

**‘ACTING THE BIBLE’**

**at**

**Beckley School**

**GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER  
SUNDAY**

**21 March 2024**

**Joint Benefice of**

**The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Beckley St. Nicolas, Forest Hill with Shotover  
St. Barnabas, Horton-cum-Studley St. John the Baptist, Stanton St. John**

The Four Parishes 'Acting the Bible' team (previously known as 'Open the Book') leads assembly once a fortnight in Beckley School. The team take stories fresh from the pages of the Bible, and make them into mini dramas, to be acted out by themselves, together with Beckley schoolchildren. Through this, it is hoped that the Bible stories are brought alive, and remembered by the children, especially as they too are involved in the acting.

The team is led by Betty Dye, a Licensed Lay Reader, and includes members from Forest Hill, Stanton St John and Beckley. They meet once a fortnight to write the scripts, with the aim of adhering as closely as possible to the original Bible texts. This often involves comparing different Bible translations and even reading the New Testament in the original Greek!

## GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER SUNDAY

**Cast:** NARRATOR; GUARD; ASSISTANT GUARD; JESUS; JOHN; Mary MOTHER OF JESUS; MARY MAGDALENE; CLEOPAS & FRIEND; JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

**Narrator:** It is very, very, early in the morning of Good Friday, the day when Jesus is crucified. We need to imagine what is happening all day Friday, when Jesus is condemned to death, and then crucified on the cross, and then what happens on Sunday morning when he comes back alive again.

*THE UPRIGHT POST OF A CROSS STANDS IN THE CENTRE. Table with bread and wine to one side.*

*FROM BEHIND THE CURTAIN GUARD MARCHES ON WITH 2<sup>ND</sup> GUARD FOLLOWING.*

**Guard: (Address the Children)** I am a soldier and I am in charge of the prisoner Jesus. I've been with him and saw it all. It was the middle of the night. We dragged Jesus first to the High Priest's house, where he was charged with crimes against God and they decided that he was guilty. Then, at about 3 o'clock in the morning we took him down to the palace of the Roman Governor, Pilate, who agreed to have him killed on a cross. Now it is Friday morning. We have just forced Jesus to walk, carrying his own cross with him through Jerusalem and up the hill to this place, where we crucify people.

*GUARDS GO OVER TO CURTAIN AND PULL OUT JESUS WHO WALKS ON CARRYING A BEAM OF WOOD AND WALKS ALL THE WAY ACROSS THE HALL AND BACK TO THE CENTRE.*

*GUARDS GRAB THE BEAM AND PUT IT DOWN (OR LEAN IT UP IN A CORNER EG BY TOILETS?), FORCE JESUS ONTO CROSS AND SIT DOWN AT THE FOOT OF IT.*

*PAUSE(COUNT 20)*

*FROM THE HALL DOOR MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS, MARY M AND JOHN WALK ON.*

**Mary: (Address the Children):** My name is Mary and I'm the mother of Jesus. It is now Friday midday. It is dreadful. I am here on the hillside watching my beloved son die. They have nailed him to a cross. It is blazing hot and Jesus is bleeding and in so much pain. He can hardly breathe! He has hung there on that cross since 9 o'clock this morning and now it is nearly 12 o'clock. My friends are with me and also Jesus' friend John is here. Oh, my dear son Jesus is calling out!

**Jesus:** Mother, look! There by your side is my friend John. John, please look after my mother as if she were your own mother.

**John:** *(PUT ARM ROUND MARY)* Yes, Jesus, I will take Mary to come and live in my house from now on *(PAUSE)*. *(To the audience)* Jesus has now been on the cross for 6 terrible hours.

**Jesus:** **( Standing upright, head up palms facing ceiling) I am thirsty.**  
**(PAUSE WHILE GUARD PUTS A SPONGE ON STICK AND HOLD UP TO JESUS)**

Father, forgive them because they don't understand what they are doing. PAUSE

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? PAUSE

**(LOUDER) It is finished!** PAUSE

**(EVEN LOUDER) Father, I commit my spirit into your hands.**

Jesus ( slump forward , head hanging down, hands dangling)

*MARY GASP BREAKS DOWN WEeping AND JOHN LOOKS HORRIFIED.*

**Guard** *(JUMP UP AND LOOK AROUND)*. Oh, what is happening?! It's completely dark, like the night and the ground is shaking under my feet. And I can hear lots of shouting coming from way over there in the temple area. *(PAUSE)*

Oh, this man Jesus, surely was a righteous man! He must have been the Son of God.

**Joseph of Arimathea:** *(WALK ON FROM HALL DOOR).* Address audience  
My name is Joseph of Arimathea. I am a follower of Jesus and because I am wealthy and have a lot of influence, I decided to go to Pilate and ask him for the body of Jesus once it had been taken down from the cross. He gave his permission, so now I can bury him in my new tomb which is close to where Jesus has been crucified.

*ACTORS LEAVE JESUS IN THE CENTRE OF THE GROUP WITH HEAD DOWN & FEET DRAGGING TO BEHIND THE CURTAIN (GUARD TO HALL DOOR)*

NARRATOR Friday morning Jesus was strong and alive but now, Friday afternoon and he has died, and the long slow hours tick past , the rest of Friday, all of Saturday , and onto the earliest hours of Sunday.

*ENTER MARY MAGDALENE WRINGING HER HANDS, WIPING HER TEARS*

**Mary Magdalene:** *(Address the audience )* My name is Mary Magdalene. On Friday I was with Jesus' mother and we watched while some of Jesus' friends took his dead body and put it into a tomb in the rock which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. Then we went home and waited because it was nearly Saturday when no-one is allowed to do any work. But now it is Sunday and look – the sun has just risen. I came as soon as I could to see this tomb where Jesus' body had been put, but the strangest thing has happened! The huge stone that was in front of it has been rolled away and I've just been inside and the tomb is empty! Someone must have stolen his body! *(WEEPING)*

*JESUS WALKS ON*

**Jesus:** Dear lady, why are you weeping?

**Mary Magdalene:** Some people have taken the body of my Lord away. Are you the gardener? Do you know where they have put him?

**Jesus:** Mary!

**Mary Magdalene:** Jesus, my Lord, it's you! You're alive! *(GOES TO GRAB HOLD OF HIM)*

**Jesus:** Don't hold on to me now, Mary, because I haven't returned to my Father in heaven yet. But go and tell the disciples that I am going ahead of them to Galilee and will meet them there.

*MARY RUNS BEHIND CURTAIN. JESUS FOLLOWS SLOWLY. PAUSE*

*CLEOPAS AND FRIEND WALK FROM THE DOOR ACROSS HALL THEN TURN TOWARDS CENTRE.*

**Cleopas:** It is so hard to believe that Jesus of Nazareth, that wonderful prophet who we had thought was the special Messiah whom God has been promising to Israel for so many years, is dead!

**Friend:** I know, Cleopas! And now it's Sunday and the 7 miles from Jerusalem to our home in Emmaus feel like such a long walk, doesn't it?

**Cleopas:** And now I don't know what to make of Mary Magdalene's story that she has seen him alive!

*JESUS WALK IN FROM CURTAIN AND CATCH UP WITH CLEOPAS IN THE CENTRE.*

**Jesus:** What are you two talking about as you walk along?

**Friend:** Why, about the crucifixion of the prophet Jesus of Nazareth. Haven't you heard about it? And some of the women we know are saying he has risen from the dead and that they have seen him!

**Jesus:** Why are you so surprised? Don't you know that it has been prophesied in many places in the scriptures that the coming Messiah would have to suffer and die for the sins of the world before entering into his glory? Let me explain to you all the scriptures that speak about it.

*CARRY ON WALKING THEN PAUSE*

**Cleopas:** Well listening to you has been absolutely amazing and now that we have arrived home, we would love you to come in and share some bread and wine with us.

*ALL WALK OVER TO TABLE AND SIT DOWN. JESUS PICK UP BREAD AND WINE.*

**Jesus:** Before we eat let us say the blessing: *Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Sovereign of all, who brings forth bread and wine from the earth.*

**Cleopas:** Ohh! Jesus, it's you! You're alive! You've risen from the dead!

**Narrator:** And as soon as they recognised Jesus, he vanished from their sight. In their excitement, Cleopas and his friend went straight back to Jerusalem to explain to the disciples what Jesus had told them, how the Messiah had to suffer and die for the world, and to share the good news that he had risen from the dead. When they got there they found that the disciples were incredibly excited because Jesus had shown himself alive to them too!