

Ten monologues

By Kathy Applebee (except as noted)

CANOE MONOLOGUE

(Anxious) Hello? God? Anybody up there? Anybody home? I'm in kind of a jam right now. I'm out in the middle of this lake, no boat, no life jacket - just this little beach ball. *(Look at it, panic creeping into voice)* And I think it's got a hole and it's getting smaller.

Lord - you know we used to be pretty close and I was wondering if maybe you could do something. Lord, I'd really be grateful and glorify you and I'd tell people about how you saved me and all.

(Looks stage left, demeanor brightens) Oh, never mind - here comes a canoe.

CHURCH GROWTH

At rise: Teacher filling in for a Bible class. An indented space indicates where the actor pauses as if she is listening to the imaginary class give an answer. Actor gradually goes from cheerful to frustrated.

(enthusiastic) Ok class. Let's get started. Your regular teachers aren't here. I'm filling in until Miss Louann or somebody arrives. *(takes a deep breath)*

Today we are going to talk about church growth. How do churches grow?

Yes, little Timmy? No honey, adding rooms to the building doesn't count. The building isn't the church. The people are the church.

Ok, You with the pink shirt. No, planting apple seeds isn't it either. I know the Bible says be fruitful and multiply but it doesn't mean to grow fruit like apples.

(less hopeful the lesson is going to end up where it should) Yes, with the jeans on, what do you think would make a church grow? Potato chips and milk shakes during communion? Why would we do that?
No, sitting in a pew and watching our waistlines expand isn't church growth either.

You in the back. What do you think? *(repeating what was said)* It's what the paid church staff is for. *(more adamantly)* Let's get that one right out of your head now. You need to stay after class. *(looks down as if a child is tugging on her clothes)*

Yes, yes. Quit tugging on me. What do you think will help a church grow? *(excited now)* Excellent – yes. New members! Yes! Helping people get baptized!! *(deflated)* No, bringing your dolls won't count. They're not alive. No, dogs and cats won't count either *(and strongly)* and believe me, you don't want to try baptizing a cat!

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Ok. We're just going to call Miss Louann. *(pulls out cell and punches in a number then looks to heaven, prays with a desperate quality)* Please Lord, let Louann answer.Somebody, anybody, answer.....

(Lack Of) CHARACTER

At rise: Speaker is making an announcement for the people gathered.

Hi, Josh [or minister's, elder's name] asked me to talk to you a little bit about one of the ministries here at KCC [insert church name]. The ____ ministry is *(cell phone rings; appears surprised but shrugs and answers cell phone)* Hello? *(shocked)* Louann! [Or nursery or Bible class teacher] It's the middle of church. What do you want?

Right now? *(put out)* NO! I'm making an announcement in front of the entire congregation..... You don't have anyone back there in the nursery? I see *(disgusted)* WHO?

(adamant) Look – if I have to work with her it's like having another baby to take care of ... *(defensive)* I'm not into changing diapers, that's just gross. And then they burp and spit up all over. I've got good church clothes on.....

(put out) Well, it wouldn't be convenient right now. You gotta give me a few days' notice..... *(hold phone away from ear momentarily and scowls)*

OK, OK. But I want a big sign posted back there that I helped. Or better yet have Brad [a church leader] put it on a slide to show Sunday morning when people take their seats so everyone will know what a great ministry worker.....

What? My character? What do you mean "something is wrong with my character? I'm not in any plays right now. *(emphasizing each word)* I don't have any character.

(softly, humbled) Oh... that kind of character. *(bows head.)*

GOOD, BETTER, BEST

At Rise: Martha enters carrying a large bowl covered with a towel so no one can see what is inside)

Good, better, best. How many of you know the difference between good and evil? *(Can ask for examples from the audience)* That's a good thing to know. But it is not enough to know what is good. We have to know the difference between good, better and best.

One day we were having company over. And not just any company. We were having Jesus. I'm rushing around, trying to get everything done. What is my sister Mary doing? Kicking back, sitting around, listening to the conversation. Meanwhile I have 20 thousand things to see to do, like cooking *(indicates bowl and then puts it down)*, cleaning, baking, washing the feet and.... You get the idea.

Jesus is saying ""Come, you who are blessed by my Father; ... For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

So, I go in and say "Lord Jesus, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

Jesus looks right at me. And he says, ""Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

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I don't get it. Aren't I giving him something to eat? Giving him something to drink? Inviting him in? What does Jesus mean – Mary has chosen what is better?

Then I remembered hearing Jesus say "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes out of the mouth of God. I should have been listening to Jesus, the one who called himself the bread of heaven – that's Jesus! Here I was thinking about physical bread, which was a good thing. Thinking about the word of God – that was a better thing to do.

Good, better, best. It is good to do good, but it is best to do what's best.

Back to the day Jesus came. I left the bread, went and sat down next to Mary and began listening to Jesus. I'm glad I finally chose the best thing. Learning about God. I became convinced Jesus was the Messiah, the son of God who came into the world. I said that to everybody, the time he came to raise my brother Lazarus from the dead. *(Takes Bible out of bowl)*

Now I know you can't have the person Jesus come to your house. You can't sit at Jesus feet the way I did and listen to him speak. But you have his words in your Bible. *(Takes towel off bowl and Bible out of bowl)* You can read the words of Jesus anytime – that is the best thing. You can read aloud to your friends, brothers and sisters who are too young to read for themselves.

Good, better, best. *(Holding up Bible)* Choose what is best.

I'M ONLY 15

Written by Sandy Knutsen circa 1982

At rise: Actor is center stage. Actor sometimes is in present with flat affect, same volume & tone like a dead person might have, at other times she is physically and verbally expressive as she has flashbacks and relives what she relates.

(Flat affect) The day I died was an ordinary school day. I dressed and ate breakfast as I had hundreds of times before. I said some snotty remark to my brother over something trivial and got on the bus.

(more emotion, steady volume) It doesn't matter how the accident happened. I didn't belong in a "borrowed" car with an unlicensed driver. I had no business being in any car when I belonged in class. But I had to go along with my friends.

The last thing I remember was passing this goofy old lady who seemed to be going awfully slow. *Flashback to accident; duck, dodge, protect your face from the wreck, loudly with fear)* A deafening crash, a terrific jolt, glass flying everywhere, steel bending into sickening shapes. My whole body seemed to be turning inside out. *(flat affect as actor returns to present)* I heard myself scream.

Later on, I awoke. It was very quiet. *(monotone, cold, lifeless voice)* A policeman was standing over me. Then I saw a doctor. My body was mangled. I was saturated with blood. Pieces of *(gingerly feel head and face, make the audience see the blood)* jagged glass were sticking out of my head. I couldn't feel anything. *(snap out of the dream state - loud, forceful)* Hey, Don't pull that sheet over my head. I can't be dead. I'm only 15. Fifteen year olds don't die. *(pleading)* I'm supposed to grow up and have a wonderful life. I can't be dead... I haven't lived yet.

(softer, no emotion) Later I was placed in a drawer in the morgue. My folks had to identify me. *(emotion creeps in as she nearly cries)* Why did I have to look into mom's eyes? Dad looked old - really old.

(lifeless) The funeral was weird. Friends and relatives passed by the casket one by one. They looked at me with the saddest eyes I have ever seen. Some of them were crying. They touched my hand, sobbing as they walked away.

(all but screaming like she is trapped in a box) Please, somebody, wake me up. Get me out of here. *(quieter but with emotion)* I can't bear to see mom and dad so broken up. My grandparents can hardly walk, they're crying so hard. My brother is like a zombie. They, everyone, they all look like robots. I can't believe this is happening to me.

(crying) Please don't bury me. I'm not dead. I have allot of living to do. I want to run, laugh, sing. I haven't even gotten to high school yet. Please don't put me in the ground. I promise, if you'll just give me one more chance God, I'll be the more careful. *(begging, crying)* All I want is one more chance.

(softly pleading) Please God, I'm only 15.

MY FATHER

Technically a monologue since there is only one speaker. The other, silent person needs to have 4 sets of bandages - Strips about 4-6 inches wide. One will need to be 3 feet long; the other three can be 18 inches long. You can use toilet paper possibly for the bandages if the audience is far enough away and you are careful when you handle it.

(Voice changes as child grows older. It is important for the voice tone only to change. Use the exact same wording over and over for greatest impact. Mocking voice must be deeper than any other voice used)

(Voice tone, mannerisms are that of a 5 year old) My father is no fun. He makes up all these rules just so I don't have any fun. He said, *(Change voice to indicate you are mocking father)* "Don't play with matches." *(Back to child's voice)* That's a really dumb rule. *(More enthusiastic)* Fire's so cool so when Tommy came over we got out some matches and played with them. *(With great enthusiasm)* Boy did we have fun.

Silent person bandages hand

(Voice tone, mannerisms are that of a 7 year old) My father is no fun. He makes up all these rules, just so I don't have any fun. My father said, *(Change voice to indicate you are*

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mocking father)" Don't ride your bike in the road." *(Back to child's voice)* Now that's dumb. Everyone knows that's what the road is there for. So me and Tommy went riding our bikes down the road when my parents weren't looking and Boy, did I have fun.

Silent person bandages head

(Voice tone, mannerisms are that of a 9 year old) My father is no fun. He makes up all these rules, rules just so I don't have any fun. My father said, *(Change voice to indicate you are mocking father)*" Don't tease the dog next door." *(Back to child's voice)* Really dumb rule. It's allotted of fun to see how mad we can get that old dog. So one day I climbed over the fence and got that dog REAL mad. *(with less enthusiasm than last time)* Boy, did I have fun.

Silent person bandages arm

(Voice tone, mannerisms are that of a 12 year old) My father is no fun. He makes up all these rules, just so I don't have any fun. My father said, *(Change voice to indicate you are mocking father)*" Don't shoot the BB gun unless your mother or I are home." *(Back to child's voice but let a little sarcasm creep in)* What do they think I am, a baby? I'm old enough to play with the gun myself. So one day while they were at the mall I got out the BB gun.

Silent person bandages foot,
(doubtfully) Boy, did I have fun.

(Pause. Change voice and posture to indicate an adult) You know, when I was younger I thought my father made up all of those rules just so I wouldn't have any fun. Sometimes I thought God wrote the Bible just so I wouldn't have any fun either. *(Pause Look at bandages. Look straight at audience)* I think I am beginning to catch on.

MEANEST MOTHER IN THE WORLD

This can be done as a monologue or with four characters.

At rise: Character is seated, swinging legs like a 4 year old.

(pouting) I have the meanest mother in the world. Other kids had candy and Twinkies for lunch, but I had to eat soup and sandwiches with *(make face)* whole wheat bread. Supper was gross too. Vegetables, fruit and sometimes even PRUNES. At least I wasn't the only one with the

meanest mother in the whole world. My brother and sisters had her too.

(age 8, pacing) I Have the meanest mother in the whole wide world. If we disobeyed she'd actually strike us. Not just once in a while either but every time we were disobedient. Can you imagine hitting a child just because they'd broken some stupid rule like *(change voice to mother's)* "Don't throw the cat off the roof" or "Don't give the Dcon to your baby brother". You begin to see how really mean she was. Sometimes my mother thought she was a judge saying *(mother voice)* "always tell the truth, the whole, truth and nothing but the truth." even if it killed us and sometimes it nearly did *(rub bottom)*

The worst is yet to come. We had to be in bed at nine and up at seven. We never got to watch the late, late, late show or sleep in until noon like all the other kids did. And she never paid attention to the child labor laws either. *(mother's voice)* "Wash the dishes, make the beds, cut the grass, take out the trash" We had to do all these cruel and inhumane things too. She and dad must have laid awake nights just dreaming up horrible things for us to do.

(change to 12/13 years old voice, standing, arms crossed) I have the meanest mother in the whole world. I have limits on using the cell phone! Notice I didn't say MY phone. No, we kids only get the kid's phone when it's *(switching to mother voice)* necessary. Plus, we have a schedule for who gets the computer. I don't see why I can't be on it when no one else is using it. Plus she acts like some kind of drill sergeant *(switch to mother voice)* "You're not going out dressed like that and not until I've looked at your homework".

She is the nosiest mother too. Always wanting to know where we were going and who we were going with and when we'd be back. And you won't believe this. We have to be back when we said we'd be or we get grounded! It's like having a ball and chain around your leg. *(With fervor)* She is mean.

(change to adult) When I was a child I KNEW I had the meanest mother in the whole world. Now I'm the meanest mother in the whole world. The other night my 7 year old asked me if she could spend the night at a friend's house. I said "No" because it was a school night. She called me the meanest mother in the world. I thought about my mother as she stomped off to her room. Then I thanked God I had the meanest mother in the world.

NEXT WEEK'S NEWS

CHARACTERS: 1 speaking

PROPS: Newspaper, rest can be done with pantomime

COSTUMES: Street clothes

SETTING: An office

At rise: Man (or woman) is praying aloud at his desk. During his prayer A walks in, places newspaper on his

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desk and exits

MAN:and Lord, just one more thing. More than anything else in the world, I'd like a copy of next week's newspaper today. Just once. That's all I need. Amen

(Confused) What's this? This newspaper wasn't here a minute ago. *(Getting increasingly excited)* Wait! My prayer! God answered my prayer! I gotta check the date to make sure..... Exactly one week from today. *(Man jumps up and does a little private victory dance)*

(Enthusiastic) Great! With this information I can make a killing in the market. *(Starts looking through the paper)* I'll be set for life. I'll never have to work again. I can spend the rest of my life on a permanent vacation.

MAN: *(Interjecting pauses, and scribbling with one hand.)* Stock prices..... I never would have guessed. I'll sell that and that and buy this and...this. Let's check out the weather. You never know when there will be an earthquake or tornado..... no hurricanes.... That's a good thing. Hmmmm... interesting. That much snow could definitely make a difference in how I good, good.

(Phone rings, answers while still looking through paper) Yeah... hi hon. *(Getting more and more exuberant as he speaks)* I'm afraid tonight's going to be a long one but tell you what, by next month I will be spending a whole lot more time with you and the kids..... I promise..... gotta go. Bye.

Sports..... You have to be kidding. They won against THEM! I have got to get a bet on that game. I bet the odds are..... *(Really excited)* speaking of odds, what's the winning lottery combination?

Obituaries... yeah, better see if any CEO's or even local politicians die. That could change the future..... *(Drops the paper)*

MAN: *(Numb)* My obituary is in this paper. *(More emotion, starting to crumble in the face of death)* I'm going to die in five days.

Lights out

SOMEONE ELSE

CHARACTERS: 1

COSTUMES: none specified

PROPS: none specified

SETTING: Eulogy spoken by the preacher

RUN TIME: 1 minute

Good morning congregation. All of us at church were saddened to learn this week of the death of one of our most valued members, Someone Else. Someone's passing creates a vacancy that will be difficult to fill. Else has been with us for many years and for every one of those years, Someone did far more than a normal person's share of the work. Whenever there was a job to do, a class to teach, or a need to be met, one name was on everyone's list, "Let Someone Else do it."

Whenever leadership was mentioned, this wonderful person was looked to for inspiration as well as results; "Someone Else can take charge." It was common knowledge that Someone Else was

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among the most liberal givers in our church. Whenever there was a financial need, everyone just assumed Someone Else would make up the difference.

Someone Else left a wonderful example to follow, a tremendous legacy and huge shoes to fill.

Let us bow and remember our dearly departed Someone Else. (*Bow for count of three*)

THE JONES FAMILY BIBLE

At rise: Actor stands or sits, arms extended straight out in front of himself with palms touching to indicate a closed book.

(Bummed out) Hi, I'm the Jones Family Bible. Most of the time I just sit around here collecting dust. I have much to offer but the Jones just never seem interested in learning about Jesus.

(Getting excited) Oh, here comes Mr. Jones... he's walking this way... Yes, he's picking me up and he's ..., *(Hopes are dashed)* looking underneath for the \$20 from last night's poker game.

You know, it's really sad. I thought when I finally got a family of my own I'd be the most used book in the house. I have information in me that is so vital...oh, it's Sally Jones... *(Hopefully)* she's walking... *(Bummed)* out of the house.

The world is filled with such bad news but I carry a message of hope. Funny how no one realizes it. Wait, I hear Joey mentioning good news... he's walking over and opening me... *(Sadly)* love letters from Barbie. He figures this is a real safe place to hide them. Nobody else even opens me.

It gets really lonely just sitting on this shelf. I've spent most of my entire life right here. There goes Mrs. Jones. Boy, is she in a hurry. *(Hopeful)* She's grabbing me and dusting me off. Maybe she's going to use me! *(Excited)* She's putting me on the coffee table and opening me! *(Crushed)* Oh, the preacher is coming for a visit.