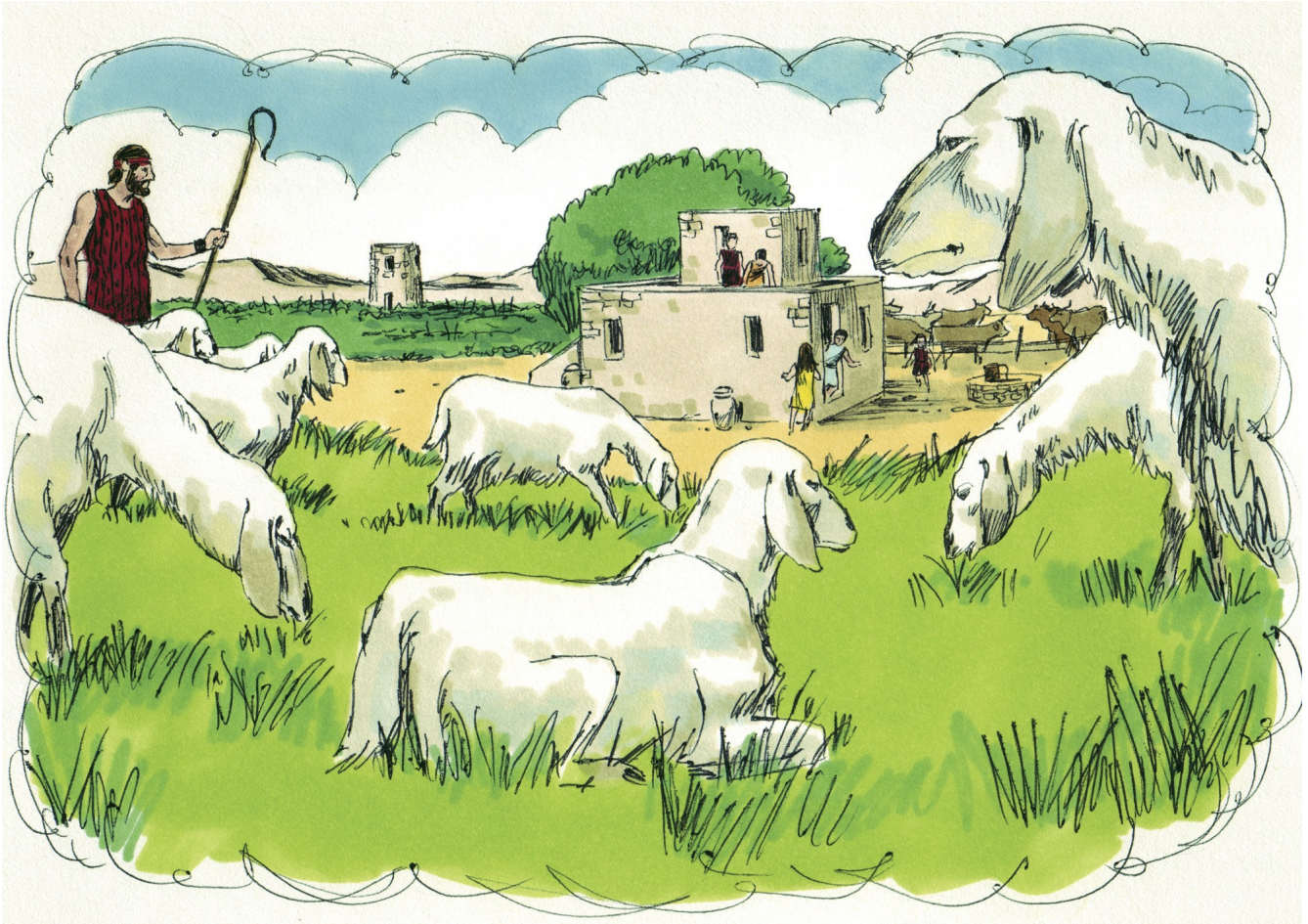


A PUPPET PLAY IN ONE ACT

One Good Goat

Based on Leviticus 16:20–22 · Written by Carrie Elderberry



SUITABLE FOR
Ages 6 and up

CAST SIZE
6 puppets

PERFORMANCE TIME
12–15 minutes

PROPS REQUIRED
None

MAIN THEME

Animals in Scripture point to God's character and our own—and the scapegoat points straight to Jesus.

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

CHILD 1 and CHILD 2 play a game of "what animal would you be?"—eagles, deer, lions, lambs. While they leave to make a list, PUPPY gets into an unexpected conversation with GOAT and PIG about how dogs, goats, and pigs are portrayed in the Bible: not very flatteringly. But GOAT explains the most important goat in all of Scripture—the scapegoat—and how it pointed forward to Jesus, who took all our sin on Himself. When the children return, CHILD 1's new favorite animal is the goat.

Spiritual Concept

Animals in Scripture often represent human or divine qualities. The scapegoat of Leviticus 16 is one of the most powerful types of Christ in the Old Testament—a spotless animal onto whose head the high priest confessed the sins of all Israel, then sent away into the wilderness. Jesus is our scapegoat, bearing our sin and carrying it away forever.

Age Suitability

Best for ages 6-12. The theological content—atonement, types of Christ—is more complex than some scripts. Suitable for children with some Bible background, or with a strong presenter introduction.

Performance Time

12-15 minutes

CAST & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Characters (in order of appearance)

CHILD 1 — About 8 years old—curious, energetic, and open to learning.

CHILD 2 — Perhaps a bit older—slightly more knowledgeable about the Bible.

PUPPY – CHILD 1 and CHILD 2's dog—understands more than the children think. Stays on stage during the animal scene.

GOAT – A bit mischievous—but carries the most important theological moment of the script.

PIG – Pretty matter-of-fact—self-aware about pigs' biblical reputation.

LION – The king of beasts—makes a brief but majestic appearance at the end of the animal scene.

Prop Options

- An eagle, peacock, lamb, deer/fawn, and other animal puppets —may be held up as pictures, used as puppets, or simply mentioned in dialogue.
- EAGLE puppet can swoop by saying "kee! Kee!" at the start.
- DEER puppet can appear briefly when mentioned.
- LAMB puppet can appear when Jesus is described as Lamb of God.
- PEACOCK puppet can appear near the end.

PERFORMANCE NOTES FOR PUPPETEERS

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

Character Notes

GOAT's line about the scapegoat ("In the olden days, before Jesus came to take all of the sins of the world...") is the theological center of the play. Give it space.

PUPPY's admission ("I'm afraid there aren't ANY nice dog stories in the Bible") is a vulnerable and funny moment—play it with genuine sadness.

CHILD 1's final line ("because Jesus became a scapegoat for me") is the payoff of the whole script.

Staging

CHILD 1 and CHILD 2 exit to make their animal list; PUPPY stays on stage.

GOAT and PIG enter and stay for the animal conversation.

LION enters at the end of the animal scene, moves to center, then exits with GOAT and PIG.

Reading the Script

CAPS = Volume / intensity.

Extra commas = pause for breath.

Suggested Reading Before the Play

These passages from Leviticus and Hebrews may be read to accompany the play, before or after.

"When Aaron has finished purifying the Most Holy Place and the Tabernacle and the altar, he must present the live goat. He will lay both of his hands on the goat's head and confess over it all the wickedness, rebellion, and sins of the people of Israel. In this way, he will transfer the people's sins to the head of the goat. Then a man specially chosen for the task will drive the goat into the wilderness. As the goat goes into the wilderness, it will carry all the people's sins upon itself into a desolate land." "Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity. Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins."

Leviticus 16:20-22; Hebrews 9:13-14 (NLT)

ONE GOOD GOAT

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(Enter CHILD 1, CHILD 2, and PUPPY. They greet the audience, then begin. PUPPY follows the conversation, turning toward speakers.)

CHILD 2: If you could be any kind of animal, what would you want to be?

CHILD 1: That's easy. I'd be an eagle.

(EAGLE puppet can swoop by, saying "kee! Kee!")

CHILD 2: Why an eagle?

CHILD 1: Because, they have keen eyes, and they can fly way up high and float on the wind.

(ALL look up.)

CHILD 2: The Bible says that if we serve God, we will soar on wings like eagles.

CHILD 1: Yes. I want to fly!

CHILD 2: That sounds nice. But I would want to be a deer. They are gentle, and graceful, and beautiful.

(DEER puppet can appear.)

CHILD 1: And boring...

CHILD 2: Oh no! Fawns are so sweet! The Bible says that we thirst for God, the same way a deer gets thirsty, for the water from mountain streams.

CHILD 1: Well that's true. But why not something majestic, like a lion?

(Enter LION.)

CHILD 2: That sounds more like you than me.

CHILD 1: I would ROAR, and shake my mane, and scare everybody.

CHILD 2: I'm sure you would!

(CHILD 1 and LION both roar, which starts PUPPY barking.)

CHILD 1: Jesus is the Lion of Judah, you know.

CHILD 2: Yes, but Jesus is also called the Lamb of God.

(LAMB puppet may appear.)

CHILD 1: *(thoughtful)* In some ways He is gentle, like a lamb.

CHILD 2: And in other ways Jesus is very majestic, like a lion.

CHILD 1: And when Jesus comes back to earth, lions and lambs will be friends!

(LION and LAMB can cuddle, then exit.)

ALL: Aww...

CHILD 2: You know what? Lots of times the animals in the Bible are a picture of other things—a symbol, either about God, or about us.

CHILD 1: I have an idea, let's go make a list of all the animals in the Bible.

CHILD 2: OK!

CHILD 1: Puppy, you stay here for a while and take a little nap. Maybe you can dream about being a Bible dog!

(Exit CHILD 2 and CHILD 1.)

PUPPY: *(to audience)* I don't think they know that Bible dogs are not very respected. Neither are goats, or pigs.

(Enter GOAT and PIG.)

GOAT: I heard that! But according to the Bible, DOGS are the worst! They eat just about anything! Especially gross stuff!

PIG: *(whispers in GOAT's ear)* Yeah, like...! Ha ha!

PUPPY: *(offended)* I seem to recall that pigs, in the Bible, were eating trash, in one famous story.

PIG: Those were PODS, not garbage. It wasn't our fault they were all muddy.

PUPPY: And look at goats! Goats eat thorns and other nasty things.

GOAT: Ok, so I'll admit that goats, pigs, AND dogs are not very careful, about what we take in.

PIG: Why is that such a bad thing, though?

PUPPY: Yes, we are tough! Human tummies are just not as tough as ours!

GOAT: Oh, please. Dogs throw up, all the time! And then they go BACK and lick it up—

PIG: Eeewww...

PUPPY: OK, OK, no need to be so detailed!

PIG: Still! There is a kind of picture from that. People need to be careful not to take bad things into their tummies, but ALSO not into their HEARTS.

PUPPY: Right! If people aren't careful what they care about, their hearts get sick, and they drift away from God.

(All animals nod and agree.)

PIG: There is one famous story about pigs, in the Bible, that I really like.

GOAT and PUPPY: Tell us!

PIG: There was a large herd of pigs, grazing on a hilltop—

PUPPY: Wait! Pigs eat grass?

PIG: Pigs eat almost anything.

PUPPY: Dogs eat grass too!

GOAT: Yes, but only when they are trying to make themselves barf!

PIG: Eeewww...

PUPPY: OK, OK, never mind!

PIG: As for my story: Jesus helped a man, who was filled with evil spirits. The spirits went into the herd of pigs, and they all jumped into the ocean. And DROWNED.

GOAT and PUPPY: Gasp!

GOAT: That sounds terrible! Why would you like that story?

PIG: Because it shows that pigs have more SENSE than people do. Ha! Ha!

(All animals nod and agree.)

PUPPY: Are there any famous stories about goats?
GOAT: Yes! In the most olden days, BEFORE Jesus came to take all of the sins of the world—
PUPPY: Do you mean before He died on the cross?
GOAT: Right. Before that time.
PUPPY: OK.
GOAT: The people of God used to take a little goat, once a year—
PIG: I know that story! It's in the Bible!
GOAT: Yes. And they would have the little goat represent ALL of their sins.
PUPPY: Then... did they... kill it?
GOAT: No, they chased it out into the desert. Not very nice.
PIG: Oh! Taking the sins of the world, just like Jesus.
GOAT: That's where the word "scapegoat" comes from.
PIG: Right. When someone else takes the blame.
PUPPY: I'm afraid there aren't ANY nice dog stories in the Bible.
PIG: That's ok, we know you can't help it.

(LION enters, moves to center.)

LION: Just remember, all you beasts, that as soon as Jesus returns, everything will be put right. We are all just waiting for that time! No more death, and no more trouble, when our Lord comes back! ROAR!
ALL: Hurray!

(LION, GOAT, and PIG exit. PUPPY stays.)

(Enter CHILD 2 and CHILD 1.)

CHILD 2: I was surprised how many different animals there are in the Bible! Almost a hundred!
CHILD 1: Rabbits, donkeys, sheep—
CHILD 2: Bears, wolves, foxes,
CHILD 1: Bees, frogs, snails—
CHILD 2: And so many more!

CHILD 1: I was surprised how awful all the dogs are.

CHILD 2: Aww...

PUPPY: (*howling miserably*) Owwww!

CHILD 1: Sorry, little fella.

CHILD 2: I think my favorite Bible animal now, is the peacock.

(PEACOCK can appear.)

CHILD 1: Why?

CHILD 2: Well they are so beautiful, and they represent the treasures of a kingdom. Our treasure is in heaven, and Jesus is the King!

CHILD 1: Well! My current favorite is the goat!

(Enter GOAT.)

CHILD 2: A goat? Why?

CHILD 1: Because Jesus became a scapegoat for me, and took all of my sins!

(PUPPY starts to bark and jump around.)

CHILD 1: Look at that. It's almost as if he understands what we're saying!

CHILD 2: And that is all for today!

CHILD 1: Yes! That's all for today!

(ALL other animal puppets enter.)

ALL: 1-2-3! You can read more about the scapegoat in the Bible, in Leviticus Chapter 16! Goodbye!

THE END

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Discussion Questions

1. Which animals in the story usually stand for something bad? (dogs, pigs, goats)
2. Which two animals are most often used to represent Jesus? (lions, lambs)
3. How did the scapegoat represent Jesus? What did the goat carry away?
4. CHILD 1 ended the play saying the goat was their favorite animal. Why? What does it mean that Jesus became a scapegoat for us?
5. The animals said they are all "waiting" for Jesus to return. What does creation's waiting have to do with our faith?

Related Bible Passages

Primary Text: Leviticus 16:20-22 – The scapegoat ritual on the Day of Atonement.

Additional Scripture:

- Hebrews 9:13-14 – "Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity. Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God." (NLT)
- Isaiah 40:31 – "But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles." (NLT)
- Psalm 42:1 – "As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God." (NLT)
- Revelation 5:5 – "Stop weeping! Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah... has won the victory." (NLT)
- Romans 8:19-22 – All creation waits eagerly for the day of redemption. (NLT)

Song Suggestions

- "As the Deer" – Marty Nystrom / The Best of Marty Nystrom: My Heart's Desire (Live) –
<https://open.spotify.com/track/4xzHgVqx03nwmNKZkXtfAt>
- "He Paid a Debt" – Stephen Forester / Amazing Grace: Hymns & Classics –
<https://open.spotify.com/track/0Q6gv2937zPnpyHmdv9wbh>

- “There Is a Redeemer” – Keith & Kristyn Getty / Getty Kids Hymnal –
<https://open.spotify.com/track/5HbMjnBDXVTsnc3Dz0HzLc>
- “Dare to Be a Daniel” – Cedarmonk Kids –
<https://open.spotify.com/track/628JyohUaQrYrAAEvTnHt8>
- “My God Is So Big” – Listener Kids –
<https://open.spotify.com/track/1fCSen4IN1MXSWYWI7eKw5>

Ministry Context

This play works especially well for teaching on atonement, the Old Testament types of Christ, or any series connecting the Old and New Testaments. The animal humor makes heavy theology accessible and engaging for children. Consider pairing with a reading of Leviticus 16:20–22 and Hebrews 9:13–14 before the performance.