

Readers' Theatre - And God Said

Readers' Theatre, with Song

4 readers

Note: The success of this reading will come with having readers who can be somewhat dramatic. Rehearsal is necessary, because reading together is not easy, and the practice of tone, volume and timing of unison speaking is critically important.

Voices 1 and 3 – female

Voices 2 and 4 – male

Part 1

- Reader 1:** (Normal speaking tone) And God said, Let there be...
- Reader 2:** (Emphasizing "Let there be") And God said, Let there be...
- Reader 3:** (Emphasizing the full line) And God said, Let there be...
- Reader 4:** A Word. (Slowly, with emphasis) In the beginning was the Word:
- Reader 1:** the voice of God...over the deep.
- Reader 2:** (Slowly, majestically) And God spoke and created dry land,
- Reader 3:** (Slowly) God spoke and created light and dark,
- Reader 1:** God spoke and created evening and morning,
- Reader 4:** (Building momentum) God spoke and created vegetation
- Reader 2:** (Building momentum) plants yielding seed, fruit trees of every kind,
- Reader 1:** God spoke and created living creatures;
- Reader 2:** (A bit faster) birds and sea monsters,
- Reader 3:** cattle and creeping things,
- Reader 4:** wild animals and...(pause)
- Reader 1:** humankind.
- Reader 2:** (A big declaration) And God saw that it was good!
- Reader 3:** (Back to a slow pace) The voice of God calling the Rocky Mountains—
- Reader 1,2,4:** good!

Reader 4: the arctic tundra, the sun-baked badlands

Reader 1,2,3: good!

Reader 1: (*With growing excitement*) the wide flat prairie, the deep high forest

Reader 2,3,4: good!

Reader 2: the streams and rivers

Reader 1,3,4: Grand!

Reader 3: (*Building up to a faster pace*) the seas and lakes

Reader 1,2,4: Great!

Reader 4: (*Fairly quickly*) All God's creatures—the moose, the mosquito, the muskrat.

Reader 1,2,3: Good!

Reader 2: The polar bear, the eagle, the sockeye salmon.

Reader 1,3,4: Good!

Reader 3: (*Slower again*) Human beings of every hue, differently abled, speaking different tongues.

Reader 1,2,4: Good!

Reader 1: (*Deliberately; it's the "punch line"*) Creation, conjoined, inseparable, joined together by the (*with emphasis*) voice of God, the voice of God over the deep.

Hymnal: A Worship Book #50 - Praise the Lord Sing Hallelujah, verses 1 and 3

Part 2

Reader 2: (*Deliberately, declaratory*) God created the heavens and the earth,

Reader 1: (*Emphasize "good"*) and God said that it was good.

Reader 3: (*Emphasize "God"*) And God said

Reader 4: (*Emphasize "said"*) And God said

Reader 1: (*Emphasize "to Cain"*) And God said to Cain,

- Reader 2:** "Sin is lurking at the door, its desire is for you, but you must master it."
- Reader 1:** (*Emphasize "must"*) "Sin is lurking at the door, its desire is for you, but you must master it."
- Reader 3:** (*Slowly, sadly*) But Cain killed his brother Abel.
- Reader 4:** (*In a shocked voice*) He killed his brother.
- Reader 1:** (*Sadly*) His brother Abel he killed.
- Reader 2:** (*Slowly*) And Sarah beat Hagar
- Reader 3:** And Jacob lied to Isaac
- Reader 4:** (*Faster*) And the people of Israel grumbled and turned away
- Reader 1:** and the people built a golden calf
- Reader 2:** (*Gaining momentum*) and the people wanted to return to Egypt
- Reader 3:** (*Faster*) and the people neglected the widow and the sojourner
- Reader 4:** and the people of Israel went after false gods
- Reader 1:** (*Slower, with emphasis*) crying all the while,
- Reader 2,3:** Peace, peace,
- Reader 4:** where there was no peace.
- Reader 2:** (*Slowly*) Our voices creating violence.
- Reader 3:** (*Matter of fact*) Violent words becoming violent actions.
- Reader 4:** (*Slowly, powerfully*) Our words exploding like bombs in living rooms
- Reader 1:** (*Emphasize "church"*) and church meeting rooms
- Reader 3:** hateful hurtful words in political negotiating rooms
- Reader 2:** words that name people as "collateral damage," as "casualties," as "statistics,"
- Reader 4:** words in skyscraper boardrooms that translate into people without work,

Reader 1: (*Quietly*) people without homes,

Reader 2: (*Quietly, slowly*) people without food.

(*Pause*)

Reader 3: (*Sadly*) Violence grows and grows, in our hearts and in our world.

Reader 4: The violence against God's good creation,

Reader 1: the violence against the poor, the marginalized, the helpless;

Reader 2: (*Emphasize "and"*) the violence against those we hate and against those we love.

Reader 3: (*Slowly*) And a voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping.

Reader 1: (*Sadly, slowly*) It is Rachel crying for her children. She is crying.
(*Pause.*) And she will not be comforted.

Reader 4: Esau lifts up his voice and weeps.

Reader 3: In anger Moses throws the tablets from his hand and breaks them at the foot of the mountain.

Reader 1: And Tamar tears her clothes and goes away, crying aloud.

Reader 2: And the king cries out with a loud voice, "O Absalom, my son, my son."

Reader 1,2,3,4:
And the people lift up their voices and weep.

Reader 1: And the Lord said,

Reader 2: And the Lord said,

Reader 3: And the Lord said,

Reader 4: "What have you done?"

Reader 1: (*Loudly*) Listen!

Reader 2: (*Softer*) Listen

Reader 3: (*Softer yet, but still forceful*) Listen

Reader 4: (*Very slowly, with emphasis*) "...your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground."

Hymnal: A Worship Book #136 - From the depths of sin, verses 1 and 3

Part 3

Reader 3: (*Slowly, quietly*) And God said, Let there be...

Reader 4: (*Slowly, but with excitement*) And God said, "Let there be..."

Reader 1: (*Gaining momentum and excitement*) And God said, "Let there be..."

Reader 2: (*With delight*) a rainbow,

Reader 3: (*With excitement*) a heavenly visitor,

Reader 4: (*With wonder*) the hope for a son,

Reader 1: (*In amazement*) a promise of descendants without number for a slave girl

Reader 2: a dream of angels ascending and descending!

Reader 4: Surely God is in this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!

Reader 3: And God's voice came from the burning bush, and there was...a hope for freedom

Reader 1: (*An even pace*) a warning to Pharaoh

Reader 2: frogs without number,

Reader 3: a river of blood,

(Pause)

Reader 4: (*With relief*) a way through the wilderness

Reader 1: (*With thanksgiving*) a deliverance from evil for Israel's children.

Reader 3: And there was manna in the desert,

Reader 4: water flowing from the rock.

Reader 2: (*This is a "punch line."*) There was a Promised Land.

Reader 1: *(Slowly)* And God spoke from the mountain

Reader 2: The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders.
The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of
majesty.

Reader 3: And the voice of God came to Deborah and Gideon

Reader 4: And Samuel heard God calling in the night. And Samuel said,

Reader 1: "Here I am. Speak for your servant is listening."

Reader 2: Generation after generation we listen

Reader 3: we listen in our hearts,

Reader 4: we listen at church

Reader 2: we listen to the sound of the whirlwind

Reader 1,4: we listen for God's voice.

Reader 3: And the word of the Lord came to Isaiah

Reader 2: and Jonah

Reader 4: and Job

Reader 1: and Jeremiah

Reader 2: and John. The voice of one crying in the wilderness,

Reader 4: "Prepare the way of the Lord."

Reader 1: And the Word of the Lord came to Mary, and Mary said,

Reader 3: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord. Let it be with me according to
your word."

Reader 2: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Reader 1: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And a voice from
heaven said,

Reader 4: "This is my Son, the Beloved."

Reader 1: And the people came to Jesus, the people crowded around Jesus,
the people flocked to Jesus, and asked,

- Reader 2:** (*Slowly*) Are you really the Messiah?
- Reader 3:** What is the most important commandment?
- Reader 4:** How can we be born again?
- Reader 2:** (*Gaining momentum and volume*) Which of us is the greatest?
- Reader 3:** How often should I forgive someone?
- Reader 4:** When will the kingdom of God come?
- Reader 3:** (*Loudly, insistently*) Why do you eat with tax collectors and sinners?
- Reader 1:** (*Change of pace; slowly*) And Jesus said,
- Reader 2:** And Jesus said,
- Reader 3:** And Jesus said,
- Reader 4:** (*Calmly; emphasizing "I am"*) "I am the Bread of Life."
- Reader 1:** "I am the Light of the world."
- Reader 2:** (*A bit faster; with excitement*) "I am the true Vine."
- Reader 3:** "I am the Gate."
- Reader 4:** "I am the Way, the truth and the life."
- Reader 1:** "I am the good Shepherd, the shepherd lays down his life for his sheep."
- Reader 2:** (*With emphasis; this is the "punch line"*) I am the resurrection and the life.
- Reader 3:** The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away.
- Reader 1,2,3:** Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it.

Hymnal: A Worship Book #163 - Obey my voice

Part 4

- Reader 4:** (*Slowly, with wonder*) And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We beheld his face.

Reader 1: (*Quiet, with emphasis*) And the voice of the Pharisees said,

Reader 2: And the voice of the Sadducees said,

Reader 3: And the voice of Herod and Pilate said,

Reader 4: and the voice of the people said,

(Pause)

Reader 1: (*Loudly, and then a pause*) Crucify Him!

Reader 1,2: (*Still louder, and then a pause*) Crucify Him!

Reader 1,2,3: (*Even louder, and then a pause*) Crucify Him!

Reader 4: (*Gently, quietly*) And Jesus said,

Reader 3: (*Sadly, slowly*) "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

Reader 1: Jesus cried with a loud voice

Reader 2: and Jesus gave up his spirit.

(Pause)

Reader 3: And darkness came over the whole land.

Reader 4: They laid him in a tomb.

Reader 1: He had given up his Spirit. *(Pause)* But on the third day, he rose again.

Reader 2: He appeared to Mary and the other disciples, who saw his hands and touched his side.

Reader 3: And Jesus said, "I will send you a Comforter. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."

Reader 4: (*With wonder and happiness*) "The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth. The Spirit will declare to you the things that are to come!"

Reader 1,2,3: (*Urgently*) "Let those who have ears to hear, hear!"

(The reading may end here – and conclude with a hymn about the Holy Spirit working in the Church. At Assembly where this reading was initially done, we incorporated the Bible reading as follows ...)

Reader 4: *(Slowly, with wonder)* And God's voice came to his servant John in the desert, a voice for the churches....

Scripture Reading

Revelation 21:1-27

Hymnal: A Worship Book #299 - New earth, heavens new, verses 1-2

Carol Penner (Canada), 2011.

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