

DIALOGUE FOR PENTECOST SUNDAY 1997

The scene takes place in a small lift

- 1 First floor please, if it isn't too much trouble.
2 Mine's the basement.
3 Well I don't mind waiting for you two but I'm going to the top, nineteenth floor and the best view in town.

Long pause - some prodding of buttons by 1 and 2 (who bangs the control panel with her fist)

- 1 Nothing seems to be happening.
2 (*irritated*) Nothing seems to be happening at all.
1 I think it must be broken.
2 Broken. Doesn't anything work around here?
1 I can't hear anything.
2 No, nor can I. [*Short pause*]
1 Once I heard about someone being stuck in a lift for two whole days.
2 I heard someone was stuck for a week. They died in that lift.

Another long pause

- 3 Well if we're going to be here some time, let me introduce myself: My name's Gerry and I belong to the Church of Eternal Hope. We have a large Church, just by Morrisons!
1 Oh. I've never heard of them. I'm Paul and I belong to the Church of the Remnant. There aren't very many of us left now.
2 My name is Martha and I've haven't heard of any you. We belong to the extremely exclusive splinter group Church called 'The New Pharisees'.
1 I thought I ought to have walked up to the next floor. But when I saw the lift - well - I thought it would be nice to go in

- a lift. And now it doesn't work. It would have been quicker to have walked after all.
- 2 Its not safe to go down the stairs to the basement on your own. You never know what kind of people you will meet. There might be muggers and rapists and all sorts. But then I got into this lift on the understanding that it was in working order. It isn't good enough keeping us cooped up like this.
- 1 I'm going to be late now.
- 2 *[looking at her watch]* I'm going to be pretty angry if nothing happens here in a minute.
- 1 I'm always late. My poor old mother is waiting up there and she won't know what's happening. She'll worry about me.
- 2 Is there a sign up here telling us who we can complain to? And I'm not wasting my breath on some schoolboy engineer either. Go right to the top, that's what I say, to the General Manager. That's the only way to get things done. Go to the top.

Long Pause

- 3 Martha, I am the General Manager. *[Not too seriously]* And what is more, there is a small phone on your right hand side which you can use to call for help. Would you like to try it and see if we can get this lift moving for all of our sakes!?
- 2 Hm! No harm in trying I suppose. Hello, hello, is anyone there? O, you are. Well, I have been stuck in this lift for at least twenty minutes and I want to know what you are going to do about it?
- 1 *(to 2, whispering)* Say the General Manager is stuck in here as well...
- 2 *(Putting hand over the receiver)* Sshh! What did you say? There's been a power cut but you're doing your best... well I hope your best is better than this! *[Puts phone back]*

[Longish pause]

- 3 Does anyone know any funny stories?
1 I'm afraid not. I'm not very good at telling stories.
2 Look, Mr General Manager, is that the best you can do? I'd be rather happier if you did something about getting us out of here.
3 *[Ignoring her]* Well ... [JOKE]
- 1,2 [Laughing] That's very good, that is.... what a nice man, what a very nice man

[Lift begins moving]

- 1 Well, here we go, we're on the move, and such a funny story.
3 Well how about coming up with me to the top of the building and taking a breath of fresh air up there.
2 Well why not, such a nice man. I'm not in any hurry, are you?
1 No, no, not at all.
3 I well remember listening to an old preacher called Meredith Dewey, back in Cambridge in the early 60s. He was a wise old bird, always had a twinkle in his eye and this is what he said:

“When our Lord rose from the dead, he gave the Church the gift of laughter. The disciples, so we read, returned to Jerusalem with great joy. The Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. “Behold I make all things new” Jesus had said and so they sang songs in the power of this new life. Christians like you and me are called to inherit a blessing, to live as those who have been anointed with the oil of gladness. That means doing our duty gaily and accepting setbacks with a secret chuckle. Laughter, said old Dewey, is wiser than tears, as faith is wiser than doubt - and it's much more likely to help people respond generously. “

He finished off with this thought: “The gay, hopeful temper which seems more frivolous is wiser than any tense, solemn attitudes. It is nearer to true understanding. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit and it is nearer to the meaning of the Cross...”

- 1 Here at last - level 19: what a view!
- 2 And such a nice man, such a very nice man!

JB
15.05.97

TOO BUSY by Dave Hopwood

Cast: Jesus: Gardener, Decorator, Knitter, Organist, Cleaner, Flower arranger.

Props: Large calendar showing eight days of the week (Sunday to Sunday), Garden fork, paint brushes etc, knitting bag of wool, pile of music, dusters and polish, flowers and vase, posh hats for all the cast except IV who wears a cassock and surplice for the last scene.

Music: Flanders and Swan: Twas on the Monday morning, fading out...

I - Monday

Jesus Hello!

I *(startled)* Oh, hello! I didn't expect to find anyone here. Did you want something?

Jesus I'd like to talk to you.

I *(ruefully)* I'm sorry - I'd like to talk to you, but I just haven't the time today. It's my turn to do the Church garden, you see. I expect the Vicar's in the vestry. I'm sure he'd be glad to chat... through that little door on the right. OK?

(Jesus sighs and watches I work and then leave. Jesus then changes the calendar to Tuesday. II enters with a paintbrush)

II - Tuesday

Jesus Hello!

II Oh, hello, I didn't expect anyone to be here. Did you want something?

Jesus I'd like to talk to you.

II I'm sorry - I'd like to talk to you too but I haven't time today. I promised to paint the Community Room, and I really must get on. The Vicar's usually in his vestry about this time. I'm sure he'll be glad to chat.... so if you'll excuse me...

(Jesus sighs. II paints, and exits. Jesus changes the calendar to Wednesday. III enters with knitting and a bag of wool)

III - Wednesday

Jesus Hello!

III Oh, hello! I didn't expect anyone else to be here. Did you want something?

Jesus I'd like to talk to you.

III I'm sorry, I'd like to talk to you, but I haven't time today.

We're holding a sponsored knit at the Mother's Union tonight for babies in Rwanda, and I've got most of the wool... The lights are on in the Vicarage - I'm sure the Vicar would be glad to chat...

(Jesus sighs and watches III knit a few stitches and exit. Jesus changes the calendar to Thursday. IV enters with a pile of music)

IV - Thursday

Jesus Hello!

IV Oh, hello! I didn't expect anyone else to be here. Did you want something?

Jesus I'd like to talk to you.

IV I'm sorry, I'd like to talk to you too, but I haven't time today. It's choir practice and I don't know what the music is for Sunday yet. The Vicar's in ... I'm sure he'd be glad to chat ...

(Jesus sighs. IV sorts through music, hums a few bars of a hymn and exits. Jesus changes the calendar to Friday. V enters with dusters and some polish)

V - Friday

Jesus Hello!

V Oh, hello, I didn't expect anyone else to be here. Did you want something?

Jesus I'd like to talk to you.

V I'm sorry. I'd like to talk to you too, but I don't have time today. It's my turn to do the cleaning, and I've got to get it done before the funeral at 10.30. The Vicar will be in the Vicarage. You could go and have a word with him.

(Jesus sighs. V cleans and exits. Jesus changes the calendar to Saturday. VI enters with flowers and a vase)

Jesus Hello!

VI Oh, hello, I didn't expect anyone else to be here. Do you want something?

Jesus I'd like to talk to you.

VI I'm sorry - I'd like to talk to you too, but I must get the church flowers done before the wedding party arrive. The Vicar will be writing his sermon, but I'm sure he would be very happy to talk to you instead...
(Jesus sighs. VI does the flowers and exits. Jesus changes the calendar to Sunday. All the cast enter with smart hats on, IV is still carrying a pile of music and is dressed in cassock and surplice.

Jesus Hello - you're early
IV Hello, yes, I have to be. I'm the organist you see. I have to get here early otherwise I never know what the Vicar wants me to play *(looking through his music)* Are you new here?
Jesus No - I've always been here.
IV Oh *(looking at Jesus, surprised)* Look, I feel I should know you, but I can't quite remember where we've met before.
(Talking to the others) Do you know this man?
Cast *(Murmurs of)* No - Possibly - Don't think so - I think I saw him once before...
Jesus I've been here all this week.
I Oh yes, I remember, you were here when I came to do the gardening on Monday.
II Weren't you hanging around the Church when I arrived to do the painting on Tuesday?
III I'm not quite sure, but I think you were here when I came with the wool on Wednesday
V *(Pause)* Did you ever get to see the Vicar?
Jesus Yes, but I was waiting to talk to each of you!
Cast You wanted to talk to US? Why, what for?
VI Look, just who are you?
Jesus I am Jesus...

The cast look amazed, and they freeze for a count of eight.

NOT NOW BERNARD!

Narrator: It was an ordinary day in Bernard's house. But Bernard was not happy. He had nothing to do. The obvious thing was to ask someone to play with him. (Dad is putting a nail into the wall)

Bernard: Hello Dad (Dad with hammer, hits his finger and yelps with pain)

Narrator: said Bernard.

Dad: Not now, Bernard! (Dad, nursing finger, goes and sits in big chair and begins to read a newspaper...)

Bernard: Hello Mum (Mum is sewing. As Bernard speaks she pricks herself)

Narrator: said Bernard.

Mum: Ouch! Not now, Bernard...

Bernard: There's a monster in the garden and it's going to eat me...

Mum: Not now, Bernard. (Bernard goes into the Community Room)

Narrator: Bernard went into the garden.

Bernard: (Loudly) Hello Monster.

Narrator: The monster ate Bernard up, every little bit! Then the monster went indoors.

'Monster' ROAR!!

Mother: Not now, Bernard

Narrator: said Bernard's mother. So the monster bit Bernard's father's leg.

Dad: Not now, Bernard

Narrator: said Bernard's father.

Mum: Bernard, your dinner is ready, go and eat it please

Narrator: said Bernard's mother. The monster went and sat down and ate Bernard's dinner. Then it watched television, read one of Bernard's comics and broke one of his toys.

Mum: Go to bed now Bernard. I've taken up your milk.

Narrator: called Bernard's mother. The monster went upstairs and got into Bernard's bed. (Monster goes into Community Room)

Monster: (Loudly) But I'm a monster

Narrator: said the Monster.

Mum: Not now, Bernard.

Narrator: said Bernard's mother.

Characters: Narrator, Bernard, Mum, Dad, 'Monster'

Props: 3 chairs (Mum's, Dad's, Bernard's) Hammer, Mum's sewing, TV, Comic, Toy, Newspaper, Supper Tray. (Bands to hold 'Monster' together)

CALL TO WORSHIP RAP - Pentecost Sunday 2000

All It's **half** past **five** and it's **worship time**;
we're **all** in our **places** and **ready** to **shine**
with **songs** and **praises** to our **Heaven-ly Lord**
who **wants** us to **listen** to his **wonderful Word**.
We've **left** our **homes**, left the **dishes** in the **sink**
in the **hope** that - in **peace** - we'll be **able** to **think**
'bout **Life** and **death** and **all things** in between:
the **things** we have **heard** and the **things** we have **seen**.
Its **terrible** hard to **pray** on your **own**
when there's **other** people **there**
or a **ring** on the **phone**
when the **baby** is **crying** or the **television's on**,
when you're **trying** to re-**member**
where you're **best** friend's **gone**.

SO IT'S

great to be **here** by the **Church** of St **Martin**
cos whoever you **are**, they'll **always** let you **in**;
whether you're the **best**, or the **worst** kind of **sinner**.
You can **wait** an **hour** before **putting** on your **dinner**,
to **sink** to your **knees** and **speak** to the **King**
about **this** and **that** - a'bout **an-y-thing**.

1 You can **spare** the **time**.

2 I can **spare** the **time**?

1 You can **spare** the **time**!

2 No I **haven't** the **time** I am **sure** about **that**:
I've **got to** wash my **car** and **feed** my **cat**!

1 "You've **got to** feed your **car** and **wash** your **cat**?!"
There's **plen-ty** of **time** to **do** all **that**!

Just a **little** bit of **effort** will **bring** much reward

All All it **takes** is some **time**, and a **love** of the **Lord** - **O Yeah!**

PENTECOST 2000 - 11 June 2000

- Marie 99 weeks! It was 99 weeks!
- QL What are you talking about?
- Marie It was 99 weeks ago since last time ...
- QL Doing what exactly?
- Marie Standing here, doing a sketch in Church. It was the middle of July in 1998 ... except it was Maria doing the other part, and this time it's you!
- QL And what's changed in all that time?
- Marie Not a lot! ... Well, quite a lot really.
- QL I'd say you've changed quite a bit!
- Marie Well, two years ago I could still mess around and do what I wanted. But then I had GCSEs - and I really do have to work a lot more now. I've always got work to do for College and I need money so I have to work for that too...
- QL And what about things here in Church, have they changed as well?
- Marie Not much - except that there are even fewer young people my age around than ever. Don't take this the wrong way but everyone has got a bit older!
- QL Well, let's be honest, including you, actually!!
- Marie Yes I suppose so!
- QL So, is that it then? Are all the young people too busy? Is the Church is only open for old fogies?
- Marie It's hard to answer that. When five of us from Senior Quest went down to London for 'The Time of Our Lives' last year we had a great time. There were thousands of young people around and we got really fired up to DO something for Jesus. But when you get back you have to live your own life again.

It was the same when I was admitted into the Church in October '98. That was a special day too, but after a

while the enthusiasm drops off; you don't forget all the promises you made but they don't seem so important.

QL So - if the 'Time of Our Lives' in London and the time you were brought into the Church were good - how can we keep that enthusiasm going for the rest of the time?

Marie I don't think you can!

QL That's a bit depressing isn't it?

Marie No, I don't think so. It's life. Most of the time we just have to make the best of what we've got. We work and we get through as best we can. Next year I've got 'A' levels and I know I'm going to have to work even harder to get through them.

But if we do nothing but work we become boring and sad, so we need some really good days to break up the monotony.

QL Like 24 hour parties!

Marie Yes - but also different things, times to think and to sort out our lives.

QL That doesn't seem very exciting.

Marie No, but it's what FAITH is about.

QL Go on...

Marie On the internet someone said that there are six things which are true of most people - young and old:

- we want to be loved
- we want to be listened to
- we're scared of dying
- we're scared of failing
- we need a reason for living
- we carry round with us a load of guilt

(Continued over)

Faith is trusting that God is there, working away, even when life is in a bit of a rut. Faith is seeing amazing things, hidden away when you're not looking for them.

Faith is finding the energy to do something for someone when you really can't be bothered. Faith is sharing. Faith is learning to give more - and take less.

QL And how do we get that Faith?

Marie I know that Faith doesn't come from me. It has to come from outside of me because I know there are times when I don't do the things I should.

QL Some of us would say that that energy, that power, is the Holy Spirit of God. We are given that Spirit here, in ways that help us soak up new energy ready for the week ahead.

Marie But if that's true, shouldn't our services be more like the story in Acts - people really buzzing, talking foreign languages, people being healed? The disciples couldn't have been much older than 30 when the Spirit came on them? Couldn't things be a bit livelier?

QL They could - and sometimes they are! But the strange thing is that even here, among us oldies, extraordinary things do happen - day in, day out. St Peter says that the Spirit will be poured out on all sorts of people and that we shouldn't be surprised when good things happen to those who use that Spirit. What matters is that we trust God to use us for whatever job he has in mind. After all, our services are about us serving God - rather than having a good time!

Marie So does it matter that I don't come to Church so much?

QL Yes - and no! If you don't come because you think that places like this are almost dead and buried then that would be a pity. It isn't!

(cont)

But if you can still hold on to what Faith means and can still feel the Spirit working with you, then there's not so much harm done - except to say that everyone is missed... and in any Church we depend on each other to make things happen.

Marie Where do you think we'll be in another 99 weeks?
QL I've no idea! But if Pentecost means anything, we'll
 keep together, not worrying too much about the future
 except promising to keep on battling against the
 temptation to do less for God.

Marie [PAUSE] Do you think I could ever do a real sermon?
QL I think you just have!
Marie But it wasn't very funny, was it?
QL Maybe not - it's just that we've both got a bit older... !

SKETCH FOR TRINITY 11 2001

- 1 Well these readings don't make a lot of sense, do they?
- 2 Do they ever?
- 1 You'd think that in August they would give us an easier time, wouldn't you? A few easy stories or even some jokes?
- 2 Fat chance. It seems to me like they try to find the most obscure bits they can find and then see how if the Vicars can make head or tail out of them during the sermon! That's why we have Lay Readers. The Vicars get them to preach on the Sundays when they haven't a clue what to say!
- 1 But today as all about the Sabbath. I never did understand how come the Muslims have Fridays off, the Jews have Saturdays off and Christians pretend to have Sunday off but don't. They all call it the Sabbath but we don't take it as seriously as the Jews and Muslims do. I mean, there you are, the Vicar's wife, what do you do on a Sunday?
- 2 I don't like Sundays very much. When we were younger it used to be the dead day of the week: going to Church, Sunday lunch - possibly going to see some relations at tea-time, then finishing off home-work and getting ready for school. The TV programmes on Sundays were always awful as well.
- 1 And has anything changed?
- 2 Not a lot - except that now *I* have to cook the dinner instead of just eating it and I have to make sure the kids have finished their home-work and get packed up for school!
- 1 So do you ever go shopping on a Sunday?
- 2 Not if I can help it; but then I don't go shopping any time if I can help it! It's not that I've great hang-ups about shopping on Sundays - near Christmas it's often the only chance we get. It's just one more pressure at the week-end I can do without.

- 1 But isn't it true that most of us can't cope without using all seven days - going to work, getting the chores done at home and shopping? Isn't Jesus right in this story when he says that we need to use even the Sabbath day of rest to look after people - as well as Monday to Saturday?
- 2 I think it might be a bit more complicated than that. He was right to point out to the priests that this woman needed help there and then. A miracle for her had to happen now, when Jesus was there - not just during the Monday to Saturday 'surgery hours' that suited the fat priests. But Jesus knew that these guys were hypocrites because they were pretending that they kept to the letter of the Sabbath laws. Of course they weren't at all. If one of their animals was sick they would be there like a shot. Jesus knew that they were much more likely to look after their animals on the Sabbath than to look after this sick woman.
- 1 So is Jesus saying that the priests were wrong and that we should keep Sunday special by doing almost nothing on a Sunday apart from going to Church - *unless there's an emergency?*
- 2 I think he was saying something much more basic. He was trying to tell us what keeping the Sabbath is all about .
- 1 It's for going to Church, isn't it?
- 2 Maybe. But Church can be pretty mundane and we don't always get that much out of it anyway.
- 1 Well, that your problem. You shouldn't have married a Vicar!
- 2 No, seriously: I think Jesus is trying to tell us that 'Sabbath' is more than just going to Church on a Sunday.
- 1 You mean you think we can skip going to Church if it suits us?
- 2 I don't actually. I think that we go to Church on a Sunday because we owe God something, and making the effort to get out of bed on a Sunday morning is a small way of saying thank you. It's also a way of reminding ourselves that we need to hear what he has to say, and a chance for asking for his help with the things that we are going to face in the week ahead.

- 1 That's all pretty obvious but I'm not sure that Church is always the place where that happens best.
- 2 Actually, that's true for most of us. If I'm honest I spend most of the service on a Sunday thinking about all sorts of things. Lots of them have nothing whatever to do with the hymns or the readings or the sermon. I think about what has happened in the week and what is going to happen - the things that have gone well and the things that I have messed up. And because there is some space to think, I can offer all that to God and hope that he can make the best of it.
- 1 But I can do that any old time - in the car when I'm driving to work, when I'm watching TV, when I'm cooking the kids' tea or when I finally get to bed. I don't need to wait to Sunday to do that.
- 2 That's right. Sometimes we can do it all in Church but I think it's just as likely to happen when we've got a bit of space in the week. So although 'Sabbath' seems like a Sunday thing, Sabbath is also about giving time over to God and waiting for him to let us know what he wants us to do - whenever the opportunity is there. Which is why the readings today are about encouraging us to listen to the voice of God that speaks to us - whenever that happens. If you look at the 2nd reading from Hebrews, it doesn't say "the voice that *might* speak to us" it says "the voice that *does* speak to us."
- 1 But lots of Christians would say they have never heard the voice of God in their lives.
- 2 Or perhaps they haven't recognised it. But they still look after other people, and go on struggling to make the world a better place. They might think that they are doing that out of the goodness of their own hearts but my guess is that God is doing a pretty good job through them, and they just don't notice!
- 1 So pass this Sabbath idea in front of me again. What's it about?
- 2 I'd say it was about finding time to listen to what God had to say, however and whenever it happens. But, hey, what would I know?
- 1/2 I'm/You're just the Vicar's wife!

25.08.2001

DIALOGUE FOR HARVEST 2001 Michael Forster, edited

- 1 Well I thought that was a bit heavy for a Harvest Thanksgiving! What's it got to do with bananas and cauliflowers and tins of beans?
- 2 Strange though it may seem, quite a lot! Jesus was having a go at the hypocrites of his day who were all very good at having big services where they could go through the motions of saying thank-you for their food.
- 1 Why would he do that?
- 2 Because they were grinding the faces of the poor people at the same time! How many times does he say - "You hypocrites"
- 1 At least three times.
- 2 Well that was because he was trying to get through their thick skulls that couldn't turn up and say one thing and do the opposite the minute they got out of the door.
- 1 Aren't you taking this just a bit too seriously?
- 2 That's just it. Religious people are quite good at using loads of words in their services; the real test is what we do the first time something awkward comes their way.
- 1 Well that's a fair point I guess... Now isn't it time for the next hymn?
- 2 Not so fast - there's more to it than that.
- 1 I might have guessed!
- 2 Jesus' big message was about fairness - fairness for all: big/small, old/young, black/white, rich/poor, male/female, friend/stranger.
- 1 I must have missed something here but for the life of me I still can't see what that's got to do with Harvest.
- 2 Well lets think: when you see pictures of Third World countries, would you like them to be as well-off as you are?
- 1 Anyone would, wouldn't they?
- 2 OK, so far so good. But what if all the people in a poor continent like Africa for example actually had all the things that we take for granted? Imagine them having two cars, three TVs, fridges, freezers, supermarkets with food all wrapped up in cellophane - do you really think our world could cope?
- 1 I suppose not. We'd soon run out of raw materials.

- 2 Quite right. But you're not saying that they should stay poor just so that we can go on having all the things we want are you?
- 1 Of course not.
- 2 So what's the answer? There isn't enough to go round fairly. So what do we have to do?
- 1 I suppose we have to start recycling our drink cans, buying those long-life electric bulbs...
- 2 What about cycling to work or walking to school? What about the Council making us pay every time we take the car out?
- 1 That's a bit drastic isn't it?
- 2 Is it? The reason that Jesus picked on those teachers was because all they did was TALK about fairness, they never did anything about it. They could talk the hind-leg off a donkey in Church but they always thought doing something about it was too painful. It could wait until tomorrow, or better still the day after.
- 1 But Jesus wouldn't say the same to us now would he?
- 2 Almost certainly. We are just as selfish today as the teachers 2000 years ago. If anything we know more about poor countries today than ever.
- 1 But why don't the government and the big companies start doing something about it?
- 2 Because the governments wouldn't get elected and the companies would go out of business.
- 1 So who can get us out of this mess?
- 2 I don't know the answer to that. But I've got something here that will show us where to begin.
- 1 What's that?
- 2 (Holding it up to the other's face) A mirror!

SKETCH FOR BAPTISMAL PREPARATION AFTERNOON
27.10.02

A Did you watch that programme on tulle last night ... about what d'ya call it..?

B About what d'ya call it?

A You know, it had all them people getting that kid thinga-majigged

B You mean they had their kid Christened: that's nice.

A Ya s'pose so

B What did they call it?

A (*Slowly*) Victoria, J-Lo, Kylie, Britney, Kristina, Holly ... Smith!

B That's nice

A Ya s'pose so

B We had our Jake christened last year

A Did yer, ya didn't invite me

B Never thought you'd be interested in that sort of thing

A Ya know I like a good boozy party

B It's not just a booze up and a party, you know

A Ya s'pose so [Pause] Do you think we could get our Darren done?

B What, just so that you can have a great big booze-up?

A (*Dreamily*) Ya s'pose so ... And we can dress him up in one ov 'em white dresses...

- B You mean a Christening Gown
- A Ya s'pose so
- B (*Hesitantly*) Have you ... have you thought about talking to the Vicar about it?
- A Ya s'pose so – (*Speeding up a bit*) NO! What, so that he can have a nosey around the house?
- B No, so that he can talk to you – ask you some questions...
- A (*Sarcastically*) Will I be able to phone a friend??
- B (*Ignoring the last comment*) It's a serious matter you know, not to be rushed into. He'll come and talk to you about God and Jesus and tell you a bit about the Church and why we ...
- A ... Splash on a bit of water and then go and wet the baby's head!
- B (*Getting cross*) You're not as dumb as you sound are you!? I knew you wouldn't be that interested.
- A Ooh la la, you snobby sod! Well, are you going to tell me something about it or not?
- B Go on then; I'll try and remember what the Vicar asked us.
- A Can I be the Vicar a'Dibley then?
- B You can't be the Vicar, you don't know the questions!
- A (*Slowing down again*) Ya s'pose so
- B Come on then, let's go and get us a cuppa tea!

Ann [Slightly 'twee'] Isn't the light shining beautifully on those old houses. I love the colour of that brick and the sun has made all the honeysuckle sparkle around the door: (expansively) oh - I do like to be in the country on a warm sunny evening.

Brian [Bluff] Shame about that enormous Morrison's sign next door; WHY are they allowed to stick up those plastic black and yellow hoardings that look like overgrown wasps!

Ann [Pause] [Always positively] Look Brian, they've finished rebuilding that pretty little pub. That's better! It looked so shabby before. I'm sure people will enjoy driving out here - and they've put a little children's play area in the corner too. [Cajolingly] We could bring the grandchildren?

Brian [Warming to his theme] And just look at the way they've put those naff gold floodlights on the front like every other "Ye Olde Worlde" modern pub. [Pause] Next they'll put 'Romeo' and 'Juliet' on the toilet doors and a four poster bed in the best bedroom and pretend Will Shakespeare slept here! [Brief Pause] And Queen Elizabeth the First!

Ann [Still positive] Look Brian, there are two swallows flying over those copper beeches - look - don't they just make you feel that God is in his heaven and all is well with the world...?

Brian No.

Ann [Pause] [Trying again] Look Brian, there's a little exhibition over there: "Paintings and Sketches by local artists". Oh, I'd love to go and have a look. [Excitedly] Perhaps we could buy a little something to put into the dining room - or on the stairs - or in the spare room - or perhaps mm - somewhere?

Brian [Rudely] "Daphne Davies' dainty daubings" - no thanks! "Views of Skipton Castle £25!" They are all copies off chocolate boxes or jigsaw puzzles. I bet she'd never been there in her life! What a waste of time!

Ann [Finally losing patience] Well, I think I'd like to go and see what they've done. Some of them are very clever you know. [Turning on him with some force] The trouble with you, Brian, is that you just don't appreciate lovely things when you see them... Just drop me off on the corner, please... I'll go in on my own ... And what are you going to do while I'm there?

Brian Oh, I thought I might read something - I'm half way through this Len Deighton...

Ann [Haughtily] Oh well, if you are only going to read that rubbish I'll go in and look at the pictures...

'QUEST' PRESENTS 'THE BEATITUDES' [St Luke 6: 27 - 38]

Narrator: **When Jesus had come down from the hill with the apostles, he stood on a level place. And there was gathered a large crowd. And he began to teach them...**

Mother: I told you yesterday that if you don't start tidying your bedroom, don't stop chewing your nails, don't clear the table after dinner - and have to be nagged into feeding the rabbits when you come home from school, I'm NOT going to give you money to go swimming this week.

Daughter: But Mum! On Saturday you *promised* I could go! You didn't say [rather sarcastically] I had to be 'absolutely perfect' or I couldn't have the money, You just said it was fine and I could go; and I've asked Becky to come with me now.

Mother: Well it's tough. I've changed my mind.

Daughter: But Becky won't be allowed to go if I don't go.

Mother: You should have thought of that. Really! it's time you grew up and stopped arguing with me. If you behave like a child I'll treat you like one! You really are turning into a lot of trouble these days... You were so much easier when you were younger!

Narrator: **Jesus said to them: I tell you: Love your enemies, do good to those who fall out with you, even those who hate you; bless those who curse you and pray for those who ill-treat you.**

II

Daughter: Dad, can I ask a favour?

Dad: [In a really good mood but pretending to be serious] Sure, so long as it doesn't cost my anything! What do you want?

Daughter: Well [in a ultra-begging voice], we are doing this project at school about Africa and we doing this thing on safari parks. I thought it would be really good if I could take in that hunting knife you brought back from Kenya?

Dad: Well, I'm not sure that's such a good idea. It's a very special kind of knife; what if you lost it?

Daughter: [Laying it on thick] Oh I wouldn't, I really wouldn't. I'd take care of it and Mr Smith would think I was really helpful bringing in your knife.

Narrator: **She loses the knife on the way to school.**

Daughter: [Crying, sobbing] Oh Daddy, daddy, I don't know how I could have and ... and ... and ... I never got to show Mr Smith the knife and he'll think I'm stupid or something...

Dad: Well never mind about the knife. I'm sure it'll turn up some time. And I think I just might find you something else to show Mr Smith. Shall we go and have a look?

Narrator: **Jesus said: Give to everyone who asks you for something, and when someone takes what is yours do not ask for it back. Do for others what you want them to do for you.**

III

1st sister: You look fed up. What's up with you?

2nd sister: Oh, I was talking to Melissa after school by the shops
and I was eating a bag of crisps and she said 'why are you
eating those crisps, you're too fat already!' I hate her!

1st sister: Poor old Melissa. I don't think anyone is ever nice to
her. I'm sure that if we were a bit more friendly to her she
wouldn't say bad things to us all the time.

Narrator: **Jesus went on: If you love only the people who love
you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners
love those who love them! No, love your enemies and
do good to them; lend and expect nothing back. Your
heavenly Father will know how to reward you. For he is
good to the ungrateful and the wicked.**

IV

Daughter: They haven't picked me for the netball team AGAIN.
Miss Lewis always picks her favourites: Susan, Rebecca and
Samantha always get in and Rebecca is really rubbish... Do
you think there's something going on? Mum, are you
listening?

Mother: [Vaguely] Yes of course; is what going on?

Daughter: [Fed up] Do you think something's going on between Miss
Lewis, Susan, Samantha and Rebecca? I think it's all a bit
weird. She gives them lifts home too and she smiles a lot at
them too. It's weird!

Mother: What's wrong with smiling at someone?

Daughter: [Exasperated] Mum! In School NONE of the Teachers
smile. It's not normal!

Mother: And do you ever smile at any of the teachers?

Daughter: No way! Give the teachers an inch and they'll get you
doing all sorts of things you don't want to do.... and never
say 'thank you', that really winds them up!

Narrator: **Jesus turned to the disciples: Do not judge others, and God will not judge you; do not condemn others and God will not condemn you; forgive others and God will forgive you. Give to others and God will give to you. Indeed you will receive so much in your hands that you will be given more than you can hold in your hands. The measure you use for others is the measure that God will use for you...**
V and VI

Mother: I'm afraid I've got some bad news tonight. I told you that things were difficult at work but I hoped that we would pull through and I might even get a better job later on. Well, they called me into the office and told me that I had got the sack - been made redundant. I'll be finishing work at the end of next week. I'm really sorry but it might be a while before I can get another one and - well that means a lot less money coming in.

Son: Well, looking at the way you run this house, I'm surprised anyone gives you a job!

Narrator: **If anyone hits you on one cheek, let them hit the other too; if anyone takes your coat, let them have your shirt as well..."**

Mother: How can you say such that - tonight of all nights? You are just SO selfish! I've been working really long hours at work, and looking after things here and all you can do is make it worse. I don't see you lifting a finger to do much to help. There have been times when I felt like cracking up under the pressure. With your dad away how else could I make ends meet? Tell me that?

Son: I'm sorry Mum, I didn't think. I'm sorry you lost your job. I will try and help more. [Slowly] I really am sorry.

Mother: It's OK. I do understand how you are feeling. I'm sorry that I haven't been around as much as you wanted me to be. These last few weeks have been tough for all of us. Let's start again, eh?

Narrator: **And Jesus finished by telling this parable: Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but pay no attention to the log in your own eye? How can you say to**

**your brother, 'Please
eye' when you can't see the
You hypocrite! First take the log
and then you will be able to see clearly
speck out of your brother's eye.**

**let me take the speck out of your
log that is in your own eye.
out of your own eye,
to take the**

PENTECOST 1995

(Sinead and Rachael)

S What's wrong with you, you look really fed up!

R O nothing, It's just that I've become a Christian. You wouldn't believe all the things that I've got to do. You wouldn't believe all the things I can't do either! Look, I've got all these commandments to keep. It's really getting me down... I never knew how hard it was keeping these commandments!

(1) You shall have no other gods but me (Sinead and Fiona)

S Where did you get all that money from?

F My gran gave it to me. I can't wait to spend it.

S What are you going to buy?

F O, I don't care what I get, so long as I can spend it on ME. I might go out - get a new CD, go riding for days and days, get another new bike ...

S But you've got most of those things already!

F Yes but I just like spending money. It makes me happy!

S Does it?

Narrator God said: I am the Lord your God. You must worship no other
god but me. And Jesus said: "If you love me you will keep my
commandments".

(2) Respect your father and your mother (Emma and Elizabeth)

Em (Shouting as if back into the house) And I hate you and I don't care if I never see you ever again...

El What's wrong with you?

Em My mum's just told me I've got to stay in.

El Why?

Em She says I was rude to her, but I wasn't.

El What did you say?

Em (Silence) I'm not going to tell you.

Em O go on. (Emma whispers in Elizabeth's ear)

El You said what! My mum would kill me if I said that!!

Em Well I don't care. She shouldn't have got on to me...

Narrator: God said: "Respect your father and your mother, so that you may live a long time in the land." And Jesus said: "If you love me you will keep my commandments".

(3) You shall not covet (Amy and Jo)

A O not again!

J What?

A How come you've got new clothes AGAIN?

J These aren't new.

A Yes they are. I've not see in them before. Anyway, I'm really fed up. My mum never buys me new clothes. I've been wanting a new coat and new socks for ages, and here you are like an advert for NEXT all over again.

J I don't get that many new things...

A Well you do - AND you've got a bigger dog than us AND you get better marks at school AND AND - EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT IS BETTER THAN MINE... (sulks!)

Narrator: God said: "Do not desire another's person's goods, his wife, his slaves, his cattle, his donkeys or anything else that he owns".
And Jesus said: "If you love me you will keep my commandments"..

(4) You shall not steal (Katie and Beth)

[Katie stands by microphone, and takes off the bag she is wearing and puts it on the floor. Beth comes over, smiles at her. Katie turns away to look at something. Beth snatches the bag and runs back to her place - hiding it behind her.]

K Who's taken my bag? Have you seen it Beth?

B No

K But it had all my money in it and all my swimming things. What am I going to do? Are you sure you haven't see it?

B No

K But what am I going to do now?

B I don't know!

K Beth, I can see the bag. It's just behind you. How could you do that?

B I don't know!

Narrator God said: "Do not steal." And Jesus said: "If you love me you will keep my commandments".

And in the same way she broke all the commandments. [Pin: all the balloons get burst]

Narrator: But Jesus also said that we don't need to drag around all those heavy balloons and the problems of keeping all the commandments. Jesus offers a much better way, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the gift of LOVE.

[Helium balloon is brought on and given to Rachael. She ties it to the arm of the chair and it sails up into the air]

MISS "I'M OK, THANKS VERY MUCH"

A This is 'Miss I'm OK, thanks very much!'. Throughout her life she was fairly happy about most things.

You could say, she was average at school [**C holds up a book and she pretends to read it, then gets bored and turns to her right**]

A She had a happy and loving family [**D,E and F are cuddling one another and chatting away but then they fall out and start arguing. B turns away to her right.**]

A She was quite interested in playing sports [**G pretends to be playing a game of squash with her, and then G cheers because she has won the game and B is fed up and turns to face the congregation**].

A What she had never thought about in her life was anything to do with religion. She thought it was all boring. [**H,I and J start singing 'All things bright and beautiful, badly. B holds up her hands to her ears.'**]

A In fact anything that was thrown her [**K throws sponge brick**] didn't seem to make any impression! It was as if she had an umbrella over her to keep everything out new out of her life. To be truthful, she wasn't very happy, she was just OK.

A Then she met 'Mr Thoughtful'. [**L comes and stands next to Miss I'm OK**] He wasn't a whimper and he wasn't boring. In fact he was really good fun. But he did go to Church and suddenly 'Miss I'm OK, thanks very much' thought she might go too. She put down her umbrella and began to listen to what Mr Thoughtful and his friends had to say.

A It wasn't long before Mr Thoughtful helped Miss OK to realise that keeping yourself to yourself wasn't such a good idea after all, and that if she really wanted to be happy, God wanted her to learn how to become one of his friends by becoming a member of his Church. [**H brings a big can of oil**] To start with she was marked with the sign of the Cross as someone wanting to be a follower of Jesus.

A But the next step was Baptism: she would have to be christened!

B [**B shakes her head violently!**] O no, no that, please!

All O yes!!

B I'm going to get wet and everyone will laugh at me.

A They all told her that she needed to wash away her old life and start all over again. [**X takes a pail of water and tips it over B, and then gives her a towel. Everyone else cheers.**]

A And all her new friends didn't laugh, they cheered.

A Then, to light up the new way she was going to go, Mr Thoughtful gave her a candle and 'Miss I'm OK, thanks very much' went away - wet but happy! Now she really was OK, thanks very much.

GODPARENTS AND A HEARTY WELCOME

1 We've organised the baby's baptism, so who can we have for godparents.

2 Oh, I don't think we need godparents any more; that makes the christening sound a bit religious and churchy. Can't we just have a few friends over to wet the baby's head?

1 Of course you've got to have godparents. It says so in this little book that Fr John gave us. I think we'd better do what he said don't you?

2 I suppose so.

1 I mean, these godparents are supposed to be able to look after our baby if anything happens to us later on.

3 So you need to think of all your rich friends for a start.

1 Don't be silly (Long pause as if she is thinking) ... we haven't got any.

2 Well can we have some of the family? There's my brother and his girl friend and my sister and her partner and my cousin in Saudi Arabia.

1 Do any of them go to Church?

2 Of course not!

1 Can't we find anyone who believes in God?

3 There's your cousin Lizzie - and David at work goes to Church - and Grandma says her prayers every night, I've heard her.

2 There's more of these Christians around than I thought!

1 I think they'll do fine. I'm sure we'll all have a great day!

WHO BELONGS HERE? (2)

A sketch for All Saint's Day

Cast: Narrator, St Peter, 1st Angel, Mrs Worrylot, God, 2nd angel, 3rd angel,
Mr Tim Id, Mr Cool Dude, 4th angel.

Narrator: The last time we heard from St Awful's Church, all the Church members were moaning about each other. There was a kind of courtroom scene ` and one after another the members were put on trial. Among them were Mrs Worrylot, Mrs Tudball, Mr Tim Id and Mr Cool Dude. They have now all died and are waiting to get into heaven - they hope.

The scene is set at the Gates of heaven and St Peter is busy as usual.

St Peter: Tickets please, have your tickets ready at the gates: no pushing and shoving thank-you; there's plenty of time - or rather, there's no time at all in heaven!!

All: *(panicking)* But we haven't got any tickets!

St Peter: No Tickets! Of course you have. It is called a `conscience print out'. If you look you'll see everything that you have done printed out in full, from the day you were born to the day you died. Have you found it now? Good. Move along now please.

All: *(Mime pulling their `conscience print outs' out of their chests)*
O dear! *(and sinking to the floor, depressed)*

1st Angel: So who's first?

Mrs W: *(shaking in her boots)* Me, your angelicals, Mrs Worrylot...

2nd Angel: Well, look lively - its better than looking deadly, eh!!

Mrs W: But I'm very frightened. You see I wasn't a very nice person at all. I used to bring my baby to Church and hope that she would scream so that I could go out into the Narthex. And sometimes I used to pretend that I was really holy by kneeling down for ages, but really I was thinking about what I would do if I won the lottery!

1st Angel: Sounds pretty dodgy to me, what do you think Peter?

St Peter: Is that all your 'conscience print-out' says?

Mrs W: *(Looking at it)* Well it does say that I had to try really hard to bring my baby to Church because my husband wouldn't come so I had to walk miles to get there - and my baby, er, Daisy, did really well and now she's going to Church with her children...

St Peter: Well why didn't you say all that - stop worrying - let's see, yes, Row F in heaven for you...

God: Mrs Worrylot, welcome into the Kingdom of Heaven. For you remembered the words of Jesus: Whoever welcomes a

little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me
does not just welcome me but my Father who is in heaven.
1st angel: NEXT...

2nd Angel: Name.

Mrs T: Mrs Tudball. T - U - D - B - A ...

2nd Angel: Yes, I think we can spell in heaven thank you!

St Peter: Mrs Tudball, I understand that you were nearly thrown out of
St Awful's because they said you were a gossip. Is that correct?

Mrs T: And what a nerve they had! I could tell you a thing or
two about those people, that's for sure!

St Peter: Nothing we don't already know about, Mrs Tudball.

Mrs T: Do you know what they said? They said I wouldn't sing
those dreadful Thanks and Praise hymns - and I wouldn't! And
that Vicar! All that trendy nonsense about giving money to
black people in Africa and getting on with Methodists. Bring
back Mattins and cold churches I say. That would sort them out!

2nd angel: Ooh, I think we're going to lose this one downstairs (*Points
down to Hell*)

St Peter: Don't be hasty, now.

2nd angel: (*rubbing hands*) But I do like to see some go for the drop!

3rd angel: But didn't she look after her father with a stroke for nearly 25
years?

Mrs T: (*crossly*) Who told you that? I didn't tell anyone about that.

St Peter: Mrs Tudball, we know everything. We know how hard it was
for you to care for your father for all those years. And no-one
ever knew about him - or gave you a holiday or any help, did they?

God: That's right. But we knew. Your love for your father and for
other people who had had strokes, was your one big secret.
I'm sorry that you were often so unhappy but come now and share
my Kingdom for I, the Lord, reward all those who lovingly do
what is right in secret. Do you know that song: "Do not be afraid,
for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name, you
are mine."

Mrs T: Is that out of that dreadful Thanks and Praise book?

God: Yes.

Mrs T: Well, do you know, I think I quite like it now...

1st angel: NEXT! (*Pause*) NEXT!! Mr Id, you're next!

Mr Id: Do I have to?

2nd angel: Have you got something to hide, Tim?

Mr Id: Er, no; er, yes; er...

3rd angel: Please speak up, we're all very interested to hear what you
have to say.

Mr Id: But I've nothing to say; I've never had anything to say. Why won't people leave me alone? They tried to make me do the intercessions at Church. And people told me they were awful and they couldn't hear a word and I didn't pray like it says in the red book.

2nd angel: (*rubbing hands again*) This looks like another one for the drop. We can't have people in heaven who have never prayed!

St Peter: But I think your `conscience print-out' says something a bit different, doesn't it? You were too shy to pray out loud in Church but we know you were always talking to God - on your way to work in the morning, ten minutes in your lunchbreak, and every night with a Bible in your hand. You didn't use prayer books but you were always keeping God in mind...

God: and I loved you for it, Tim. Ask and you shall receive, said Jesus. So I say to you: Come and receive your place in my Kingdom.

2nd angel: Bother - another one got away, but I think I might do better with this one...

MCD: Hi, I'm Mr Cool Dude, ready and waiting for the action, folks! Where do I go now? Everyone else seems to be getting in without too much trouble, so where's the door to the heavenly party?

St Peter: Just a minute, young man, I want a word with you.

MCD: Oh no, you sound just like the lot down there. They were always playing for time too. My conscience is clear - let's get going. Where is the Big 'G' anyway? (*calls out loudly*) Oi! me main man!

4th angel: I think you'd better hang on a bit. From where I'm standing your print-out has got more red stains on it than anything else! There's the time you walked out of St Awful's Quest Group because you thought the Bible was for oldies and the Ten Commandments were for softies.

St Peter: In fact your whole life looks pretty selfish to me. You always wanted your own way. You took money from your mother, you bunked off school, you lounged around at work, you never lifted a finger at home, you drank and smoked too much and even used rude words to the Bishop at your daughter's Confirmation! What do you say about that?

MCD: Well he was ... no, you're right. I really was a selfish pig for most of my life, but I did get back to Church just before I died, and I did say sorry to God - and I did mean it.

2nd angel: But it was only just in the nick of time wasn't it? You died the next day in a car accident! You might have left it too late!

God: You did say sorry, Cool Dude, and I accept your apology. Do you remember, last time we spoke? I said that I was a loving and forgiving Lord, and that everyone who repents has a place in Heaven. It sounds like I've got to say it to you

again. Welcome back, Cool Dude, there's a place for you
too in my Kingdom.

JESUS' CHRISTMAS PARTY

Narrator There was nothing the innkeeper liked more than a good night's sleep.

But that night there was a knock on the door.

Innkeeper "No room"

Narrator said the Innkeeper

Mary "But we're tired and have travelled through night and day"

Innkeeper "There's only a stable round the back. You'll find two blankets by the door. And don;t forget top sign the register. Good night!"

Narrator So they signed it: 'Mary and Joseph'.

Then the Innkeeper shut the door, climbed the stairs, got into bed, and went to sleep.

But then, later, there was another knock at the door.

Joseph "Excuse me, I wonder if you could lend us another, smaller, blanket?"

Innkeeper "There. One smaller blanket,"

Narrator said the Innkeeper.

Then he shut the door, climbed the stairs, got into bed, and went to sleep.

But then a bright light woke him up.

Innkeeper "That's *all* I need,"

Narrator said the Innkeeper.

Then he shut the door, climbed the stairs, drew the curtains, got into bed, and went to sleep.

But then there was *another* knock at the door.

Shepherds "We are three shepherds."

Innkeeper "Well, what's the matter? Lost your sheep?"

Shepherds "We've come to see Mary and Joseph."

Innkeeper **"ROUND THE BACK!"**

Narrator said the Innkeeper.
Then he shut the door, climbed the stairs, got into bed, and went to sleep.
But then there was yet *another* knock at the door.

3 Kings "We are three kings. We've come..."

Innkeeper **"ROUND THE BACK!"**

Narrator He slammed the door, climbed the stairs, got into bed, and went to sleep.
But *then* a chorus of singing woke him up.

Innkeeper **"RIGHT, THAT DOES IT!"**
So he got out of bed, stomped down the stairs, threw open the door, went round the back, stormed into the stable, and was just about to speak when -

All "Sssh!"

Narrator whispered everybody,

All "you'll wake the baby!"

Innkeeper **"Baby?"**

Narrator said the Innkeeper.

Shepherd "Yes, a baby has been born tonight."

Innkeeper "Oh?"

Narrator said the innkeeper, looking crossly into the manger.

And just at that moment, suddenly, amazingly, his anger seemed to fly away.

Innkeeper "Oh",

Narrator said the Innkeeper,

Innkeeper isn't he **lovely!**"

Narrator In fact, he thought he was so special that he woke up **all** the guests at the inn, so that they could come and have a look at the baby too...

So no one got much sleep that night!

DRAMA FOR CANDLEMASS 1998

- Mary Will you get a move on! Wouldn't get out of bed, wouldn't get washed, wouldn't find a clean shirt, and you've been walking as slow as a cock-roach. Will you get a move on!
- Joseph Will you leave me alone! I've got a bad head, my leg hurts and I don't like all this bowing and scraping in Temples!
- Mary A fine example of a man you are. Don't you know the rules? 'Take your child, take your turtle doves or your pigeons, go to the Temple, find a priest and say thank-you for the baby that God has given you'
You're just typical, you are! It's too easy for men. They should have the babies, I say. Then they'd be glad enough when it was all over!
- Joseph Keep your voice down! We're there now. Now who are we supposed to see?
- Mary I don't know. Let's just see what happens. I've not had any children before!
- Simeon It's a bit busy in here today. But who's this coming in now? I've got a feeling this might be someone a bit special... Excuse me, can I hold your baby?
- Mary Well, thanks very much. We didn't know where to go and ...
- Simeon Lord, you've done it! You've saved an old man from dying before he saw the promised Christ. Now I can go in peace! With my own eyes I've seen the child you told us about. He'll be great - a child who will light up the world - both Jew and Gentile - and give us hope!
- Mary Well that's very nice of you to say that. See Joseph, I told you it was worth coming didn't I?
- Simeon But, Lady, let me warn you: it won't be that easy. This young man will bring so many good things, but people will turn against him too. Just remember what I've said: a light and a

sign that some will love, and some will hate. But for now, may God bless you all.

SUNDAY BEFORE LENT - 2000

"LOOK: THIS IS ME!"

1 (Waving from the top of the ladder) Hi everyone! Can you see me? Can you hear me? Hello - are you all awake?? I've got a few things to tell you...

Well: I've been asked to do this bit of the service because, well, I'm one of the better people around here! I'm always in Church on Sundays for a start...

Mark Except for last week - and you weren't here the week before that either!

**1 Mm (goes down a bit)
Well, apart from that, everyone knows I tell the truth...**

James Not to your teacher you don't. "I've left my homework at home" you said! You hadn't even started it!

**1 Mm (goes down a bit more)
Well, apart from that, I never got cross with people...**

Carl So is that why you smacked Kevin the other night?

**1 How did you know about that... ? (goes down a bit more)
well, apart from that, everyone knows that I share all my things...**

Sarah Apart from your new Beany Baby - you didn't let anyone touch that after you got it yesterday!

**1 But ... well apart from that (goes down a bit lower)
I always do what I'm told at home and my mum says...**

Laura Your mum says you're a pain at the moment and she hopes you'll stop telling everyone how wonderful you are!

1 (goes to the bottom of the ladder)

I was only saying...

Peter It doesn't matter what you SAY it's what you DO that counts!

1 I just feel - REALLY bad!

SUNDAY BEFORE LENT - 2000

"WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU LOOK LIKE!"

(Andrew stands on his own, centre stage on top step. He has a "cross" on his head A large crowd meet up with him)

Sinead Hey Andrew, what do you think you look like? What's up with you? You got another eye or something?

Shona Oi, Andrew, what have you done to yourself? - Where did you get that smudge from? Been up a chimney!?

Andrew It isn't a smudge, it's ash.

Sinead So what are you doing with a load of ash on your head, eh?

Andrew I've been to Church.

Sinead Church?! (louder) Church! What do you want to go and do that for? Are you in trouble or something?

A No. I've been to Church today because it's the start of Lent.

Laura So you go to Church so that they can stick a load of ashes on your head? What do they do that for?

A To remind me of something.

Martin What?

A To remind me of all the bad things I've done.

James Andrew - I'll tell you one thing. If that spot's there for that, it's not big enough!

A Yes it is! It's big enough to remind me that if I say sorry, all the bad things I do get forgiven.

Jessica Who by? the Chimney sweep?

A No - by Jesus. I say "I'm sorry". He says "then that's alright."

Sarah Is it that easy - saying sorry and getting a black blob on your head?

A It's not easy exactly ... but I tell you what: it's better than never knowing whether God is your friend or not. I've said I'm sorry and I know he's my friend. (Pause) But I'm not so sure about you lot! Are we still friends?

Peter Yea, so long as you wash that blob off.

Matthew Leave him alone. I think it suits him!

DRAMA FOR TRINITY 11 September 2000

Three actors, all holding a tabloid newspaper

G That's just dreadful - have you seen the like of it? (*showing number 2 the imaginary picture*)

K Mm [Pause] This lot should be ashamed of themselves as well. They had a few too many drinks and - well, it's disgusting ... and in Harrogate too!

G [Pause] This girl is having a baby and she's only 12!

P This boy was caught smashing shop windows and he was only 8.

K [Pause] This man got a HALF A MILLION POUND Golden handshake and then - surprise, surprise - the firm went bust...

G Just look at what teacher has been doing to these children...

ALL (*Pretending to turn from page to page*) The world's just gone mad and we want no part of it! (*Then turn back to their papers*)

G Look there's a report here about the Churchwarden of St Agatha's - run off with that new good-looking curate...

1 K Disgusting!

P [*quietly*] Lucky Churchwarden!

G It says here that they were seen together in Bridlington by Mrs See-it-all.

K You're not safe anywhere! But the annoying thing is that Mrs See-it-all never comes to Church from one year's end to the next...

G It doesn't stop her snooping around - especially if she can run down someone from the Church - just remember when she accused us all of cheating at the last Summer Fair when she said she was done out of that big bottle of Whisky?

K But she was right!" (*Turning to P*) You didn't put the winning ticket into the drum until 10 minutes before the end. I saw you!!

P Well! You don't make any money if all the decent prizes go in the first half hour. It was all in a good cause you know... [pause] but while we're talking, (*Talking to K*) what's all this I hear about your Robert getting invalidity benefit! He stronger than me AND he works part-time down the take-away. It's a fiddle and you know it!

G How do you know what benefit her Robert's getting?

P Someone told me when I went for my pension the other day.

G (*clearly to K*) So is it true that he's getting that allowance?

K Well it's none of my business and it's none of yours! (*K stomps off*)

G Hey, how about that for a guilty conscience!

P Yes, I really don't know what's got into her.

G *(turning on P)* Well perhaps it's because you really do like winding people up, don't you?

P What, me?!

I Yes, you!

P Me? I'm an angel of discretion. Never say a word out of place!

G Or fix the tombola, or listen to gossip in the post office, or cheer when that curate runs off with the churchwarden...

P Hang on a minute: I haven't been in this Church for all these years not to know a fair bit about quite a few of the people here. Look at them! There's a skeleton or two in almost every cupboard. But because we know each other so well, we turn a blind eye and just try to enjoy people for what they are.

G It's a lot easier to criticise people we read about in the papers...

P Most of us don't need an excuse to have a go at other people - whether we know them or not. It makes us feel better somehow.

G The strange thing is that we don't mean to do it: it's become part of life somehow.

P And these newspapers don't help: all the good news gets put into the corners and all the juicy bits get the headlines.

G *[Pause]* The thing that worries me is 'WHY we are all so critical'? If we've all got things we're not so proud of, why do we go on and on about other's peoples faults?

P Partly because sorting other people out seems easier than dealing with ourselves. Sometimes of course there are things which we are right to speak out against - like lots of the things we read about in here.

G But we never get the full story from the papers.

P We don't often get the full story even with our friends and our families. That's why it's so dangerous taking sides.

G Really, I suppose those of us in the Church shouldn't be like that.

P No we shouldn't, and often church people are as bad as those outside. That's why listening to people is probably one of the most important things we can ever get involved in: listening to people's stories and giving them huge credit just for getting through life as well as they have.

G Don't we do that already?

P A bit, but often not without preaching at people and telling them what we think is good for them.

G Don't you think it's strange that Jesus didn't point out what the woman had done wrong before he let her go?

P What do you think?

- G The thing about Jesus is that he would have known the full story - and he would know that she already felt guilty about what she had done - stoning her wasn't going to make the situation any better. She still had to face her husband and her family when she got home and I don't expect that would have been too easy either.
- K *(sidling up to the others without them seeing - and said with slight sarcasm)* Well Amen to that! I'm glad that there's a place here for everyone - the perfect, the sinner and the hypocrite!
(Said straight) As I've said often before, this faith bit is easy enough - it's putting it into practice that makes it all so much more difficult.
- G *{a bit embarassed}* I'm glad you've come back... where did you go?
- K I went to tell my Robert that he shouldn't be claiming benefit when he could work.
- P And what happened?
- K He said, 'O, for goodness sake, not again!' He said he was fed up with being got at by a load of do-gooders. He had had it with teachers, he's had it with the police, he'd had it with Church. What he did was none of anyone else's business! I was his mum not his conscience.
- G And what did you say?
- K Well, just for once I didn't tell him what he should be doing. I just said that everyone knew what he was doing and that he couldn't get away with it for ever. Before long he'd end up in the papers and we'd all be sorry.
- P And then?
- K Then he really surprised me. He said, 'what did people think of him?' And I said, 'they don't think much of what you're doing but most of them have known you since you were a baby and they still love you like they always have'.
- G I don't suppose he was too impressed with that!
- K Well you know how pig-headed he is! But I think it shook him to hear that people would still care about him even after they knew what he had been doing. Give him time, I think he'll come round. The odd thing is, I think he's glad he'd been found out. Now he could begin to do something to put things right.
- P "And Jesus said, How many times should you forgive someone? Seven times? No, seventy times seven - or until you have lost count! For there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over a whole congregation who pretend they have nothing to be sorry for".

DO YOU REMEMBER MISS SMITH?

At the [PAUSE] mark, please count slowly to six before the next section

- 1 Do you remember Miss Smith?
- 2 She had large glasses and a wobbly chin!
- 1 Do you remember Miss Smith?
- 2 She played the piano and was incredibly thin.
- 1 Do you remember Miss Smith?
- 2 She had a big book with pictures in.
- 1 Do you remember Miss Smith
- 2 *(hated thought and down-turned mouth, slowly)*
At Sunday School she made us all sing... [PAUSE]

- 3 *(Faster)* What was Sunday School like for you then?
- 4 It was a lot of years ago now you know but I remember it used
to be on Sunday afternoon. My dad used to go upstairs to bed
and my sister would take us down to the old hut behind the
Church. Before she left us there she gave us a three-penny bit
for the collection. I don't know where my mum was.
- 5 We started with a song and then Miss Smith would read a story.
The ones I remember were
- 1 Adam and Eve,
- 2 David and Goliath,
- 3 Noah's Ark,
- 4 Joseph and his big coloured coat,
- 5 Jonah and the Whale,
- 6 Moses and the plagues,
- 1 *(slowly)* Did you ever get stories out of the Bible?
- 2 *(thinks)* No I don't think so! [PAUSE]

- 3 Sometimes we heard stories about Jesus
- 4 I think we talked about him too.
- 5 The ones I remember were
- 6 Being born in a stable,
- 1 Getting lost in the Temple,
- 2 Talking to the man who dropped through the roof,
- 3 Feeding 5000 people with a little boy's dinner,
- 4 Walking on water,

5 (slowly) Did they ever tell you what happened to Jesus at the
end?
6 No I don't think so! [PAUSE]
1 What was your best bit of Sunday School?
2 The stamps. I used to swap them with my best friend Daisy.
3 We used to stick the stamps in a little book and if we got them
all at the end, we used to get a prize.
4 What was the prize?
5 A Bible.
6 Did you ever read it?
1 No, but it had my name inside the front cover in lovely squirly
writing.
2 And the name of the Vicar underneath.
3 I think the best bit was the summer trip.
4 We used to go to the seaside. It was the only day out I ever had
when I was a kid. There'd be hundreds of us.
5 And what did you do when you got to the seaside?
6 We sat on the beach and listened to stories about Jesus.
[PAUSE]

1 Did you ever say prayers in your Sunday School?
2 Yes: but we had to wash our hands first.
3 (*astonished*) Why did you have to wash your hands first?!
4 Because prayers came before our drink and biscuit and Miss
Smith said that cleanliness came before God-liness.
5 Did they teach you that prayer about being good?
6 What's that one then?
1 (*parrot fashion*)
"Jesus, help me to be good;
Help me do the things I should.
If I stray and am not kind,
Smack me hard on my behind."
2 (*really cross*) I don't believe you ever said that prayer!
3 Yes I did!
4 No you didn't!
5 Are you sure?
6 Well it's all that I can remember from Sunday School, all those
years ago...

END

Song: **HON883 Rise and shine**

1 It's half past nine and we're right on cue:
2 The Church is already buzzing;
1 There'll be friends in the Hall and friends in my pew
2 And they'll all know if I am a'missing!
1 I haven't a clue what they'll ask us to do
2 There'll be talking and making and sticking;
1 And then at the end I'll race up with you
2 To get both a smile and a blessing
1 And then we will show what we coloured and drew
2 Before the serous business of eating ..! [PAUSE]

1 So what did you do at Junior Church today?
2 I dunno!
3 *(patiently)* No, go on, tell me what you talked about.
4 Well we were thinking about some children in Africa.
5 That's a long way away.
6 Yes but they are in real danger.
1 What, the children are?
2 Yes, people take them away in the middle of the night and
 make them fight for them.
3 But that's dreadful. *(Slowly and reluctantly)* I guess they are
 too far away for us to do anything to help.
4 Oh no! we can do things to help. We can write letters and send
 money.
5 *(A bit aghast)* What, to Africa?
6 I don't think God thinks that Africa is very far away and
 anyway we only have to write a cheque... [PAUSE]