

HOME FREE

Everyone

has

their

own

Gethsemane



By

Brett Hadley

OFFICIAL STUFF

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

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Music for Home Free

Music for Slides/Narration between scenes:

ACT-1

Opening Opening from soundtrack for the movie "Legend"

Gethsemane The Blue Room*

Classroom Cottage*

Lunchroom The Kitchen*

Michelle's House Beginning of the Unicorn Theme*

Andy's House The Blue Room*

Campfire End of Unicorn Theme*

ACT-II

Classroom The Blue Room*

Mall The Kitchen*

Music for Scenes

ACT-11, Scene-3 "Choose Joy" from the CD *Everything I Need* by New Creation

ACT-III, Scene-2 "Home Free" from the CD *Home Free* by Wayne Watson

**Taken from the soundtrack for the movie "Legend".*

Props and Sets

- Bible
- Newspaper
- Bible with John 17:3 marked
- Birthday party paraphernalia
- (balloons, blowers, etc.)
- 4 tickets
- Gift wrapped box
- "Optical Illusion Jesus" gift
- Bible
- Pen
- Papers
- Bible Commentary

Stage Sets

ACT-I

SCENE-2

Chalkboard
12 Chairs

SCENE-3

Long table

SCENE-4

Couch
End table
Desk with chair

SCENE-5

Couch
End Table
Billel Broom

SCENE-6

Campfire logs

ACT-II

SCENE-1

Chalkboard
12 Chairs

SCENE-3

Couch
End table
Desk with chairs

ACT-III

SCENE-1

Chalkboard
12 Chairs

Home Free

THEME AND FOCUS:

This play is written specifically to be a meaningful and relevant play about the second coming of Jesus to teens. Though it is not intended to deal specifically with all the events surrounding the last days, it does try to illustrate that the most important thing for every soul who will live in the time of the end is their own personal relationship with Christ. No one can tell us to what degree our faith may be tested; some will suffer great loss, some imprisonment, some all manner of persecution for their faith, and some the death of a martyr. The setting is a group of typical high-school age students attending one of the remaining Adventist Christian schools left in the country. The story focuses around one central character, Michelle, and how Satan asks to try her faith in the fire of persecution. This is accomplished through the events of the last days. The moderm is that of a Job scenario wrapped around a last days theme. The result is an illustration of how the forces of evil will be unleashed on all true followers of Christ, and how every soul who passes through the Gates of Heaven must pass through their own, personal Gethsemane. Home Free.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Michelle	Erik	Daryl	Jesus
Beth	Melissa	Andy	Peter
Paul	Satan	Holy Spirit	John
Michelle's Father	Andy's Mother	Capt. Devon	2 Soldiers
Mr. McGant	Ms. Flemming	Ms. Gunderson	President of the U.S.A.

ACT-I

Scene-I

(NOTE: This scene and the next are both optional. The play works with using only one of them as the opening scene, or you can use both.)

(Opening scene is bare stage. Jesus enters with Peter and John from stage left. He walks very heavily, weighted with sorrow. He stumbles and is caught by the disciples. He walks on supported by them. Peter and John both are afraid and confused. They stop just in from stage left)

JESUS:

Wait. *(He stands on his own)* Stay Here. *(Turns to walk away)*

PETER:

My Lord, what is it?

JOHN:

Yes Jesus, tell us, what is wrong? Is it something we did?

JESUS:

No--it is nothing you have done. It has nothing to do with you. . .and everything to do with you.

PETER:

(Looks at John confused) Lord, we don't understand. Tell us, what do You want us to do?

JESUS:

Stay here. While I go to pray, keep watch and pray for yourselves and the others, for my time has almost come. *(Disciples look confuse. Jesus turns to go and then looks back)* And Peter-John, pray for me.

(Disciples nod, though still unsure of what is going on. Jesus walks to down stage right)

JOHN:

I don't understand Peter. Only minutes ago we were all celebrating the passover and now look at Him. I'm afraid for His life and I don't even know why.

PETER:

I Know, I know! I feel the same. But He told us to stay here, so we will. Maybe this all has something to do with Judas and why he ran out tonight. I don't know where he is, but I wish I did.

(Disciples lay down and slowly fade to sleep)

JESUS:

(In Anguish) My God! Father please, if there is any way take this cup from me, don't take your presence away! Please Father, don't shut me out *(Satan enters from stage right. He walks around Jesus defiantly)* I don't know if I can do it.

SATAN:

Well look what we've got here; The Son of God doesn't know something--this has got to be a first. I'll tell You the answer--You can't do it!!

JESUS:

(Looking up, still praying and never looks at Satan) Is this really the cost Father? To be shut out from You?

SATAN:

(Seizing the thought) That's right, Jesus. You have to become sin for the world if your going to save it. And sin can't stand in the presence of The Most High so You know what that means? If You become sin, you'll be shut out from God forever! You'll belong to me!

JESUS:

Father, if there is any other way to pass this cup-

SATAN:

That's right! Give it up Jesus! The human race isn't worth it! They aren't worth the love of God! They aren't worth the very life of God!

JESUS:

But if this is the only way for us to save man--

SATAN:

Save man?! Save man?! For what? Your going to throw away Your love on these pathetic creatures? When has God ever wasted His love on anything?

JESUS:

If it is the only way to bring them home--

SATAN:

Why would You want to bring them to Heaven? It's a waste Jesus! Of Your time, Your life and Your love. It's a waste! Look, in the time of Your life when You need them most, they can't even stay awake! And Your going to die for them? It's a waste!!

JESUS:

Then not my will Father, but Yours.

SATAN:

Wake up!! Your throwing Your love away on these people! Look! One is on his way right now to betray You over to me. Another is going to deny he even knows You. And when the pressure is on, they are all going to run out on You. You know that! And these are Your closest friends! Your wasting Your love on them!

JESUS:

My God!

SATAN:

Not to mention all the others who are going to laugh at You, mock You, beat you, spit on You, and when it comes down between You and a murderer, even people You healed will yell "crucify Him". They will strip You naked, gamble for your clothes, march You up a hill and crucify You! Your wasting Your love on them!

JESUS:

(With growing intensity) My God, my God!

SATAN:

Man throughout all time will deny You were the Son of God, and will be so pre-occupied with the pursuit of their own dreams and happiness that they will forget You ever existed. Your death will be meaningless! Your wasting Your love on them too.

JESUS:

(In extreme anguish) Why have you forsaken Me!?

SATAN:

(With all the hatred of winning) Tell me Jesus, when has the Son of God ever thrown away His love?! When has it ever been used so pointlessly?! When has the Son of God ever wasted His love on anything!! Tell me!!

JESUS:

(For the first time looks directly at Satan) Did I--waste it on you.

(Satan stares him in the eye and runs from the realization. Screams and storms off stage right)

SATAN:

This is not over.

JESUS:

Father, if You are willing, take this cup from me; yet not My will Father, but Yours be done. I do this now for these disciples, my friends, who You gave me. So they can know how much You--how much we love them. And not just for them Father, but for everyone who will believe in me through them. For every soul throughout all time that will believe and come home to You, that they may all be one. For them too. And Father, I do this...

(Looks directly into audience) for Michelle. *(Looks off stage left)* Even now, they come.

(Blackout. Crowd noise of a mob is heard off stage)

JOHN:

Peter! What's going on? Who are all these people? Where's Jesus?!!

PETER:

(Realizing the betrayal) Judas! Noooooooooo!

NARRATOR/SLIDE:

The awful moment had come--that moment which was to decide the destiny of the world. The fate of humanity trembled in the balance. Jesus saw that man, left to himself must perish. He sees the power of sin. He beholds it's impending fate and His decision is made. He will save man at any cost to Himself. He accepts His baptism of blood, that through Him perishing millions may gain everlasting life. But if it had been for only one lost soul, Christ would have died for that one.

ACT-I

Scene-II

OPENING:

(Spot light up on downstage-left. Satan character enters light carrying a manila file holder and a Bible)

SATAN:

(Reading) "When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child." Hmmmmm. "Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring--those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus." From the book of, *(musing)* Revelation. Interesting how the enemy paints my lord. A "dragon" He calls him. Perhaps. Sometimes a dragon. Sometimes a lamb. Whatever it takes to reach the hearts of men. But I like to read these word before I take on a new assignment...for *(looking for the right word)* motivation.

Encouragement for my new assignments. And here *(holds up folder)* it is. I finally have it. At the end of the ages, working generation after generation I hold in my hands my final case. My last assignment. My comrades and I have fought well against the host of Heaven. And, despite the power of *(sarcastic)* the "Most High" we have won far more battles than they could have ever hoped to win. More souls of the sons of Adam fall on our side than theirs. And now, this one. This, *(looks in folder)* Michelle. Well, daughter of God, I have won many souls for the master and I will win yours also. My work has become far easier than in days past. I remember when there was not much around to ignite the passionate fires of the lusts of men...But now, there are resources everywhere! Sin isn't confined just to the thoughts of the mind anymore, it's in 3-D, Super VGA images with sensoround sound! Daily we bombard the senses of Adam's children, numbing them till right and wrong are no longer clear--No! Till right becomes wrong and wrong becomes right! I have brought people to persecute and kill the innocent all in the name of God. And I will bring you there Michelle. You will bow before my wishes. There is not much history left for this world. And you are the last I am assigned to bring into the kingdom. And bring you I will. I must start while you are young. *(Lights come up on stage right showing a kindergarten classroom. The children are playing while the teacher watches over them anxiously, expecting a visitor who is most unwelcome)* Even now the powers of the New Age are moving into place. Pushing out those of the old ways so our new world order can come into being.

(Ms. Gunderson is pacing center-stage left. She is extremely nervous and preoccupied. The children are playing and making general "kindergarten" noise. After a few beats Ms. Gunderson speaks)

MS. GUNDERSON:

Children, children! Be quiet please! Everyone just sit still and be quiet.

ERIK:

(Raises hand) Ms. Gunderson, what's wrong? How come we can't go outside for recess?

MS.GUNDESON:

Because Erik, we just can't right now. We have to just all stay here in the room and sit very still and be real quiet.

PAUL:

Is it because of all the new grown-ups here? Who are they?

MELISSA:

Yeah, who are they and why are they all dressed the same? And why do we have a new principal?

MS. GUNDERSON:

I can't answer your questions right now children. We just need to stay here in the classroom.

BETH:

I heard we're going to have a visitor today! Is that why we can't go outside Ms. Gunderson? 'Cause we have to wait for our visitor?

MS. GUNDERSON:

(Giving in) Yes Beth, that's why we can't go outside. But it's not a visitor we're waiting on. It's...it's your new teacher.

(This horrifies the children)

ERIK:

Why do we have to get a new teacher? Are you leaving us?

MELISSA:

But I don't want a new teacher. I like you Ms. Gunderson!

BETH:

What's wrong Ms. Gunderson, don't you like us anymore? Have we been bad?

MS. GUNDERSON:

No Beth. You haven't been bad. None of you have been bad. And it's not that I don't like you anymore. I love you all very, very much. Don't ever forget that children. I love each one of you very much.

PAUL:

Then why are you going away?

BETH:

Where are you going?

ERIK:

When are you coming back?

MS. GUNDERSON:

I don't know children. I really don't know. I wish I could explain it all to you. These new grown-ups, they will be taking over our school. They are taking over all of the schools.

MS. FLEMMING:

(Enters from off-stage left) Good morning everyone. I am your new teacher. *(Makes her way through the children and to the front of the class. As she passes the children)* Good morning Michelle. How are you today Erik? *(The children all are amazed that she knows their names)*

MS. GUNDERSON:

I, um, don't know what to say...good morning. This is really very awkward and—

MS. FLEMMING:

Hello Ms. Gunderson. I'm taking over your class now. You are to go to the principal's office.

MS. GUNDERSON:

Why? What's going to happen to me? What's going to happen to my children? Why are you people doing this?

MS. FLEMMING:

He just wants to talk to you Ms. Gunderson. You really must take better care of yourself. You shouldn't be so upset. Please go now, he is waiting for you. *(Walks her to the door)*

MS. GUNDERSON:

(Ms. Gunderson is still in shock. She nods her head "yes" and exits the room) Good-bye children. Remember, I—

MS. FLEMMING:

Good-bye Ms. Gunderson. *(Makes sure she exits then turns to the children. They are scared and some are crying)* Children, children. There's no need to cry!

MICHELLE:

You're mean! You made Ms. Gunderson go away!

MS. FLEMMING:

(Goes to Michelle) Michelle, are you afraid of me? *(Michelle nods "yes")* It's O.K. to be afraid of someone you don't know. Have any of you ever been afraid of someone you don't know?

PAUL:

I was afraid of Ms. Gunderson the first time I met her.

MS. FLEMMING:

But after you got to know her, you weren't afraid anymore, were you?

PAUL:

Uh-uh. She was nice.

DARYL:

I was afraid of my aunt Ruth when I first met her. She had a beard and it tickled when she kissed me.

MS. FLEMMING:

Well, I'm a little scared too. Why don't we play a game that will help us get to know each other and then we won't be afraid anymore? Because fear is something that comes from inside tummies. And good strong children like you have to put food in your tummies. Not fear. *(All the children think this is a good idea except for Michelle. She still doesn't trust her)* Now, what game shall we play? I know, I'll try and guess your names!

(All the children get wide-eyed and excited)

ERIK:

You'll never guess all our names. Not even Ms. Gunderson knew them all the time. Sometimes she'd call me Paul.

PAUL:

Way to go Dufus. Now you told her my name!

MS. FLEMMING:

So you are Paul. And you're not Paul, you're Erik.

(With each name each child gets wide-eyed and amazed at her knowledge)

MS. FLEMMING:

And you are Melissa, you're Beth, and you must be Daryl.

MICHELLE:

(Distrustfully) How'd you know our names? I mean, well, we haven't had a roll call or anything, so how'd you know our names?

MS. FLEMMING:

That's easy, Michelle. You all sit in the same places every day. Each place has one pupil So I learned your names from a list. I had to work for three whole days to remember your names. A teacher must work very hard to be a good teacher, and so I worked for three days so that I could know each of you the first day. That's very important, don't you think, for a teacher to work hard? Michelle, would you tell me something please? How do you start school? I mean, what do you do to begin with?

MICHELLE:

(Stands reluctantly) We first pledge allegiance and then we sing the song—

DARYL:

Yeah, but that's all after roll call. You forgot roll call.

MICHELLE:

First we have roll call. *(She sits)*

MS. FLEMMING:

All right. But we really don't need roll call. I know all your names and I know everyone's here. It's very lazy for a teacher not to know who's here and who isn't, don't you think? After all, a teacher should *know*. So we don't need roll call while I'm your teacher. So we should pledge, isn't that next?

(Everyone stands, puts hand over their heart and begin in unison)

ALL:

I pledge allegiance to the flag of—

MS. FLEMMING:

Just a moment. What does "pledge" mean? *(Silence)* What does "allegiance" mean? *(More silence. Children look puzzled at each other)*

MELISSA:

Well, pledge is, ah, well, something like—sort of when you want to do something very good. You sort of pledge you're going to do something like not suck your thumb 'cause that makes your teeth bend and you'll have to wear a brace and go to the dentist, which hurts."

MS. FLEMMING:

That's very good, Melissa. Very, very good. To pledge means to promise. And allegiance? (*Melissa shrugs and looks back to Beth for help who looks at her not knowing and shrugs also*) I think it's quite wrong for you to have to say something with long words in it if you don't understand what you're saying. (*All the children sit down*) What did your other teacher tell you that it meant?

PAUL:

She never said nothing, miss.

BETH:

(*Very quickly*) One of my teachers at the other school I went to before this one, well, she sort of said what it all meant, at least she said something about it just before recess one day and then the bell went and afterwards we had spellin.

ANDY:

Miss Gunderson, well, she never told us. We just hadta learn it and then say it, that's all. Our real teacher didn't say anything at all.

(*All the children nod in agreement*)

MS. FLEMMING:

Your teacher never explained to you? (*Children shake their heads no*) I don't think that was very good. Not to explain. You can always ask me anything. That's what a real teacher should do. But didn't you ask your daddies and mommies?

MELISSA:

Not about I pledge. We just hadta learn it. Once I could say it, Daddy gave me a nickel for saying it good!

PAUL:

That's right. So long as you could say it all, it was very good. But I never got no nickel.

MS. FLEMMING:

Did you ask each other what it meant?

PAUL:

I askt Erik once and he didn't know and none of us knowed really. It's grown-up talk, and grown-ups talk that sort of way. We just havta learn it.

MS. FLEMMING:

Well, I think you should know what it means if you're going to say it. Allegiance means you are promising or pledging support to the flag and saying that it is much more important than you are. How can a flag be more important than a real live person?

MICHELLE:

But the next thing is, well, where it says “and to the republic for which it stands.” That means it’s like a, like a...like a well, sort of sign, isn’t it?

MS. FLEMMING:

Yes. The real word is a symbol. But we don’t need a sign to remind us that we love our country, do we? You’re all good boys and girls. Do you need a sign to remind you?

DARYL:

What’s “remind” mean?

MS. FLEMMING:

It means to make you remember. To make you remember that you’re all good boys and girls.

(The children think about this and decide they don’t need a symbol to remind them)

MICHELLE:

(Trying to defend the flag) It’s our flag! We always pledge!

MS. FLEMMING:

Yes, it is a very pretty one. I wish I could have a piece of it. If it’s so important, I think we should all have a piece of it. Don’t you?

BETH:

I’ve got a little one at home. I could bring it tomorrow!

MS. FLEMMING:

Thank you Beth, but I just wanted a little piece of this one because it’s our own special classroom one.

DARYL:

If we had some scissors we could cut a little piece off.

MELISSA:

I’ve got some scissors at home!

DARYL:

There’s some in Ms. Gunderson’s desk.

MS. FLEMMING:

(Looking in the desk) Here they are. Now, who should we let cut the first piece? *(All the children, except Michelle, raise their hands enthusiastically)* How about—you Michelle. Since it is your birthday and all.

MICHELLE:

(Wondering) How did you know it was my birthday.

MS. FLEMMING:

Birthday's are special days. Good teacher's should know their student's special days, don't you think? And since this is your special day, you should be the one who gets to go first.

MICHELLE:

I don't wanna. And you can't make me. I'm not gonna cut our flag.

MS. FLEMMING:

That's O.K. Michelle. It's your special day, you don't have too. Would anyone else like to? *(Children raise their hands again)* O.K. Daryl. How about you. *(Daryl stands cuts off a piece of the flag and gives it to her)*

Thank you Daryl. But since our flag is so special, I don't want to be the only one with a piece of it. Would anyone else like to have a piece so you can carry it with you? *(All the children, except Michelle, nod and ask for a piece)* All right Daryl, why don't you cut everyone a piece. *(He does till there is nothing left of the flag)* Very good. Now, before we start our lessons, perhaps there are some questions you want me to answer. Ask me anything you like. That's only fair, isn't it, if I ask you questions?

MELISSA:

We never get to ask our real teacher any questions.

MS. FLEMMING:

You can always ask me anything. That's the fair way. The new way. Try me.

PAUL:

What's your name?

MS. FLEMMING:

My name is Erin Taylor Flemming. Do you like my name?

MICHELLE:

No. I want Ms. Gunderson to come back.

MS. FLEMMING:

Well, I think Michelle is a beautiful name. I had a very good friend who's name was Michelle. Maybe you and I can become good friends too.

ERIK:

What was wrong with Ms. Gunderson? Why was she crying?

MS. FLEMMING:

I suppose she was just tired and needed a rest. She's going to have a long rest. The grown-ups I work for think teachers should be young. I'm nineteen.

DARYL:

Why was she crying?

MS. FLEMMING:

Sometimes, people cry when they are afraid.

DARYL:

What was she afraid of? Was she afraid of all the new people who are dressed like you?

MS. FLEMMING:

Remember how we said that people can be afraid of things they don't understand? Well, some people are afraid when things change and they don't understand the changes. The grown-ups I work for are bringing lots of changes for everyone all around the world. Good changes that are going to make people happy, make sure children everywhere get enough food and have someone to take care of them. It's important to have someone take care of us, isn't it? *(The children nod in agreement)* Would you like to learn the name of the people who are going to take care of you and me and good boys and girls like you all over the world? *(Children nod enthusiastically)* It's called the New World Coalition. Can you say that? *(They do)*

ERIK:

What's coa, cola, colishun mean?

MS. FLEMMING:

It means lots of people getting together because they want the same things. And our New World Coalition wants everyone in the world to be taken care of and loved. Those are good things, aren't they?

BETH:

Why do you and all the new grown-ups here wear those clothes?

MS. FLEMMING:

Well, it's like sort of like a uniform nurses wear. We think that teachers should be dressed the same. Then you always know a teacher. It's nice and light and easy to iron. Do you like the color?

MELISSA:

Oh yes. I think it's very pretty. I had a dress that color.

MS. FLEMMING:

If you like children, as a very special surprise, you can all have this sort of uniform. Then you won't have to worry about what you have to wear to school every day. And you'll all be the same.

(The children get very excited about the idea)

ANDY:

But won't it cost a lot? My momma won't want to spend the money 'cause since my daddy left she says we hafta be real careful and we have to buy food and food is expen, expent, well, it costs a lot of money.

MS. FLEMMING:

These will be given to you. As a present. There's no need to worry about money.

MICHELLE:

I don't want to be dressed like that.

MS. FLEMMING:

You don't have to accept a present, Michelle. Just because the other children want to wear new clothes, you don't have to.

MICHELLE:

(Exploding with anger) Where's my father!! Some grown-ups dressed just like you came to my house and took him away today! Where is he!? *(Breaking into tears)* I want my daddy back.

MS. FLEMMING:

(Walks over to Michelle and kneels directly in front of her) Michelle, first I want you to know that your daddy is all right. He's perfectly all right. He's just going to school. Some grown-ups have to go to school as well as children.

MICHELLE:

But they took him away and he didn't want to go.

MS. FLEMMING:

He's no different from all of you. You sometimes don't want to go to school, do you? With grown-ups it's the same—just the same as children. Would you like to visit him? He has a holiday in a few days.

MICHELLE:

But Daryl said that he was gone away forever. He has a holiday?

MS. FLEMMING:

(Laughing to break the tension) Daryl is wrong. After all, everyone who goes to school has holidays. That's fair, isn't it?

MICHELLE:

I—I can see him?

MS. FLEMMING:

Of course. Your daddy just has to go back to school a little. He had some strange thoughts, and he wanted other grown-ups to believe them. It's not right to want others to believe wrong thoughts, is it?

MICHELLE:

Well, no. I guess not. But my daddy never thought nothing bad.

MS. FLEMMING:

Of course not Michelle. I said wrong thoughts, not bad thoughts. There's nothing wrong with that. But it's right to show grown-ups right thoughts when they're wrong, isn't it?

MICHELLE:

Well, yes. But what wrong thoughts did he have?

MS. FLEMMING:

Just some grown-up thoughts that are old-fashioned. We're going to learn all about them in class. Then we can share knowledge, and I can learn from you as you will learn from me. Shall we? Would that be O.K.?

MICHELLE:

Oh, all right.

MS. FLEMMING:

Good. Now, lets not worry about grown-up bad thoughts and start learning good things. I have a lovely surprise for you. You're all going to stay overnight with us. We have a lovely room and beds and lots of food, and we'll all tell stories and have such a lovely time.

(All the children get very excited, except for Michelle.)

DARYL:

Can I stay up till 8:00?

MELISSA:

Can we eat ice-cream and cookies?

BETH:

I want to watch television too!

MS. FLEMMING:

Well, as it's our first new day, we'll all stay up to 8:30, eat ice-cream and cookies and watch television. I have a very special program I want you to see. But only if you promise to go to sleep right afterwards.

(Children react with excitement and promise)

MICHELLE:

But first we got to say our prayers. Before we go to sleep.

MS. FLEMMING:

Of course. Perhaps we should say a prayer now. In some schools that's the custom too. Let's pray. But let's pray for something very good. What should we pray for?

BETH:

Bless Momma and Daddy.

MS. FLEMMING:

That's a good idea Beth. I have one. Let's pray for candy. That's a good idea, isn't it? *(They all agree very enthusiastically)* Lets all close our eyes and fold our hands. Ready? Dear God, please bless all of our mommies and daddies and please give us some candy. Amen. *(They all open their eyes and look for the candy)* Where's our candy? God is all-seeing and is everywhere, and if we pray, He answers our prayers, isn't that true?

PAUL:

I prayed for a puppy of my own lots of times, but I never got one.

MS. FLEMMING:

Maybe we didn't pray hard enough. Perhaps we should kneel like it's done in church. *(They all kneel, fold hands and close their eyes)* O.K. Everyone concentrate and pray real hard. Ready? Dear God, please, please give us some candy. It would make us all very happy right now. And we know that You want us to be happy. Thank You. Amen. *(They all open their eyes and look for the candy)* Ohhhh. Still no candy. Perhaps we're using the wrong name. Instead of saying "God" let's say, "Our Leader". Let's pray to Our Leader for candy. And this time everyone pray silently. Let's pray very hard and don't open your eyes till I say." *(The children do,*

but Michelle opens one eye and watches her. While the children are praying Ms. Flemming takes candy out of her pocket and places it in front of each student, then walks back to the front of the room and kneels) O.K. Lets open our eyes.

(The children do and are amazed and excited)

BETH:

I'm going to pray to Our Leader every time!

MELISSA:

Me too! Could we eat Our Leader's candy now, teacher?

(All the children beg to eat the candy)

MS. FLEMMING:

So, Our Leader answered your prayers, didn't he?

MICHELLE:

(Bursting out) I saw you put the candy down! I saw you!! I didn't close my eyes, and I saw you. you had 'em in your pocket. We didn't get them with praying. You put them there!

(Appalled, the other children stare at Ms. Flemming.)

MS. FLEMMING:

Yes, Michelle. You're quite right. You're a very, very, wise girl. Children, I put the candy on your desks. So you know that it doesn't matter whom you ask, whom you shut your eyes and "pray" to—to God our anyone, even Our Leader—no one will give you anything. Only another human being. *(To Paul)* God didn't give you the puppy you wanted. But if you work hard, I will. Only I or someone like me can give you things. Praying to God or anything or anyone for something is a waste of time.

BETH:

Then, we don't say prayers? We're not supposed to say prayers?

MS. FLEMMING:

You can if you want to, children. If your daddies and mommies want you to. But we know, you and I, that it means nothing. That's our secret.

MICHELLE:

My daddy says it's wrong to have secrets from him.

MS. FLEMMING:

But he has secrets that he shares with other grown-ups and not with you doesn't he? *(Children nod in agreement)* Then it's not wrong for us to have a few secrets from them, is it?

MELISSA:

I like having secrets. Beth and me have lots of secrets.

MS. FLEMMING:

We're going to have lots of wonderful secrets together. You can eat your candy if you want to. And because Michelle was especially clever, I think we should make her monitor for the whole week, don't you? *(All the children cheer for her. Michelle is not impressed)* And now children, I want to teach you all something new.

PAUL:

Is it math? 'Cause I'm real good at math.

MS. FLEMMING:

No, Paul, we'll get to math later. I want to teach you a special way that we're going to sit and have quiet time to start everyday with. But you're going to have use your imagination. Do all of you have good imaginations? *(They nod enthusiastically)* Good. Then with our quiet time we can travel to all kinds of places and see all kinds of things. Ready? O.K.? First, everyone sit on the floor like this. *(She crosses her legs in a yoga position. The children, except for Michelle, follow)* Now we have to do something with our hands. Lets put them on our knees like this. *(Puts her hand palms up on her knees)* And now children, close your eyes. *(They do)* Draw a picture in your mind of your favorite place to be.

DARYL:

I'm in my tree house.

BETH:

I'm sitting under a tree next to a river.

MELISSA:

I'm at the mall.

MS. FLEMMING:

Good, children. Very good. And now, with you in your favorite place, I want you to imagine Our Leader with you.

ERIK:

But we don't know what he looks like?

MS. FLEMMING:

He can look like anything you want him too. Imagine the kindest, most gentle face of a man. What would he look like? Someone who loves you very much and wants only what's best for you. *(Michelle begins to sing softly, "Jesus Loves Me")* Michelle, now is not a time for singing. We're trying to imagine what Our Leader looks like to each one of us. *(She keeps singing)* Michelle, if you're not going to play with us, please be quiet. *(She keeps singing. Ms. Flemming gets up and stands over her. She says the next lines with growing intensity)* Michelle, stop singing that song right now. Stop singing or you won't be able to be our monitor. Only good girls get to be the monitor. You won't be able to see your father either. Do you want to see your father? Stop singing Michelle. There is no Jesus!

(Blackout)