

Mothering Sunday - Dramatic presentation on the prodigal son for Mothering Sunday

On your marks:

Finding something 'new' for the annual 'special services' is always a challenge. Mothering Sunday is increasingly one of those services where many fringe supporters of church make an appearance. It's important we make them welcome and sow good seeds for the gospel. The following piece of drama is for two voices and adds a new 'fun' dimension to the story of the Prodigal Son as found in Luke 15. It is called 'Mum's the word', which might in fact be a good title for the whole service!

Get set:

You will need two actors who can rehearse the sketch well - a narrator and a mother; if it can be learned off by heart or with a minimal amount of prompting all the better. This drama should come just before a short talk and takes the place of the Bible reading of the parable in question.

Go!

Narrator (N) - One of the most famous stories that Jesus ever told was about a family; a father, who was a well-to-do farmer, and his two sons. Now one day, one of the sons...

Mother (M) - Hold on, hold on, aren't you forgetting someone? What about the mum? No one ever remembers mum and now you're just as bad... and on Mothering Sunday too, I ask you!

N - Well, yes, you have a point. I'm sorry. I suppose there was a mum. It's just that she never normally get a mention.

M - Typical!

N - OK, I'll put her in. A father, his two sons and their mother.

M - That's better.

N - Now, the one son was hard working and very dependable.

M - Takes after mum, I expect!

N - But the other son was very different...

The narrator looks at the Mum who is wearing a knowing smile

He couldn't wait for his 18th birthday. In fact he didn't! As soon as he had left his last GCSE behind, he was on at his dad to let him leave home and have his share of the family business... now! He wanted to travel, to see the world and to do his own thing.

M - *interrupting* And you know what that father did? You won't believe it. He gave in to him. Why are men so soft? Who is it that does all the parenting? Who is it that does all the hard work? Who is always there for them? Teaching them their first steps, taking them to school, washing their clothes, getting them meals? You've guessed it. It's the mum. And who is it that gives away the family inheritance as if he were already dead and buried? That's right - the dad! Can you believe it?

N - Quite. Yes. Well, as you say, the dad said OK. It is all yours to do with as you please.

M - Crazy! That's men for you. No sense of responsibility!

N - Now the younger son was gone for some considerable time.

M - I bet he never wrote or even phoned. He could have been dead for all they knew. Just think of how the mother felt. Does it say that in your story?

N - Well, as a matter-of-fact... no!

M - I thought so. The sacrifices we mothers have to make!

N - Actually, there was one letter - from the bank manager. '*Dear Sir, we are writing to advise you that your son's account is now seriously overdrawn. As he is still a minor, we feel we should make you aware of your responsibilities in this matter etc. etc...*'

M - And did that make the dad see sense?

She gives no time for the narrator to answer

No of course not. He just kept waiting for him to get back in touch. He would hang around the bus stop hoping he'd be on the next bus. Or else he is regularly meet the 17.05 from Jericho just in case. Would you credit it? And no thought for the mum. She's the one who had to cover up for him behind the screen at the synagogue on the Sabbath. 'Oh, he's staying with friends in Heliopolis', she would say, hoping they would have no idea where that was. But of course, they didn't believe her. It's always the mum who has to suffer for her children. Who takes the blame when they go off the rails? Who is it that is always meant to understand but is never understood? The mum. This is what we should be remembering on Mothering Sunday!

N - Quite, but as you say, the father kept waiting, hoping and praying his son would return and one day, out of the blue, there he was. Walking up the road to his former home. What a state he was in. Smelling of pigs, his life in ruins, all his money and his friends gone. He was ready to beg his way back into the family, even to take a job as a farmhand and sleep in the barns, as long as he had somewhere to go. But the dad...

M - but the dad! Well, he was running out there to meet him before he even had a chance to lift the latch on the gate. Sweeping him up in his arms, welcoming him home, as if he'd

only gone on holiday for a couple of weeks. And what about the dear old mum? She loved him too, you know. But what was she busy doing? Off to Sainsbury's for frozen fatted calf and then to M & S for a set of new clothes and then to Tie Rack for an extra-special, super-deluxe tie clip. No expense spared. That dad never thought about the housekeeping!

N - The father could hardly contain his joy. It was like having his son back from the dead. He told everyone at the party that he always knew his son would come back. He'd been lost, but now was most definitely found. It was like having a new member of the family - his runaway boy was now his son twice over.

M - And the mother?

N - Well, it doesn't actually say...

M - No, but I'll tell you what happened. Once she'd supervised the washing up, mopped up the calf juices from the barbecue and said goodbye to the neighbours, she couldn't help but think about it all. Neither she nor that husband of hers was a saint. She done her fair share of worrying and moaning but despite that, each in their own way, had shown they care. And most of all, neither had given up hope. Love and hope had kept them both going.

N - And that's just why Jesus told the story. God never, never gives up on us. He is always there; waiting, watching and hoping for our return, however faraway we have gone from him. And that was one of the best stories Jesus ever told. A father and his two sons...

M - and their mother!

M and N *together* - and a God who is waiting to welcome us all home with open arms of love.

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