

Too Much to Bear
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Purpose:

Because separation to God requires denial, our carnal natures rebel against the “burdens” or sacrifices we make for God. Sometimes we forget how small those sacrifices are compared to one God made. This sketch is intended to bring the viewer to repentance. To contrast two levels of suffering. And to remind us our small crosses are often our means of protection, rather than a burden

Characters:

Frank -- A family man seeking to provide for his family. At least this is his excuse for always working overtime and being *married* to his job.

Sandy -- Usually a rather quiet girl, she is ecstatic to be asked out by such a popular guy. Who would of thought? Simple, plain, Sandy?

Joe -- A natural athlete, he never tried out for the football team before. He is overwhelmed that he was chosen. To the point he skips church for try-outs.

Beth -- A gifted singer, she always uses her talent in church. After hearing her sing at church, someone offers her a job, singing in a coffee house. Just not gospel songs.

Jesus

Detective

Props:

Small crosses - you can use 3/4" trim or 1" lath, either one will make a simple, inexpensive cross. A huge wooden cross (should seem heavy to carry, even if it's not), a crown of thorns. A stretcher or wheel chair

The dialogue in this play is just intended as examples. It can, and probably should be, modified to fit the personal lives and struggles of players participating. The stage is empty of any scenery. It is simply the front of a church. As the lights come up, a side door opens and Frank enters the room, carrying a small white cross. As he speaks, he advances to the center of the altar area.

Frank: Phew! What a day! I can't believe the amount of time we've been putting in at work. Sorry about missing prayer meeting tonight, God. Had a meeting I couldn't put off. Awful lot of those being scheduled around church time lately. But I think I'm in line for a promotion. They reward loyal employees. The ones who give a little more. I'm complaining about your provision, God. *(Laughs nervously)* The extra money will sure come in handy, though. We'll probably have a down payment for a new car by the end of the year. Of course, that means I'd have to keep working long hours to make payments. Plenty of working needing done. Yeah, I know I promised to teach a Bible study to John this year. I know it takes time to prepare Sunday School lessons. But I can wing those. As for the study, well... God, you understand don't you? *(Lays the cross down in the middle of the altar)* A guy has to prioritize. Provide for my family. *(He exits out in one direction)*

Sandy: *(Comes in from a different entry, also carries a small white cross, approaches the altar)* Wow! Ted asked me out! A plain old nobody like me! The most popular kid in the class.

Captain of the football team. Even has a sports car. Know what he said, God? He said he'd never seen anyone so pure looking. Who'd have believed holiness would pay off big time? Isn't it cool? (*Frowns*) What do you mean, am I going out with him? Of course! Really, Lord! It's not like we're going steady or anything. He's just taking me to a movie. Maybe a get together at a friend's house. I know he doesn't serve you. Maybe I can be a good influence on him. Won't the girls all be envious? I mean, seriously! (*Lays her cross down on the altar*) I'm tired of being such a stick in the mud. I'm young. That's the time to have fun, right? It's not like there's a bunch of guys to pick from here. (*She exits in a different direction*)

Joe: (*Comes in from a different location, carrying a small white cross, approaches the altar*) Man, I'm still in a daze. Coach said he never saw such a natural athlete. I've practically made the team. I'm the only walk-on with the football squad this year. Said if I practice hard, I can try out for quarterback next year. (*Shakes his head*) Boy! Was Dad mad! Wanted to know if it was worth missing Bible study? He's obviously never been young. Doesn't understand what it means to have a chance to make something of yourself. (*Lays his cross on the pile too*) But he'll be proud of me when he sees how well I do. You will too, God. You wait and see. If I get a chance, I'll let people know you're my inspiration. (*Joe exits off stage*)

Beth: (*Comes in from a different location, carrying a small white cross, approaches the altar*) Okay, God! You gave me this talent, right? So I'd think you wouldn't mind my using it. So why are you making me feel guilty? I just have to play the coffee house for a year. Then I'll be able to cut my first project for the agency. Imagine, a talent scout in church, the night I sang a special. I'm invited to a special party for new stars, right after the audition. Once I get my first album out, I'll come back to singing songs I really love. You know! Ones about you. (*Lays her cross on the pile*) In the meantime, with you blessing my career, I can't help but succeed. Besides, there's plenty of other singers here. (*She leaves*)

The lights slowly dim and then brighten. The silence is broken by the opening of a door to the side of the altar. A bloody and beaten Jesus, wearing a crown of thorns, is on his way to his crucifixion. He enters dragging a huge, heavy wooden cross over his shoulder. Breathing hoarsely, he laboriously makes his way toward the center of the altar, preparatory to turning down the main aisle to leave. In the middle of the turn, he looks up slightly at the audience, turns his head enough to obviously notice the little pile of crosses, cries out, stumbles, and falls. Alone, he struggles back to his feet, drags his cross painfully down the main aisle, and out the door. The lights go completely down. When the lights come back up, Joe is at the altar, near the crosses, in a wheel chair.

Joe: (*Fervent*) I'm so sorry, God. They think my back's broken. I'm not worried about playing any more. Or running. Or walking. What a fool I've been. Coach wouldn't even come to see me. Had to train a new player. Could barely get my friends to bring me here. They think I'm crazy. Maybe I am. Can't imagine what use you have for me now, either. But God, if you'll let me, I'll serve you with what's left. (*Struggles to reach and grasp the nearest cross. Begins to pray at the altar as back door bursts open*)

Beth: (*Runs down the aisle, throws herself on altar*) Oh, Jesus! It was terrible. I sounded awful! There was no joy in my singing. Everyone out there, smirking at me. So they told to just to sing something I was comfortable with. So I tried, "I Will Give You All". You remember? Our song? It didn't come out right. I couldn't feel you anymore. They all stared at me so Strange. I just wanted to impress them. And I'm scared, God. I did

something really stupid at the party. You've to help me! *(As she says this, a man in a suit comes in the back door, checks an official looking paper in his hand, strides purposely down the aisle to Beth)*

Detective: Beth Mander? I'm Detective James. You'll need to come with me. You are under arrest. For illegal possession and use of a narcotic. Do you understand your rights under the Miranda Act?

Beth: Oh God, please! I just attended a party. I didn't know what the stuff was till I tasted it. Is that a crime?

Man: I am afraid so, Miss. Don't make me use cuffs. *(He takes her by the arm. She reaches out toward the crosses)*

Beth: Can I please take my cross with me?

Man: You got to be kidding! What for? A souvenir? Come on! *(He pulls her weeping down the aisle, out the door)*

Side door opens. Frank comes in, approaches the altar.

Frank: Guess you know what I'm here for. Didn't get that promotion after all. Don't even have a job now. Put the owner's son in my position. Said they didn't have much use for "yes men" any more. Do you? Now that I have time? Can't even teach John that Bible study now. Since he died last week. Lost! *(Begins to cry)*. I'm so sorry, God. *(Reaches and pulls a cross to him)* If you'll still let me serve you, I promise I won't fail you again. *(He begins praying by Joe)*

Sandy comes weeping down main aisle, repenting all the way to altar. She grabs a cross and falls on her knees, pulling at her hair.

Sandy: Oh God, I need you. I'm so scared. Feel so dirty. I told him no! I told him! But he'd been drinking. Me too, even though it tasted bad. Wanted him to think I was cool. Next thing, we were parked. Things were out of hand. I was crying ... fighting... and God? Oh, God! What if I'm pregnant? What will I do? Don't know whether to tell Mom. Don't even know for sure what happened. How could one little night mess up my whole life? My parents are gonna hate me. So will the kids in the youth group. I'm supposed to be a leader Do you hate me too, God? I feel dirty. How can I feel clean again? Can you forgive me? *(Begins praying beside the other two)*

The altar is opened for others who would like to pray.