

Marriage Bank

by Don Markham and Jim Prichard

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GENRE: Comedy

SYNOPSIS: What if marriage resembled a bank? A sarcastic look at making deposits and withdrawals for "stuff" in a marriage.

TIME: 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 4M, 2F

THEME: Marriage

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Ephesians 5:21-33

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Worship Service; Sermon Starter

CHARACTERS:

TELLER

LEANDRA – first time customer

CHRISTY—long time customer

SCOTT—big time NASCAR fan/overdrawn customer

TOM—outdoorsman saving for trip

CHUCK—every man

PROPS: Counter, laptop or monitor/keyboard and deposit slips, cell phone

COSTUMES: Teller in professional dress; Scott in a Nascar hat/t-shirt

SOUND: Six wireless microphones

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: A bank

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Making comedy funny requires actors who can keep from cracking up. The more serious your actors are about their “banking” in this sketch, the funnier it will be to your audience. The Teller is thrilled to work in this bank and sees her job as a service. Think of the character of Flo in the Progressive Insurance ads on TV. She’s funny because she’s so into her job. That actress isn’t laughing at her own situation, she takes it seriously. And that’s what makes the character lovable to a large audience.

Working with Stereotypes

Several of the characters here are stereotypes. Leandra is the shy one. Christy is the busybody. Scott is the manly man, more focused on NASCAR and hanging with the guys than paying attention to his wife. Tom has business smarts. He knows how to save what’s in his account, but he’s doing it for a purpose—to make a huge withdrawal later. And Chuck is the uber-stereotypical male, whose only goal is sex.

Have fun with these stereotypes, but don’t go over the top with them. They are funnier when they are subtle and played realistically and honestly. After all, most stereotypes have their basis in fact, they’ve just gotten blown way out of proportion. That’s what makes them stereotypes. If Christy’s dress and demeanor before she speaks lets us know that she’s a busybody, her lines won’t be as funny. If she seems like just another average banking customer, waiting her turn in line, then her enthusiasm at sharing the joys of banking with Leandra will that much funnier. Avoid making Tom seem smarmy for planning to take his wife out to her favorite restaurant and to a Chonda Pierce concert just so he can go on a weekend hunting trip. Instead, try playing him as excited. He’s happy to make this deposit because he has a goal in mind. It’s like spending months saving your money to finally get that big-screen TV and the joy you feel at the pay-off after your hard work. That’s how we should see Tom. You get the idea. Have fun with your actors deciding how they’ll make these customers seem like real people.

Know Thy Audience!

This sketch will fall flat on its face and leave your audience red in the face if they’re not okay with the subject of Chuck’s bank withdrawal. Some congregations are totally fine with a frank reference to sex in a sketch, especially when it’s between husband and wife. In other congregations, that subject has no place in the sanctuary—at all. How does your congregation feel about the subject? If you aren’t sure, be certain to talk to your pastor to find out! If he says that subject won’t fly, you don’t have to sacrifice the entire sketch. You can cut Chuck’s scene without damaging the rest of the script. You might add to Teller’s last line to Tom. Instead of having her say, “Thanks for coming in” to Tom, you might use the end of her last line to Chuck instead: “Thanks for visiting the Marriage Bank, “A place where saying I do means you owe me!” That way, the sketch ends as the author intended with the punch line, you’ve avoided offending your audience, and you’re ready for a great sermon on marriage.