

Who Is Jesus?

Bible 101 Gospel Play 2022

First Church in Cambridge, Congregational, UCC

[The play begins with all the players spread out across the chancel.]

Ari:

If I were writing a gospel about Callum, it would take place now, in Massachusetts. I would tell everyone about his expedition to Kenya where he met a baby cheetah. He would tell his disciples to go away so he could contemplate life. But he would also tell them to go and fix climate change.

Callum:

If I were writing a gospel about Ari, I'd make sure to include stories about all of his friends, especially when they went to see the new Doctor Strange movie and had the whole theater to themselves. I'd say that when Ari fed the apostles, he fed them Bahn Mi, Sushi, Stroopwaffle, and BitterBallen.

Leo:

The Gospel of Millie would happen in the far away land of Vermont! Her artwork would change the world, and she would feed five thousand people with ramen.

Millie:

The Gospel of Nick would be full of music and would feature a concert by his band, the Electric Skulls. Communion would be pizza, and everyone would play soccer.

Nick:

If I were writing a gospel about Leo, everyone would know all about the computer he built, and all about his friends! He would tell his apostles to carve his face into the moon.

[Students walk to the table, put on fedoras marking gospel writers]

Narrator/Millie

When Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote gospels about Jesus, they included stories that they wanted us to remember, stories they believed would tell us something important about who Jesus is.

Narrator/Callum

When Matthew wrote his gospel about Jesus, he told stories about Jesus's Jewish background and identity. He often used passages from the Old Testament to describe Jesus and his ministry. Showing Jesus's closeness to Judaism was really important to Matthew. He also wanted people to know that Jesus was a king.

(Matthew/Ari waves to the congregation)

Narrator/Millie

When Luke told stories about Jesus, he made sure to show how Jesus welcomed all people—even children, even women, even tax collectors and sinners.

(Luke/Leo waves to the congregation)

Narrator/Callum

When Mark wrote his gospel about Jesus, he thought it was important to include stories about how Jesus challenged the status quo. He even went into the Temple and flipped over the tables of the moneychangers! That made people mad.

[Players look at each other and nod in agreement. Ad lib: "Yeah that was not cool!"]

Narrator/Millie

John thought it was important to show that Jesus was the Word of God. John uses lots of symbols to describe Jesus—bread, water, light, life, word, shepherd, doorway.

(John/Nick waves to the congregation)

Narrator/Callum

Of course, the gospels don't always agree on what stories about Jesus are most important...

Narrator/Callum

They sure don't. Look, they're getting into it again!

(Matthew and Luke step forward)

Luke/Leo

The angel of the Lord appeared to Mary!

Matthew/Ari

Wait a minute! The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, in a dream!

Luke/Leo

Jesus was born in a barn, a lowly stable.

Matthew/Ari

A barn? You talkin' cows and chickens? Jesus descended straight from King David!

Luke/Leo

Shepherds came to visit him when he was a baby!

Matthew/Ari

Shepherds? It was KINGS from the east!

Luke/Leo

Shepherds!

Matthew/Ari

Kings!

Narrator/Millie

Break it up! Break it up!

(Callum executes a costume change and puts on a fedora to become Mark)

Mark/Callum

Who cares where he was born? Jesus came to tell us that the kingdom of heaven was very near!

Narrator/Millie

Oh! It's Mark!

John/Nick

Gentlemen, gentlemen. There is no need to squabble over details. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Gospel Writers (ad lib)

What's he talking about??

Luke/Leo

You lost me at "Gentlemen, Gentlemen."

Matthew/Ari *[to the congregation]*

John likes to get a little philosophical.

(Callum hands the 'Mark' fedora to Millie)

Mark/Millie

Yeah, he loves to show off that Greek education!

Narrator/Callum

Thanks, other Mark!

Luke/Student C

But his gospel is very beautiful, you must admit.

ALL (ad lib)

Transcendent. Way ahead of his time.

Matthew/Ari

And he does know stories about Jesus that none of us knew.

ALL

[Murmur of agreement.]

Narrator/Millie

Sometimes, though, the gospel writers agree with each other.

Gospel Writers *[looking at each other in surprise]*

We do?

Narrator/Millie

Yes, sometimes you all tell the same story almost exactly the same way.

Gospel Writers *[ad lib]*

We do? No way!

Narrator/Millie

Yes! Remember the story of when Jesus fed five thousand people with only five loaves and two fishes?

Narrator/Callum

Remember how everyone ate until they were satisfied? Remember how the disciples collected 12 baskets of leftovers?

Luke/Leo

Yes, that's right. There were five thousand people.

Matthew/Ari

And only five loaves and two fish.

Mark/Millie

But when everyone had eaten their fill, there were 12 baskets left over.

John/Nick

Oh yeah, I guess I tell that one too! Jesus told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments so that nothing may be lost!"

Narrator/Callum

That's what the gospel writers did, too. They gathered up the fragments of Jesus's life and ministry, so that nothing would be lost.

Narrator/Millie

And they passed their baskets of stories down to us. We share them so that we can remember who Jesus is.

Ari

I remember how he had kindness as infinite and endless as homework.

Leo

I remember how he healed people, almost like magic.

Callum

I remember his amazing fish duplication skills, and how he always fed the poor.

Millie

I remember the bread and the cup!

Nick

As Saint Nick.... I remember Christmas!

Callum/Narrator (to the congregation)

How do you remember Jesus?

Millie/Narrator

Who is he to you?

All

If you want to remember, it's all in the gospels!

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