



WORSHIP & DRAMA

LEADER
GUIDE





WORSHIP & DRAMA LEADER GUIDE

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Get Connected!

 **Pinterest:** *GrowingUpCatholic*
<https://www.pinterest.com/GrowingUpCatholic/come-to-the-table>
"Come to the Table" board



WELCOME TO COME TO THE TABLE!

Come to the Table is a one-week Vacation Bible School (VBS) curriculum that explores five stories about Jesus from the Gospels of Luke and John. These stories show Jesus eating with unexpected people, providing food for a crowd, demonstrating humility, and extending welcome and forgiveness. When you eat with Jesus, anything can happen!

The curriculum begins with Jesus' parable of the great feast and invites children to journey alongside Jesus as he feeds 5,000 people, befriends a tax collector, washes his disciple's feet, and both forgives and challenges his friend, Peter. Through these stories of Jesus, children learn that everyone is welcome at God's table where there is always enough. *Come to the Table* invites children to see that God loves and welcomes all people and challenges them to share that same love and hospitality in their everyday lives.

Each day begins with the invitation to **COME**. Children will participate in relationship-building activities, songs, prayer, Bible memory, and a dramatic presentation of the Bible story. Then children will **TASTE** by rotating through three activity stations and eating a snack. In closing worship, children will be challenged to **SHARE** the love of God with everyone they meet.

COME (35 min) Children start in small groups and then gather for worship.	TASTE (90 min + snack) Small groups rotate between three activity stations and have a snack.	SHARE (10 min) The large group gathers for worship and dismissal.
Set the Table (10 min) (small groups) Gather (10 min) (large group, Call to Worship, songs, offering) The Main Course (15 min) (large group, Bible memory, drama, Table Talk questions, prayer)	Create & Discover (30 min) (art and science projects) Dig In (30 min) (Bible study) Sprout (30 min) (active games) Snack Time (15 min)	Songs Family Diner Cards Blessing Dismissal

Items you will need:

- ☐ *Worship & Drama Leader Guide*
- ☐ Worship & Drama supplemental files
- ☐ Worship & Drama Area Poster

The **supplemental files** include teaching aids and materials related to worship and drama. Each Worship and Drama Leader should be given access to the relevant materials. They includes the following:

- Five Worship PowerPoints, one per day
- Resources for 7 songs:
 - Sing-along videos
 - Lyric PowerPoints
 - MP3 audio files
 - Chord charts
 - Song motions
- "Set the Table" Instructions
- Drama Scripts
- Offering Project Resources
- Fruit Emblems for small groups
- Day 1 Audience Member Script
- Day 2 Picnic Pictures
- Day 2 Loaves and Fish

Media Connections are posted on the *Growing Up Catholic* Pinterest page (see page 1). The items are organized by day. Additional songs and offering-related videos are also included on Pinterest.

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

Each day of *Come to the Table* has three main sections: **COME** (opening worship), **TASTE** (activity stations) and **SHARE** (closing worship). The provided times for each worship session are approximate. They can easily be shortened or lengthened depending on your schedule.

COME

(opening worship, 35 minutes)

Set the Table (10 minutes): Children gather in small groups with a Small Group Leader and participate in activities designed to nurture relationships and introduce the theme of the day. There is a one-page “Set the Table” Instructions in the supplemental files that summarizes the activities for the week. Print one for each leader.

Gather (15 minutes): Small groups come together for worship, beginning with a Call to Worship followed by singing. Children are then introduced to the offering project. See page 5 for information about the offering. A Worship PowerPoint for each day includes the Call to Worship, offering information, Bible memory, Table Talk questions, and the blessing. Customize it to fit your needs.

The Main Course (10 minutes): Children practice the Bible memory passage, watch a dramatization of the Bible story, and close in prayer.

TASTE

(activity stations, 90 minutes)

Small groups of children rotate through three activity stations: **Create & Discover** (art and science activities), **Dig In** (Bible activities), and **Sprout** (active games). Each activity station is 30 minutes. A snack can be incorporated into this time period if desired.

SHARE

(closing worship; 10 minutes)

Small groups return to the worship area with their leaders to sing, pray, and learn about ways they can share what they have learned with others. Each child will receive a **Family Diner Card** taken from the student booklet. These cards have at-home activities for families. Each day closes with a song and a closing prayer.

Worship Leaders

The worship plan of this guide could be implemented by one leader, or the tasks could be divided in the following way:

- **Worship Coordinator:** Oversee all Worship and Drama Leaders and Small Group Leaders, welcome the children, lead Call to Worship, Bible memory, and prayers each day.
- **Song Leader:** Choose and lead songs or coordinate a music team.
- **Drama Director:** Coordinate the dramas, find actors, design set, gather props, and arrange rehearsals.
- **Technology Coordinator:** Set up the laptop, projector, and screen. Show the Worship PowerPoint for each day. Play song videos and/or MP3s as needed. Troubleshoot problems that arise.

Small Group Leaders

The children will gather and then move throughout the day in small groups. A Small Group Leader is needed for each group of children. Group size will vary depending on the number of children and volunteers you have. Leaders will implement the Set the Table activities that are designed to build relationships and connect to the theme of the day. Then they will guide children to their activity stations and back to the worship area for closing worship.

SETTING UP THE WORSHIP SPACE

- Designate an area for each small group of children so they know where to go at arrival time. Depending on your space, this could be tables or pews. Picnic blankets or plastic tablecloths could also be laid on the floor to go with the *Come to the Table* theme. Each small group area will need a different Fruit Emblem as well as “Set the Table” Instructions (page 53 and supplements), nametags, and the specified materials for each day’s Set the Table activity.
- Refer to the *Director Guide* and the “Come to the Table” board on the *Growing Up Catholic* Pinterest page for ideas about decorating. The VBS Physical Kit has a poster for the worship space.
- A stage is best for presenting dramas. Information about staging and props is on pages 31–32 of this guide.
- A laptop, projector, and screen are needed for the Worship PowerPoint for each day. You will also need a way to play sing-along videos or MP3 versions of the chosen songs if you don’t have live music. There are chord charts in the Songbook if you wish to have someone lead the songs with a guitar or piano.

WORSHIP PREPARATION

- **COME** (opening worship) and **SHARE** (closing worship) have a variety of repeated elements. Prepare for the week by completing the tasks on list. Many of these can be done by volunteers.
- Make Fruit Emblems for each group. Use the emblems to mark the meeting space for each group.
- Print nametags for each child. If possible, print them on card stock and insert them in nametag holders so they can be reused from day to day.
- Remove all Family Diner Cards from the *Dig In* and *A Scoop of Stories* student booklets and organize them by day.
- Distribute sets of Family Diner Cards to Small Group Leaders during **SHARE** (closing worship).
- Set up an offering display using ideas from the Offering Project Resources (in supplements). Count and record the amount of money collected.
- Choose and learn songs.
- Practice words and motions for songs and the readings.
- Rehearse the Bible story drama for each day.

GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Laptop, projector, screen
- Music player
- Lunch boxes or other containers to collect the offering
- Offering display (ideas in supplements)
- Nametags
- Fruit Emblems
- Family Diner Cards (from the *Dig In* and *A Scoop of Stories* booklets)

MUSIC

The theme song “Lead Us to Your Table” is accompanied by six other songs for you to choose from. In addition to the **sing-along videos** and **MP3 versions** of the songs, there are **chord charts** and **song motions** for each song. (Find them in the Songbook.)

The lyrics are included in the sing-along videos and song lyric PowerPoints. You may choose to copy and paste the videos or lyric slides into the Worship PowerPoint in the appropriate place. **Note: If you modify the PowerPoints, the slide numbers in the session plan will no longer be correct. You will need to update them to reflect your changes.** Additional song ideas are posted on the *Growing Up Catholic* “Come to the Table” Pinterest page.

Some songs are used every day:

- The theme song “Lead Us to Your Table” is played to cue small groups to gather for worship and then later sung together.
- “Where Shall We Go?” is the offering song.
- “The House that Love is Building” is used during **SHARE** (closing worship).
- “We Live to Love” is the sending song.

The remaining songs can be used in whatever way works best for your group.

- “Table of Life”
- “Many Voices, One Song”
- “Eucharistic People”

Please note that music in the download cannot be duplicated, distributed, used in your parish-wide Masses, or otherwise used outside the VBS experience! If you wish to send home the music with children and their families, purchase *Come to the Table* CDs or MP3 licenses (sold separately). To use the songs in Sunday Mass, please report usage under your regular music licensing program.

OFFERING

Although there is plenty of food in the world, people still go hungry every day. People from children to seniors all over the world experience food insecurity, malnutrition, and even starvation because of financial hardship, natural and human-made disasters, and lack of access. This week, children will hear stories of Jesus caring for others, providing food to the hungry, and calling us to do the same. Many church and other humanitarian organizations are responding to this call. Choose an organization that is working to address issues of hunger in your community or in another part of the world. The *Director Guide*, download, and Pinterest page have further information about the offering project, including books, videos, and offering display ideas.

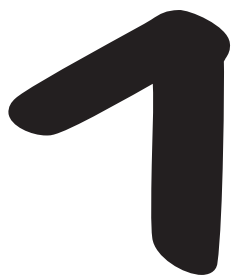
BIBLE MEMORY

The Bible memory passage is John 6:35:

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

—John 6:35 (NRSV)

Children will practice the passage during opening worship. Project the words from the Worship PowerPoint for each day. During the Dig In Bible activity, children will work on the passages again in other interactive ways.



DAY 1

BE OUR GUEST

Scripture Text:

Luke 14:15–24

Food for Thought:

Everyone is welcome at God's table.

"There is room for everyone in the church and, whenever there is not, then, please, we must make room, including for those who make mistakes, who fall or struggle.... The Lord is clear. The sick, the elderly, the young, old, ugly, beautiful, good and bad... Everyone, everyone, everyone!"

**Pope Francis
August 3, 2023**

Bible Essay:

Who is welcome at God's table? The answer might surprise you!

The parable of the great feast is the focus of today's session, but the preceding verses offer important background for understanding the parable and the theme of this session. Jesus is having dinner at the home of a prominent Pharisee (a "religiously serious" leader). It is the Sabbath, but that doesn't stop Jesus from breaking Jewish law to heal a man who is sick. Jesus notices that the guests are vying for the important seats at the dinner table. He then teaches the guests that at God's table, the humble are exalted, the stranger is invited, and all are welcome. Social status, wealth, and power don't matter here; come as you are! This is God's table, where the poor, ignored, and excluded receive the extravagant and warm hospitality of God. It's a reminder for us that we should invite and welcome all to our eucharistic celebrations. Jesus doesn't want us to exclude anyone!

Jesus doesn't stop with just a lesson about where to sit and how to treat guests. He tells the dinner guests a parable of a great feast to reveal who God is and what God cares about. This is the focus for children today. This story, like so many of Jesus' parables, stretches and challenges the listener. The host invites many friends, who initially agree to come, but then some back out on the day of the feast. They have more pressing things to do—visiting a purchased field, trying out some new oxen, enjoying the early days of a marriage.

The host doesn't have patience for these excuses and sends his servant to invite people until his house is full. He specifically tells the servant to look in the streets and alleys to find people who are poor, people who can't walk, and those who can't see. Even after doing this, there is still room. So the servant goes far and wide inviting people until the house is full.

Jesus closes the story by restating the sad reality that not everyone is interested in this alternate way of being in community; some want to carry on with life as usual. It can be hard to embrace a world where the last are first and the least are the greatest, especially if you have been living in a position of privilege.

The good news is that God (the host of the feast) offers an invitation to all people. No one is left out! Everyone is welcome to come to God's table. Those who come do so in response to God's generous hospitality. May all the children in your group experience welcome and hospitality this week!

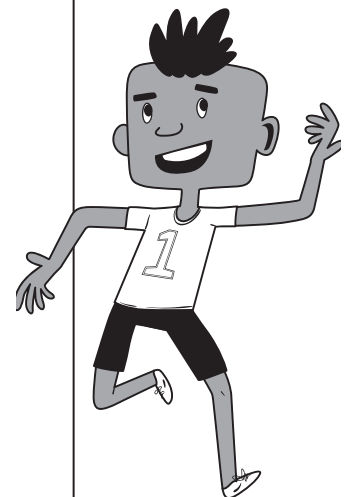


DAY 1 AT-A-GLANCE

Advance Preparation

- ☐ Read Luke 14:15–24 and the Bible essay for Day 1 on page 6 of this guide.
- ☐ Read the opening and closing worship plans. Make modifications as needed.
- ☐ Customize the Day 1 Worship PowerPoint to reflect your plans.
- ☐ Hang up the Worship & Drama Area Poster.
- ☐ Communicate with Small Group Leaders, Worship and Drama Leaders, the Music Leader, the Technology Coordinator, and drama participants about their roles and tasks.

	SUPPLIES	TO DO
COME <i>Opening Worship</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship & Drama Area Poster <input type="checkbox"/> Nametags (template in supplements) <input type="checkbox"/> "Set the Table" Instructions (page 53 or supplements) <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit Emblems, one per group (supplements) <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1 Worship PowerPoint <input type="checkbox"/> Selected songs <input type="checkbox"/> Place settings, one setting per group <input type="checkbox"/> Laptop, projector, and screen <input type="checkbox"/> Music player <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch boxes or other containers to collect offering <input type="checkbox"/> Bible <input type="checkbox"/> Drama props <input type="checkbox"/> Bell	<p>Make Fruit Emblems for each small group.</p> <p>Make nametags for each child and leader.</p> <p>Designate a space for each small group. Set out instructions and supplies for Set the Table (page 53 or supplements).</p> <p>Learn songs.</p> <p>Set up for and rehearse the drama.</p>
SHARE <i>Closing Worship</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Day 1 Worship PowerPoint <input type="checkbox"/> Laptop, projector, and screen <input type="checkbox"/> Music player <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1 Family Diner Cards	<p>Remove the Day 1 Family Diner Card from each student booklet.</p>



COME

SET THE TABLE

Be sure each Small Group Leader has the “Set the Table” Instructions for Day 1 (supplements), along with a basket or box that has one complete table setting. As children arrive, they can join their groups, put on a nametag, and participate in the Set the Table activities.

GATHER

When you are ready to begin large group worship, turn on the theme song “Lead Us to Your Table.” This will serve as a cue for small groups to clean up their materials and prepare for worship.

Project the Day 1 Worship PowerPoint, clicking through the slides as indicated. *Note: If you modify the file, the slide numbers will need to be adjusted to reflect your changes.*

(Slide 2) Welcome everyone to the first day of Vacation Bible School. Say:

**We are so glad all of you are here and have
Come to the Table! This week we will sing,
see Bible dramas, play games, create art, eat
together, and do much more! Do you have a table
in your house? What about at your school
or this church (hint - the altar is a table!)?
Tables are everywhere. We use them for lots of
things—to eat meals, talk, play games, and do
art projects or schoolwork.**

**Now what if God had a table? Actually, God
does! We call it the eucharistic table and it's
where we're all invited to communion every
Sunday.**

**This week we are going to imagine what it
would be like to sit at God's table. We are going
to hear Bible stories about Jesus eating with
people. We'll see who he ate with and what
they talked about. This will give us ideas about
who we can invite and welcome into our lives.**

Call to Worship

(Slide 3) Say the Call to Worship together, which is based on Isaiah 55:1–2. Children will repeat the line “Come to the table” five times. Have them start with a whisper and get a little bit louder each time they say the line. As they say

their line, they can make a large circle with their arms out front to resemble a round table. Children can read the yellow print while the leader reads the white print.

Leader: Come, all who are hungry. (*Gesture “come.”*)

All: Come to the table! (*Make a big circle with your arms.*)

Leader: Come, all who are thirsty. (*Gesture “come.”*)

All: Come to the table! (*Make a big circle with your arms.*)

Leader: Come, even if you have no money. (*Gesture “come.”*)

All: Come to the table! (*Make a big circle with your arms.*)

Leader: Come and eat, there's more than enough food. (*Gesture “come.”*)

All: Come to the table! (*Make a big circle with your arms.*)

Leader: Come, enjoy food that satisfies your soul. (*Gesture “come.”*)

All: Come to the table! (*Make a big circle with your arms.*)

Songs

(Slides 4–5) Sing “Lead Us to Your Table” and “Many Voices, One Song.” Motions are in the Songbook and demonstrated in the sing-along videos.

Offering

(Slide 6) Give a brief introduction to the organization you are donating to this week. If possible, show a video or pictures to help the children see where they are located, what they do, and who they serve. Many organizations provide pictures or videos on their websites or on YouTube that you can show. Alternatively, you could show a general video or read a book that discusses hunger. See Offering Project Resources (download) for suggestions.

Explain how you will collect the offering. This might involve having children come forward to place their offering in lunch boxes or passing an upright lunch bag from group to group.

(Slide 7) Sing “Where Shall We Go?” during the offering.

THE MAIN COURSE

Words to Remember

(Slide 8) Introduce the Bible memory passage (John 6:35) and tell children that they will be learning words of Jesus from the Gospel of John. Read the whole passage from the Bible while children listen.

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

—John 6:35 (NRSV)

After reading the passage one time, read it again one line at a time from the slide and invite the children to repeat after you in a call and response. Do this several times, changing your voice each time (loud, soft, fast, slow).

**Jesus said to them,
“I am the bread of life.
Whoever comes to me
will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me
will never be thirsty.”**

—John 6:35 (NRSV)

The Story

(Slide 9) Introduce the Bible story drama. Say:

Raise your hand if you’ve ever gone to a party or a picnic. Raise your other hand if you’ve ever had a special dinner at your house, maybe to celebrate a birthday or holiday. It’s fun to get together with other people, eat good food, laugh, and talk.

**Today we are going to meet _____
(name of actor playing the Daughter). She lives right around the corner from here. A new family moved into her neighborhood and so she invited them over for a picnic. The picnic starts in three hours. Let’s see how her preparations are going.**

Present the Day 1 drama titled “Be Our Guest” (pages 33–36 of this guide).

Table Talk

(Slide 10) Give several minutes for the small groups to discuss one or both of the “Table Talk” questions on the slide:

- Who gets left out at your school or in your neighborhood? Why?
- How could you welcome someone who is usually ignored?

Ring a bell to get everyone’s attention again. Pray:

Thank you, God, that everyone is invited to your great feast and is welcome at your table. Help us to notice when other people are being left out or ignored. Give us courage to reach out and show God’s love to them. Amen.

Dismissal

Explain the schedule of the day and let the children know what activities they will be doing today. Remind children to stay with their Small Group Leader throughout the day and let them know they will have a chance to visit every activity station.

Dismiss the children by groups to go to the TASTE Activity Stations: Create & Discover, Dig In, and Sprout.

Gather for closing worship. Play the song “The House that Love is Building” as children are returning to the worship space. Have a volunteer hand each Small Group Leader a set of Family Diner Cards from the student booklets, one per child in the group.

(Slide 11) Sing “The House that Love is Building” using motions.

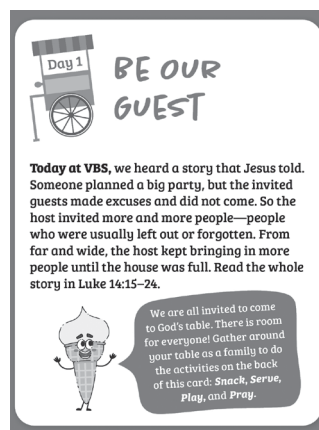
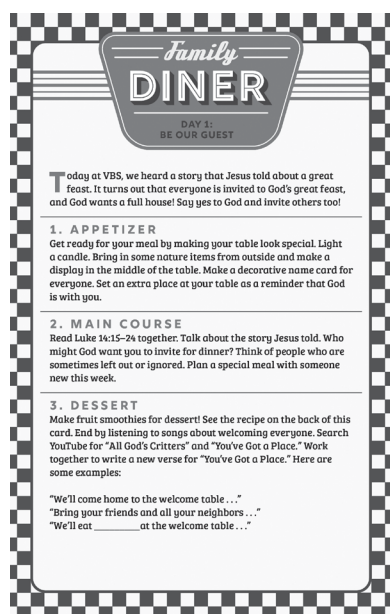
(Slide 12) Ask Small Group Leaders to pass out the Family Diner Cards. Explain that the children will get a card to take home every day so that they can share what they learned with their families. Highlight the activities on the card, pointing out the recipe on the back.

(Slide 13) Sing “We Live to Love” using motions.

(Slide 14) Say the closing blessing, which will be repeated every day:

Friends, as you go, know that God loves you. Now go and share that love with everyone!

Remind children to remove their nametags and leave them beside their group’s Fruit Emblem so they can be reused tomorrow.



WELCOME TO THE DRAMAS!

Introduction

The Bible story dramas are the heart of each day's large group worship experience. Throughout the week, the Bible stories are woven with a modern-day story, which will help children notice the connections between then and now. The drama scripts are included in the Worship & Drama folder on the Music & Resource download file for ease of emailing and printing. There is a Drama board on the VBS 2023 Pinterest page that has ideas for creating sets and props.

Characters

Many of the Bible stories for *Come to the Table* have primarily men speaking. To provide some balance, the modern-day portion of the drama in Days 1–3 is written as an interaction between a mother and young adult daughter (early to mid-20s). There are many adult relationships that could be substituted based on your available volunteers, such as aunt and niece, mentor and mentee, grandparent and adult grandchild. If you do not have women who are available to play these roles, it is also possible to substitute men. Just be sure that the other characters from the neighborhood show diverse representation.

Days 4–5 depict a neighborhood picnic. The goal is to convey that all people—young and old, men and women, and all racial-ethnic groups—are welcome at God's table. Whenever possible, choose participants who can help reflect the diversity of the human family. There are 12 people who attend the picnic. You may want to use Small Group Leaders and children from the audience to represent the families in the drama. Several of them are non-speaking roles and several only have a few lines. This will reduce the number of "outside" actors you need to recruit. However, if you have the option, you could increase the number of picnic goers! Add them into the drama on Day 4. They can simply walk up to the Daughter, introduce themselves, and bring food or other items to contribute, such as plates and napkins.

There are four Bible-times characters needed each day. Ideally, use the same four people all week. They switch roles somewhat from day to day, but it will be simplest for rehearsals if it is a consistent group. This is a great opportunity to involve older youth or teens. On several days, there is the need (or option) to include audience members within the Bible-times drama. These are nearly always non-speaking roles, but it is important to choose and talk briefly to participants ahead of time so that they

know where to go and what to do. Choose children who can sit or stand quietly so as not to be a distraction during the drama.

Adapting the Dramas

The dramas are available as Word documents in the download file so that you can easily edit them to fit your context. You may want to change characters' names, the foods that are being used, the gender or family structure of the guests, and the total number of characters who attend the picnic on Days 4–5. Perhaps you want the Carter family to have three children instead of one child. Maybe you want grandma's famous recipe to be a dessert rather than potato salad. Perhaps you want Lee Walker instead of Juliana to tell the footwashing story. You may want to add another family. Structure the drama in the simplest and most authentic way for your setting and the volunteers and space you have.

- **Day 1:** Daughter, Mom, Jesus, Pharisee, Messenger, Guest, three Audience Members
- **Day 2:** Daughter, Mom, Juliana, Jesus, Philip, Andrew, Peter, Child
- **Day 3:** Daughter, Mom, Jesus, Zacchaeus, Crowd Person 1, Crowd Person 2
- **Days 4–5:** Mom, Daughter, Juliana/father/sister, Thomas/Jen/child Carter, Lee Walker/two children, Mr. Stokes, Jesus, Philip, Andrew, Peter

Costumes

The costume suggestions are simple for the drama. Feel free to adapt these or expand on them to suit your setting. Check a thrift store to find inexpensive clothes as needed.

Modern-Day Characters:

All characters should be dressed casually for a summer picnic on a hot day. For Day 3, Mom and Daughter could wear an apron as they prepare food.

Jesus and Bible-Times Characters:

Ideally, have these characters wear Bible-times costumes. Search online for "Bible times costumes DIY" to get inspiration to make your own simple costumes.

Props and Supplies

Each drama includes a list of props and the set design description on page 32 gives other needed items. Use the

items listed or modify them according to your available space and resources.

A smartphone is required for Days 1–2. You will need to practice sending text messages and making calls at the correct time so that the sounds align with the script. It may be easier to download text message sounds and ring-tones online that can just be played on cue to avoid making actual phone calls and sending actual text messages to the Daughter's phone.

Rehearsals

Plan rehearsals (as many as you can) that will take place a week or two before VBS. Distribute scripts in advance so that participants are familiar with their parts. Make it clear whether lines should be memorized or if it is okay to read from the script.

At the first rehearsal, read through each drama without moving around to allow actors to become familiar with the stories. For subsequent rehearsals, read the script and incorporate suggested movements as well as alternative or additional movements that work for your space. Rehearse each drama several times.

Feel free to make adjustments that will add meaning or that express the personality of the people who are filling the roles. Preparation and rehearsals will help the stories come to life, showing that you value the stories you are presenting to the children.

Set Design

Ideally, present dramas on a stage or the church altar (if appropriate). If presented at floor level, you may need to make some adjustments to stage instructions so children can see what is happening.

Modern-Day Set:

Stage left will be used for the modern-day story. Days 1–3 take place in a kitchen. This can be as simple or elaborate as you wish but should look consistent each day. The essentials are a kitchen table and chairs, large clock (digital or analog) as well as a counter area. If you create a wall as a backdrop, add wall hangings, photographs, or framed art. House plants, a clock, and a shelf or rack with dishes or canned food on it will make it look more realistic.

Days 4–5 are set up as a backyard picnic. At minimum there should be an outdoor table and chairs and a campfire area (ring of stones or bricks or firepit). This scene can be made more elaborate with strings of lights overhead, a grill, decorations, a music system, or a long table to put food on. The goal is to create a scene that best represents how a neighborhood picnic would look and feel in your community.

Bible-Times Set:

Stage right will be used for reenactment of the Bible stories and will look different every day. Again, the sets can be very simple or more elaborate depending on your space, time, and budget. Simple ideas are included below. Refer to the Decorations section on the “Come to the Table” Pinterest board for *Growing Up Catholic* for how to create a more elaborate Bible-times house, tree, and boat.

Day 1:

This is an indoor scene where Jesus and his friends are having dinner. They likely would have eaten at a low table, so collapse the legs of a table and set it flat on the ground. Put cushions around the table for the actors to recline on. Put Bible-times food in bowls or on plates. Have a plate and cup for each actor. Add rugs, baskets, jars, and other items suitable for Bible-times to give it the look of a room.

Day 2:

Set 12 baskets throughout the audience.

Day 3:

Create a large tree near the edge of the stage. This could be as simple as a step ladder or chair for Zacchaeus to step up on that is placed behind a large houseplant. Children will probably get a good laugh out of this setup! For a more elaborate tree, refer to the Drama section on Pinterest.

Day 4:

Set this up like Day 1 with several additional props: a loaf of unsliced bread and cup/chalice, as well as a large basin of water and a towel for footwashing.

Day 5:

This story requires a boat onstage and a campfire offstage, near the audience. Cover stage right with a blue cloth to represent the water. Make a boat: Set up several chairs in a line parallel to the front of the stage. The chairs should face away from the audience. Attach a cardboard boat shape to the back of the chairs to cover them. Set up another row of chairs to form the other side of the boat. These chairs should face the audience. The actors will sit on them. Lay a tan cloth offstage to represent the beach area. Build the campfire there. The campfire can be made with a circle of stones and real logs. Put red tissue paper on the logs to represent flames. Other boat and campfire ideas are on Pinterest.

DAY 1 DRAMA

BE OUR GUEST

Scripture Text

Luke 14:15–24

Summary

This drama begins in the modern-day kitchen. It's 2:00. A young adult woman is getting ready for a backyard picnic at her house that starts at 5:00. The Carter family just moved into the neighborhood, so she invited them over for a picnic. Mom stops by, bringing a dessert. Throughout the conversation the daughter keeps getting text messages and phone calls from Juliana, another neighbor. Juliana heard about the picnic and started inviting other neighbors to attend. Her mom tells her daughter the Great Feast story that Jesus told. They talk about the importance of welcoming others as God welcomes us.

Modern-Day Characters

- Daughter*
- Mom*

Bible-Times Characters

- Jesus
- Pharisee
- Messenger
- Guest (non-speaking role)
- Three audience members with speaking parts
- Other audience members (non-speaking roles)

Props

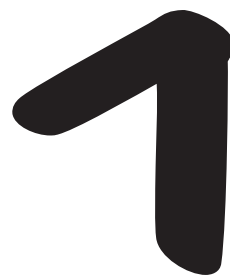
- ☐ Clock set to 2:00
- ☐ Kitchen table and chairs
- ☐ Miscellaneous items on the table, such as a napkin holder, salt and pepper shakers, and pieces of mail
- ☐ Reusable shopping bags with watermelon, a pack of hot dogs, and rolls**
- ☐ Smartphone
- ☐ Cake
- ☐ Day 1 Audience Member Scripts (download)

Preparation

Place several items on the modern-day kitchen table, such as a few pieces of mail, salt and pepper shakers, and a napkin holder. Put the food items in a reusable or plastic grocery bag. Recruit three adults from the audience to stand and say a line during the drama. Give each one a copy of the Day 1 Audience Member Script (download) so they know when to speak. Select several children to join the actors on stage during the Bible story portion. Choose children who will be able to sit quietly throughout the drama so as not to distract others. Practice sending text messages and making phone calls to the Daughter's smartphone so it is timed with the script (or download text tones and ringtones that can be played at the appropriate times).

Pronunciation Guide

Pharisee: FAIR-uh-see.



*The script is written with "Mom" and "Daughter" language. Feel free to change to a different relational pairing. If you change the pairing, you may need to change pronouns and other words throughout the script. See the Characters section on page 31 for more information.

**Feel free to substitute different food items to better fit your context.

(Daughter walks into the kitchen on stage left carrying grocery bags with food in them. She sets the grocery bags on the table.)

Daughter: *(glancing at the clock)* Okay, good. 2:00. I have three more hours until the Carters gets here. Plenty of time to get ready for our little picnic. *(pulls food items out of the bag and sets them on the table)*

(There is a knock. Mom enters carrying a cake.)

Mom: Hellooooo! I brought the cake you asked me to make for tonight. *(sets the cake on the table)*

Daughter: Thanks so much! I'm really excited to meet the Carters. They just moved here a few weeks ago. *(The phone dings indicating a text message.)* Hold on, I just got a text. It's Juliana. She lives next door. *(reads from phone)* Just met the Carters. Really nice. They said they're having dinner with you tonight. Could I come? *(looks at Mom)* I guess that would be fine, right? It's only one more person and it would be great to see her. *(texts back, reading her text aloud as she types)* Sure! Love getting the neighbors together. See you at five.

Mom: What are you feeding them? I know you don't like to cook.

Daughter: I'm keeping it simple. Just grabbed some hotdogs and watermelon. And your cake will be the perfect ending! *(The phone rings.)* Sorry. Gotta get this. *(answers phone)* Oh, hey, Juliana. How are you? So glad you're coming tonight. *(pauses to listen)* Oh . . . I didn't know your dad and sister were in town. Of course, they are welcome to come. You can't leave them home alone! *(pauses to listen)* Okay, great. See you soon. *(hangs up)*

Mom: *(laughing)* Wow! Your picnic is getting bigger by the minute!

Daughter: *(looking anxious)* Mom! It's not funny! What am I going to feed them? Where are they going to sit? I only have one table and one pack of hotdogs. *(The phone dings to indicate a text message. Looks down at the phone.)* It's Juliana again. *(reads from the phone)* I'll let the Walkers and Mr. Stokes know about the picnic. *(looks at Mom)* Wait! I know I told her that I love getting the neighbors together, but I didn't mean that she should invite **more** neighbors. This is not good! *(sits down heavily at the table)*

Mom: Why not? The more the merrier, they say. It reminds me of the Great Feast.

Daughter: Thanksgiving?

Mom: *(sitting down)* No, this feast happened long before the first Thanksgiving.

(Mom begins narrating what is happening on stage right.)

Mom: Jesus went to eat at the home of an important church leader called a Pharisee. (*Jesus, Pharisee, Messenger, and Guest enter and sit around the table, stage right. Guest and Messenger jostle each other to sit on a certain cushion near Jesus.*) Jesus noticed that people were trying to sit in the best and most important places.

Daughter: Just like at lunch in the cafeteria when I was in elementary school . . . and middle school . . . Okay, even in high school. Or when our family went places when we were kids. We always used to argue about who got to sit up front.

Mom: Exactly. Jesus told them,

Jesus: Don't try to take the most important places to sit. It's better to care for others first than try to be more important than other people. If you have people over for dinner, invite people who need a place to belong or who need something to eat. God's way is to care for people who don't have a lot or who have a hard life.

Mom: Jesus then told them this story:

Jesus: A man was having a great feast. (*Pharisee stands up.*) He invited a lot of people to come. On the day of the feast, he called his messenger.

(*Pharisee gestures to Messenger. Messenger stands and moves next to Pharisee.*)

Pharisee: The feast is ready! Go tell everyone I invited that they can come now.

Messenger: (*walking out into the audience, calling loudly*) Party time! Everything is ready! Come to the feast!

Mom: But there were a lot of people who gave excuses for why they couldn't come:

Audience Member 1: (*standing*) Sorry, but I can't come. I have to take care of my animals.

Audience Member 2: (*standing*) Sorry, but I can't come. I have to go to work.

Audience Member 3: (*standing*) Sorry, but I can't come. I just got married.

Mom: So the messenger came back to the man giving the feast. He said:

Messenger: (*returning to talk to Pharisee*) The guests said they were too busy to come. What should I do?

Pharisee: Go invite people who don't have anything to eat. Invite people who can't walk or see. Invite people who are sick or in pain. Invite everyone you can find.

Mom: The messenger invited them, and they came! (*Messenger goes into the audience and brings several children and leaders back to the table.*) But there was still room.

Pharisee: (*to Messenger*) Go into the streets and countryside. Invite everyone to the great feast. I want my house to be full. The first people I invited missed it; they missed out on the goodness at my table.

Mom: So the messenger searched and searched until he found enough people to fill the house. (*Messenger goes out into the audience again, bringing back more children and leaders.*)

(*All actors and chosen audience members sit down by the table to watch the rest of the drama.*)

Mom: (*to Daughter*) Jesus showed his listeners that **everyone** is welcome at God's table. Sometimes the people that God invites might not be on **our** list of guests. But doing things God's way means caring for people who might otherwise be overlooked.

Daughter: I see . . . But wait. If everyone is welcome at God's table, does that mean . . . ? (*trails off*)

Mom: Yes! I think tonight you have a chance to welcome people the way that God does.

Daughter: (*exhales*) Okay. But I'll need some help if I'm going to pull this off!

Mom: Don't worry. I've got some ideas!

Daughter: (*Phone dings to indicate a text message.*) Oh, no . . . who is coming now?!