

Take My Kids

by Terrie Todd

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GENRE: Light Comedy

SYNOPSIS: Three little girls dressed in grown-up clothes enjoy a tea party while discussing the horrors of raising children.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: What makes this script work is that the actors are young children. If played by adults, it would only be three women gathered to complain. They need to be completely sincere and just let the irony create the humor. If they try to be funny and cute, it will be lost.

TIME: 4 to 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 3 girls, age 6-10

THEME: Parenting, Children, Motherhood

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Proverbs 31; Psalm 127:3

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: Worship Service, Mother/Daughter Banquet

CHARACTERS:

Pam, Vicki, and Louise (the oldest should play Louise)

PROPS: Table, three chairs, tea or coffeepot, three cups, plate of cookies, etc.

COSTUMES: The girls should be in fancy lady's clothing that is obviously way too large— hats, gloves, jewelry, the whole bit if they want to have some fun with it.

SOUND: Three wireless microphones

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: Pam's kitchen

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Child's play

A couple of things are of vital importance for this clever scene to work. First, the characters must be played by young children. If the roles are played by adults, then this really just becomes a scene about three women gathered to complain, and loses all dramatic 'integrity'. Secondly, the children need to be completely sincere in what they're saying, delivering the lines in the kind of deep earnestness that children often exhibit when they're not consciously being watched by grown-ups. If the kids try to be funny or "cute", the humor of the scene will fall flat.

Coffee, anyone?

The coffee (or tea) party is a beautiful staging touch, but take care that the kids have rehearsed like mad with the actual props (and liquid) in order to avoid mishaps. Even adult actors can easily become flummoxed on stage when finally in costume and before an audience, and this danger grows exponentially when the actors in question are very young.

Rehearsals should ideally replicate the actual performance conditions as closely as possible. Granted, in the real world it isn't always feasible to have a dress rehearsal on the actual stage with all of the technical elements in place, but cover as many bases as reality will allow. The nature of drama is to expect the unexpected and you only get one shot at this, so be sure your players are going on with as many variables covered as possible.

Little touches

Take My Kids includes a lot of nice subtle touches, and those can be delightful to an audience but challenging to young actors. Be patient, but take care that things like the groaning in unison and sarcasm don't get lost in the delivery.

While being careful that little things don't get left out, also be wary of little things getting put in. Small children in oversized clothing going through the business of having a tea party creates a lot of possibilities for distracting 'stage business', and the audience could become so rapt by what's being done that they miss what's being said. Make sure your ladies are working as a group, and nobody gets caught up in the trap of being 'cute' to the detriment of the dialogue.

You be the judge as to how much is too much, but be aware that the audience will of course be seeing all of this for the first time, while you've had time to absorb the scene. If you're just not sure whether the costumes and staging are becoming distracting, you might bring in a fresh set of trusted eyes. Failing that, the general rule of thumb is 'when in doubt, leave it out'.