

Drama

Overview

The *Gold Rush* drama is a major part of the VBS program and is presented during the Closing Gold Rush Rally each day. It is a continuing story with each day's installment designed to entertain and touch upon the theme of the day.

Why Live Drama?

At a time when kids are so accustomed to watching videos, live drama can be a treat. Not only do kids love to watch it, but chances are there are teens and adults in your church who love to act and are looking for opportunities to use their gifts. Just try it and see if it isn't one of the best things about your VBS program and one of the main reasons why kids want to come back the next day!

For those who are unable to pull off a live drama, *Eureka* is also available on DVD!

Setting

The drama takes place in the year 1860 in a California boomtown, called Discovery City.

Characters

THEODORE TWEEDLE (SHERIFF)

The new sheriff of Discovery City, but everybody in town is wondering how on earth he got the job. It couldn't be on account of his experience because he doesn't have any. And it surely wasn't because of his intelligence because the cupboards are empty there, as well. Most likely, it was because no one else wanted the job.

OTIS HENRY (DEPUTY)

Theodore's best friend for 24 years. He's even more clueless than Theodore, if that's possible. In fact, he never made it past the second grade. He does know how to spell his own name, however, and he can count to ten (as long as both hands are free).

SADIE BROWN (CAFÉ OWNER)

Came to Discovery City with her father at the height of the Gold Rush. After he passed away and things didn't work out so well in the gold fields, she decided to open her

own outdoor café to support herself. Life's been tough for the past few years, but things are about to change for the better. She's going to be introduced to Jesus Christ.

PETUNIA PERIWINKLE (STARLET HOPEFUL)

Hoping to realize her life-long dream of becoming a world famous singer and actress, she leaves her home in Ohio and travels across the country. Sadly, no one's had the decency to tell her she's completely devoid of talent. She's also not the brightest bulb in the chandelier.

CALEB FOSTER (PROSPECTOR)

Although he's a gold miner by trade, he's also a mature believer who plants the seeds of the gospel wherever he goes. As a result, his treasures in heaven far exceed anything he's found in the ground. He has a twin brother (Dr. Marvel) whom he hasn't seen or spoken to in years, but he prays for him every day.

DR. MARVEL ("FISH OIL SALESMAN")

A professional con man, Billy Foster (aka "Dr. Marvel"), has been fooling people ever since he cheated on his first grade spelling test. He's been getting away with it for a long time, but that's about to change. He has a twin brother (Caleb Foster) whom he hasn't seen or spoken to in years.

JAKE "THE SNAKE" JACKSON (OUTLAW)

Everybody's afraid of Jake "the Snake" Jackson until they meet him face-to-face. Then they're terrified! Actually he's only somewhat "mean-looking," but don't let that fool you. He's a notorious bank and stagecoach robber and isn't scared of anybody or anything . . . until he meets the Savior and his heart is miraculously changed.

Premise

There's nothing too extraordinary about Discovery City until a prospector named Caleb Foster comes through and plants a spiritual seed. He strikes up a conversation with Sadie Brown, the owner of the Hard Times Café and then gives her a gospel tract. Although reluctant at first, Sadie reads the tract, and the Holy Spirit uses it to change her heart. As a result, she renames her café the Good News

Café and seeks to pass on that same good news to the people she meets.

Then Petunia Periwinkle, who’s pursuing fame and fortune in show business, comes to town thinking she’s in San Francisco. When she discovers that she got off at the wrong stop she becomes desperate to leave. Meanwhile, Sadie gives her a Bible and encourages her to take it seriously, but she is just too distracted to care. When Dr. Marvel offers to assist her, it appears her pursuit of stardom is revived—until he turns out to be a colossal con artist.

When Caleb Foster returns to Discovery City he finds out that the gospel tract he left with Sadie several months before has had an effect. In fact, it’s currently working on the heart of his long lost twin brother, Dr. Marvel, who is sitting in a jail cell for defrauding the townspeople.

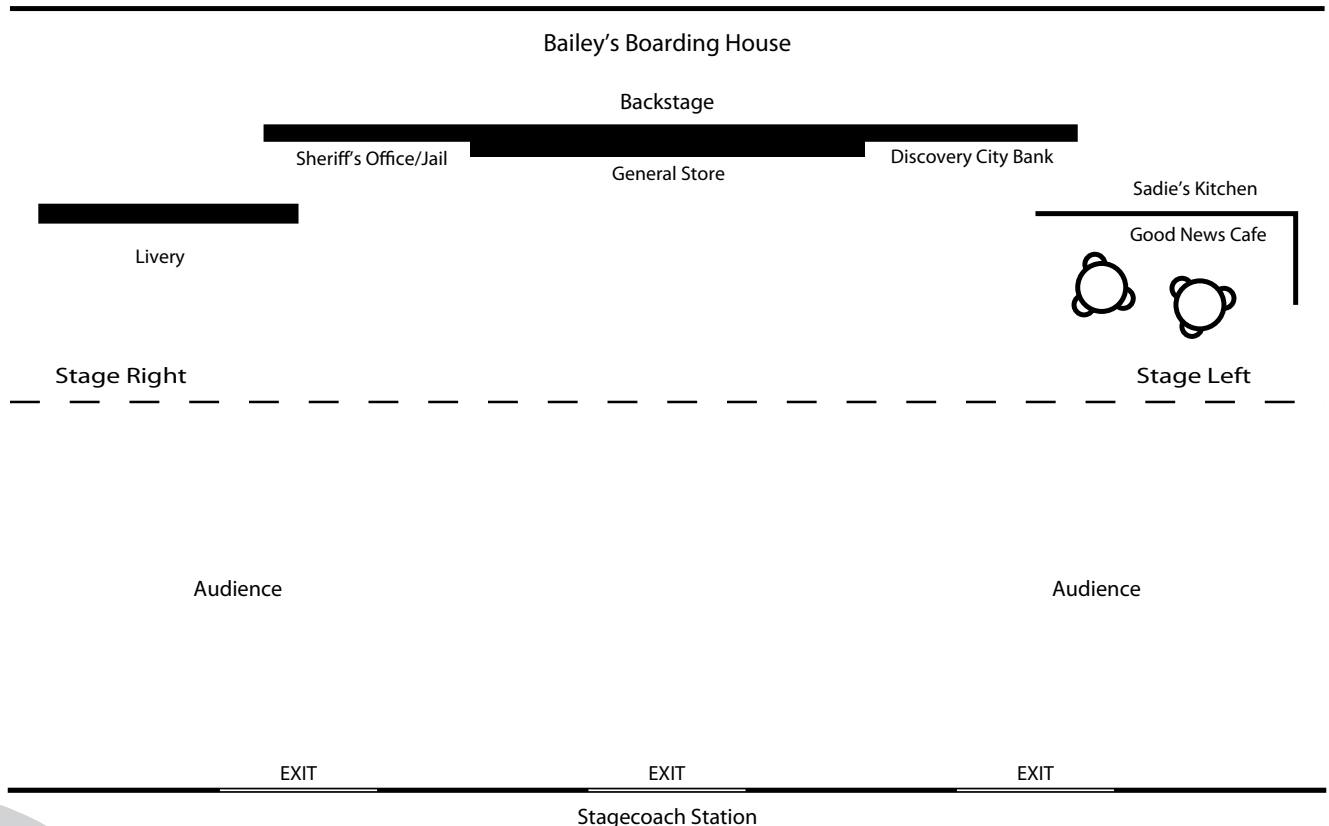
Finally, when the notorious outlaw, Jake “the Snake” Jackson, rides into town, Theodore Tweedle and Otis Henry, the bumbling law enforcement duo, have their hands full. Of course, Jake has no problem neutralizing them and robbing the bank, but what he wasn’t prepared for, was the power of the gospel, which ultimately tames his wild heart.

Theme Tie-In

The spiritual theme of *Gold Rush—Discovering the Rock of Ages* is the unique person of Jesus Christ. On day 1, we’ll learn about the bold claims that He made and that compared to all other people, only Jesus can rightly claim to be God. On day 2, we’ll discover that His birth was like no one else’s, from the fulfilled prophecies to the spectacular events. On day 3, we’ll learn that no one else has ever taught like Jesus or had the power of Jesus. On day 4, we’ll be confronted with His death and resurrection which further separates Him from all others. And on day 5, we’ll see that no one else is able to change lives like Jesus and that we need to share the good news with others. To help reinforce some of what has been taught each day, the dramas will briefly touch upon these principles.

Venue Diagram

The following diagram shows a typical venue (church sanctuary or auditorium) with the location of certain aspects of the story in relation to the stage, the audience, and the exits. You may need to adapt the stage directions to your particular setting.



Production Notes

As the drama director, you will be producing and directing *Gold Rush* VBS drama. A well-performed production is very rewarding and will bring energy and excitement to your VBS program. It can also leave the children with a desire to return the next day, and bring their friends!

The Role of Prayer

Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain (Psalm 127:1).

The importance of prayer in relation to every aspect of your VBS program cannot be over emphasized. Even if you, your cast, and crew are exceptionally talented or experienced, your dramas will have little eternal impact upon those in the audience unless God blesses it. Pray for yourself, your actors, and your crew regularly. Pray for each meeting and rehearsal. Pray for the effectiveness of your dramas and for the children and adults who will watch them. When you encounter problems or challenges of any kind, pray and watch God do amazing things as you trust Him. Finally, and most importantly, pray that God would be glorified and that He would save people as a result of your VBS!

First Steps

Become very familiar with the drama scripts by reading each day's script several times. Get to know each of the characters before you cast the parts and schedule your first rehearsal. Also, because each facility is unique, it may be necessary to adapt the script and stage directions somewhat to your particular situation.

Casting

The drama is written with four male parts and two female parts. If necessary, the scripts can be adapted depending upon the gender of the actors available.

- Theodore Tweedle—Male
- Otis Henry—Male
- Sadie Brown—Female
- Petunia Periwinkle—Female
- Caleb Foster / Dr. Marvel—Male
- Jake “the Snake” Jackson—Male (or, if female, use “Calamity Kate”)

Because the drama is so important, take great care in choosing your actors. Choose teens or adults who not only have some dramatic ability but also are dependable and work well with other people. This will make your job easier and more enjoyable. Make sure the actors understand the level of commitment required before they agree to volunteer.

Caleb Foster / Dr. Marvel

The parts of Caleb Foster and Dr. Marvel are played by the same person. The actor playing these parts should note, that even though they are twin brothers, their voices or manner of speaking should sound a little different.

Major and Minor Parts

The major parts in the drama are Theodore Tweedle, Otis Henry, and Sadie Brown. Petunia Periwinkle and Caleb Foster/Dr. Marvel are somewhat lesser parts with each having one day off. Jake “the Snake” Jackson is a fairly minor part, only appearing on days 4 and 5.

Extras

If you have more actors than you can use, consider adding two or three non-speaking parts to certain scenes in the drama. An Old West boomtown can always use townspeople.