

THE EMPTY CHAIR
Copyright 2013, Paul Spite
For one time use by churches, all other rights reserved

Purpose:

We sometimes allow the busyness of running what we call ‘church’ to supplant the mission given us by Jesus. This skit, through the eyes of a child, reminds us of how we must sometimes appear to God. Especially our designated role as ultimate servant, is lost in petty power and organizational influence.

Characters:

Sunday School superintendent, pastor, Sunday School teacher, outreach director, usher, treasurer, music director, Stephen’s closet, food pantry, publications, secretary, assistant pastor, child, mother, and Jesus.

Props

Long table, stools/chairs, goblets, bread basket, etc. (Re-create Last Supper scene)

Lights slowly rise on recreation of famous “Last Supper” painting, by Leonardo DaVinci. Thirteen actors are frozen in place behind long table shrouded in white. Actors wear costumes duplicating in nature, if not detail, those of characters in painting. These costumes are over normal church clothes and are barely held in place from behind. Actors pose in positions and attitudes of corresponding characters from painting. Scene frozen in place for few seconds, then lights go back down. In darkness (Brief as possible), character playing Jesus slides from chair to under table and remains there. Remaining characters remove robes, place them under table. Then all characters resume original poses, leaving center chair empty. Lights slowly come back up on new scene. Everyone is again motionless for a few seconds. Then spell abruptly broken as first character turns head to speak and all characters become animated.

Sun Sch Super There just aren’t enough people willing to get involved. I’m happy to head up Sunday School, but I need more teachers. Mine are too few, too stressed, and need a break. We need help.

Pastor : I don’t know. It’s hard to pastor saints who are never in service to hear lessons I prepare. Maybe we need to scale Sunday School back a little.

S.S. Teacher: Why should *we* have to cut back? What about outreach dinners? Or am I out of line?

Outreach Dir: You’re out of line. We’ve got the most effective ministry in the church (*Angry muttering at this*). Our dinners are well attended. We just need more hands. Cleanup takes forever.

Usher: Why should we clean up after you? If you want the glory, get your hands dirty. Besides, what outreach? It has been the same four families, far as I can tell. Eating dinner every Saturday at the church’s expense of the church.

Pastor: Wait a minute!

Outreach Dir: We haven’t taken a dime from the budget. Ask the treasurer!

Treasurer. And I’ll answer! All these programs are good. Everyone’s doing a fine job. But folks, we’re in trouble. If more emphasis isn’t put on raising money, instead of spending it, it’ll take a miracle to pay the bills. And depending on miracles makes me uncomfortable.

Music Dir: You can depend on God. All it takes is a little faith. Now in our music department...

Stephen's Right! A little faith and no effort. The music department brings in no money. A little faith and a lot of spending. We've got a great organ, nice robes, but no clothing for the poor?

Food pantry: Nothing in the food pantry either. Lucky we have no funds to advertise this ministry or we'd be mighty embarrassed.

Publications: Are you implying I've done a bad job getting public notices out? If I ever got information to work with, I might be able to inform the public.

Secretary. Wait a minute, Sister. Everything I get, or anyone gives me, I put in your box. I know for a fact you haven't looked in it for over two weeks.

Assist Pastor: Well, as assistant pastor, none of this bickering helps us in our goal make any significant impact in our community.

Pastor *(Sadly, as all at table gradually move into original positions and freeze in place)* I thought we were here to discuss how to best fulfill God's commission.

Last of characters freezes into original scene of last supper. Lights hold for a few seconds, then slowly go out. In darkness, two more voices are heard.

Small child: Mommy? I didn't see Jesus in that last picture!

Mommy: Neither did I, Honey. Neither did I!