

A PUPPET PLAY IN ONE ACT

# The Delights of Politeness

*Based on Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31 · Written by Carrie Elderberry*



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**SUITABLE FOR**  
Ages 5 and up

**CAST SIZE**  
3 puppets

**PERFORMANCE TIME**  
12–15 minutes

**PROPS REQUIRED**  
A small archery target, leafy greenery for one corner, and a tea cup for Grammy (all optional).

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**MAIN THEME**

True politeness is not just good manners — it is love and respect for others, rooted in God’s love for us.

Carrie Elderberry's Gospel Puppets · [gospelpuppets.org](http://gospelpuppets.org)

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*To print just the play on its own, print pages 5-10.*

## **PRODUCTION OVERVIEW**

### **Synopsis**

A child arrives at Grammy's house behaving rudely and demanding – a dramatic change from previous visits. Grammy gently presses until the child admits to imitating bullies at school. Through an honest conversation about what "please" and "thank you" actually mean, Grammy teaches the Golden Rule as Jesus gave it – and the child quietly slips away to practice before coming back transformed.

### **Spiritual Concept**

The Golden Rule – "Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you" (Matthew 7:12) – is not simply a social nicety but flows from love. Jesus commands it, and God's love in us is the wellspring from which it comes. Politeness without love is hollow; politeness rooted in God's love is transformative.

### **Age Suitability**

Best for ages 5-up. The bully theme makes it especially relevant for school-age children.

### **Performance Time**

12-15 minutes

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## **CAST & TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **Characters (in order of appearance)**

GRAMMY – A wise, loving follower of Jesus. Warm but firm. She is not a pushover – she requires manners from her grandchild and won't skip the lesson.

SPARKY – Grammy's puppy. Expressive and loyal – immediately picks up on the child's rudeness and reacts accordingly. Makes various sounds: Woof, Arf, GRRR, mmm, whining.

CHILD – Either a boy or a girl – the script uses s/he and him/her throughout. Has been imitating bullies at school, but underneath is still the sweet grandchild Grammy knows.

### **Prop Options**

- A small archery target (placed in a side window if available).
- Leafy vines or greenery to drape over one corner of the stage.
- A tea cup for Grammy in the final scene (optional).

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## **PERFORMANCE NOTES FOR PUPPETEERS**

New to puppets? General prep, technique, and voice tips live at [gospelpuppets.org/getting-started](http://gospelpuppets.org/getting-started).

### **Character Notes**

SPARKY senses CHILD's rudeness before Grammy fully calls it out – use SPARKY's reactions to set up Grammy's observations. Make them clear and physical.

SPARKY's sounds carry meaning: Woof = happy or agreement, Arf = excited, GRRR = displeasure or warning, mmm and whining = concerned or sad.

GRAMMY is warm and genuinely loving, never scolding – disappointed but not harsh.

CHILD's rudeness should be recognizable but not villainous – a bad habit picked up from the wrong influences, not real meanness.

The moment CHILD says "I love Grammy a lot. And you, too" to SPARKY is the emotional turn of the play – play it with genuine warmth.

Grammy's line that "please" means "only if you want to" is the theological heart – slow down here.

### **Staging**

The set has two areas: Grammy's shooting range (archery target on one side) and the private garden corner (leafy greenery on the other). The change between them marks the shift from confrontation to tender practice.

When CHILD and SPARKY practice manners together in the leafy corner, give them their own intimate space apart from Grammy – let the scene breathe.

### **Reading the Script**

CAPS = volume / intensity.

SPARKY's sounds are spelled phonetically throughout – preserve exactly as written.

### **Sound Effects**

- Knock at the door (CHILD's arrival): Rap knuckles on a hard surface or a wood block, just off to one side. Recorded options: [pixabay.com/sound-effects/search/door-knock](https://pixabay.com/sound-effects/search/door-knock)

More options and noise-maker tips at [gospelpuppets.org/sound-effects](https://gospelpuppets.org/sound-effects).

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## THE DELIGHTS OF POLITENESS

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*(Enter GRAMMY and SPARKY. Place small archery target in a side window if available.)*

**GRAMMY:** Oh, Sparky, I am so excited! My grandchild arrives today!  
**SPARKY:** *(excited)* Woof, woof!  
**GRAMMY:** Yes, we haven't seen each other in such a long time.  
**SPARKY:** *(whining)* mmm, mmm  
**GRAMMY:** Do you remember the last time we saw my grandchild? S/he was so sweet and kind to you.  
**SPARKY:** Woof!  
**GRAMMY:** And so kind and polite, s/he made me feel really special.

*(A knock on a door is heard.)*

**SPARKY:** ARF arf arf arf arf!!!  
**GRAMMY:** That must be him/her now! Come in, come in!

*(Enter CHILD.)*

**GRAMMY:** Hello, hello! Here's my sweet grandchild! My, how you have grown!  
**CHILD:** I want a drink of water.  
**GRAMMY:** What?  
**CHILD:** Give me some water.  
**GRAMMY:** What! No hug, no kiss for your Grammy?  
**CHILD:** With ice, lots of ice.  
**SPARKY:** *(sad whining)* mmm?  
**GRAMMY:** Wow, you have gotten taller but I see you have changed in other ways too.  
**CHILD:** I'm thirsty!  
**GRAMMY:** Yes, I can hear that. No "please"?  
**CHILD:** And after the water, I want to shoot some arrows.

**GRAMMY:** Well, I can tell you one thing for sure. My arrows are only for polite children who greet me with a hug and use their manners.

**CHILD:** Oh, Grammy.

*(They hug.)*

**CHILD:** I'm still thirsty.

**SPARKY:** GRRR.

**GRAMMY:** Even Sparky can tell something is not right with you.

**CHILD:** *(nervous)* I'm fine, just thirsty!

**GRAMMY:** Do you remember the last time you came to visit?

**CHILD:** *(hesitating)* Why?

**GRAMMY:** I was so proud of you for your good manners.

**CHILD:** *(big sigh)* Ok, fine. I want some water ...PLEASE.

*(GRAMMY looks at him/her for a while.)*

**GRAMMY:** Hmm. Come to the kitchen with me!

*(Exit GRAMMY and CHILD.)*

**SPARKY:** *(whining)* And not even a little scratch behind the ears for me! mmmm...

*(Exit SPARKY.)*

*(STAGE SET CHANGE: Put up archery target on one side, and leafy opening on the other.)*

*(Enter GRAMMY and CHILD and SPARKY on target side. SPARKY is closest to the target.)*

**GRAMMY:** Do you remember everything I taught you last time? About bows and arrows?

**CHILD:** Yeah, yeah.

**GRAMMY:** Last time you even popped a balloon.

*(SPARKY sniffs around them.)*

**CHILD:** Sparky! Get out of the way! Stupid dog!  
**SPARKY:** GRRR!  
**GRAMMY:** Ok, hold everything. We need to talk.  
**CHILD:** What.  
**GRAMMY:** Come, Sparky. Good dog. Go lie down.

*(Exit SPARKY.)*

**GRAMMY:** CHILD, you are so changed.  
**CHILD:** No I'm not.  
**GRAMMY:** You have to tell me what has happened.  
**CHILD:** What. Nothing's happened.  
**GRAMMY:** Oh, yes. You are so mean now!  
**CHILD:** Oh.  
**GRAMMY:** You never used to be mean.  
**CHILD:** Oh.  
**GRAMMY:** So, tell me WHY.  
**CHILD:** *(big sigh)* Ok, I'll tell you, Grammy, but it's kind of a secret.  
**GRAMMY:** Ok...  
**CHILD:** There are these kids I know...  
**GRAMMY:** Yes?  
**CHILD:** And... and they get ANYTHING they want, any time they want it!  
**GRAMMY:** And let me guess, they are mean kids!  
**CHILD:** Yeah! Yeah!  
**GRAMMY:** I remember those days.  
**CHILD:** And so, I got tired of being pushed around, and I decided to be mean TOO.  
**GRAMMY:** How is that working out for you?  
**CHILD:** Well... Sometimes it's sort of ok. People get out of my way, and I get to go first a lot more.  
**GRAMMY:** Would you say it's worth it?  
**CHILD:** Well... I don't have NICE friends now, and my brother and sister won't play with me anymore. And Mom and Dad are always mad at me!  
**GRAMMY:** Let me call Sparky. Here, Sparky!

*(Enter SPARKY. He avoids CHILD and stays tight against GRAMMY.)*

**SPARKY:** GRRR!

**GRAMMY:** Dogs can tell when you are being mean. Sparky doesn't trust you now. And I know just how he feels.

**CHILD:** Oh, Grammy. I'm sorry.

**GRAMMY:** You know, when we say "please" and "thank you", those are not just magic words to get what we want. They are supposed to show love.

**CHILD:** Love? How?

**GRAMMY:** Love and respect. Yes. When we say "please" it means "only if you want to".

**SPARKY:** *(curious)* MMM?

**GRAMMY:** It means that the other person has a choice. It shows you APPRECIATE them.

**CHILD:** Oh!

**GRAMMY:** In the olden days, people said "If you please". But we make it shorter and just say "Please".

**CHILD:** Oh! I never knew that.

**GRAMMY:** Well now you do.

**CHILD:** *(gently)* Hey, Sparky, come here – please?

**SPARKY:** *(cautious)* Mmmm?

**CHILD:** Good girl! Please?

*(SPARKY jumps all over CHILD and they have a cuddle.)*

**GRAMMY:** And we say "thank you" for the same reason. It shows that we understand that the other person was kind to us. We appreciate them, so we thank them.

**CHILD:** Oh, Grammy, I'm so sorry. And thanks for not being mad at me.

**GRAMMY:** Jesus will help you with those mean kids if you ask Him politely. He tells us in the Bible "Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you".

**CHILD:** He will help me?

**GRAMMY:** Oh, yes! You know I love you, child! But Jesus loves you even more than I do.

**CHILD:** Can I wait to shoot arrows, a little later? There is something I need to do first.

**GRAMMY:** Sure!

*(Exit CHILD.)*

**GRAMMY:** Now where do think s/he went, Sparky? Go see!

**SPARKY:** Woof!

*(Exit SPARKY.)*

**GRAMMY:** I think it's time for a cup of tea. And I'm going to say a prayer for that child.

*(Exit GRAMMY.)*

*(Enter CHILD and SPARKY to the side, by the leafy window.)*

**CHILD:** Hi, Sparky. Good girl.

**SPARKY:** Arf, arf!

**CHILD:** Grammy gave me a lot to think about.

**SPARKY:** *(curious)* Mmm?

**CHILD:** I feel pretty bad.

**SPARKY:** *(sympathetic)* Mmm?

**CHILD:** I don't know why I thought being mean was such a good idea.

**SPARKY:** Mmmm.

**CHILD:** I really do love Grammy a lot. And you, too.

**SPARKY:** Woof!

**CHILD:** Hey, you can help me!

**SPARKY:** *(happy)* Arf arf!

**CHILD:** You pretend to be Grammy, ok?

**SPARKY:** *(happy)* mmm?

**CHILD:** I need to practice something...

**SPARKY:** mmm!

**CHILD:** *(sweetly)* Grammy, can I please have a drink of water, if it's not too much trouble?

**SPARKY:** Woof!

**CHILD:** Thank you, Grammy!  
**SPARKY:** mmm!  
**CHILD:** Grammy, could we please shoot some arrows some time?  
**SPARKY:** Arf! Arf!  
**CHILD:** Thanks! Oh, Sparky, I love you!

*(They hug.)*

*(Enter GRAMMY in center stage.)*

**GRAMMY:** Where's my special grandchild? It's time for a snack!  
**CHILD:** We'll be right there!  
**GRAMMY:** Well, that is all for today! And you know, we love, because God first loved us. Jesus came to earth to show us the way to God, and to give us His love.  
**CHILD:** If you are having trouble being kind, the best thing to do is to ask God to help. True politeness comes from a heart filled with God's love.  
**SPARKY:** *(in a growly voice)* You can read more about God's love in the Bible. Try the book of John, chapter 3. And now Goodbye!

**THE END**

## **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why did CHILD start being rude? Have you ever copied someone else's bad behavior?
2. Grammy says that "please" means "only if you want to." What does that show about the other person?
3. Why did Sparky stop trusting the CHILD? What made Sparky trust him/her again?
4. What is the Golden Rule? Can you say it in your own words?
5. Grammy says true politeness comes from a heart filled with God's love. What does that mean?

### **Related Bible Passages**

Primary Text: Matthew 7:12 – "Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets." (NLT)

### **Additional Scripture:**

- Luke 6:31 – "Do to others as you would like them to do to you." (NLT)
- 1 John 4:19 – "We love each other because he loved us first." (NLT)
- Ephesians 4:32 – "Be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you." (NLT)
- Proverbs 15:1 – "A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare." (NLT)
- Micah 6:8 – "No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." (NLT)

### **Song Suggestions**

- "Shake a Friend's Hand" – Andy Z –  
<https://open.spotify.com/track/6HLgPcXnPb2yh2h9Xa3pte>
- "Jesus Loves Me" – Cedarhurst Kids –  
<https://open.spotify.com/track/4RQHs94Y99QaGuYDzzSoS0>
- "What Does the Lord Require of You" – Neill A. Burgess & Howard J. Prior –  
[https://www.threeleggedmusic.com/songhtml/what\\_does\\_the\\_lord\\_require\\_of\\_you.html](https://www.threeleggedmusic.com/songhtml/what_does_the_lord_require_of_you.html) · © 2000 Three Legged Music Limited · CCLI Song No. 3154072 · Used by permission

**Ministry Context**

This play is especially effective for addressing peer pressure and bullying in a gentle, story-driven way. Grammy's explanation of "please" and "thank you" as expressions of love and respect is memorable for children and parents alike. Based on a true story, per Carolyn's note. Works well in Sunday School, midweek programs, or as a conversation starter for a series on kindness or the Golden Rule.

**Carolyn's Recommended Picture Books**

*The Berenstain Bears and the Golden Rule* by Mike Berenstain