

A PUPPET PLAY IN ONE ACT

Formula for a Christian

Based on Galatians 5 · Written by Carrie Elderberry



SUITABLE FOR
Ages 6 and up

CAST SIZE
4 puppets

PERFORMANCE TIME
12–15 minutes

PROPS REQUIRED
Lab coats, safety glasses, beakers

MAIN THEME

Only God's Spirit can make a true Christian—the fruit of the Holy Spirit can't be manufactured.

Carrie Elderberry's Gospel Puppets · gospelpuppets.org

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

PRODUCTION OVERVIEW

Synopsis

A pompous scientist, Professor Argle-Bargle, arrives to demonstrate his formula for producing the perfect Christian—by chemically combining the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit. BOY is excited; GIRL is skeptical. The experiment fails spectacularly, and the Professor's own behavior reveals the flaw in his theory: only Jesus can produce true love, joy, peace, and the rest. His assistants begin to understand what the children already know.

Spiritual Concept

We like to think we can produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit on our own—through effort, technique, or good intentions. But Galatians 5 teaches that these qualities flow only from the Holy Spirit, who comes to those who surrender their lives to Jesus.

Age Suitability

Best for ages 6–12. The Professor's pomposity and the chemistry experiment make this especially engaging for older children.

Performance Time

12–15 minutes

CAST & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Characters (in order of appearance)

BOY — A Christian, about 8 years old—enthusiastic and a little easily impressed.

GIRL — A Christian, a little older—more cautious and theologically grounded.

PROFESSOR — A proud and foolish scientist—convinced he can manufacture Christianity. His name (Argle-Bargle) is an ancient British term for nonsensical arguing and is continuously mispronounced by everyone throughout.

ASSISTANT – A quiet helper who begins to realize the experiment's real flaw.

Prop Options

- Lab coats for PROFESSOR and ASSISTANT.
- Tiny "safety glasses" for all puppets.
- Safety glasses and gloves for the human assistant mixing the chemicals.
- A table set up with 10 beakers or test tubes: one large flask for the formula, nine smaller vessels for the ingredients—labeled: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control.
- Recipe Option 1 (simple): One cup vinegar divided among eight of the small vessels. Two tablespoons baking soda in the "Love" container. Add food coloring to some of the vinegar. When Love is added, the mixture fizzes and bubbles.
- Recipe Option 2 (dramatic): One cup very hot water, 1 tsp glycerin, 1 tbsp dish soap, which all end up in the large flask. Activator: a few dry-ice chips in the "Love" container. Creates large steam-filled bubbles. Wear gloves and goggles.
- Recipe Option 3 (elephant toothpaste): One quarter cup 35% hydrogen peroxide with a shot of dish soap end up in the large flask. Activator: 1 tsp potassium iodide crystals in the "Love" container. Swirl flask to mix and stand back! Wear gloves and goggles.
- Large stand-up labels on the table for each ingredient vessel.
- PRACTICE all chemistry demonstrations thoroughly before the performance.

PERFORMANCE NOTES FOR PUPPETEERS

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

Character Notes

The Professor's name (Argle-Bargle) is mispronounced by every character throughout the script—this is intentional and should be played for laughs each time.

PROFESSOR's mistreatment of his assistant(s) ("Nobodies," "stupid, clumsy fool") is what reveals he has no real love, kindness, or self-control—the children pick up on this before the audience does.

The ASSISTANT's eventual curiosity about Jesus is the quiet emotional payoff of the script—give it room to land.

Staging

Set up the chemistry table before the play begins.

The human ASSISTANT mixing the chemicals should be visible to the audience—the chemistry is part of the show.

PROFESSOR carries on with self-congratulation as the reaction happens—then gets quieter as it fizzles out.

Reading the Script

CAPS = Volume / intensity.

Extra commas = pause for breath.

FORMULA FOR A CHRISTIAN

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(Enter GIRL and BOY. They mispronounce the Professor's name throughout.)

GIRL: Hello! Hi, everyone!

BOY: Hello! Hey, did you hear about the famous scientist who is visiting today?

GIRL: Really! What is he famous for?

BOY: His name is Professor Mouk Ungo-Bungo, and he is developing a formula for the PERFECT CHRISTIAN!

GIRL: But I thought only GOD can make a Christian.

BOY: I know—I did too! But that's not what Professor Aggle-Baggie says! And he is a FAMOUS scientist!

GIRL: But he is just a man, even if he IS famous, and a scientist.

BOY: Whatever! He says his formula is nearly FINISHED, and he only needs to do ONE MORE experiment to prove that it works.

GIRL: But wait—

BOY: He's going to do the experiment RIGHT HERE, today! Aren't you EXCITED?

GIRL: Well... I don't know... I have a funny FEELING about this...

BOY: Listen! I want to go look for safety glasses. Can you stay here and welcome the Professor... if he comes before I get back?

GIRL: Sure, OK.

(Exit BOY.)

GIRL: This is DEFINITELY going to be interesting. Wait, I think I hear someone coming now.

(Enter PROFESSOR and ASSISTANT.)

GIRL: You must be Professor Argo-Bargo.

PROFESSOR: Argle-Bargle! That is me, yes, yes. And these are my assistants, but THEIR names are not important.

GIRL: *(to ASSISTANT)* Really! Well, pleased to meet you ANYWAY. Welcome.

ASSISTANT: Thank you!

(Start to arrange test tubes on table.)

PROFESSOR: Ah, yes... I am READY to do my experiment now. Yes, I believe I have discovered the formula for creating a PERFECT CHRISTIAN!

GIRL: Um, about this experiment, Professor Obble-Gobble...

PROFESSOR: *(angry)* The name is ARGLE-BARGLE!

GIRL: Sorry! The BIBLE says that only God—

PROFESSOR: Yes, yes, the Bible. That book has given me all of the INGREDIENTS for my FORMULA.

GIRL: It has?

PROFESSOR: Yes, yes. And as you can see, I have distilled all of them right over here.

(BOY returns.)

BOY: Hurray, Professor Angle-Bangle is here!

PROFESSOR: My name is ARGLE-BARGLE!

BOY: Oh! Sorry! WOW, what is in all of those containers?

ASSISTANT: *(pointing at each in turn)* Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and gentleness and self-control! The fruit of the Holy Spirit.

BOY: How did you get those into TEST-TUBES?

PROFESSOR: That is my SECRET! Young people, this formula will save pastors, and parents, and Sunday-School-teachers, hours of work and worry!

ASSISTANT: He says we will be famous!

PROFESSOR: No, no! I said that I will be famous. You will be... NOTHING. Nobodies.

ASSISTANT: Of course, sir. Sorry, sir.

PROFESSOR: Now, we just put on these safety glasses, and we will be ready to begin!

(ASSISTANT puts safety glasses on everyone, including the puppets.)

GIRL: Why do we need safety glasses?

PROFESSOR: Just STANDARD precaution. Yes, yes. Don't you worry your LITTLE empty heads about a thing.

BOY: But then? Why be CAREFUL? Those are all the fruits of the Holy Spirit! What DANGER could there be?

PROFESSOR: Yes, yes, but you never know with EXPERIMENTS. There might be some UNEXPECTED reaction!

GIRL: I still have a funny FEELING about this!

PROFESSOR: (*instructing ASSISTANT*) Yes, yes... my assistant will now assemble the ingredients. Take the little beaker marked 'Joy' and pour it into the largest flask.

BOY: JOY in a test tube? Weird...

PROFESSOR: Yes, joy, of course! Now, my assistant will add the other ingredients as I point to them...

PROFESSOR: (*showing increasing irritation as assistant follows instructions*) Add peace... carefully!... then patience... hurry UP!... kindness is next... what's WRONG with you! Can't you read? Ha-ha! I'll be rich!... then goodness... I will be FAMOUS!... faithfulness... you are too SLOW!... then gentleness... idiots! Now Self-Control—

(Wait until ASSISTANT pretends to fumble with the empty beaker.)

PROFESSOR: Look out! What is your problem? Stupid, clumsy FOOL! Why can't you be more careful?

GIRL: (*quietly to BOY*) He may be a famous scientist, but even I can tell he does NOT know Jesus.

BOY: No, because if he DID, he would never talk to his assistants like that.

PROFESSOR: Bah! Phooey. What do little kids like you KNOW about such things?

GIRL: I know that to say those mean THINGS shows you have NO gentleness, and NO kindness, and no self-control in YOUR heart.

BOY: Those things are all FRUITS of the Holy Spirit.

GIRL: And the Holy Spirit ONLY comes to people who love Jesus. Who let Jesus be in CHARGE.

PROFESSOR: Bah! You are nincompoops! That is why my formula is so IMPORTANT! We won't need JESUS any longer!

BOY: Um... Professor Ungle-Bungle?

PROFESSOR: ARGLE-BARGLE!

BOY: Sorry! Um... so is that it?

PROFESSOR: Not yet. I have ONE more ingredient to add! The MOST important of all.

GIRL: Oh, I know! You are definitely missing LOVE.

PROFESSOR: Yes, yes... love! Pour that in, and watch what HAPPENS!

(ASSISTANT pours in the last beaker and stirs. Step back.)

PROFESSOR: Yes! Yes! Eureka! I CONGRATULATE myself! I pat myself on the BACK!

(PROFESSOR carries on, but gets quieter as the reaction fizzles out.)

PROFESSOR: Now, who will be the first to TEST it?

BOY: TEST it?

PROFESSOR: Yes, yes... you must drink it.

GIRL: No thanks, Professor Argie-Bargie.

PROFESSOR: *(slowly)* That's Ar-gle-bar-gle.

GIRL: Sorry. But I am ALREADY a Christian.

BOY: I am too. We don't NEED your formula.

PROFESSOR: Ah, then my faithful assistant! Drink it!

ASSISTANT: No way am I touching that. YOU try it.

(PROFESSOR smells it.)

PROFESSOR: Not with that SMELL... Curses! My experiment has failed AGAIN.

BOY: Wait!

GIRL: Wait!

BOY: Professor, WE know what your problem is!

PROFESSOR: You do? That is ABSURD! Little ignorant children like you? Bah!

BOY: You must be using the WRONG KIND of love!

PROFESSOR: What on EARTH are you talking about, young man?

GIRL: That's just it! It's not FROM the earth. God's love doesn't COME from earth!

BOY: JESUS makes us Christians with GOD's love!

PROFESSOR: Humph... No scientist could ever create a love like that!

GIRL: That's exactly right, Professor Argle-Bargle!

PROFESSOR: Well, at least you said my name right for ONCE.

GIRL: (*looks at ASSISTANT*) You know something? The Professor's mistake is one that a LOT of us make.

ASSISTANT: So we can't just make up our OWN way to be a Christian?

BOY: No. It is ONLY God's Spirit in us that makes us Christians.

ASSISTANT: I see I need to find out more about Jesus.

GIRL: Start with Galatians! Look up Chapter 5.

ASSISTANT: OK, thank you. And... I am really GLAD I came to visit here today, even if the experiment failed!

BOY: We are too!

GIRL: We are too!

ALL: And that's all for today! Goodbye!

(All bow.)

THE END

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Discussion Questions

1. What was the Professor trying to do? Why didn't it work?
2. How could you tell the Professor didn't really have the fruit of the Holy Spirit?
3. What are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit? Where do they come from?
4. Can a person be a good person without Jesus? What's the difference between that and being a Christian?
5. What did the ASSISTANT decide at the end? What would you tell someone who wants to find out more about Jesus?

Related Bible Passages

Primary Text: Galatians 5:22-23 – The fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Additional Scripture:

- Galatians 5:22-23 – "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (NLT)
- John 15:5 – "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing." (NLT)
- Romans 8:9 – "But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.)" (NLT)

Song Suggestions

- "Step By Step" – Rich Mullins – <https://open.spotify.com/track/4I5F86BgWXG0cp4ddEZ4S8>
- "The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22 & 25)" – Steve Green – <https://open.spotify.com/track/62d4ovw0MQHCM866qghuWv>
- "Change My Heart Oh God" – African Music Experience – <https://open.spotify.com/track/7tUfFDEk8h7GBKW840ddFu>
- "Spirit of the Living God" – Audrey Assad – <https://open.spotify.com/track/0HGihCMb23up2Iv4L2eHEE>
- "I Surrender All" – Joey + Rory – <https://open.spotify.com/track/4YMddy05BzjfULz7nW9mjC>

Ministry Context

This play works well for any series on the Holy Spirit, spiritual growth, or what it means to be a Christian. The chemistry experiment makes it memorable and visual—especially effective for older children and youth groups. Consider pairing with a reading of Galatians 5:16–23 before or after the performance.