A PUPPET PLAY IN ONE ACT

The Day the Sun Stood Still

Based on Joshua 10:12–14 · Written by Carrie Elderberry



SUITABLE FOR
Ages 6 and up

PERFORMANCE TIME
10–12 minutes

CAST SIZE
5 puppets + 1 live volunteer

PROPS REQUIRED
Time Machine; a cardboard Sun; sunglasses for everyone

MAIN THEME

God made time, and He is in charge of it. The day the sun stood still wasn't a catastrophe, because the Master of time and of the whole universe was in charge.

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To print just the play on its own, print pages 5–9.

PRODUCTION OVERVIEW

Synopsis

Children wonder how the sun could stand still without a catastrophe. They visit the day of the event via a Time Machine. CHILD 1 is sure the Bible story can't be true: if the sun stood still, the earth would have to stop spinning, and everything would go flying. CHILD 2 is sure God can do it. In Joshua's time they meet two VULTURES waiting out the long day of battle, and then the SUN himself (everyone needs sunglasses), who asks the big question: who made time, and whose rules does it follow?

Spiritual Concept

God created time when He created the universe, and time follows His rules, not the other way around. The play takes a child's honest science question seriously (the earth turns at about 1,000 miles an hour at the equator) and answers it with a bigger truth: the One who manages the whole universe can easily hold one little planet still for one long day. The vultures add a second thread: all creation is waiting for the day God reveals His children (Romans 8:19), and God will save His creation yet.

Age Suitability

Best for ages 6 and up. The science talk is fun for curious kids, and the vultures waiting for their “dinner” after the battle are played for “Ewww!” laughs rather than shown.

Performance Time

10–12 minutes

CAST & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Characters (in order of appearance)

CHILD 1 — Worried that the Bible might not be true. Knows a lot of science facts about the earth and the sun.

CHILD 2 — Quite confident in the Bible.

VULTURE 1 — Watching the battle. Tired, because it must be past bedtime, but the sun is still high in the sky.

VULTURE 2 — Can be a crow if needed. Patient and motherly ("Be patient, dear"); proud to be one of nature's janitors.

SUN — Gives glory to God, the Master of time.

VOLUNTEER — In front of the theater, helping put sunglasses on everyone. Eclipse glasses are even better!

Prop Options

- Time Machine: a cardboard box covered in tin foil, hung by a string. You can tape on a string of battery-operated Mini-lights and add some funny sound-effects. We write "Time Machine" on the box so there is no doubt!
- Sunglasses: baby-sized for children and birds. Inexpensive "eclipse" sunglasses are even better for a meeting with the Sun!
- The Sun: cut a large "sun" out of cardboard, paint it yellow, and glue a cardboard flap on the back for your hand. Glue 2 giant "googly-eyes" to the front.
- Vultures: the birds should perch on the top of the theater frame if possible. Crow puppets may be available for purchase, but for a vulture you will probably need to buy a stuffed toy online and just hold it up. Alternatively, print or draw a picture of a vulture on stiff paper and affix it to a stick. Stir-sticks for paint work very well!

PERFORMANCE NOTES FOR PUPPETEERS

New to puppets? General prep, technique, and voice tips live at gospelpuppets.org/getting-started.

Character Notes

CHILD 1 isn't being rude. The questions are honest, and the play takes them seriously. Let CHILD 1's "AND…" lines build up speed, with CHILD 2 trying (and failing) to get a word in.

The VULTURES are matter-of-fact about their job as “nature's janitors”. The children's “Ewww” is the laugh, so keep the vultures cheerful, not creepy.

The SUN is warm and a little grand. It's a once-in-a-lifetime day, even for the Sun.

Staging

The VOLUNTEER stands in front of the theater and helps put sunglasses on the puppets (and the audience, if you have enough) when the SUN arrives, and takes them off again when the SUN exits.

Bring the VULTURES in on one side of the stage and the CHILDREN on the other when the Time Machine lands.

Reading the Script

CAPS = volume/intensity.

Ellipsis (…) = the author's pacing notation.

Em dashes (the long dash, —) = the author's interruptions.

The source abbreviates the vultures as V1/V2 after their first line. Written out as VULTURE 1/VULTURE 2 here.

THE DAY THE SUN STOOD STILL

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“On the day the Lord gave the Israelites victory over the Amorites, Joshua prayed to the Lord in front of all the people of Israel. He said, ‘Let the sun stand still over Gibeon, and the moon over the valley of Aijalon.’ So the sun stood still and the moon stayed in place until the nation of Israel had defeated its enemies. Is this event not recorded in The Book of Jashar? The sun stayed in the middle of the sky, and it did not set as on a normal day. There has never been a day like this one before or since, when the Lord answered such a prayer. Surely the Lord fought for Israel that day!”

Joshua 10:12–14 (NLT)

(Enter CHILD 1 and CHILD 2.)

CHILD 1: Have you been reading your new “story” Bible?

CHILD 2: Yes! I just read in a story that God made the sun stand still in the sky!

CHILD 1: Well, that is NOT possible. That would mean the earth stopped spinning.

CHILD 2: Wait, doesn’t the sun go around the earth?

CHILD 1: No! The earth travels around the sun, once every year.

CHILD 2: Oh! Ok. But God made it stop.

CHILD 1: AND the earth spins around by itself once a day, making day and night. It would be totally impossible for it to just STOP for one day. It would be a disaster if the earth stopped spinning!

CHILD 2: But—

CHILD 1: AND, I just was reading that the earth rotates at 1000 miles an hour, at the equator!

CHILD 2: 1000 miles an hour. Wow.

CHILD 1: So if the sun stood still, that would have to mean, that the earth stopped rotating, which would have to mean, that anything that was not nailed down would start flying EASTWARDS at about 1000 miles an hour!

CHILD 2: Yes, but—

CHILD 1: Especially the oceans!

CHILD 2: Yes, ok yes, unless GOD did it.

CHILD 1: What difference does GOD make?

CHILD 2: A lot! God manages the whole UNIVERSE. I'm sure anything with one little planet, would be quite easy for him.

CHILD 1: But that's just crazy. Why would God do such a weird thing? I don't get it.

CHILD 2: He had a good reason, actually.

CHILD 1: What.

CHILD 2: He had given Joshua a big job to do, and it was taking so long that Joshua needed the day to last longer.

CHILD 1: Arg! This can't be a true story. I don't believe it!

CHILD 2: Well, this is a puppet show, right?

CHILD 1: What does that have to do with the sun standing still?

CHILD 2: Let's pretend we can go back in time and visit that day.

CHILD 1: OK. Whatever.

CHILD 2: Maybe, we can meet with somebody who was there and find out more about it!

CHILD 1: Ok, let's fire up the Time Machine.

(Turn on Time Machine.)

CHILD 2: Come on!

(Enter VULTURES on one side of stage and CHILDREN on the other side.)

VULTURE 1: It must be past our bedtime. I am so tired! But the sun is still so high in the sky.

VULTURE 2: Be patient, dear. Today is a very special day in the story of God's humans.

VULTURE 1: That's right! We wait. Is today the day that the sons of God will be revealed?

CHILD 1: Excuse me? Is today the day that the sun stood still?

VULTURE 2: Actually it still is! Look!

(CHILDREN look around.)

CHILD 2: It just seems like lunchtime, the sun is right overhead.

VULTURE 1: Yes but it’s been there for hours and hours!

VULTURE 2: We’ve been waiting for the battle to be over, to fly down and have some dinner.

CHILDREN: Ewww.

VULTURE 2: Can’t help it, dears. We are nature’s janitors after all.

CHILD 1: Ok but can we not talk about that right now?

CHILD 2: I was reading about this day in my Bible story book.

VULTURE 1: Oh, yes! God has been given great glory today.

VULTURE 2: We’ve been waiting and waiting for the sons of God to be revealed.

VULTURE 1: Yes! Is this the big day?

CHILD 2: I’m afraid not. You have to wait until Jesus comes back.

CHILD 1: But how is the sun standing still? And why? I still have no idea.

VULTURE 1: Oh. I can tell you that at least. Joshua, the leader of God’s people, asked God to make the sun stand still.

VULTURE 2: They needed more time, you see.

CHILD 1: Time for what?

CHILD 2: God told them to clear out their promised land. There were lots of enemies there.

VULTURE 2: There were people who would try to wreck God’s plans.

VULTURE 1: You humans sure cause a lot of trouble for God.

VULTURE 2: Don’t worry dear. God will save his creation yet.

CHILD 1: But listen! ALL of you! You can’t just stop the earth from turning! The sun can’t just stand still! Everything on earth would get messed up. It would be a catastrophe!

VULTURE 1: I know someone who can help you with this. We’ll have to put on special glasses though.

(All put on sunglasses. Enter SUN.)

SUN: Hello everybody. Glad to see you are prepared for a close encounter!

CHILD 1: Gosh, I never thought I’d get to talk to the SUN!

CHILD 2: Sir? My friend is very worried about that story in the Bible, the day when you stand still.

SUN: Ah…this is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, I think. And my lifetime is much longer than yours!

CHILD 1: How could time just stop like that?

SUN: Time…what is time? Do you really know?

CHILD 1: Well…um… it's minutes and hours— and days.

SUN: And who made it? Who made time?

CHILD 2: I know! I know! God invented it. God made time when he made our universe.

SUN: Very good.

CHILD 1: But even if He did, doesn't time have to follow the RULES from then on? How could time just stop?

SUN: Whose rules?

CHILD 1: Well, I don't know…God's?

SUN: Right. And time hasn't totally stopped. It's just waiting a bit, until Joshua gets his job done. My friend the MOON is waiting too. It's quite a day!

VULTURE 1: Speaking of Joshua, and the battle, my friend and I have a job to do too. We are on the clean-up crew.

CHILDREN: Ewww!

SUN: It was nice to meet you all. You can trust God. Goodbye!

(Exit SUN. ALL take off sunglasses.)

CHILD 2: Let's go back to our time now. I don't want to watch the battle.

CHILD 1: Me neither. Please excuse us, clean-up crew!

VULTURE 1 AND 2: Goodbye!

(VULTURES and CHILDREN exit, then CHILDREN come back out.)

CHILD 1: Do you feel better after visiting the battle scene?

CHILD 2: Actually, I do. Even with creepy VULTURES hanging about.

CHILD 1: Do you see how God could make time stand still, without causing a catastrophe?

CHILD 2: Right. He wouldn't be God, if he wasn't in charge of everything. Even TIME!

CHILD 1: Even time. And that's all for today. Let's have all the puppets help with the ending—

(Enter VULTURES and SUN.)

ALL: You can read more about the day the sun stood still in the book of Joshua, in the Bible. Goodbye!

THE END

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Discussion Questions

1. Why was CHILD 1 so worried that the story of the sun standing still couldn't be true?
2. The SUN asked, “Who made time?” What was the answer?
3. CHILD 2 said God manages the whole universe, so one little planet would be easy for Him. What else in the Bible shows God is in charge of nature?
4. Joshua asked God for something really big, and God said yes. What big things can you ask God for?
5. Is it OK to have questions about the Bible, like CHILD 1 did? Who could you ask?

Related Bible Passages

Primary Text: Joshua 10:1–15 — Five Amorite kings attack Gibeon. Joshua's army marches all night to defend it, God throws the enemy into confusion with hailstones, and at Joshua's prayer the sun stands still until the battle is won. (Summarized.)

Additional Scripture:

- Romans 8:19 — “For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are.” (NLT)
- Psalm 74:16 — “Both day and night belong to you; you made the starlight and the sun.” (NLT)

Song Suggestions

- “My God Is So Big” — Cedarmont Kids — https://open.spotify.com/track/2SmyojIPKb7PlPlRdyV9Dt
- “This Is My Father's World” — London Philharmonic Choir — https://open.spotify.com/track/2GoI28uSWzevH1qFHmEMQF
- “How Great Thou Art” — Amen Choir of the First Baptist Church and National Philharmonic Orchestra — https://open.spotify.com/track/0CBeuXQ0EnfcFrwr5xg3BT

Ministry Context

A great fit for kids who are starting to learn science in school and wonder whether the Bible holds up. It models taking honest questions seriously instead of brushing them off. It also works in a series on Joshua, on God as Creator, or on prayer (Joshua asked big, and God answered).