



SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD

A Reader's Theater
Bible Study
of Matthew 9:10-38



1 LESSON | LEADER GUIDE + STUDENT WORKSHEETS

Leader's Guide

Ready...set...action! Reader's theater is a creative way of inviting students to immerse themselves in the story of Scripture. Not only is it a fun way to read, it also helps readers (and listeners) hear and see the story with greater clarity. You can sit around a table or a living room and simply read it, or you can choose to stand and act it out. Either way works!

After reading the script aloud, follow the discussion guide to explore the story to your desired level of depth. Note that this guide won't be providing "answers" to the questions. Rather, the questions invite you to enter into the story and see what you discover. Your group will have more unique insights than this guide could possibly include. The goal isn't application but rather response. Each story invites us to respond to God.

Before you begin, print out scripts for every member of your group. Decide if you want to print the optional worksheets.

Part 1: Reader's Theater

1. Assign a **role** (or roles) to each person in the group. Note that the roles are different for each story.
 - The number that appears in parentheses after each role lets you know how many lines of script the person filling that role will be reading. This doesn't indicate how many *times* they will speak, but rather how is a measure of how much they'll be reading. If someone in your group struggles with reading, you can give them a role with a smaller number of lines.
 - If you have fewer people than roles, the scripts also note which roles can be easily combined. If you need to further combine roles, consider using simple props and more exaggerated voices to help differentiate them.
2. After you have assigned roles, give everyone a copy of the script and ask them to circle or highlight their parts. You may also want to ask them to read through their parts first and see if there are any words they need help pronouncing or defining.
3. Decide if you want to sit and read or stand and act it out.
4. Before you begin reading, remind everyone to have fun with it!
5. Say "Action!" and enjoy the show!

Part 2: Discuss

Discussion can take place with or without the worksheet. If your students are visual or need something to keep their hands busy or their minds focused, the worksheet can play that role. However, it may be that they engage better through simple conversation. Experiment with it!

1. Help orient students with the setting of the story by asking two questions:
 - **What time is it?**
 - Explore where this story takes place within the larger story of the Bible. If you are using the worksheet, look at the ups and downs of that larger story and what they've all been building to. The stories in this series travel up that steep hill that Jesus is standing on. Anticipation for God's Kingdom is ramping up and there is a sense of desperation.
 - Are there any other markers of time in the story? For example, Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days. Are there any other stories in the Bible where someone was somewhere for 40 marks of time? You might discuss the similarities.
 - **Where are we?** Explore the physical location of where this story took place. Did any other notable stories take place in this location? For example, did any other stories in the Bible involve 40 marks of time in a Wilderness? Are there any connections between those stories?
2. Help students explore who is in the story and what they are doing.
 - **Who is here?** Identify all of the characters in the story, including those who didn't have speaking parts. Have we seen them in other stories? Do you notice any behavior patterns? Remember to point out that God is the main character in every single story, whether He speaks or not.
 - **What do we see each character doing?** What are they like? Most of the time, the people in Bible stories are not playing the role of "hero." Rather, their story acts like a mirror to show us how normal people act. So how are they acting? Are they complaining? Are they suspicious? Are they desperate for something? Ask what you have in common with the characters in this story.
3. (optional) Consider running through the script again at this point.
4. Connect with God.
 - **What is God doing in this story?** What do you see Jesus doing? How is he connecting with the people in the story? If you were in this story, how might he want to respond to you.

If your students have OneStory's Bible Binder, they can file the scripts and workbook pages in the Gospels section.



Reader's Theater: Sheep Without a Shepherd

Roles: **Narrator 1** (18), **Narrator 2** (16), **Jesus** (16), **Pharisee** (2), **Disciple of John** (1), **Ruler** (1), **Woman** (1), **Blind Man** (2), **Person** (1)

(The following roles can be easily combined in any combination: Pharisee + Disciple of John + Ruler + Woman + Blind Man + Person)

Narrator 1: As he sat in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw it, they said to his disciples,

Pharisee: Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?

Narrator 2: When Jesus heard it, he said to them,

Jesus: Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick do. But you go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Narrator 1: Then John's disciples came to him, saying,

Disciple of John: Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples don't fast?

Narrator 2: Jesus said to them,

Jesus: Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch would tear away from the garment, and a worse hole is made. Neither do people put new wine into old wine skins, or else the skins would burst, and the wine be spilled, and the skins ruined. No, they put new wine into fresh wine skins, and both are preserved.

Narrator 1: While he told these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped him, saying,

Ruler: My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.

Narrator 2: Jesus got up and followed him, as did his disciples.

Narrator 1: Behold, a woman who had a discharge of blood for twelve years came behind him, and touched the fringe of his garment; for she said within herself,

Woman: If I just touch his garment, I will be made well.

Narrator 2: But Jesus, turning around and seeing her, said,

Jesus: Daughter, cheer up! Your faith has made you well.

Narrator 1: And the woman was made well from that hour.

Narrator 2: When Jesus came into the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the crowd in noisy disorder, he said to them,

Jesus: Make room, because the girl isn't dead, but sleeping.

Narrator 1: They were ridiculing him. But when the crowd was sent out, he entered in, took her by the hand, and the girl arose. The report of this went out into all that land.

Narrator 2: As Jesus passed by from there, two blind men followed him, calling out and saying,

Blind Man: Have mercy on us, son of David!

Narrator 1: When he had come into the house, the blind men came to him. Jesus said to them,

Jesus: Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

Narrator 2: They told him,

Blind Man: Yes, Lord.

Narrator 1: Then he touched their eyes, saying,

Jesus: According to your faith be it done to you.

Narrator 2: Then their eyes were opened. Jesus strictly commanded them, saying,

Jesus: See that no one knows about this.

Narrator 1: But they went out and spread abroad his fame in all that land.

Narrator 2: As they went out, behold, a mute man who was demon possessed was brought to him. When the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke. The multitudes marveled, saying,

Person: Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel!

Narrator 1: But the Pharisees said,

Pharisee: By the prince of the demons, he casts out demons.

Narrator 2: Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.

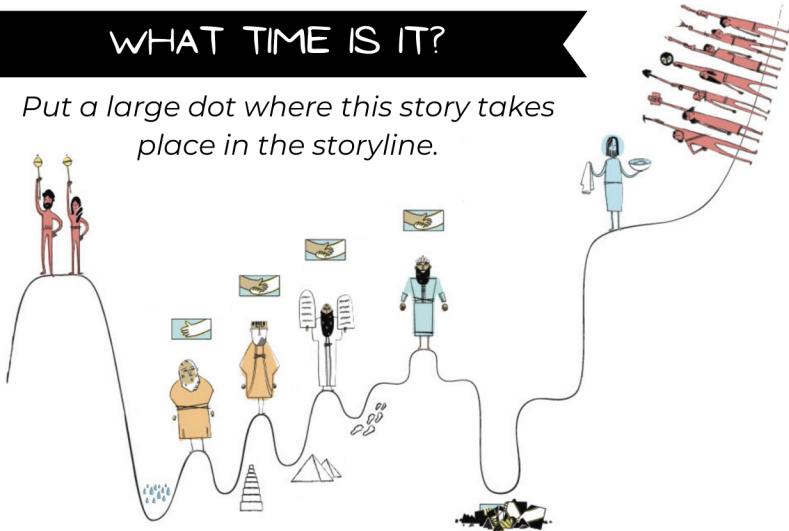
Narrator 1: But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them because they were harassed and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples,

Jesus: The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers into his harvest.

Sheep Without a Shepherd

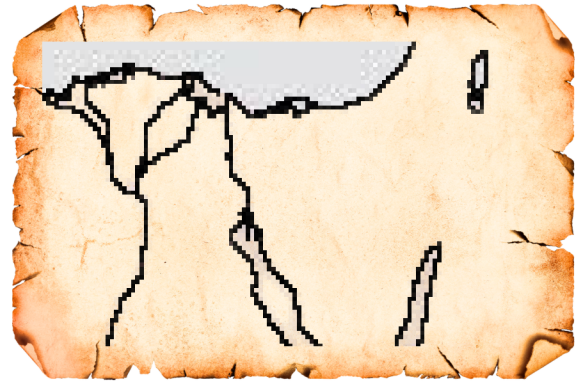
WHAT TIME IS IT?

Put a large dot where this story takes place in the storyline.



WHERE ARE WE?

Draw a 📍 to show where this story takes place on a map.



WHO IS HERE?

Draw or name the characters in this story.



LOOK IN THE MIRROR

Write or draw what you see people doing. Then circle what reminds you of yourself.



WHAT IS GOD DOING?

Write or draw what you discover about how God is meeting with people.