

THE BOX OF STONES

by Rick Clark

GENRE: Drama

SYNOPSIS: A young woman tries to find relief of her life's burdens by visiting a therapist and her friends but comes to realize that it is only through Christ that she can find true peace.

TIME: Over 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 3

TOPIC: Grace, Peace

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Matthew 11:28

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Easter

SUGGESTED USE: Worship Service

CHARACTERS:

- 1 female voice
- 1 female-main character
- 6 friends
- 1 Therapist
- Jesus
- 2 Roman guards

PROPS: Stones, boxes for stones, desk, cross

COSTUMES: Period dress for Jesus and soldiers

SOUND: Offstage mic for "voice"

LIGHTING: General, except for sheet at the end of the drama

SETTING: Church sanctuary

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Director's Tip:

The Box of Stones offers a wonderful opportunity to explore a presentation type of acting not as common in modern drama today.

Most theatre is realistically based, or what some might call, "kitchen sink drama." This type of production became popular in the 1930s when the Group Theatre adopted the "real life placed on stage" styles of acting generated by the Moscow Art Theatre. Oftentimes modern audiences are unused to heightened theatrical spectacles, especially being as immersed in film and television as the modern public is today. However, this is why a presentational, or more theatrical, piece like this one can be so effective and moving if performed with real conviction. The most important element of directing this piece is to remind your actors that if they believe in the reality of what they're doing on stage, so will their audience. It is simply a fact that an audience will allow itself to be swept into a theatrical moment if it sincerely believes that the people on stage have "become" their characters. Be prepared to challenge your actors to make big physical and emotional acting choices; the script calls for heightened drama and an audience will be captivated if actors really commit to what they are doing.

Soft music lead-in. The main character enters to center stage, struggling to carry a heavy box of stones. The main character pantomimes the words of the voice. The music fades and the voice begins speaking.

VOICE: I'm not exactly sure where it came from...this box of stones. It seems like I've been carrying it around all of my life. It didn't used to be this heavy...it's sort of strange, but the older I get...the heavier it becomes. And as each day goes by, more and more stones accumulate in the box.

Main character moves to stage left and sets the box of stones on the floor. The main character kneels beside the box.

VOICE: I can barely remember finding the first stone. I think I was around four years old. I had lied to my parents about eating all the chocolate chip cookies...it was no big deal...but when the incident was over, I noticed this box with a single stone inside. I pulled the stone out of the box (*Reaches in the box as if searching for the stone*)...let's see...it's in here somewhere (*Looks at different stones, not bringing them out of the box.*) Yeah...here it is...the first stone.

I pulled it out of the box...it was filthy. And inscribed on the stone ...the word "liar." I tossed the stone back into the box. (*Puts stone back inside the box*) No big deal...after all, it was just a small lie. But now I've accumulated so many of these stones. (*Reaches in the box, pulls out a stone and reads the inscription*) This one... "Disobedient to Parents" ...so what?