

**Pre-Show Lesson Plan for GODSPELL 2011 Broadway Production**  
**Created by MaryAnne Piccolo**

<b>Lesson Plan Title:</b>	“We Can Build A Beautiful City”
<b>Unit Lesson Title:</b>	Golden Age of Broadway/ Updating the Traditional to Contemporary
<b>Grade:</b>	High School (9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade)

**Central Question:** How can the morals of the parables used in *GODSPELL* inspire people to be upstanding members of society?

**Aim:** How can taking others into consideration before you make decisions positively affect you and your community?

**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

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| Students will  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Understand the structure of a parable and the lesson or “moral” that can be taken from it</li><li>▪ Through improvisation, role- play and tableaux explore character choices that can also be applied to decision making in everyday life</li><li>▪ Learn to work in groups to create a final product to present to the entire class</li></ul> |

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** The Parable(s) *The Good Samaritan* and/ or *The Prodigal Son*

**Students Previous Knowledge:**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students know the meaning of the words <i>parable, moral, and compassion</i></li><li>• Students know the theater terms/ techniques of improvisation, role- play and tableaux</li><li>• Students are studying <i>The Golden Age of Musical Theater</i> and are exploring how through <i>direction</i> “dated” material can be presented with a modern appeal. This in hand, makes material more tangible for audience members to relate to.</li></ul> |
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**Cultural Connections** This particular production of *GODSPELL* has been updated in various aspects making the parables relatable for audience members of all ages. This lesson is to prepare students to think about how these “dated parables” apply to their lives in a modern society.

**WARM-UP/Do-Now**

**Columbian Hypnosis**

The students are divided up into groups of A's and B's. They are then paired into two groups one partner is A and one is B. They will be guided through the exercise by the facilitator. A will start by guiding B with his or her hand. In this half of the exercise A had complete control of where to move student B. Students are encouraged to explore levels and pace. After a few minutes the pair switches role and B then guides A.

Rationale: *This exercise pairs students in two roles; the oppressor and the oppressed. The oppressor is making all decisions without consulting the other. The oppressor can choose to make the movements less or more difficult. This is up to them alone. Perhaps the oppressor will take their partner into consideration.*

Role of the Facilitator: The facilitator divides students into pairs. Facilitator should side coach the activity and encourage students to explore the pace in which they are moving as well as the levels they at. The facilitator should make sure each group (A and B) has equal time as the leader.

**HOOK:** **PARABLE READING**

EXAMPLES: ***The Good Samaritan***

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

OR

***The Prodigal Son***

“There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with *compassion* for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they

began to celebrate.

“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

“‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

Rationale: These stories are two of the most prominent parables used in the production *GODSPELL*. There are clear characters and choices and objectives in both parables. This makes them easy to translate into a theatrical setting.

Role of Facilitator:

The facilitator reads one or both of these parables aloud to the class. Ask students to close their eyes and visualize the story. If reading just one, perhaps the facilitator should read it twice in a row.

The facilitator should then ask students to open their eyes. Then ask students “What did you see?” When speaking about the characters ask questions like; “What did they look like?” , “Why do you think they did that?”, “What could have been a more considerate choice for that character?”

## **MAIN ACTIVITY**

### **Students create NEW or ALTERNATE endings to the parable(s)**

Break students into groups of about four or five. They will decide amongst themselves who will be which characters from the parable. (If both parables are read in class the group can decided which one they would like to work on) Through improve students will be asked to explore a *different choice* a character(s) could make in order to create a better outcome for everyone. After the students have solidified their story they will then create a tableaux which will best show the “new” change to the story. Each character will be allowed to speak one phrase when activated by the facilitator.

Rationale:

This activity allows students to use their own judgment if they were put in a tough situation where they had to make a decision, which affected other people like the characters in the story. It also allows for group discussion about making these decisions.

Role of Facilitator:

The facilitator should divide the students into groups, give the instructions and monitor that each group is using their time efficiently. Each group should have about ten minutes to create their

piece. Then the facilitator will ask everyone to present their pieces in a sharing.

## REFLECTION

### GROUP DISCUSSION:

The facilitator can then lead the group in a discussion about *how* and *why* each group made these “new” choices in the parable. Students can discuss how it changed the story and it’s characters.

Rationale: A group discussion is a great way to reflect because it allows students to share their own observations and instincts.

Role of Facilitator: The facilitator should help guide the discussion by making sure everyone has a fair chance to speak and making sure open ended questions are being asked.

**Homework** Students will write a **journal entry** asking them to think about a time they made a poor decision that negatively affected someone. How could they have made a more compassionate choice?

## Theatre Literacy

Improvisation, Role-Play, Tableaux, Audience, Director
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### Assessment/Indicators:

Students are able to work in pairs once the instructions are given During <b>THE DO NOW</b> . Students follow directions during <b>THE HOOK</b> and participate in the discussion. During <b>THE MAIN ACTIVITY</b> students are able to work in larger groups and are respectful of each other’s artistic choices. I will make sure each group presentation is a collaborative effort and not the work of one student “directing.”
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### How could you document the learning?

Pictures of the tableaux activity and Journal activity homework