked and so violent. They have become so bad that God is sorry he ever made them.

Young Man: Why did God warn you so that you could escape?

Noah: Because I serve God and try to please him.

Young Man: (Thoughtfully) How could I be saved?

Noah: If you will turn away from your wicked ways and help us build the ark, I'm sure God will save you too.

Young Man: I'll go talk to my wife about it right now. And I'll see you later.

Noah: We would be glad to have you join us. But don't wait too long. (Both exit) (Turn back to audience to show time elapsed or scene change)

Young Man: (Coming on stage) Wife! Wife! (Wife appears) Oh, there you are. Say, we don't have a minute to lose if we want to be saved! There's a man out on the hillside building a big boat and he said ...

Wife: (Interrupting) I know what he said. You've been listening to that crazy old man ... Noah. (Mockingly) And he said there's a flood coming out of the sky and everyone who doesn't get in his silly boat will be drowned!

Young Man: Don't you believe his story?

Wife: No, I don't! When I was a little girl he was building that ark and preaching that a flood was coming. And a flood hasn't come yet!

Young Man: . . . but he seemed so sincere and I felt down in my heart that God had spoken to him. What if Noah is right and we are all drowned because we don't believe.

Wife: I'll tell you what. Go talk to our pastor and see what he says.

Young Man: That's a good idea! I'll go right now. (Turn back to audience to show time elapsed or scene change.)

(Minister enters; a knock is heard; minister moves to other end of stage and appears to open door.)

Minister: Come in, my boy, come in! What can I do for you?

Young Man: (Entering) I've been talking to Noah. Do you believe that God is really going to destroy

the people of the earth with a flood because we are so wicked?

Minister: Ha-ha-ha. Of course not! That old man is a fanatic ... just an old killjoy. People aren't really so bad. I say, "let's eat, drink, and be merry!" Forget about old Noah! You're too young to worry about dying. Have a good time, and let the future take care of itself!

Young Man: (Doubtfully) Well ... OK ... if you say so. I guess you should know. (Turn back to audience to show time elapsed or scene change.)

Narrator: It is a few days later. (*Young Man and Scientist enter together.*)

Young Man: (*Looking toward the other end of the stage*) What in the world is happening over there?

Scientist: A bunch of animals are going into Noah's boat.

Young Man: (*Excitedly*) Then Noah's story is true! And even the animals believe a flood is coming.

Scientist: Don't get excited, young man. I'm a scientist, and I'm sure there is a logical explanation why pairs of animals would file into the ark this way. I've come to study them and discover why.

Young Man: I believe Noah is telling the truth! It may begin to rain any minute! I'm going home and get my wife and get in Noah's ark before it is too late.

Scientist: Do you want people laughing and making fun of you like they do Noah and his family?

Young Man: I'd rather be laughed at than drown! (*Turns and walks rapidly away*)

Scientist: (*Shaking his head as he watches him go*) Tut-tut. Poor, ignorant soul. (*Exits*)

Narrator: It's a few minutes later.

Young Man: (*Rushing onto stage out of breath*) Wife ... Wife! (*She enters*) Come quick we've got to get in Noah's ark! Animals ... a male and female of each kind ... are filing into the ark right now. It could start raining any minute!

Wife: (*Angrily*) I've had enough of this foolishness! I'll not leave my nice home and go live with a bunch of wild animals and be laughed at! Besides, Noah would think the things I like to do are sinful, and I don't plan to quit doing them for anyone!

Young Man: But, Wife, we may drown if—

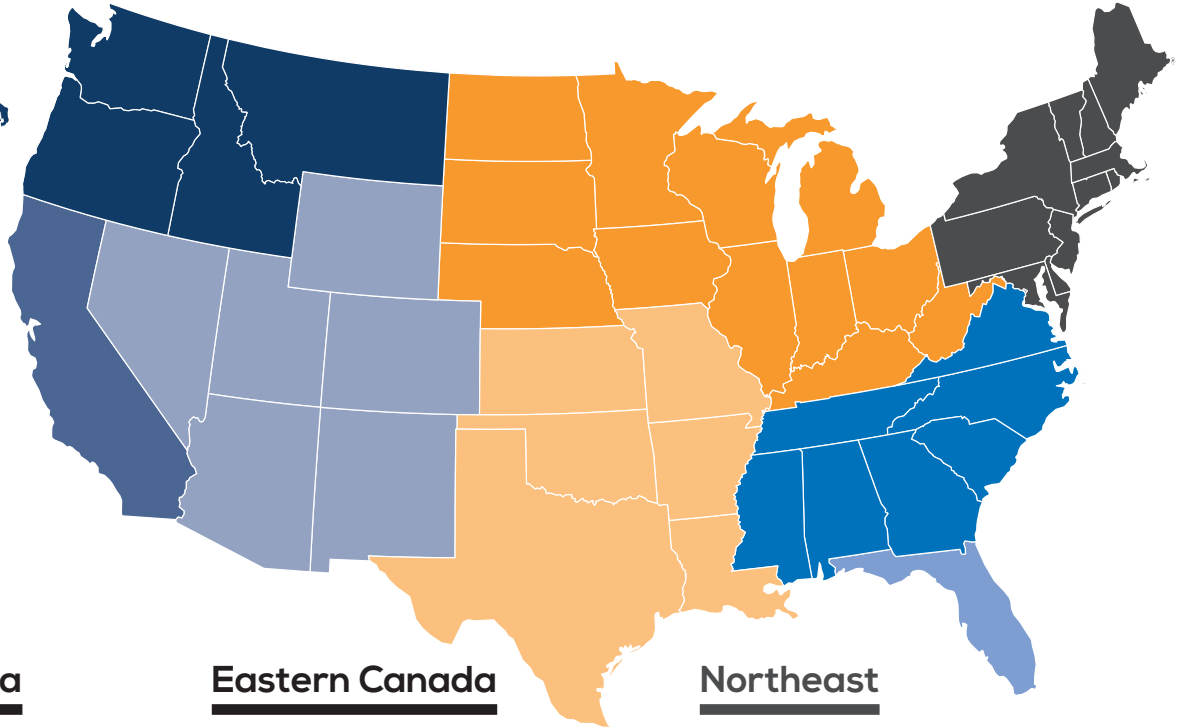
Wife: Not another word! I'd rather drown than go live with the "holy" preacher and his family! And if you say another word about it, I ... I'll go home to mother!

Young Man: (*Sadly*) Yes, dear. But I have the feeling that is just what we will do—drown!

(*Both exit, Wife flouncing out, Young Man more slowly, with bowed head.*)

In the boat, God shut the door. After seven days, a terrible flood came on the earth ... just as Noah had said ... and everyone on the whole earth that was not in the ark drowned.

The Bible says that Jesus is coming back to the earth to take his people home with him. Some people laugh, just as they did in Noah's day, but Jesus is coming back whether people believe it or not. The only ones who are going with him are the ones who have invited Christ into their hearts and are living for God. Are you ready to go? Jesus is the big boat, and all who are not on his boat will not go. Are you in the Jesus boat? If not, you can be.



Western Canada

44 Willow Brook Dr. N.W.
Airdrie, AB T4B 2J5 Canada
403.948.2332 | info@acsiwc.org

Northwest

student_activitiesNW@acsi.org
16703 SE McGillivray Blvd. Suite 110
Vancouver, WA 98683
360.256.5860 | Fax 360.256.7357
Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon,
Washington

California/Hawaii

student_activitiesCAHI@acsi.org
910 E. Birch St., Suite 260
Brea, CA 92821-5854
714.256.1287 | Fax 714.256.4085
California, Hawaii

Rocky Mountain

student_activitiesRM@acsi.org
1607 N. Wilmot Rd., Suite 104D
Tucson, AZ 85712
520.514.2897 | Fax 520.514.0994
Arizona, Colorado, Nevada,
New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming

Eastern Canada

1 Wenden Ct., R.R. #2
Minesing, ON L0L 1Y2 Canada
705.728.7344 | gkennedy@acsiec.org

Mid-America

student_activitiesMA@acsi.org
4081 N Perryville Road,
Loves Park, IL 61111
815.282.7070 | Fax 815.282.7086
Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky,
Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska,
North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota,
West Virginia, Wisconsin

South-Central

student_activitiesSC@acsi.org
2001 W. Plano Parkway, Suite 3600
Plano, TX 75075
972.941.4404 | Fax 972.941.4405
Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri,
Oklahoma, Texas

Northeast

student_activitiesNE@acsi.org
845 Silver Spring Plaza, Suite B
Lancaster, PA 17601-1183
717.285.3022 | Fax 717.285.2128
Connecticut, Delaware,
District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland,
Massachusetts, New Hampshire,
New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania,
Rhode Island, Vermont

Southeast

student_activitiesSE@acsi.org
1780 Oak Road, Suite B
Snellville, GA 30078-1537
Mailing address: P.O. Box 1537
770.985.5840 | Fax 770.985.5847
Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi,
North Carolina, South Carolina,
Tennessee, Virginia

Florida

student_activitiesFL@acsi.org
461 Plaza Dr., Suite C
Dunedin, Florida 34698
727.734.7096 | Fax 727.734.3666
Florida, Caribbean