



HERO_{se}!

HE LIVED
HE DIED
AND
HERO_{se}!

Extraordinary Easter Celebration
For Ordinary Heroes!

HEROse!

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HERO_{se}



Have you ever wanted God to appear in the sky, point at you and confirm, "I AM! I AM GOD!" If only you could see some miraculous event, then you would believe.

The good news is that God did just that! God entered time and space for thirty three years. His Only Son, Heaven's Ambassador, proclaimed the message, "I Am God. Come Home!" He lived, He died and...HE ROse!

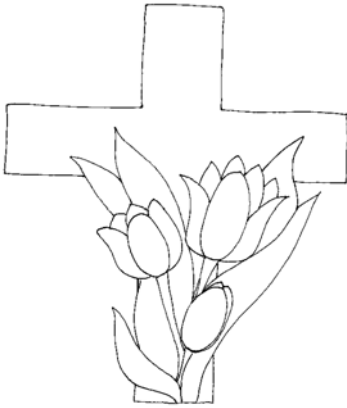
While the world slept, an amazing, unbelievable, one of a kind event designed by God flashed across a humble community of people who were afraid...very afraid. From cowards to heroes, common folk were to rise up and follow a real Hero, Jesus of Nazareth, because.....HE ROse!

For two thousand years people around the world have celebrated an event that changed the world like no other. It's the resurrection of Jesus. Prophets centuries before Christ made hundreds of specific prophecies concerning His life, death and resurrection. They revealed that He would be fully God and yet a man. He would die a brutal death for the sins of man, conquer death and rise from the grave. He would leave for Heaven and return to establish His Kingdom on earth.

The eleven men who followed Him closely and witnessed His death and resurrection died martyrs' deaths rather than deny the truth of His resurrection.

Throughout the centuries millions have found new life and hope through a relationship with Jesus the Risen Lord. Come celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ with us. It is our hope that you find the Risen Lord for yourself.

HERO_{se}!



HERO_{se} is an easy-to-prepare Easter Sunday School/All Church Easter Celebration. Feature a unexpected story teller who has traveled through time from the days of Jesus and small groups of children, teens and adults who tell the story of the day Jesus rose to change the world forever.

Memorization is not necessary.

HERO_{se} is rehearsed during Sunday School by separate groups under the leadership of their teachers. Gather the whole group for a final dress rehearsal and this Easter celebration is set to go.

HERO_{se} is a forty-five minute presentation sprinkled with humor, inspiration and the re-telling of how our Super Hero, led a group of reluctant heroes into the adventure of a lifetime! This event is designed to challenge your church to think about their own courage when proclaiming the claims of Christ to a modern world in desperate need.

HERO_{se} involves the audience singing a variety of traditional Easter Carols. Add a few special musical pieces by individuals or small groups to complete the musical portion of the program. Adapt the entire program to fit the talents of your groups.

HERO_{se} concludes with Rise Again Café. Serve breakfast, play Easter music and fellowship with each other in thankfulness for what Jesus has done!

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EASTER DIRECTOR

LEAD WITH LOVE!



Mold small groups into a well organized Easter team. Make copies and assign individual segments to Sunday School classes, church committees, small groups of friends and individuals who agree to become part of the event. Adapt HERO_{se} to fit the number of participants available in your church.

LEAD WITH PREPARATION!

Ask small group leaders to organize their group complete with props or costumes as suggested for their segment. Be prepared to help the teachers/leaders but for the most part they should be able to handle their own material. The result will be a wonderful presentation of the story of Easter.

LEAD WITH ENTHUSIASM!

Statistics show Easter Sunday is the most attended church service of the year. It is very possible that as you read this you are thinking, "Why me? I cannot do this!" Put those feelings aside and dive into this charming presentation of Easter morning with a minimum of hassle. May your church be blessed by this special touch that reminds everyone of the gift Jesus offers with salvation through Him.

DELEGATE!

Sunday School teachers and small group leaders become involved in preparing their groups. Teachers/leaders also participate with speaking parts. Trust the staff to carry out their tasks. Never apologize when asking people to help.

POSITIVE APPROACH!

Easter is busy but also exciting and meaningful. It is worth extra effort in the midst of family preparations and travel plans. Uncomplicated preparations will be appreciated by everyone.

PRAY!

Pray for staff, students and set up. Take all details before the Lord and then—RELAX! God is in control. You carry out individual tasks at hand.

PLAN!

Copy and read this manual. Mark areas requiring special attention. List details you must handle personally. Give teachers and participants copies of their segment with their personal parts highlighted for easy use.

PREPARE!

Hopefully you have ordered and received **HERO_{se}** with more than one month lead time. Copy materials for individual groups and assign responsibility for small group practice to each leader.

Some churches enjoy memorization and others avoid it. Except for young non readers, read all parts. If your church is fond of memorization, lead time must be longer and more intense rehearsal is necessary.

This is an ALL CHURCH production!

Involve adults as readers, musicians and leaders.

Small churches: Adapt program to fit available participants.

ADAPTATIONS -- MAKE IT WORK!



Preview individual segments. Adapt HERO_{se} to fit your local church. Segments intended for specific age groups may be assigned to older or younger groups, combined or even eliminated. Your goal is to present the Easter story with the number of participants available.

HERO_{se} is designed to last about 45 minutes, depending upon time needed for special music. **RISE AGAIN CAFÉ** party is not included in this time frame.

WHEN SHOULD WE PRESENT THIS PROGRAM?

Sunrise Service, Sunday School hour or even during Easter Morning worship.

That being said, you may need to arrange another time in your church schedule for the presentation.

SMALL CHURCH

Is your church small (10-20 participants)? Remove segments requiring more people than available. Combine speaking parts so few people are needed for performance. *(Example: For a combined Middle School-Senior High class, consider eliminating one presentation and featuring the vignette you like the best. Or, use the same group to present both segments.)* Adults are crucial to the small church presentation.

MEDIUM CHURCH

Choose segments you personally like best and eliminate what cannot be performed. The goal is to tell the Easter story so don't leave out important parts!

LARGE CHURCH

Organize speakers, snack makers, servers, sound and lighting staff and others who make this easy program exciting. Use as many people as possible.

EASTER MUSIC!



Coordinate appropriate music with the church music director, organist and pianist. Every Easter song is sung by participants and the audience. Include hymn book numbers in a printed program or use a projection system to illuminate words.

EASTER HYMNS

Traditional Easter carols are suggested throughout the program. If desired, change any hymn to fit the tradition of your local congregation. If your Sunday School has an established Sunday School Opening, practice the songs you choose for three to four weeks prior to performance.

OPTIONAL SPECIAL MUSIC

Sprinkle special music throughout the event featuring local church and community talent. These options are NOT in the existing program and may be inserted where desired. Think about performance time limitations in early planning stages.

VOCAL SOLO
INSTRUMENTAL SOLO
CHILDREN/ADULT CHOIRS
INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE
HANDBELL/CHIME CHOIR

STAGE AND PROPS



HEROse is an upbeat presentation of the Easter story using a minimum of props and using very little special staging. Each small group carries their props as needed.

SET UP

The church sanctuary will be decorated for Easter. Banks of Easter lilies, large cross, open tomb display and other items add to the festive atmosphere. Leave those items in place.

STAGING

Participants take center stage, speak from the aisles, enter from the back and sometimes mingle with the audience.

SEATING

Reserve seating for classes, small groups and individual participants before the audience enters the area. Make bows or rope off the saved seats. Assign adult/teen assistants to sit with younger children during the program.

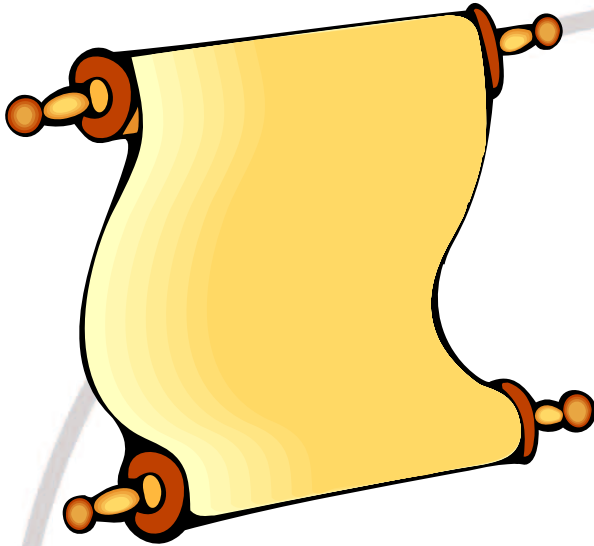
SOUND SYSTEM

Use the existing sound system to its' best advantage. Place one or more microphones within easy reach of participants. Students must be heard clearly as they speak. It may make the difference between a frustrating experience and a delightful program for the audience. Do not neglect this detail.

LIGHTING

Turn off overhead sanctuary lights. Light all mood lighting. Place small spot lights on the floor aimed upward toward the participants. Try for dramatic lighting with light and dark shadows.

COSTUMES



Holy Land costuming is appropriate for SOME characters. When costuming a large group, one solution is to ask each participant to devise their personal attire. Parents may be willing to provide bathrobes, caftans and headgear for their child. Not every group in the program needs costumes. Some wear modern day clothing.

Main characters may need costume help. Props such as donkeys, palm branches, shepherd staffs, etc., can be made from cardboard and displayed as if they are "real" items. Use bathrobes, sandals, sheets, long T-shirts with rope belts, bare feet, simple caftans and head wraps. Some jewelry may be worn.

PILLOWCASES: Pillowcases work well for small children. Cut a neck hole in the top of the pillowcase. Cut up the front to the neck hole. Cut armholes in the sides. This makes a long, vest type costume. Plaid or striped flannel pillowcases are available and work great for costumes.

FABRIC: Two wide strips of fabric, one over each shoulder, crossed across the back and front of the child, tied with a sash makes a good costume too. Use striped or colorful fabric.

A square of fabric over the head with a wide ribbon or piece of cloth around the top of the head makes a headpiece. Make large scrunchies (like girls wear around ponytails) and put them over the square fabric around the head. It holds the fabric on quite well.

BATHROBES: Purchase bathrobes at garage sales and resale shops or borrow robes. Wrap in front and use contrasting fabric for head dresses and sashes to complete the costume.

ANGELS: Dress Easter angels in white cotton fabric or silver lame' fabric found in most textile stores. Angels may wear cardboard, feather wings or remain wingless. Place gold or silver tinsel taped in a circle halo on each angel head. Tie tinsel around the waist for a sparkling angel belt. Face and hair glitter add "extra sparkle".

CHILD USHERS



Once everyone is costumed, consider assigning a few "angels" and "palm waving children" to serve as ushers giving programs and seating people before the performance. Employ a variety of ages.

Place children at each door and coach them, *"Welcome to 'HEROse'. May I show you to your seat?"* Or, *"Where would you like to sit?"* The friendly greeting is an added personal touch that is much appreciated by older members of the audience.

After **HEROse**, ask participants to remain in costume at **RISE AGAIN CAFE**. They serve beverages, greet guests and wander through the serving area while people eat and talk.

PUBLICITY



*Publicize **HEROse**
through church communication channels.
Announce it in the church newsletter,
the weekly worship bulletin and from the pulpit.*

CHURCH BULLETIN AND NEWSLETTER

Inform the congregation about this special Easter event. Print an announcement in the newsletter preceding Easter. If you plan **RISE AGAIN CAFE**, let people know there will be fellowship and food following the program.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER

Include an announcement along with Easter publicity for the church. Talk to a reporter and photographer to see if a feature article is possible.

TELEVISION AND RADIO

Consider advertising on your local cable advertising channel. Check it out! It may be one more avenue of great publicity!

INVITATIONS

Send family invitations home with Sunday School students. This is effective for families who send their children to your children's ministry but are not personally involved. Use real Easter cards with invitations tucked inside.



TEACHERS!

INVOLVE STUDENTS

If you have more students than speaking parts, divide parts or decide how to involve extra students. If you have less students than parts, allow students to say two or three segments. Be specific when assigning jobs of holding visuals, carrying props and dressing in costume.

HIGHLIGHT INDIVIDUAL PARTS

Decide if your students will memorize their speaking parts or read them. Scripture verses may be memorized by all students. If your students read their parts, back copies with colorful construction paper, glitter and Easter stickers. Performance copies must remain in good shape.

PRACTICE

In the weeks before the program, rehearse during Sunday School and plan costuming. If a visual aid or prop is suggested for your group, decide how this will be provided. Make the segment you are assigned fit your small group with appropriate adaptations.

COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS

Let parents know when to have their children at formal rehearsals and the performance. Invite them to attend and be sure they know what props or costuming their child is responsible to bring.

ADAPT HEROES TO FIT YOUR SPECIFIC GROUP!

ATTEND REHEARSAL/PERFORMANCE

Meet your class for the processional. Don costumes in a back room, line up according to specific instructions and enter the sanctuary as directed. Sit with your group in the designated area. Lead them on and off stage. Perform your own speaking part with enthusiasm. Coach students quietly if they have problems speaking their parts...Stage fright is not uncommon!

IF YOU NEED HELP....

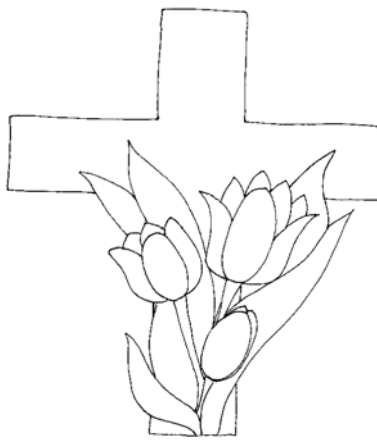
The **HERO_{se}** Director is available if you need help but you should have your small group ready to participate. The program will come together at the last moment with little formal large group rehearsal.

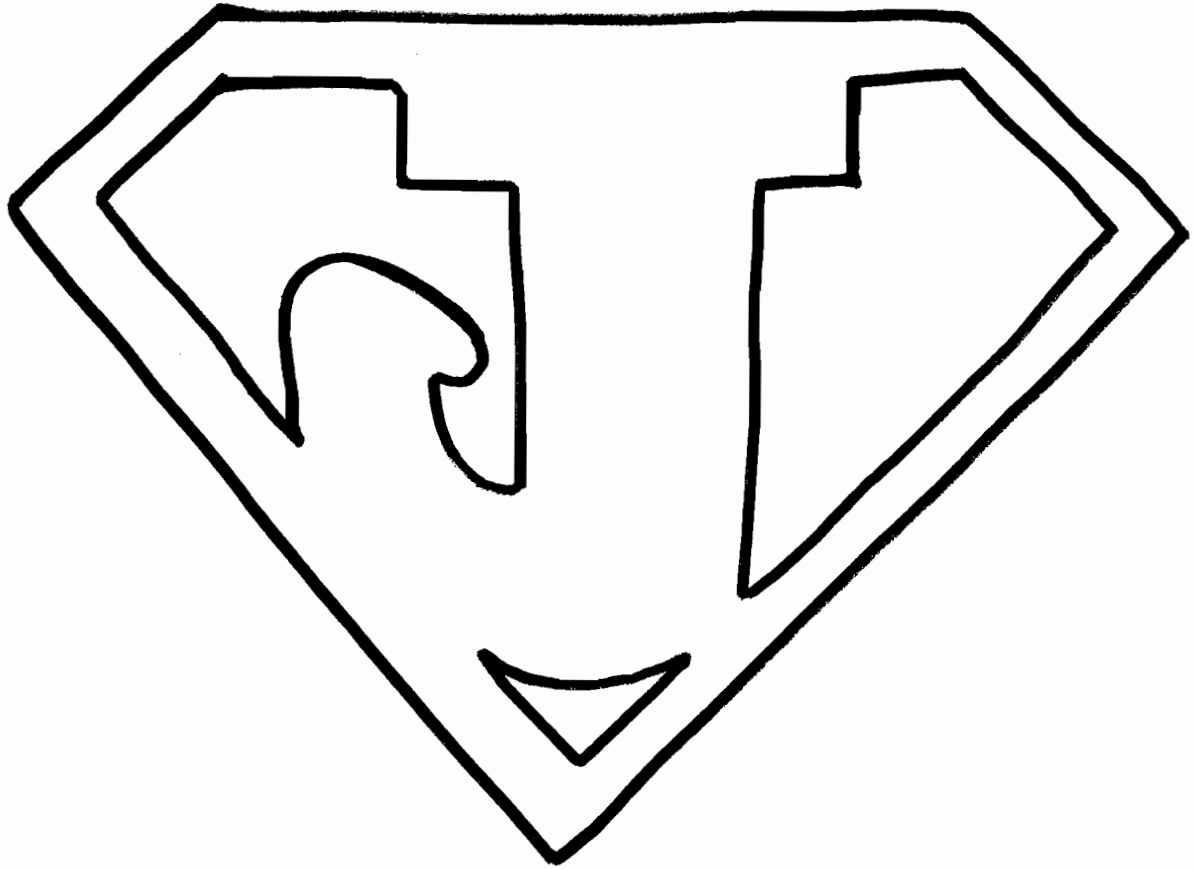
RISE AGAIN CAFE

Stay for **RISE AGAIN CAFE**. Collect props before your group attends the party. Ask students to remain in costume. Mingle with guests. Enjoy your students and their families. Eat something delicious to treat yourself for the great results!

ENJOY THE EASTER EXPERIENCE!

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to touch lives of children and adults. Enjoy your small part of the bigger picture. The Resurrection Morning account is classic. Life with Jesus changes people. The spiritual experience is amazing!





SUPER J

Use this simple pattern to make the hero symbol part of the experience. Adjust the size of the SUPER J to the width and length that serves you best. Print them on stiff paper or cardboard and use as a backing for speaking parts.

If desired, make huge, free standing symbols to place on stage or on walls. With Jesus as our Hero, we should announce it to the world!

Make each SUPER J eye catching by spreading white glue in your favorite color or colors and pour sparkling glitter on the glue. Allow to dry completely. To keep the spread of sparkles to a minimum, store all parts in an open box before the program.

LEAH OF GALILEE EASTER STORY TELLER

Choose one person to portray Leah of Galilee. This person is an important link between groups as they present their program segment. Leah has "traveled" through space and time to introduce heroes of the Easter story to your group.



CHARACTER: Your Leah may be young, middle aged or older. She portrays a firsthand witness to the last days of Jesus and tells the Easter story on stage as each group interacts with the heroes of the story. It is obvious that she is a personal friend of Jesus and to each "hero" as she introduces them to the participating groups.

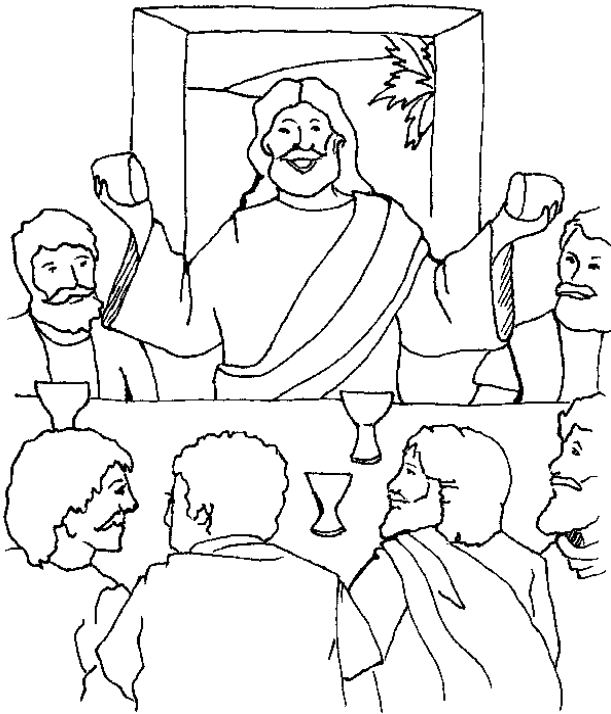
COSTUME: Dress in simple Holy Land clothing.

SCRIPT: No memorization is necessary. Leah to carries a complete script with her in a notebook or folder.

STAGE: Prepare a chair covered with a sheet or blanket where Leah sits and holds the script in her lap. Add a rustic bench, pottery, greenery and colorful pillows to the Holy Land feel of the area. Add an extra chair for heroes who visit each small group.

ORDINARY HEROES

VISITORS FROM ANOTHER TIME AND PLACE



HERO_se features the recollections of ordinary people who were eyewitnesses to events surrounding the last week of Jesus' life and of His Resurrection.

CHARACTER: Each Hero Holy Land actor may come from the Sunday School class or small group they belong to in the church. Some actors are chosen to visit on stage if students are very young or if you desire to choose a hero from your list of folks willing to participate.

COSTUME: Heroes dress in simple Holy Land costume.

SCRIPT: No memorization is necessary. Carry the script and read from it. Make enough copies for each group. If desired, back group scripts with glittered SUPER JESUS symbols on stiff paper. (Individual classes may complete the project on their own.)

STAGE: Stand or sit on stage as directed to interact with the group. Speak clearly and slowly so the audience can hear every word.

HERO_{se} AT A GLANCE

**PROCESSION
SUPER HERO INTRODUCTION
LEAH OF GALILEE ARRIVES**

NURSERY: IN THE BEGINNING
PRESCHOOL: SHY HERO-PRECIOUS PERFUME
KINDERGARTEN: HOSANNA HEROES-ROAD TO JERUSALEM

EASTER HYMN OR SPECIAL MUSIC:

GRADES 1-2: POOR HERO-WIDOW'S PENNIES
GRADES 3-4: SERVANT HERO-'SUPPER' ROOM
GRADES 5-6: SLEEPY HEROES-IN THE GARDEN

EASTER HYMN OR SPECIAL MUSIC:

MIDDLE SCHOOL: SCARED HERO-PETER THE NOT SO GREAT
HIGH SCHOOL: COUNTRY HERO-SIMON OF CYRENE

EASTER HYMN OR SPECIAL MUSIC:

YOUNG ADULT: UNKNOWN HERO-NAIL MAKER
MIDDLE ADULT: HAPPY HEROES
SENIOR ADULT: SUPER HERO CONCLUSION

EASTER HYMN OR SPECIAL MUSIC:

RISE AGAIN CAFÉ!



PROCESSION

Gather participants in an outer room before the program begins. Dim sanctuary lights. Existing holiday lights are left burning. Leave stage lights and spotlights so students can read their speaking parts.

PRELUDE

Ask church instrumentalists (*organ/piano/keyboard*) to play bright, cheerful Easter music as the audience gathers for the program. Music ends before the performers enter.



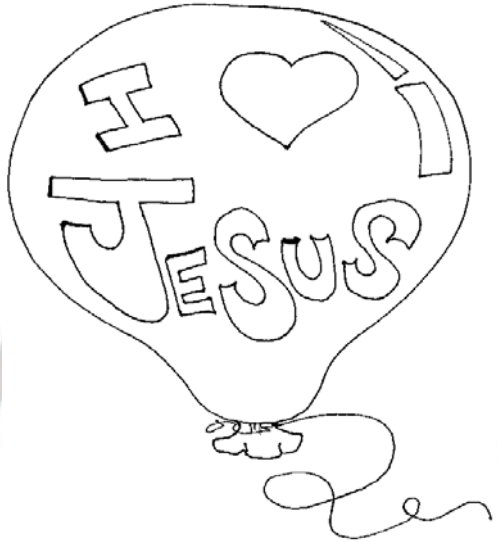
PROCESSION

The Prelude ends and participants enter as a group from the rear of the sanctuary.

Whisper "He Rose!" in unison as people proceed to their seats. Whispering gets louder and louder until they give one final shout when everyone is in place:

"He Rose!"

SUPER HERO INTRODUCTION



Station teens and adults around the edges of the sanctuary. (No costumes needed.) Read the **Super Hero Introduction** with enthusiasm. If the room is dark, carry flashlights to read.

No monotones allowed!

*****OPTION:** *Combine parts or divide parts according to the number of participants available. This could be read by two people speaking back and forth across the sanctuary.*

*****OPTION:** *Back each Reader's copy with cutout "Super J" shapes. (See pattern included.) Glitter the Super J's so they shine as the script is read aloud.*

#1: *(Speak loudly, with rising excitement)* "Faster than a speeding bullet. More powerful than a locomotive. Able to leap tall buildings in a single bound. Look! Up in the sky. It's a bird. It's a plane. It's Superman!"

#2: "Yes, it's Superman - strange visitor from another planet who came to Earth with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men. Superman - who can change the course of mighty rivers, bend steel in his bare hands, and who disguised as Clark Kent, mild-mannered reporter for a great metropolitan newspaper, fights a never ending battle for Truth, Justice and the American Way."

#3: Boys and girls need heroes, brave men and women who fight against evil with powerful weapons and supernatural strength. Do you think this only happens in the movies or comic books? Think again.

#4: God's Word is full of super heroes--Noah with his Ark, Moses defying Pharaoh and parting the Red Sea, Deborah leading the war cry, Samson's jawbone, David's slingshot and the miracles of Jesus-the Ultimate Super Hero of all time.

#5: Seeking "Truth, justice and the American Way" worked well for Superman but heroes of the faith quietly turned to God for courage, truth and faith long before the American Super Hero was invented.

#6: ...and we all know Superman wasn't a real guy!

#7: Really?

ALL READERS IN UNISON: (Loudly) REALLY!

#8: Because the story of Jesus is so impressive, it would be easy to think of him as "Super Jesus", faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, able to leap tall buildings in a single bound." But Jesus is much more than a regular, everyday, pretend Super Hero. Jesus is God among us! God speaking a language we understand. God showing love in practical ways that heal and help and save us.

#9: The story of Jesus began long before He was born in Bethlehem. Salvation is an old, old story. God loved us so much that He sent His only Son to live with us, to teach us about the hope of heaven and to offer Himself as our Savior.

#10: When humans entered the Jesus story, common, ordinary folks took their place in the long line of heroes who believed in Jesus.

#11: Jesus established Himself as our Hero during that time and remains our Super Hero above all other heroes because.... He lived, He died and HEROSE!

LEAH OF GALILEE ARRIVES!

Leah, dressed in simple Holy Land garments, enters from the rear of the room. Walk slowly and wonderingly along the center aisle, looking at every detail of the ceiling, carpeting, seating, lights and people.

LEAH ENTERS: *(Begin speaking from the back of the room.)* Where am I? Moments ago I was drawing water from the well in Nazareth. It is so hot and my feet are so tired that I waited until the crowd left before drawing my water.



The women call out, "There's Leah from 'Galilee-yah'. Thinks she's seen Messiah. Wouldn't wanna 'be-yah!" I guess it is a clever little poem but it hurts. I HAVE seen Messiah. His name is Jesus of Nazareth. I know His mother and grandmothers. I have shared meals with His sisters and brothers.

(Speak to anyone sitting on the aisle....) Could YOU be quiet if you heard good news? Great news? The best news in all the world? God's "Yes to the world" has come and we are part of His story. I must tell His story but no one in Nazareth will listen.

I have never seen a beautiful place of worship like this in Nazareth. Lanterns inside the walls, soft wool on the floor and children...oh, the children! We have children in Nazareth. You would like our children, I think.

(To the youngest participants...nursery or preschool...depending on who is presenting their segment first....while passing their seats) Children, come with me. Tell me about life in this strange place. Let me tell Messiah's story!

NURSERY CLASS AND MOTHERS FOLLOW LEAH TO THE STAGE.

NURSERY MOTHERS/CHILDREN

IN THE BEGINNING

CAST: LEAH, NURSERY TEACHER, MOTHERS AND CHILDREN



FIND PLACES TO SIT AND STAND AROUND LEAH'S CHAIR. BE CASUAL AND COMFORTABLE. ADJUST PART ASSIGNMENTS ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF MOTHERS AND BABIES AVAILABLE. IF MOTHERS ARE NOT AVAILABLE, NURSERY STAFF MAY SPEAK. **No Memorization Needed**

LEAH: *(Sit in on stage chair)* Ahhh, very comfortable! Every story teller loves a cozy seat. Tell me, where am I? Who *are* you people?

NURSERY TEACHER: We are not sure how you got here but you are visiting _____ Church and these are our youngest children and their mothers.

MOTHER #1: Your name, Leah, is a beautiful, old fashioned name and your clothing is so different from ours. Are you truly from Nazareth? In Galilee? Are you one of God's Heroes? We *are* searching for heroes, you know!

LEAH: Hero? No, I'm just an ordinary, everyday woman. My humble Nazareth village is home to ordinary, everyday shepherds and craftsmen. Our most famous family is Mary and Joseph. I remember when their Jesus was as tiny as your sweet babies. I became his friend too. I clearly remember the day He said "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." (Matthew 19:14)

MOTHER #2: You cannot expect us to believe you have traveled all this way to our town! Jesus lived 2000 years ago. *(Excited)* But, just in case, I want to hear your story. Anyone who loves little children like *my* baby is special!

MOTHER #3: I often think about Mary and Joseph's life. My little one is such a "tumbler" that I wonder if Mary ever had to correct Jesus when He was a baby.
LEAH: *(Laughing....)* Oh, yes. Jesus was a lively boy. Mary was a good match for

her oldest son. She made sure He ate good food and washed behind his ears. I was there at the beginning, you know.

MOTHER #4: We know the Christmas story. We've heard about angels, shepherds, innkeeper, wise men and the stable. Or, was it a cave?

NURSERY TEACHER: My Sunday School babies hear Jesus' Bethlehem story every Christmas.

LEAH: **Easter** began in Bethlehem. Young Mary and Joseph traveled there for a Roman government sponsored census while she was expecting her baby.

MOTHER #5: Bad timing if you ask me.

LEAH: It was God's perfect timing foretold by prophets of old. "But for you, Bethlehem....Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel." (Micah 5:2)

I met many quiet heroes during those days. They would not think of themselves as heroes. My hero and friend is Mary. The danger that young girl faced was more than most brave warriors could have endured.

MOTHER #6: Christmas is easy to teach but how can we teach our babies about Easter? It's such a hard story for their little ears. Yet wonderful!

LEAH: "In the beginning...." It's always best to start a story at the beginning. God loved the world so much that He sent His only Son so that whoever believes in Him should never die but have everlasting life. (John 3:16) If your babies believe just that much, they will have eternal life. You gave your children life once but God loves them so much He gives them the gift of eternal life.

MOTHER #7: "In the beginning...." I like that. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...." (Genesis 1:1) Are there everyday heroes in Jesus' story?

LEAH: Oh yes. I want to introduce you to fearless men and women who risked their lives to follow God's Messiah. That is the story we must never forget.

NURSERY TEACHER: Please tell Jesus' story to everyone. We promise to listen carefully! It's nap time. We'll see you later!

NURSERY MOTHERS AND CHILDREN LEAVE THE STAGE.

PRESCHOOL

AGES 4-5

SHY HERO--PRECIOUS PERFUME

CAST: LEAH, MARY OF BETHANY, PRESCHOOL TEACHER, PRESCHOOL STUDENTS.
PRESCHOOL CHILDREN AND TEACHER SIT AND STAND AROUND LEAH'S CHAIR.

No

Memorization



LEAH: Oh look, more little ones. Come to Leah, dear children. Sit near me. I want you to meet a shy hero.

PRESCHOOL TEACHER: My preschool children want to welcome you to our church, Leah. Listen to their words.

PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

(In Unison-Repeat two or three times)

Welcome Leah from Galilee! (Clap hands)

We wave at you so you will see... (Wave at Leah)

That Jesus loves you, yes He does! (Hug self)

He showed us all when He arose! (Scrunch down/Pop up!)

LEAH: What a delightful welcome. I want you to meet a real hero from Bethany. Mary is very shy. She is not Mary the mother of Jesus. She is the Mary who gave Jesus a sweet smelling gift.

MARY ENTERS: *(Dress in simple Holy Land garments. Enter from the back of the room and walk slowly along the center aisle to the stage. If desired, spray a soft, sweet smelling cologne as you move to leave a sweet fragrance behind as you walk.)*

(Waving...) Leah! Dear friend, is that you? It looks like you but this is such a strange place. I found your water pot beside the well and wondered where you went. *(Looking around...)* Where are we? *(Hug Leah and then*

sit down in the opposite chair.)

LEAH: I'm don't know where we are. Someone said we are at _____ Church. Mary, look at these fine children! They said a poem for me. Oh please, say it again to my Bethany friend, Mary.

PRESCHOOL CHILDREN REPEAT THEIR POEM

MARY: *(Whispering loudly....)* Leah, how do they know Jesus arose from the grave? It only happened a few days ago.

LEAH: *(Whispering loudly....)* I don't know. Just go along with it. I'm happy when anyone believes in our Messiah. Tell these children your story.

MARY: *(Spray perfume in the air over the heads of the children.)* Lift your heads. Breathe deeply. My precious perfume is the best gift I can give to Jesus. I'm not a very important person. My brother Lazarus and my sister Martha are far more important. Jesus has been our friend for a long time.

Recently Jesus and His disciples visited our house for dinner. Everyone was quite excited. I took one pound of sweet smelling perfume....

PRESCHOOL TEACHER: It was very expensive!

PRESCHOOL CHILDREN: (In Unison) Ooooooo!

MARY: ...and anointed the feet of Jesus. I wiped His feet with my hair. The whole house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. I wanted to honor Jesus. (John 12:1-3) Judas, the disciple that was about to turn Jesus in to the government wondered, "Why wasn't this perfume sold to feed the hungry."

LEAH: Old Judas was not interested in the poor and hungry. He wanted to steal that money for himself. Never did like that guy! Jesus said, "Let her alone, in order that she may keep it for the day of My burial. The poor you always have with you; but you do not always have Me."

MARY: ...And that was 6 days before Jesus was thrown into so much evil. If only I had known how short His time on earth would be, I would have done more. I was afraid. I wish I had been a hero.

LEAH: You did enough, dear friend. Jesus knows even today what a good friend you and Martha and Lazarus have been. You ARE a hero!

PRECHOOL TEACHER: Mary and Leah, my children have learned much about your love for Jesus. You gave Him your very best perfume. Thank you.

PRECHOOL CHILDREN: (In Unison) **Mary is our SHY HERO!!!**

CHILDREN AND MARY LEAVE THE STAGE.

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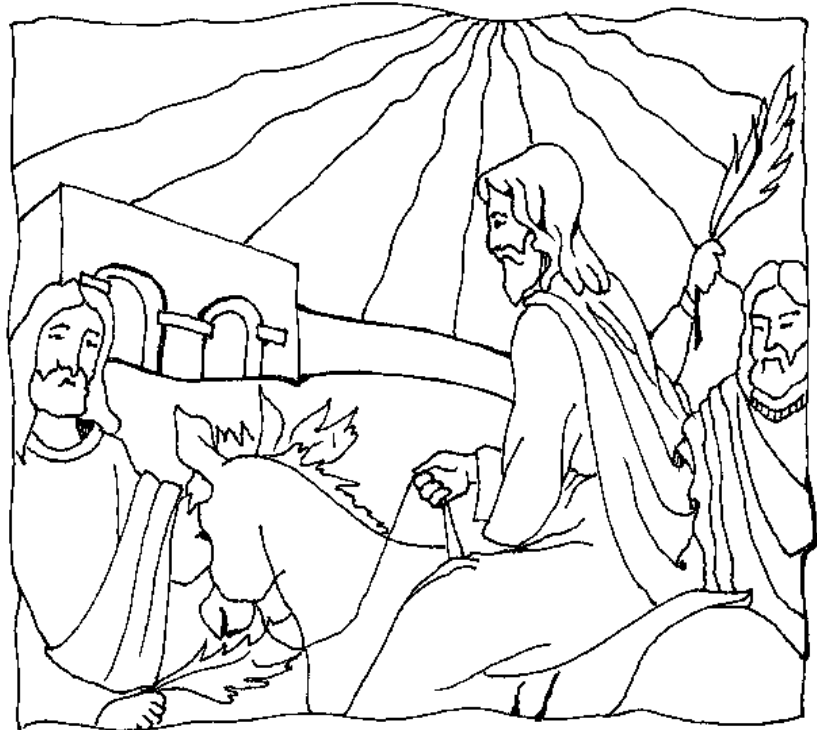
KINDERGARTEN HOSANNA HEROES ROAD TO JERUSALEM

CAST: LEAH, KINDERGARTEN
TEACHER, KINDERGARTEN
STUDENTS

DRESS IN SIMPLE HOLY LAND
GARMENTS. GIVE EACH CHILD A
PALM BRANCH TO CARRY AND
WAVE. PALMS MAY BE HAND
MADE FROM GREEN
CONSTRUCTION PAPER.

No Memorization Needed

LIFE SIZED CARDBOARD CUT
OUT OF A DONKEY.
ENLARGE ENCLOSED PATTERN.



STUDENTS ENTER FROM THE REAR, WAVING PALM BRANCHES AS THEY WALK
ALONG THE AISLE SHOUTING "Praise the Lord", "Hosanna", "Blessed is He
who comes in the name of the Lord".

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: *(Alone on stage)* Have you seen my children?
They are about "this" tall, really cute and sometimes they are loud!

LEAH: Every child looks like that. Be more specific.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: Come to think of it, they are dressed a lot like
you. They are waving palm branches and they are leading a donkey. Not
a real donkey, just a pretend donkey sort of like the animal Jesus rode into

Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. They are looking for HOSANNA HEROES.

LEAH: (*Surprised*) Oh, you know about Jerusalem and palms and the little donkey?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: (*Hand shading eyes, beckon children to enter*) There they are! See them coming? Ok, kids! Come now!

**KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS WAVE PALMS PALM BRANCH PARADE
AS THEY MAKE THEIR WAY TO THE STAGE.**



LEAH: Very impressive! That is what it looked like when Jesus rode the young donkey in the streets of Jerusalem. Oh how the people loved Him.

KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN: (*At the front-In Unison*) Luke 19:38 NAS

**Blessed is the King Who comes in the name of the Lord;
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"**

LEAH: We didn't understand the praise of the people. Later Jesus' disciples remembered the prophets said, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King comes sitting on a donkey's colt." (Zechariah 9:9)

KINDERGARTEN STUDENT: If the people loved Jesus so much, why did they hurt Him?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: The Bible says people in Jerusalem saw Jesus perform miracles.

"As He was going, they were spreading their garments in the road. And as He was now approaching, near the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen." (Luke 19:36-37 NAS) They believed He was their Messiah and on that special Sunday of Palms, they were HOSANNA HEROES shouting to their world that Jesus was their King!

KINDERGARTEN STUDENT: I want to be a HOSANNA HERO.

LEAH: When you give praises to Jesus, our Savior, you are a HOSANNA HERO. You don't have to carry a palm branch or walk in a parade.

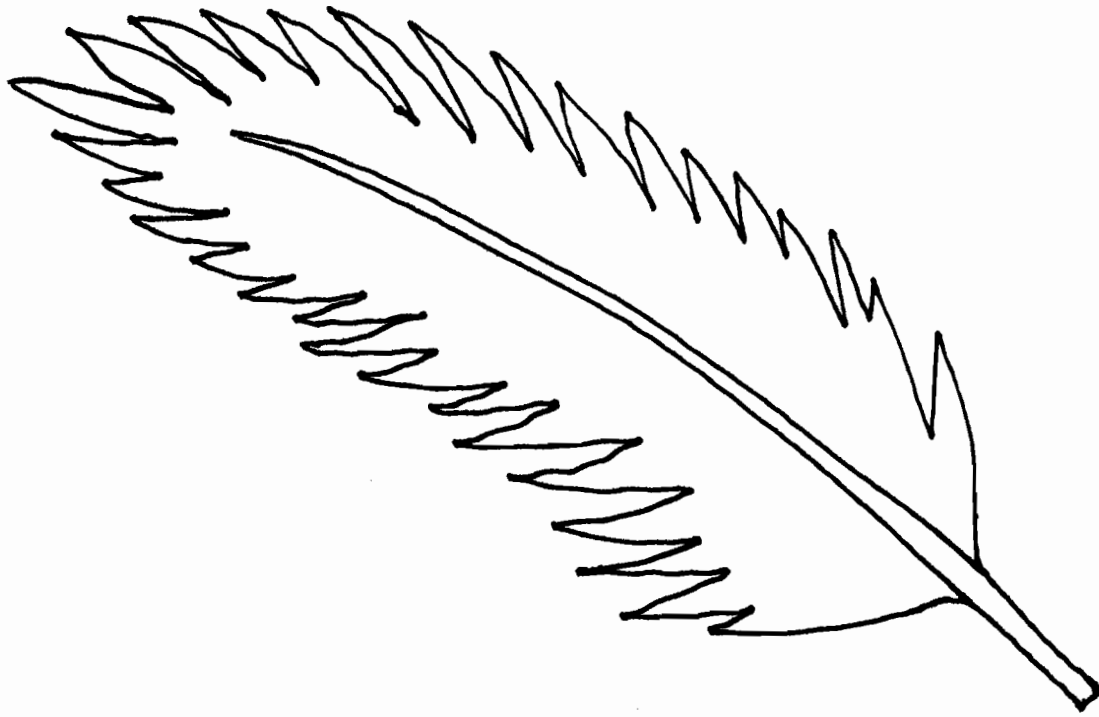
KINDERGARTEN STUDENT: Let's praise Jesus together!

ALL KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS:

**Praise God for Jesus!
Praise His Name in all our cities!
Praise His Name in all our streets!
Praise His Name in all our homes!
Praise His Name in all our hearts!
HOSANNA!**

KINDERGARTEN GROUP RETURNS TO SEATS.

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EASTER HYMN OR SPECIAL MUSIC
PLEASE PURCHASE



ENLARGE THIS PALM PATTERN, CREATE YOUR OWN PALMS
OR PROVIDE REAL PALMS FOR HOSANNA HEROES
TO WAVE AS THEY PARADE INTO THE PROGRAM.



LEAH: I know that woman. She lives near me. She is a very poor widow. No money, no hope. She is a generous person. If anyone needs help, she is always the first to offer whatever she has.

STUDENT: She cannot possibly be an Easter Hero. Where is she going? It looks like she is heading for the offering plate.

STUDENT: She is! She is placing something in the plate.

WIDOW RETREATS FROM THE ROOM SLOWLY WITH HEAD STILL BOWED.

STUDENT: *(Look in plate and remove two pennies!)* Two pennies! Just two little pennies.

LEAH: *(Smiling)* Ahhh, yes. Jesus noticed this widow too. He was teaching in the Temple when she slipped in quietly and put two small copper coins in the treasury. Rich men were placing large treasures and gifts in the box, making a big deal of it...smiling and bowing. They had much more money at home but this poor woman gave all she had. Two little 'mites'.

Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; for they gave of their surplus and put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on". (Luke 21:1-4)

STUDENT: I don't have much to give to the Lord. I'm just a kid. I don't even have a job! *(Calling into audience...)* Mom, can I have my allowance early?

STUDENT: Jesus gave His life for us. We can at least give the little bit we have even if we are kids.

PENNY STUDENT: *(Look longingly at penny jar)* Does that mean I have to give my penny collection?

LEAH: Not unless you want to. A gift is only truly a gift when the person giving it does so with a heart filled with love.

PENNY STUDENT: Look at all the people in this room! I could give a penny to each person to remind them how much Jesus gave when He died on the Cross! Let's do it!

**STUDENTS GRAB HANDFULS OF PENNIES FROM THE JAR
AND HAND EVERYONE IN THE AUDIENCE ONE PENNY!
THEY RETURN TO THEIR SEATS WHEN FINISHED.**

(Music may be playing while students are handing out pennies.)

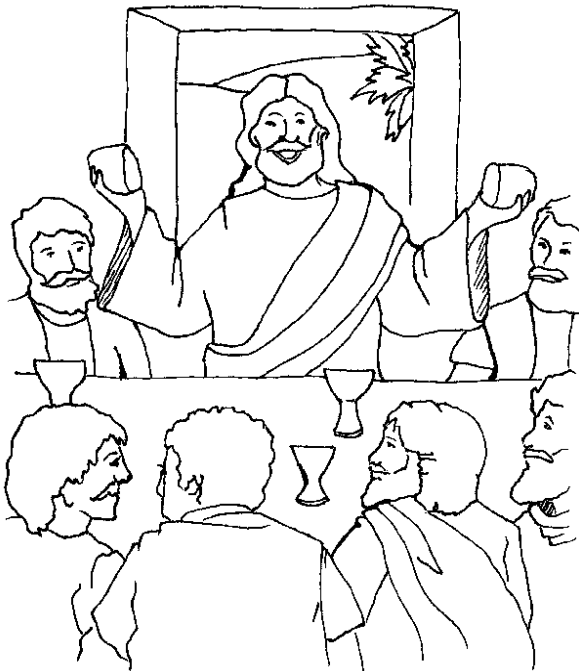
LEAH: *(Walk to center stage...)* When you teach a child to give out of what they have, you teach that child to show love to the lost, the lonely and the least of us. The POOR HERO, a widow, was not a Super Hero but she showed us how to give from what we have. That's exactly what Jesus did a few days later on a Jerusalem hillside. He gave all He had. He gave His life as a sacrifice for every person on earth.

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PLEASE PURCHASE

GRADES 3-4

SERVANT HERO SUPPER ROOM

CAST: LEAH, COSTUMED UPPER ROOM
SERVANT MAY BE PORTRAYED BY TEACHER OR
A 3-4th grade STUDENT, STUDENTS (Divide
speaking parts between available students.)
No Memorization Needed



**UPPER ROOM SERVANT TO STUDENTS
GATHERED AND SEATED ON STAGE:** (*Loud,
enthusiastic*) I saw it all! Yes I did! I was
there! It was mostly me. I was the Hero! I
felt sick that day but I showed up for work
anyway. Good thing too. My master was a
wreck getting ready for a group of men who
wanted to enjoy Passover Meal in our Upper
Room. Thirteen men, I believe, wanted to
squeeze around our long, low table.

We fondly call it "The *SupperRoom*" because
most guests want us to serve them a good supper and then leave them
alone. I'm a servant. It is my duty to take care of our guests. Even when
they ask us to leave them alone, I stick around. Because...I'm a servant!

STUDENT: We know a lot happened in that "Supper Room".

STUDENT: Jesus made arrangements for a private supper with His disciples.
They followed a man carrying a pitcher of water into the house.

SERVANT: Yes! And...

STUDENT: And when Jesus and His twelve disciples arrived the whole
house was furnished and prepared for the Passover meal.

SERVANT: (*Proudly*) You've got that right! We are the best Upper-Supper Room in town!

STUDENT: Jesus said, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Did you know people laid down at the table? My mom would 'kill' me if I tried that trick.

SERVANT: And then....

STUDENT: And then Jesus took a cup from the table and thanked God. He told them to share it because he would not be drinking wine again until He got to Heaven. Sharing is a good thing. My mom says I'm not good at it.

SERVANT: And then he took bread.....

STUDENT: And He gave thanks and broke the bread and gave it to them. He was reminding them of His body which would be broken for them. I had a broken arm once. Does that count?

SERVANT: You'll never guess what happened next. I was the only servant present when Jesus said someone in that very room would betray Him.

STUDENT: It was Judas and when Jesus called him out, he ran from the room. I don't know how he got away with that. I'm not allowed to 'run in the house'.

SERVANT: I don't know what I'm doing here. You seem to know the whole story. That was an important night. It was the night Jesus was arrested.

Jesus seemed nice. Just a teacher and his friends enjoying Passover until I heard him say someone in that very room would betray him. The room erupted with shouts of "Surely it isn't me".

Jesus said, "The one who hands me over is someone I eat with every day, one who actually passes me food. No surprises here since the scripture says this will happen. But for that man, it would be better if he had never been born."

Judas, the traitor, said, all innocent-like: "It isn't me, is it, Teacher?" Jesus looked sad when he said, "Don't play games with me, Judas."

The men sang a song and left for the Mount of Olives. I stayed to clean the tables and I had this odd feeling I was a witness to Jesus' Last Supper. It was a sad night and yet I feel somewhat hopeful.

LEAH: Thank you for telling your story, young servant. Jesus' story does not end in sadness but at the moment I just want to shake Judas. That ungrateful man walked and talked with Jesus for three years. He saw miracles and heard God's Word just like every other disciple. Yet he was dishonest and was open to Satan's trickery.

STUDENT: What can we do? Can we warn Jesus? Which way is it to the Mount of Olives? I'm really bad with directions.

STUDENT: Yes, point the way and we will run as fast as we can to tell him to run and hide.

LEAH: Jesus does not need to be warned. He knows exactly what is going happen. He will not run and hide. You would not want him to run away. What Jesus is about to do, he will do for each of you.

STUDENTS RETURN TO THEIR SEATS.

GRADES ONE-TWO

POOR HERO WIDOW'S PENNIES



CAST: LEAH, GRADE 1-2 STUDENTS, TEACHER DRESSED AS POOR HOLY LAND WIDOW

SUPPLIES: LARGE GLASS JAR FILLED WITH PENNIES, OFFERING PLATE ON STAGE

STUDENTS GATHER ON STAGE AROUND ONE STUDENT WITH A LARGE JAR OF PENNIES. No Memorization Needed

ALL STUDENTS: (Gather around Penny Student) What's in the jar? Yeah, what's in the jar?

PENNY STUDENT: It's my penny collection. These pennies are worth a lot of money. Don't touch them. You will get my pennies dirty!

LEAH: Pennies? What are pennies? They look too small to be worth much. They remind me of our "mites". Tiny bits of money which don't buy much of anything.

STUDENT: Don't let him kid you, Miss Leah. Pennies aren't worth anything. People drop them on the street and put them in jars. You can't even buy candy for a penny.

PENNY STUDENT: (*Hugging jar protectively*) No way! My dad says if I save my pennies I can buy a big house someday!

STUDENT: Look! Someone is coming!

COSTUMED TEACHER WALKS DOWN THE AISLE SLOWLY WITH BOWED HEAD.

GRADES 5-6

SLEEPY HEROES IN THE GARDEN

CAST: LEAH, TEACHER, STUDENTS (Divide speaking parts between available students), 2 COSTUMED BOYS/MEN (may be 5-6th grade students or adults)

No Memorization Needed

TWO DISCIPLES WALK DOWN THE AISLE STRETCHING AND YAWNING.

SNEAKING UP ON THEM AT A DISTANCE ARE THE FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADE STUDENTS AND TEACHER WHO WALK SILENTLY DOWN THE AISLE BEHIND THEM—LISTENING.



DISCIPLE #1: Where is everybody? I fall asleep for one minute and look what happens.

DISCIPLE #2: I wouldn't have fallen asleep if you had kept talking to me. It's all your fault!

DISCIPLE #1: My fault! I was the one who had to find the man who had a private room. I was the one who had to go up to him and say, "The Teacher says, 'My time is near. I and my disciples plan to celebrate the Passover meal at your house.'" I didn't even know the guy!

DISCIPLE #2: And you did a fine job. The meal was delicious.

DISCIPLE #1: (*Calling....*) Jesus, Peter, John! Where are you guys? Come on, we're tired. We're not in the mood to play games.

DISCIPLE #2: *(Turning around to discover students following them...)* Hey! Who are you?

STUDENT: We're on our way to visit Leah. She's visiting our church. Who are you? Are you Easter Heroes?

DISCIPLE #1: Ahem! Maybe so. Maybe not. *(Whisper...)* We're disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. Have you seen him? We left him praying in the Garden at Gethsemane.

LEAH: Come, come! I can answer all your questions. Everyone...Sit down and rest...but NO SLEEPING!

STUDENT: Where DID Jesus go, Leah? He way praying in the garden and then he was gone!

LEAH: Jesus has been arrested by the Roman soldiers.

ENTIRE GROUP: *(Gasp in horror, look at each other and say "no"!)*

LEAH: I'm afraid so. While the disciples slept, Jesus prayed. He was about to sacrifice his life for the sins of every one of us. It's a gift he freely gave. It cost Jesus his life.

DISCIPLE #2: Jesus told us, "Stay alert, be in prayer...Part of you is eager, ready for anything in God; but another part is as lazy as an old dog sleeping by the fire." *(From Mark 13 The Message)* I have to go. If Jesus was arrested, he must be in the jail near the center of town.

DISCIPLE #1: It's been nice to meet you but we have slept long enough. We must find our friends. Jesus is in trouble!

**BOTH DISCIPLES RUN BACK THE AISLE.
STUDENTS WAVE AND SHOUT "GOODBYE! BE CAREFUL!"**

LEAH: Do you know what these disciples are going to find?

STUDENT: Not really. I hope Jesus will be okay.

STUDENT: Jesus is not okay. He is on trial right now. His friends are afraid and scattered and he is among enemies who want to see him dead.

STUDENT: What can we do? Can we help?

LEAH: You can pray! Jesus knows what he is doing. He could have escaped from Gethsemane but He gave himself willingly. A gang of ruffians showed up with swords and clubs. Judas had worked out a signal. "The one I kiss, that's the one— seize him."

STUDENT: Judas kissed Jesus, didn't he?

TEACHER: Yes. Jesus said, "What is this, coming after me with swords and clubs as if I were a dangerous criminal? Day after day I've been sitting in the Temple teaching, and you never so much as lifted a hand against me. What you in fact have done is confirm the prophets writings." All the disciples cut and run! *(From Mark 13 The Message)*

STUDENT: Jesus should have run away with the disciples.

TEACHER: Jesus must die so our sins will be paid for. It's God's plan. It is Jesus' gift. Let's go back to our seats and think about what happened that dark night so long ago.

STUDENTS AND TEACHER RETURN TO THEIR SEATS.

**SING AN EASTER HYMN
OR SPECIAL MUSIC**

MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7-9)

SCARED HERO

PETER THE NOT SO GREAT



CAST: LEAH, TEACHER, ALL STUDENTS IN HOLY LAND COSTUME (Divide speaking parts between available students.)

TEACHER AND CLASS WALK ON STAGE DRESSED IN COSTUME, READY TO PERFORM FOR LEAH.

TEACHER: Come on, kids. You look great. I'm glad we found those costumes in the closet. Leah is waiting for us. We're looking for the next Easter Hero.

Leah! It is so nice to meet you. Our class knows what happens next. Let us show you!

STUDENT/SERVANT GIRL: *(Looking hard at student dressed as Peter)* I'm a servant girl of the Chief Priest. I'm here in the courtyard everyday. You were with the Nazarene, Jesus.

STUDENT/PETER: I don't know what you're talking about! *(Turn back to servant girl.)*

STUDENT/ROOSTER: *The rooster may stand in the back of the room if desired. (Calling loudly....)* Cock-A-Doodle-Do!

STUDENT/SERVANT GIRL: *(To people in the audience....)* This is one of the Nazarene's followers. I'm positive I have seen him before. He's one of them. He was with Jesus just yesterday. I never forget a face!

STUDENT/PETER: *(Shouting and angry...)* I am not that man! You are wrong!

STUDENTS/BYSTANDERS: *(Crowd around Peter threateningly, grumble, wave arms in air, speak the lines over one another, get louder and louder....)*

You've got to be one of them.
You've got 'Galilean' written all over you!
I know it's him.
He's lying.

PETER: *(Very loud and very angry....)* I swear I have never laid eyes on the man you're talking about! I AM NOT THAT MAN!!!

STUDENT/ROOSTER: *(Loudly, slowly....)* Cock-A-Doodle-Do!

**ALL STUDENTS TURN BACKS TO PETER
WHO STANDS ALONE FACING THE AUDIENCE.**

STUDENT/PETER: *(To audience...Sadly)* But I AM that man. Jesus told me this would happen. I stupidly blurted out, "Even if everyone else is ashamed of you when things fall to pieces I won't be ashamed. Not me. Not me."

Jesus said, "Don't be so sure. Today, this very night in fact, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times."

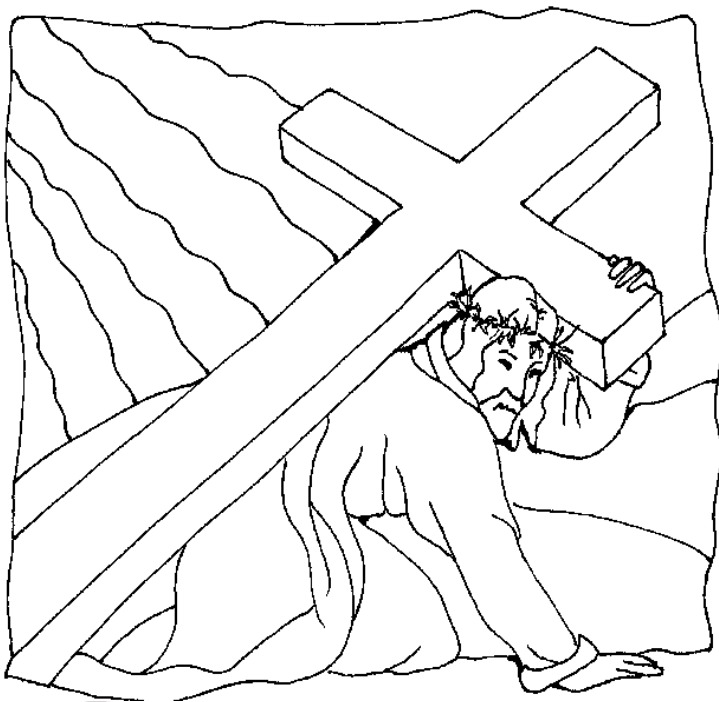
I was so proud. I said, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you."
(Put head in hands weeping, run down the aisle and out of the room.)

LEAH: *(Calling after Peter....)* Peter, Peter! Run away tonight. Your day will come. Your courage will return. You will live up to the name Jesus gave you, The Rock. Jesus said, "On this Rock I will build my church." Cry, Peter, cry. It will make you strong in the Lord.

**STUDENTS AND TEACHER LEAVE THE STAGE QUIETLY
AND RETURN TO SEATS.**

HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 10-12)

COUNTRY HERO SIMON OF CYRENE



CAST: LEAH, STUDENTS (Divide speaking parts between available students.),
COSTUMED SIMON OF CYRENE (High School student or adult man)

**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
GATHER ON STAGE.**

STUDENT: I wonder what it would have been like to be part of the crowd on the Via Dolorosa the day Jesus was crucified.

STUDENT: It must have been terrible. The Romans crucified thousands of Jews. They were ruthless in their rule.

STUDENT: Do you remember when we talked about one man who had no idea he was going to be in the middle of this story. A husband and father, a strong man with strong convictions.

STUDENT: Yes, his name was....hmmm...it was...Simon!

STUDENT: Yes, Simon of Cyrene. Cyrene was an ancient Greek city. Today it is in Libya. Simon just happened to be walking by, coming from work. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus.

LEAH: I know that man still struggles with what happened the day Jesus died. Would you like to meet him?

STUDENT: Is he here? Where is he?

SIMON THE CYRENE: *(Enter from the back or side. Bowing....)* I am Simon. Indeed I am from the great Greek city of Cyrene.

STUDENT: Were you really there? Were you in the crowd in Jerusalem when Jesus died?

SIMON: *(Sit down on stage...exhausted and shocked.)* I still cannot believe what happened.

EVERYBODY: What happened? What happened?

SIMON: I was in Jerusalem with my boys for the time of sacrifice. I was minding my own business. As we walked, Alexander and Rufus asked me about sacrificing the lamb. I tried to explain how Moses and Father Abraham set our example by following God's instructions to faithfully sacrifice the perfect lamb. It was God's plan, not ours.

It seemed as if something was wrong in Jerusalem. People were running everywhere. No smiles, no greetings but there was...noise. I finally made out that the crowd was yelling, "Crucify Him!"

I tried to get the boys to safety but it was too late. Of all the bad places to be, it seemed as if we had chosen the worst spot on the road. The crowd tightened around us and then I saw them.

One condemned man was crying for mercy, another man was cursing the crowd. Then someone said, "There's Jesus." When I saw Him, I didn't believe it. He was beaten so badly and He struggled under the heavy load of the Roman cross. He fell. He rose. He fell.

The Roman soldier grabbed my arm and screamed, "You, carry His cross." I didn't want to. I tried to turn away but there I was so I took the cross and carried it on my shoulder. It was the hardest thing I have ever done.

We reached Golgotha Hill and I tried not to watch as the nails were put in His hands and feet. Do you know that as He died He said, "Father, forgive

them." How could He do that? I have never seen such love. My boys were waiting on the same street in Jerusalem when I returned. How could I explain to them what had happened? I tried. I said, "You know the Passover lamb of sacrifice we were talking of awhile ago? Well, I know now why God gave those instructions to be faithful with our sacrifice. You see, today the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, was sacrificed. And I saw it happen myself."

(OPTION: www.rayboltz.com offers the CD "Concert of A Lifetime" with the song "Watch The Lamb" by Ray Boltz. The song tells Simon's story eloquently. If desired, purchase the CD online or through your local Christian Bookstore. Play it while cast stands/sits quietly on stage, or have someone sing the song, or have Simon read the lyrics quietly. The lyrics are online.)

STUDENT: Simon, I'm glad you were there.

SIMON: I will never be the same. Jesus died for you and for me that day. He was God's Lamb.

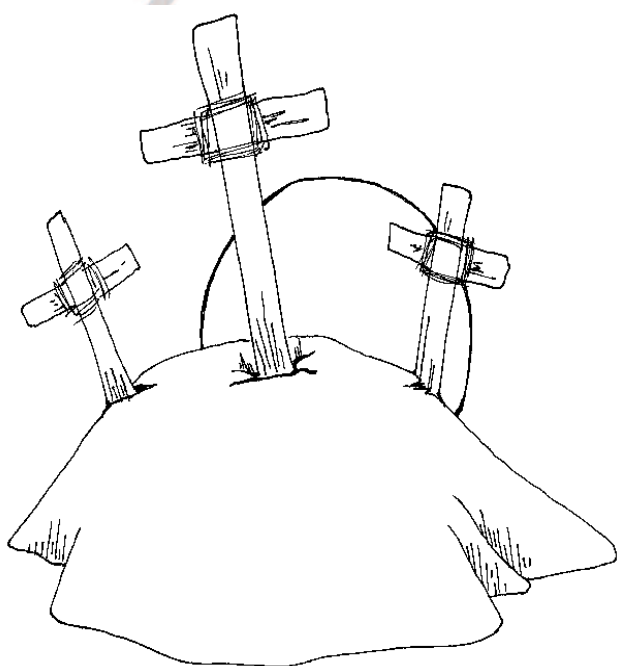
STUDENT: We will never be the same after hearing your story.

CAST LEAVES THE STAGE TOGETHER.

AUDIENCE SINGS: "Where You There When They Crucified My Lord"
(Found in Most Hymnals—Or choose your own favorite hymn of the Cross)
OR SPECIAL MUSIC

YOUNG ADULT

NAIL MAKER UNKNOWN HERO



CAST: ONE YOUNG MAY WHO PORTRAYS AN ANCIENT BLACKSMITH. DRESS IN HOLY LAND COSTUME. CARRY A LARGE HAMMER.

(OPTION: Ask several people to distribute medium/large nails purchased at a local hardware store. These nails should look as old as possible. If desired, make simple crosses @ 3" x 5" cut from white posterboard and place one nail in the middle of each cross. Place all crosses and nails in offering plates to be given by specially chosen ushers.)

NAIL MAKER MONOLOGUE

I should not be here. I am no hero. Really! I am just a common working man. What do I do, you ask? I make nails. Every morning I walk into a dark, dirty workshop, kindle a very hot fire and pound, pound, pound until there is a basket filled with iron nails of every shape and size by the end of the day. I'm known for my nails. Most folks call me "Mr. Fix It".

My nails are the best nails in Israel. Everybody says so. Builders come to me to fill their work boxes. My nails hang proudly in Herod's Temple. My handmade nails repair broken things and strengthen weak things. Why, I think my nails hold every door in Jerusalem together in some way. My nails have been used for good things, in good places.

If that is true, why do I feel so terrible because I am a Nail Maker? Maybe I am stricken because for the first time I realize that my nails leave a mark that last forever. Once you pound a nail into a piece of wood, it is never the same.

And then there is That Man. Truly, I didn't know what the Roman soldiers wanted with my nails. They said, "Give us all the nails in your basket." And they didn't even pay for them. Not that I argued. I am glad they left quickly without taking more. I understood soon enough when I saw the sad parade of doomed men and the crowd spitting and screaming.

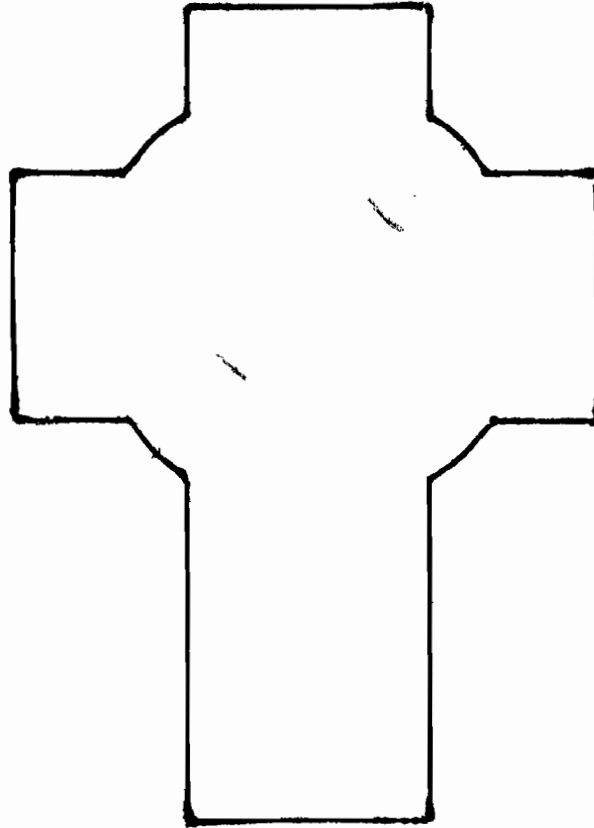
That Man. He died, you know. I heard the hammers as three crosses and three men were lifted into the air. I knew those were my nails. I'm not a murderer and I'm not a hero. There was nothing I could do.

That Man, Jesus, was different. He did no wrong. He did not deserve to be nailed to a Roman cross. And yet there He was, hanging in mid air between earth and heaven. I kept pounding nails all afternoon to drown out the screams. Strange things happened. The sky grew dark...like night. People were very afraid. Men ran from the Temple shouting, "The veil! The veil in the Temple has been torn in two from the top to the bottom!" It was like a message they were divinely appointed to shout along the city streets and into the countryside. Darkness, torn Temple veil and nails, my nails. What does it mean?

It was That Man. Somehow this is all about Him. I heard someone say He was a carpenter. We would have a lot in common, Jesus of Nazareth and me. I wonder how He made His nails. I'll never know. He's gone now. It's over. People hurried back into Jerusalem to prepare for the Sabbath.

And That Man? I wish I had known Him. Well, one thing is for sure. My nails were part of an evil plan. Did I kill Jesus? Oh please, tell me I did not kill That Man!

**WALK SLOWLY, HEAD BOWED
BACK THE AISLE
AND OUT OF THE ROOM**



TRACE CROSS PATTERN ONTO WHITE POSTERBOARD.
CUT OUT CROSSES FOR EACH PERSON IN AUDIENCE.
PLACE A REAL NAIL THROUGH SLITS.
DISTRIBUTE IN OFFERING PLATES DURING PROGRAM.

MIDDLE ADULTS

HAPPY HEROES

CAST: LEAH, 2 ADULT WOMEN IN HOLY LAND COSTUME

Two women enter from the back. They are shouting, laughing, clapping and rocking back and forth as they gleefully head for the stage.

BOTH WOMEN: (With great joy as they walk the aisle....)

WOMAN 1: Can you believe it?

WOMAN 2: It's empty!

WOMAN 1: Totally empty!

WOMAN 2: It's wonderful!

WOMAN 1: It's unbelievable!

WOMAN 2: It's miraculous!

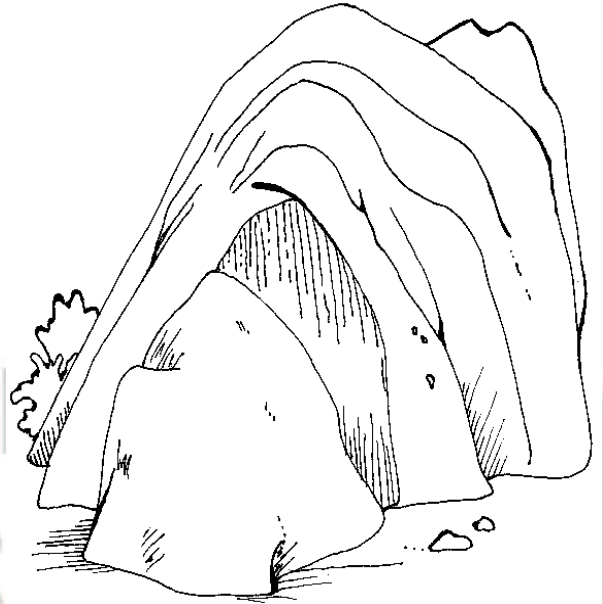
LEAH: Ladies! What are you talking about? Get over here. Don't you know you are not at home any more? SSShhhhh!

WOMAN 1: Friend Leah! We cannot be quiet. It's wonderful!

WOMAN 2: It's unbelievable!

LEAH: I know, I know. I heard you...It miraculous! What is wonderful, unbelievable and miraculous?

BOTH WOMEN GRAB LEAH AND ALL THREE JUMP UP AND DOWN IN A CIRCLE: He Rose!!! He Rose!!!!



LEAH: *(Stop jumping...)* He Rose????

WOMAN 2: It's Jesus. He did what He promised. He is not in the tomb. The tomb is empty. He's alive!

LEAH: Oh please, I bet the disciples moved His body to another place. Calm down and think about it. Jesus could not have come back from death. Let's find Peter and John. They will know what to do.

WOMAN 1: Oh yes He could! And He did! Wait 'til you talk to Mary Magdalene. She saw Him.

WOMAN 2: In person! In the garden! By the tomb!

WOMAN 1: The tomb was open, Mary was crying and a man asked her why she was crying. She said, "They have taken my Lord and I don't know where He is."

WOMAN 2: He said, "Mary" and she knew, she just knew it was the Master. And it was!

LEAH: *(Wonderingly...)* Well, I'll be. He did it. He said He would conquer death and He did! He Rose! *(To the audience...)* Did you hear that? He Rose! Say it with me until we shake the rafters... *(Get audience to say louder and louder and clap their hands in joy...)* He Rose! He Rose! He Rose!

WOMAN 1: We've got to get back to find out what happens next. If you want to find us when you get home, look for a closed room. We'll have to be careful until Jesus tells us what to do next.

WOMAN 2: Which way do we go? You won't be long, will you, Leah? We need you at home. There's so much to do *(Jumping up and down...)* He Rose!

LEAH: *(Pointing to back of room...)* Go that way. I'll catch up to you soon. I wouldn't miss this for the world!

WOMEN LEAVE STILL JOYFUL AND SAYING TO EACH OTHER, "HE ROSE!"

LEAH: *(To audience...)* I must leave you now. I want to catch up to my friends. You understand, don't you? He Rose! My time here has been well spent. All of you must carry the message to future generations. Promise me you will tell everyone you meet that Jesus, Savior of us all, Arose from the Grave. He kept His promise so we can go to Heaven. There is no more important message to shout to the world.

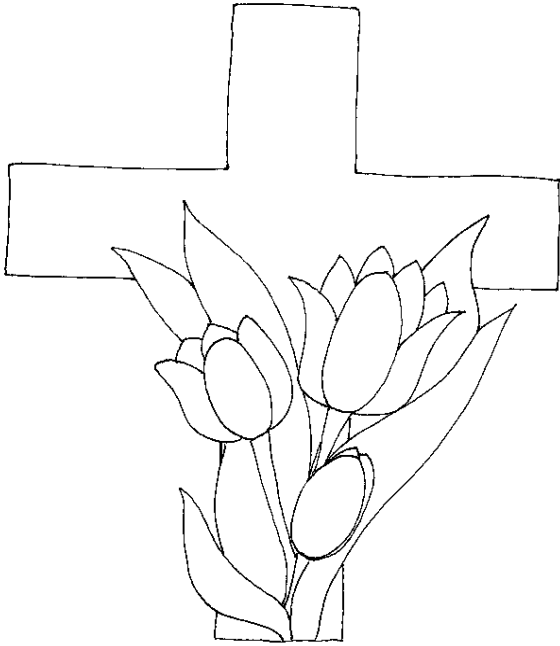
Leave the room by running back the center aisle.

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY
NOT FOR USE
PLEASE PURCHASE

SENIOR ADULTS

CONCLUSION

SUPER HERO



CAST: Adults who are willing to participate. Share the numbered parts equally between the people available. No costumes needed.

1: All the Easter heroes we have met today do not seem like the kind of heroes we're used to. Personally I like a Super Hero who is strong and brave and can rescue folks from danger. And a great Super Hero suit doesn't hurt either.

2: But we need more than a man of steel. We need more than someone in blue tights and a cape. We need a Man of the Cross. We need the man who was both God and Man in the flesh. We need the one who stepped out of heaven and became one of us.

3: We need Jesus, the perfect Son of God who came to teach us how to live, save us and offer us life eternal. And Jesus did it, not by bending steel with His bare hands, not by beating the bad guys to dust. Jesus did it simply by offering Himself on the Cross for the sins of the world. Jesus looked very normal, in fact, that is why many people didn't believe he was a Hero.

4: This is the Super Hero we need. This is the Super Hero who loves each of us with the same love God has for us, an unconditional love. Jesus, while being the greatest Super Hero of all time, is so much more than a Super Hero. He's the Savior of the World.

5: I remember playing Superman as a child. With a towel and safety pin I had a cape and I was magically transformed into the "man of steel". I'd heard stories about Jesus but I never put on sandals and a robe to play "Jesus". There was something more real about Him, more genuine than

a mere hero of TV, comic books or movies.

6: Have you ever wanted God to appear in the sky, point at you and confirm, "I AM! I AM GOD!" If only you could see some miraculous event, then you would believe.

7: The good news is that God did just that! God entered time and space for thirty three years. His Only Son, Heaven's Ambassador, proclaimed the message, "I Am God. Come Home!" He lived, He died and...HE ROse!

8: While the world slept, an amazing, unbelievable, one of a kind event designed by God flashed across a humble community of people who were afraid...very afraid. From cowards to heroes, common folk were to rise up and follow a real Hero, Jesus of Nazareth, because.....HE ROse!

9: For two thousand years people around the world have celebrated an event that changed the world like no other. It's the resurrection of Jesus. Prophets centuries before Christ made hundreds of specific prophecies concerning His life, death and resurrection. They revealed that He would be fully God and yet a man. He would die a brutal death for the sins of man, conquer death and rise from the grave. He would leave for Heaven and return to establish His Kingdom on earth.

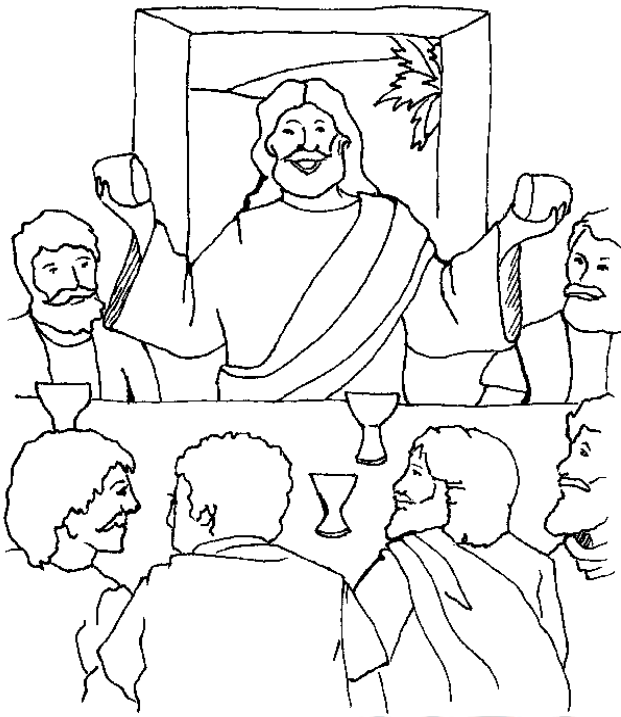
10: While Superman HAS power. Jesus IS power. A baby, born in a manger. A child, lost in the Temple crowd. A young man, tempted. A popular leader, betrayed. An innocent man, put to death on a cross.

11: Faith is not a summer blockbuster with jaw-dropping special effects. Faith is quiet and it's heroes are quieter too; Mothers and Dads who work hard, children who grow up looking for heroes. Teachers and pastors, grocery clerks and even nail makers can be people who shout, "He ROse" and mean it!

12: Everyday heroes! That's it! He ROse for everyday heroes. It's me! It's you! We are the real Easter Heroes! Our commission from Jesus is to change our world one person at a time because... *(Let all the people say together...)* **He ROse!**

**AUDIENCE SINGS "UP FROM THE GRAVE HE AROSE"
OR ANY EASTER HYMN OF YOUR CHOICE**

RISE AGAIN CAFÉ!



Assign one small group the responsibility of preparing RISE AGAIN CAFÉ. This could be a few men and women hand picked for the event, an adult Sunday School class or the Women's Group.

Choose the form this gathering will take early in the planning stages. Choose to host a full Easter Breakfast or Continental Breakfast. If held in the evening, serve snacks or a full meal. The people who attend will enjoy whatever type of event you plan.

BEFORE RISE AGAIN CAFÉ



MENU: Plan appropriate food choices. A pleasant option may be to ask people to bring their favorite Easter Breakfast Casserole or homemade sweet rolls. If this is a Sunday morning event, consider serving a Continental Breakfast complete with fresh doughnuts, orange juice, coffee and tea.

Since this gathering is called RISE AGAIN CAFÉ, it might be fun to set up the area like a trendy café, serving various coffee and tea flavors along with delightful sweet snacks.

It may be that your program is in an evening setting. Consider feasting on a full dinner, tureen style or sandwiches and cookies or a formal dessert bar.

SEATING: Decide the best arrangement for seating depending upon the size of the anticipated gathering. Position tables and chairs and serve buffet style with guests standing and moving around the room to chat. Place a few chairs in small circles throughout the area for small group conversation.

MUSIC: Play Easter music. This could take the form of live performances by local church musicians or CD's chosen before the program.

CENTERPIECES: Cover tables with colorful table cloths. Easter centerpieces may be featured on each table. These may be as casual as Easter flowers in vases tied with yellow, pink, blue and green pastel ribbons. Fly colorful balloons at each table. Or, place an open Bible with meaningful bookmark and candle nearby. Use your imagination and the area will be lovely!

THE DAY OF RISE AGAIN CAFÉ



Decorate the serving table and guest tables. Plug in the coffee pot and put tea water on to boil while the program is in progress. Set out foods, cream and sugar. Make your favorite Easter punch and place on a nearby serving table in crystal bowl.

DURING RISE AGAIN CAFÉ



Assign people to serve the food, pour beverages and fill creamer and sugar bowls as needed. Greet guests cordially as they come through the serving line. Move about the group to be sure everyone feels welcome. Find seats for those who may not be familiar with your church. Introduce people. Enjoy the program participants as they mingle still dressed in Holy Land costume.

AFTER RISE AGAIN CAFE

Don't forget the party is not over until clean up is complete. Ask everyone to help with dishes, remove tables and chairs and sweep the area clean.



It may be helpful to choose a team of children, teens and adults who agree to stay for clean up duty. Many hands make the job go much faster!

GO HOME
KNOWING
YOU ARE A
FAITHFUL
EASTER
SERVANT!