

Psalm 146 Reader's Theater

CHARACTERS: 16, flexible casting
PROPS: none specified
COSTUMES: none specified
SETTING: Flexible, class setting implied

CAST

Teacher
Students
Cassie
George
Donisha
Jose
Maria
Sun Li

Biblical characters

David
Silas
Joseph
Paul
Peter
John
Bartimeaus
Blind Man
Ruth

(Group is assembled for daily Bible reading. As written it is a children's Bible class but can be adapted to a camp, youth group, family, etc.)

TEACHER: Time for our daily Bible reading. Who remembers what chapter we are on?

GEORGE: Psalms something I think

DONISHA: I have it bookmarked. We're on Psalm 146.

TEACHER: Cassie, it's your turn to read. You may begin.

CASSIE:
Praise the LORD.
Praise the LORD, O my soul.

(Continues reading but losing interest, reading in a more bored or sleepy tone)

I will praise the LORD all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

(As David interrupts this brings CASSIE to full alertness, even shock)

DAVID: *(With great enthusiasm, inflection and emotion)*

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Do not put your trust in princes,
in mortal men, who cannot save.

When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;
on that very day their plans come to nothing.

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD his God,

The Maker of heaven and earth,
the sea, and everything in them—
the LORD, who remains faithful forever.

CASSIE: Who are you?

DAVID: David.

DONISHA: David who?

DAVID: King David. (*Cassie is shaking her head like she doesn't recognize him*) David the shepherd? David that killed Goliath?

CASSIE: Wow. I didn't expect to ever meet you.

TEACHER: Neither did I? But please continue.

DAVID: You were reading Psalm 146 but I don't think you really "get it". Since I am rather an expert on the Psalms I thought I'd drop in and help put some meaning into it. And I brought a few friends along to help (*Whistles with two fingers in his mouth and calls loudly*) Hey guys! Come join us for a reading of Psalm 146 and add some commentary.

BARTIMEUS:
Add pizzazz

WIDOW:
Some flour and oil, I mean zing and zip

DAVID:
Start over for us. We'll jump in when it's time.

CASSIE: (*With more feeling*)
Praise the LORD.
Praise the LORD, O my soul.
I will praise the LORD all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

Do not put your trust in princes,
in mortal men, who cannot save.

DAVID: I want you to picture this. Now the Philistines had gathered their forces for war. The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them.

GEORGE: This was back in the day when you had swords and stuff, right?

DAVID: The Philistines did. But only Saul and Jonathon had swords on our side.

JOSE: So what did you guys have?

MARIA: Sticks and stones?

DAVID: Pretty much. Clubs from tree branches, sharp sticks. And of course slings and stones.

GEORGE: So then what happened?

DAVID: A Philistine champion named Goliath stepped forward. He was over nine feet tall.

SUN LI: A good basketball player

DAVID: He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor weighing five thousand shekels.

JOSE: How much is that in pounds?

DAVID: He walked around wearing 156 pounds of armor!

JOSE: *(Amazed)* The guy had to be bigger than Hulk Hogan or the Undertaker

DAVID: Goliath's spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels... That's almost 19 pounds.

SUN LI: *(Incredulous)* A spear point that weighed more than a bowling ball!

DAVID: Yes. He was huge and strong and looked dangerous. The Philistines thought they had it made with Goliath on their side. But the bigger they are, the harder they fall. I dropped him with my sling and a stone.

CASSIE: I remember that story. *(Everyone else says "Yeah", "me too")*

DAVID: Keep reading Cassie

CASSIE:

When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;
on that very day their plans come to nothing.

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD his God,

the Maker of heaven and earth,
the sea, and everything in them—
the LORD, who remains faithful forever.

TEACHER: Your exact words are in 1 Sam 17. You girls read verses 45-47.

MARIA: 45, David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

SUN LI: 46, this day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.

CASSIE: 47, all those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

DAVID: That's right. Next time you read Psalms 146:6, I want you to think of God, me and Goliath.

GEORGE: I sure will.

DONISHA: I'm going to write it down

SILAS: Now – who is going to read the next verse?

PAUL: It has a special meaning for Silas and me.

DONISHA: He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets prisoners free

SILAS: Remember that jail in Philippi, Paul?

PAUL: How could I ever forget? First they beat us to a pulp, then they locked us up.

MARIA: What were you in for?

PAUL: Casting out demons.

SILAS: That girl was about your size and age I would guess.

PAUL: She was a slave girl. Her owners were using her to tell people's future's and got upset when she was free because it was going to cost him money.

SILAS: Paul and I were singing around midnight. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake. Our chains fell off.

PAUL: The doors flew open.

DONISHA: I remember. You guys didn't escape. Instead you told the jailer how to become a Christian.

GEORGE: And he did. He and his family got baptized.

TEACHER: You spent a lot of time in jail and prison, didn't you Paul.

PAUL: Yes. But Paul and I weren't the first people to be locked up for following Jesus. John and Peter were.

JOHN: We sure were because we were proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.

PETER: They seized us, and because it was evening, they put us in jail until the next day.

JOHN: Then we went to trial for an act of kindness - healing a crippled man.

PETER: They asked how we healed him. I replied by the name of Jesus Christ whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead.

CASSIE: So then they flogged you.

JOHN: Yes. But they got Peter a second time.

GEORGE: I remember. In Acts 12, an angel came and let you out.

PETER: I thought I was dreaming but it was for real. But none of us were the original.

JOSE: That would be Joseph, right?

JOSEPH: Right. That would be me. I was put in Pharaoh's jail for a crime I didn't commit.

DONISHA: But the butler got you out?

JOSEPH: The butler didn't do it...

SUN LI: (*giggling*) That sounds like something from a murder mystery.

MARIA: Yeah, they're always saying the butler did it.

TEACHER: Who did get you out?

JOSEPH: God. He used my time as a slave and a prisoner so I could learn the Egyptian language and to teach me how to administer.

TEACHER: You started small with just Potiphar's family

MARIA: Then moved into the public sector by managing a prison

JOSE: And finally ran the whole country of Egypt.

JOSEPH: And that all ties in with feeding the hungry. God worked through me to keep not just my family but the entire region fed during the famine. Read that verse again.

DONISHA: He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets prisoners free

CASSIE: I'll think of you next time I read Psalms 146.

GEORGE: And I'll remember Paul and Silas

SUN LI: And Peter and John.

PETER: Keep reading. John and I are linked to the next verses as well.

PAUL: And me too – but when I was known as Saul.

CASSIE: the LORD gives sight to the blind,
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down,
the LORD loves the righteous.

PETER: Once when we were leaving Jericho two blind men were sitting by the roadside,

JOHN: When they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

PETER: Almost everyone was telling them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

JOHN: Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?"

MARIA: I know what they said. "Lord," they answered, "we want our sight."

SUN LI: Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him

TEACHER: Didn't Jesus heal many blind people?

BARTIMAEUS: Absolutely. And I am one of them. I'm Bartimaeus I was so excited I threw myself to his feet and came to Jesus. I said Rabbi, I want to see. Jesus healed me.

GEORGE: And followed Jesus.

BARTIMEUS: And followed Jesus. But another blind man was healed got into trouble for being healed

BLIND MAN: That would be me. Jesus spit on the ground, made some mud and put it on my eyes.

SUN LI: I always thought that was kind of gross – the spit and all

GEORGE: But it would be worth it to see.

SUN LI: Absolutely. If I were blind you could put yucky old lima beans on my eyes.

GEORGE: What happened next?

BLIND MAN: Jesus told me to wash in the Pool of Siloam. I did and could see. I thought all my problems would be over.

JOSE: But the Pharisees got mad. Didn't they?

CASSIE: Didn't they get upset because Jesus healed on a Sunday?

DONISHA: The Sabbath. It was on a Saturday

BLIND MAN: Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

TEACHER: But others thought he was a prophet sent from God.

BLIND MAN: I said "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

PAUL: I was blind at one time too.

JOSE: You were?

PAUL: I was on a trip to arrest Christians when a light from heaven flashed around me. Jesus spoke to me – asking why I was working against him. I was blind for three days.

CASSIE: I remember. Ananias came to see you. Something like scales fell from your eyes.

SUN LI: Scales would be gross too, probably worse than spit or Lima beans

PAUL: I needed to be physically blind to see the spiritual truth that Jesus was the son of God. Please keep reading Psalms 146

CASSIE: The LORD watches over the alien
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

JOSE: I know one of the widow's Jesus helped. The widow of Nain.

MARIA: God raised her son from the dead.

DONISHA: There was that widow in Elisha's time that was going to have her two sons sold as slaves.

GEORGE: And Elisha told her to fill up all of the containers in her house with oil.

SUN LI: The oil didn't run out until the last jar and dish was filled.

MARIA: I think there's another time when Elijah stayed with a widow during a famine.

GEORGE: She said they were out of food except only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil.

CASSIE: And then there's Ruth. I bet that's who you are.

RUTH: Yes. I was an alien and a widow.

DONISHA: You were from Moab but wouldn't leave your mother-in-law Naomi.

RUTH: I traveled with her back to Bethlehem. I was determined not just to stay with her but also to worship the God of Israel.

DONISHA: God blessed you.

RUTH: With a home, a kind husband and a son.

DAVID: Don't forget you got a great grandson too. (*Confidentially*) She's my great grandmother. But let's finish the psalm. We only have one more verse.

CASSIE: The LORD reigns forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the LORD

TEACHER: Do you all realize what we have done here? We've deepened our understanding of Psalm 146 by connecting it to other parts of the Bible.

DONISHA: Thanks for coming and helping us do that.

JOSE: Can you guys come every time we read from Psalms?

DAVID: You don't need us.

RUTH: At the end – you were doing it mostly yourselves. You thought of 3 other widows before I came in.

BLIND MAN: I think you have had your eyes opened to a new way of reading the Bible.

RUTH: Connecting things as you read.

GEORGE: Can we read it over again one more time?

SUN LI: Let all read it. I forget what that is called.

TEACHER: A choral reading?

DONISHA: Or with parts.

TEACHER: Tell you what. Everyone read the verses that have special meaning to you. Everyone ready?

TEACHER: Psalm 146

ALL: Praise the LORD.
Praise the LORD, O my soul.

CASSIE, MARIA: I will praise the LORD all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

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in mortal men, who cannot save.

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the sea, and everything in them—
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JOSEPH, SILAS, PETER, PAUL, JOHN: He upholds the cause of the oppressed
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