

THELMA & JIM BOB'S GUIDE TO CHURCH LIFE

by Marilyn Walker Flavner



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Thelma & Jim Bob's Guide to Church Life

by MARILYN WALKER HAVNER

A series of skits on church-related topics

PRODUCTION NOTES

CHARACTER NOTES: This series of skits revolves around two characters named Thelma and Jim Bob. They are, indeed, “characters” in every sense of the word. Both are a little “rough around the edges” and lacking in social graces. Thelma walks very fast, with her head moving faster than her feet, and she talks just as quickly. She knows everything about everything (or so she thinks) and doesn’t hesitate to let the world know it. On the other hand, Jim Bob is the strong, silent type. His gait is somewhat stooped and bow-legged. A man of few words, he thinks before he speaks and has a knack for helping Thelma consider a different viewpoint. He speaks (when he does have something to say) very slowly and deliberately, in contrast to Thelma’s nonstop verbosity. Both characters speak in an exaggerated Southern drawl.

Thelma and Jim Bob’s children, Floyd and Sissybelle, appear in two of the skits. They are typical kids, aged anywhere from pre-adolescent to late teens. Jim Bob’s cousin Luke and wife Mavis appear in the last skit. Their appearance and speech is similar to Thelma’s and Jim Bob’s.

COSTUMES: Thelma — Whatever doesn’t match is perfect for Thelma. She could wear a denim skirt and oversized sweater or a too-big shirtdress, and saggy stockings or socks with shoes or work boots. Her hair can be done in pigtails or covered with a bandana. When she is in church, she can wear a straw hat with a flower stuck in.

Jim Bob — Overalls or blue jeans with a flannel shirt work well for Jim Bob. He should have a red kerchief in a pocket (which can be used to loudly “blow” his nose), work boots or cowboy boots, and a straw hat. When he is going to church, he can wear a string tie.

Floyd and Sissybelle — “Normal” but casual clothing, such as jeans and tee shirts. Sissybelle’s hair should be done like Thelma’s

STAGING: These skits work well in any setting: a large sanctuary, small fellowship hall, a Sunday school classroom, or outdoors. Entrances may be made from the sides, back, or front of the audience, utilizing whatever the space offers (doors, aisles, etc.). They also work well for a variety of uses: worship services, evening services, Sunday school, or youth group meetings.

PROPS: Individual prop lists may be found before each skit.

Thelma and Jim Bob have provided a lot of fun and laughter whenever they have “visited” churches. They have even appeared from among the audience and have greeted the congregation during welcoming times. It is my prayer that you will have fun with these skits and that God will use them to ultimately bring focus and glory to himself.

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A Good Enough Reason

In *A Good Enough Reason*, THELMA and JIM BOB discuss not only getting involved in church, but also inviting friends to get involved. THELMA is a little off track, but JIM BOB cunningly sets her straight.

CHARACTERS: JIM BOB is the strong, silent type and THELMA is the verbose, nonstop talker.

STAGING: THELMA and JIM BOB are sitting on their chairs — she on a rocking chair reading the church bulletin; he on a straight chair reading the newspaper.

NOTE: To enter the “stage” area where the chairs are already set up, JIM BOB and THELMA enter through the same door at different times. JIM BOB comes sauntering in, carrying his newspaper under his arm, scratching his backside. By the time he reaches his chair, which is to the left of THELMA’s, THELMA has scurried in, holding the church bulletin. When JIM BOB sits down, he puts his glasses on and opens his newspaper in front of him, being careful not to put it in front of his face. He should turn a page once, not more than twice, during the dialog. He focuses on the paper, only looking at her when the script directs him to do so. He speaks very slowly. When THELMA sits down, she starts rocking and reading the bulletin. Although THELMA speaks quickly, the audience should still be able to understand her.

PROPS: Newspaper (with “Hillbilly Herald” pasted over name); church bulletin or newsletter; straight chair for JIM BOB; rocking chair for THELMA.

THELMA: Looky here, Jim Bob! Looky here at this church bulletin! Ah bin readin’ this here thang and they got a

1 bunch of stuff we kin do here. Somebody could really git
2 purty busy if they did all this stuff.

3 **JIM BOB:** *(Not looking at her)* Yep. Uh-huh.

4 **THELMA:** You remember that Christmas carolin' and that
5 special New Year's Eve service and that there smor-gas-
6 borg? Well, listen here to this, Jim Bob. This month
7 they're havin' a readin' contest, and a church meetin',
8 and a roller skatin' party! Imagine that, Jim Bob! A roller
9 skatin' party! *(When THELMA is reading the bulletin about*
10 *recent and upcoming church events, insert your own church's*
11 *activities to personalize the skit.)*

12 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.

13 **THELMA:** Why, you know, Ah'll bet you and Ah could go
14 roller skatin'. We could even do some of that there other
15 stuff, too. Do you think we could do some of that there
16 stuff?

17 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh. Whatever you say, Thelma.

18 **THELMA:** Well, Ah do think that's a good idea. We'll jest do
19 that. We'll jest git ourselves involved.

20 **JIM BOB:** Uh-huh. *(THELMA rocks silently a bit, reading the*
21 *bulletin.)*

22 **THELMA:** *(Sitting forward in her chair)* And you know what
23 else, Jim Bob? Ah bin listenin' to the pastor talk about
24 "outreach" at church. You know? He's talkin' about it
25 ever week now. You remember?

26 **JIM BOB:** Yep, Thelma. Ah remember.

27 **THELMA:** And the pastor, he's bin talkin' about reachin' out
28 to other people, so, well, maybe we should invite someone
29 to come with us to some of this stuff.

30 **JIM BOB:** *(Looks over his newspaper at THELMA, squinting at*
31 *her.)* Well, Thelma, what would you want to do that fer?
32 *(He knows the answer to this but he wants her to figure it out.)*

33 **THELMA:** *(Sitting back in her chair)* Well, because the pastor
34 says we should.

35 **JIM BOB:** T'ain't a good enough reason, Thelma.

- 1 **THELMA:** Well, then, because if we invite somebody, then
 2 they kin hear how good our pastor is!
- 3 **JIM BOB:** Not good enough, Thelma.
- 4 **THELMA:** *(Getting increasingly exasperated)* They kin learn
 5 about our poor missionaries.
- 6 **JIM BOB:** Nope. Uh-uh.
- 7 **THELMA:** *(Rocking madly)* They kin see how purty our church
 8 looks with the new carpet and the matchin' curtains and
 9 all them purty things up on the table in the front. *(She*
 10 *pauses, then speaks in an angry tone.)* So's they kin see how
 11 friendly everybody in our church is!
- 12 **JIM BOB:** Yer missin' the point, Thelma.
- 13 **THELMA:** You tryin' to tell me we cain't invite somebody to
 14 church so's they kin see our nice building and hear our
 15 good pastor and learn about our poor missionaries and
 16 meet our nice folks?
- 17 **JIM BOB:** Yep. That's what Ah'm tellin' you.
- 18 **THELMA:** Well, then, in a minute yer gonna tell me Ah should
 19 invite them 'cause they need to hear about Jesus and
 20 learn how he died for their sins and all that stuff.
- 21 **JIM BOB:** Yep. That's right, Thelma.
- 22 **THELMA:** Well, Ah'll jest have to see about that. Ah mean,
 23 Ah know that Jesus died for my sins and that's the only
 24 way you kin git to heaven but Ah don't know if Ah wants
 25 to tell other people about that. Ah mean, what would Ah
 26 say? How would Ah do it? Ah'm not the pastor, you know!
 27 Why should Ah tell them anything?
- 28 **JIM BOB:** *(Looking over his newspaper at THELMA)* Don't you
 29 care about your friends, Thelma?
- 30 **THELMA:** Of course Ah care about my friends, but what's
 31 that got to do with anything?
- 32 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.
- 33 **THELMA:** *(Shaking her finger at him)* You are jest a wealth of
 34 words sittin' over there in that there chair. Ah care about
 35 my friends. Is that why Ah should invite them to do things

1 at church and talk to them about Jesus? So they kin be
2 re-stored to God? Is thet right, Jim Bob?

3 **JIM BOB:** Yep. That's right, Thelma.

4 **THELMA:** Ah guess yer right. It changes the things you do
5 and the things you say when you believe in Jesus. And
6 people gotta see them changes. You cain't sit there quiet-
7 like, the way Ah do. You gotta let your friends know.

8 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.

9 **THELMA:** *(Stands.)* You didn't have to tell me all that, Jim
10 Bob. I knew that all along. Ah really did.

11 **JIM BOB:** *(Standing and putting his paper down, looking at the*
12 *audience)* Yep. Uh-huh. *(THELMA and JIM BOB exit.)*

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Not an Event

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3 In *Not an Event*, THELMA thinks that outreach to friends
4 requires drastic measures. JIM BOB helps her see that coming
5 on too strong will only drive her friends away from knowing
6 Jesus.

7
8 **CHARACTERS:** THELMA and JIM BOB.

9
10 **STAGING:** The pastor should pray before the skit. THELMA and
11 JIM BOB take their places while he is praying. He is in a
12 straight chair looking at the newspaper. She is in a rocking
13 chair with a long piece of paper and a pen. JIM BOB speaks
14 very slowly. THELMA speaks as quickly as she can while still
15 being understood.

16
17 **PROPS:** Newspaper; paper and pen; straight chair for JIM BOB;
18 rocking chair for THELMA.

19
20 **THELMA:** You know, Jim Bob, Ah bin thinkin' about what
21 you said last week. So looky what Ah'm doin' now.

22 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.

23 **THELMA:** Ah think it's real important to talk to our friends
24 about Jesus and to invite them to church. So Ah've
25 decided to do somethin' about it. Ah've made this here
26 list with all of our friends' names on it. And Ah've made
27 a list of when we kin invite each one of them over to the
28 house or to church so's we kin tell 'em about the Lord!

29 **JIM BOB:** Is thet right, Thelma?

30 **THELMA:** You bet, Jim Bob. The way Ah figger it is, we invite
31 each one over for dinner or somethin' like thet and then
32 after dinner, *wham!* We tell 'em about the Lord and why
33 they should trust him to be their saviour and we don't
34 let 'em leave until we's sure they believes it. Don't you
35 think thet's a great idea, Jim Bob?

- 1 **JIM BOB:** Nope, Thelma. Ah don't think that's a great idea.
- 2 **THELMA:** You don't think that's a great idea? Whyever not?
- 3 Ah jest don't understand you at all, Jim Bob. Yer the one
- 4 who said that knowin' Jesus has to make a difference to
- 5 us and we cain't jest sit around quiet-like, like me. Yer
- 6 the one who said we gotta tell our friends because we
- 7 care about 'em. Yer the one who said we oughta git
- 8 ourselves involved in church and invite our friends to
- 9 do things, too. *(Pause)* So why ain't it a great idea?
- 10 **JIM BOB:** Yer missin' the point, Thelma.
- 11 **THELMA:** *(Sarcastically)* "Yer missin' the point, Thelma." Am
- 12 Ah ever not missin' the point, Jim Bob?! If we want our
- 13 friends to be Christians, then we should jest set 'em down
- 14 and tell 'em so and not let 'em up 'til they decide to believe.
- 15 Then we'll know they're goin' to heaven.
- 16 **JIM BOB:** Yer missin' the point, Thelma.
- 17 **THELMA:** *(Throws hands up in the air.)* Well, then, Ah jest give
- 18 up. Next yer gonna tell me I should jest tell mah friends
- 19 about Jesus and then let the Holy Spirit do the rest. Next
- 20 yer gonna tell me I should jest tell 'em about the Lord
- 21 and then let 'em do what they want! Is thet what yer
- 22 gonna tell me next, Jim Bob?
- 23 **JIM BOB:** Yep, Thelma. That's right. *(Pause)* It's not an e-vent,
- 24 Thelma.
- 25 **THELMA:** It's not an e-vent? Well, Ah think it's a purty durn
- 26 excitin' e-vent if you ask me, which of course you don't.
- 27 That's why we should jest set 'em down and tell 'em the
- 28 truth.
- 29 **JIM BOB:** *(Looking over his paper at her)* Now, Thelma, is thet
- 30 what happened to you?
- 31 **THELMA:** Well, of course that's not what happened to me,
- 32 Jim Bob. You know thet. It didn't jest happen all of a
- 33 sudden-like. It took a long time. Mah friends told me
- 34 about Jesus and Ah thought about what they said fer a
- 35 while.

1 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.

2 **THELMA:** *(Slaps knee.)* By golly, yer right agin, Jim Bob! It's
3 not an e-vent, it's a process. It takes a right long time
4 sometimes fer someone to believe in Jesus and turn their
5 life over to him. Why thet's jest like that there story in
6 the Bible about the guy who goes out and plants them
7 seeds. Thet's jest like what happened to me, ain't it, Jim
8 Bob? Mah friends planted them seeds and then God
9 watered them and after a while them seeds started a-
10 growin' and then I believed. It took a long time, Jim Bob.

11 **JIM BOB:** *(Looking over paper at audience)* Yep, Thelma. Ah
12 know.

13 **THELMA:** Ah got it all figgered out now, Jim Bob. Ah believe
14 in Jesus, so that oughta make a difference in the things
15 Ah do. Ah gotta tell my friends about him and invite them
16 to church so's they kin hear all about what it means to
17 be a Christian. But Ah cain't jest hit 'em over the head,
18 it takes a while. Like a little bit at a time. Ah tell 'em and
19 then God convinces 'em. Course the first thing is jest to
20 be their friend and let 'em know you care about them.
21 *(Pause)* Am I still missin' the point, Jim Bob?

22 **JIM BOB:** Nope, Thelma. You got it right this time.

23 **THELMA:** *(After a pause)* You know, Jim Bob, you got some
24 purty good ideas. *(JIM BOB gets up and slowly starts to exit.)*
25 You oughta think about bein' a Sunday school teacher
26 or somethin'; the way yer always talkin' about all this stuff
27 and tellin' me them things. But I tell you what, Jim Bob,
28 it gives me a headache when you do all this talkin'!

29 **JIM BOB:** Come on, Thelma. We both got a headache.
30 *(THELMA and JIM BOB exit.)*

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Teeter-Totter

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In *Teeter-Totter*, MAMA is talking about how much she misses JIM BOB and the boys who have gone on a hunting trip when she realizes it is kind of nice to have them gone for a few days. She considers her family and how they often don't get along and wonders at how they even survive. SISSYBELLE helps her to realize that it's Jesus who holds the family together because he never changes, even in the midst of bad times.

CHARACTERS: MAMA (Thelma) and SISSYBELLE, her daughter.

STAGING: MAMA (Thelma) and SISSYBELLE are reading or doing needlework while they converse.

PROPS: Two chairs and books or needlework for MAMA and SISSYBELLE.

MAMA: You know, Sissybelle, Ah miss your daddy and your brothers something terrible while they're off a-huntin' these few days.

SISSYBELLE: You do, Mama?

MAMA: Why, Ah shorely do! The way your daddy always has just the right things to say. That Jim Bob! He shore is something else! And Floyd — always ready with a joke. And that Lester is just a pack of fun! Why, Ah shorely do miss them.

SISSYBELLE: Yes, Mama. Ah guess you do. *(Pause, and then quietly to herself)* But Ah don't.

MAMA: Why, Sissybelle, how kin you say such a thing? Why, of course you miss your daddy and your brothers. *(Pause, look at each other.)* Don't you, Sissybelle?

SISSYBELLE: Well, now, Mama . . .

MAMA: Why, Sissybelle, Ah know you really truly do love

1 your brothers! Why, Ah know they kin be a bit of a bother.
 2 Sometimes Floyd's jokin' can git out of hand. Like the
 3 time he told your daddy he was stayin' after school in
 4 the principal's office because his teacher liked him so
 5 much. We was so proud. And then we found out it was
 6 really because he put a mouse in her desk! And there was
 7 that there time he changed all them little cards in the
 8 card catalog at the library. But he is truly a sweet boy —
 9 so polite and always thinkin' about other people. Except,
 10 of course, when he's thinkin' about hisself. And Lester.
 11 Well, now, you might be right about Lester. Lester always
 12 has a good time. But we don't always have a good time
 13 around Lester. It does seem like he has fun and we doesn't.

14 **SISSYBELLE:** Yeah, like when he flushed my dollbaby down
 15 the toilet.

16 **MAMA:** And when he pokes fun at you 'cause you don't know
 17 as much as he does. Which, of course, you shouldn't, since
 18 you is five years younger 'n he is! But he truly is a kind
 19 boy, and gentle. With most people. *(Pause)* You know,
 20 Sissybelle, maybe Ah don't miss your daddy and your
 21 brothers as much as Ah thought I did. I mean, it's kind
 22 of nice to work hard cookin' up black-eyed peas and
 23 pickled pigs' feet and not havin' your daddy come home
 24 late for dinner. And not havin' your brothers a-sittin'
 25 down for dinner and a-complain' and a-gaggin'. It's kinda
 26 nice not havin' arguin' and fightin' all the time. Ah think
 27 Ah'm glad they're a-huntin' these few days.

28 **SISSYBELLE:** But, Mama, Ah thought you said you missed
 29 them somethin' terrible!

30 **MAMA:** Well, Ah guess part of me does and part of me
 31 doesn't. Ah mean, they kin be real pleasant and nice or
 32 they kin be real mean.

33 **SISSYBELLE:** *(To herself)* Tell me about it!

34 **MAMA:** And the thing of it is, you never know when they're
 35 gonna be what. It's like a teeter-totter. Up and down. Up

1 and down. Nice and mean. Nice and mean. I never know
2 which end is gonna be up — the nice one or the mean
3 one. Why, sometimes I jest don't know how we survive
4 at all.

5 **SISSYBELLE:** But, Mama, didn't you once tell me Jesus
6 holds everything together?

7 **MAMA:** Well, of course Jesus holds everything together. But
8 what's that got to do with this here family?

9 **SISSYBELLE:** If Jesus holds everything together, why can't
10 he hold our family together?

11 **MAMA:** Well, now, that's an idea there, Sissybelle. This here
12 family changes from day to day. But Jesus is always the
13 same. We jest gotta depend on him and trust him to help
14 us when the teeter-totter's down. Ah cain't always be
15 strong. But Jesus always is. What a good idea! But that's
16 not easy, you know. 'Cause sometimes things are still
17 pretty bad.

18 **SISSYBELLE:** But you just said that Jesus doesn't change.

19 **MAMA:** I do declare, Sissybelle. You is jest like your daddy,
20 sittin' over there knowin' all this stuff. Why, thank you,
21 Sissybelle. When your daddy and your brothers come
22 back, we'll jest have to practice that there depending on
23 Jesus when things get bad. *(Pause)* And they will get bad.

24 **SISSYBELLE:** Yeah, probably about five minutes after Floyd
25 and Lester are here.

26 **MAMA:** Now, Sissybelle. Part of depending on Jesus is lovin'
27 Floyd and Lester even when they ain't nice. So you'll jest
28 have to start workin' on that. Meanwhile, Ah'm goin' to
29 check on them pickled pigs' feet we're havin' for dinner.
30 *(SISSYBELLE makes a face as MAMA exits, then she follows*
31 *MAMA.)*

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Why Bother, Anyway?

In *Why Bother, Anyway?*, THELMA is feeling overwhelmed by the difficulty of getting her family ready for church on Sunday mornings. She asks the question, Why bother to go to church, anyway? As usual, JIM BOB sets her straight.

CHARACTERS: THELMA, JIM BOB, and their children, SISSYBELLE and the mischievous FLOYD.

STAGING: FLOYD, SISSYBELLE, THELMA and JIM BOB start the skit from the rear of the sanctuary (or auditorium). SISSYBELLE should be out of the audience's view.

PROPS: Diary for FLOYD to look through; chairs for THELMA and JIM BOB to sit on.

(FLOYD enters, running, from the back of the sanctuary or auditorium, with SISSYBELLE's diary. He gets to the front of the audience and turns around with a mischievous gleam in his eye. He opens the diary and flips through the pages. SISSYBELLE's shout is heard from outside the sanctuary or auditorium before the audience sees her.)

SISSYBELLE: *Floyd! Floyd! Where are you?* *(FLOYD looks around furtively, then hides diary behind the podium or flowers, under a book, etc.)* **Where did you put my diary?** *(SISSYBELLE appears at the rear of the sanctuary [auditorium].)* **Floyd!** *(FLOYD exits through a side door.)* **You come back here!** *(SISSYBELLE runs to the front and looks for her diary but doesn't find it.)* **Mama!** *(Pause)* **Mama!** *(THELMA and JIM BOB enter, also from the rear.)*

THELMA: *(As they walk toward the front)* **Oh, listen to thet, Jim Bob. There they go agin. Ah tell you, Ah cain't stand their fightin' and yellin' all the time. Ah'm jest at mah wit's end.**

1 And it's always worse on Sunday mornin's. It makes me
2 wonder why we bother to go to church at all.

3 **SISSYBELLE:** Mama! Floyd just took my diary!

4 **THELMA:** Is thet what all this yellin's about?

5 **SISSYBELLE:** He read it, Mama! And then he hid it and now
6 I don't know where it is.

7 **THELMA:** (*Sugary sweet*) Well, now, Sissybelle, Ah reckon it'll
8 turn up sooner or later. (*Sotto voce*) Sooner if Ah git mah
9 hands on thet brother of yours! (*To SISSYBELLE*) You
10 jest run along now and git ready for church.

11 **SISSYBELLE:** (*Whiningly*) Mama.

12 **JIM BOB:** Sissybelle, git.

13 **SISSYBELLE:** Yes, Papa. (*She exits.*)

14 **THELMA:** You see what Ah mean, Jim Bob? They fight with
15 each other and whine and fuss at me, but they do
16 whatever you say. And it's always worse on Sunday
17 mornin'. Why do you think thet is, Jim Bob? Do you
18 think mebbe we should jest forgit about goin' to church?

19 **JIM BOB:** Now, Thelma, do you really think thet's the answer?

20 **THELMA:** Well, now, Jim Bob, Ah jest don't know. Ah mean,
21 why do we bother to go to church anyway? The kids jest
22 fight about goin', and they fight while we git there, and
23 Ah spend mah time tellin' them not to fight while the
24 pastor's preachin' his sermon. So why bother to go?

25 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.

26 **THELMA:** Now, Jim Bob. Yer gonna have to give me an
27 answer here. Ah cain't think of why we ought to go to
28 church. Ah mean, sure we git to fellowship with other
29 believers. And sure we git to say hi to everybody and ask
30 'em how they's doin'. And sure we git to encourage
31 somebody if they isn't doin' fine. And of course we git to
32 pray fer each other. But, Ah mean, why bother to go?

33 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.

34 **THELMA:** Ah mean, it is so hard to git this family to church
35 on Sunday mornin's. Lester teases Floyd, and Floyd

1 bothers Sissybelle, and they *all* bother me. And we is all
 2 jest runnin' around gittin' dressed up in these here fine
 3 clothes so we looks good on the outside and we's boilin'
 4 like possum stew on the inside. So why bother to do it,
 5 Jim Bob?

6 **JIM BOB:** What about God, Thelma?

7 **THELMA:** What's God got to do with goin' to church, Jim
 8 Bob? You mean to say we gots to go to church so's we kin
 9 worship God? Is thet what you mean to say, Jim Bob?
 10 Well, Ah guess thet's as good a reason as any to go to
 11 church. We do git to sing all them purty songs and we do
 12 git to think about God and what he does fer us. And, by
 13 golly, when we does that, we doesn't think so much about
 14 our problems, does we, Jim Bob? When we is worshiping
 15 God, we isn't thinkin' about ourselves! By golly! You done
 16 it agin, Jim Bob! What a right good idea thet is! Goin' to
 17 church helps us even when we've had a mornin' like this
 18 one. Which, of course, is a mornin' just like ever other
 19 Sunday mornin' around here.

20 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.

21 **SISSYBELLE:** *(Enters running from the rear of the sanctuary/
 22 auditorium.) Mama! Floyd's gonna get me! (She exits,
 23 running back the way she came.)*

24 **THELMA:** Come on, Jim Bob. Let's git to church so's we kin
 25 forgit about all this fightin', say hi to our friends, and do
 26 some serious worshiping.

27 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh. *(THELMA and JIM BOB exit down the
 28 aisle toward the back of the sanctuary/auditorium.)*

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Don't That Jest Beat All!

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3 In *Don't That Jest Beat All!*, THELMA and JIM BOB have just
4 arrived at church for a special day, Friend Day. THELMA is
5 complaining that none of their friends agreed to come. After
6 listening to her, it's plain to see that the reason they did not
7 come is because she is not a very encouraging, loving or forgiving
8 friend. JIM BOB helps her to see that she needs to be a true
9 friend in order for her friends to want to come to church with her.

10

11 **CHARACTERS:** THELMA and JIM BOB.

12

13 **STAGING:** THELMA and JIM BOB sit on two straight-backed
14 chairs facing the audience.

15

16 **PROPS:** Chairs for THELMA and JIM BOB to sit on, placed at the
17 front of the sanctuary or auditorium; Bibles for both of them.

18

19 *(THELMA and JIM BOB enter and sit down. JIM BOB takes*
20 *his hat off and puts it on the floor by his chair. They hold their*
21 *Bibles in their laps. JIM BOB's is open and he is looking at it;*
22 *THELMA's is closed.)*

23

24 **THELMA:** Don't that jest beat all, Jim Bob! Jest look at all
25 them people here in church today! All them friends.
26 Hmph! And not one of 'em is ours! Why do you think thet
27 is, Jim Bob? Why d'you think none of *our* friends would
28 come to church with us today? Ah mean, Ah told them
29 we was havin' special music and our pastor was givin' a
30 special sermon. Ah told them they'd learn about how God
31 kin help 'em with their problems. And they *do* have
32 problems! Ah told them they ought to come! And they
33 still didn't come with us. Don't that jest beat all?

34 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.

35 **THELMA:** And after all Ah did for Lula May last month when

1 her husband walked out on her. Ah mean, Ah told her he
 2 was a good-for-nothing scoundrel. Ah told her he
 3 wouldn't have left if she'd jest kept her house a little
 4 cleaner! Ah mean, why, she doesn't clean her kitchen
 5 floor until it gits sticky all over. And Ah don't think she
 6 knows what a dust rag is. And her bathrooms, well, never
 7 you mind about them bathrooms! Ah mean, Ah know she's
 8 got all them kids, but that's no excuse for a messy house,
 9 mind you!

10 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.

11 **THELMA:** And then there's Maysiebelle. Why, she didn't
 12 even come! And after Ah was so nice to her, tellin' her
 13 that her black-eyed peas tasted like lumpy oatmeal. And
 14 me spendin' all the day helpin' her make my recipe. Ah
 15 mean, Ah told her if'n she didn't start a-cookin' better,
 16 she'd never git a man to marry her. Don't that jest beat all?

17 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.

18 **THELMA:** An' what about Susie Lynn? She really needs to
 19 come to church. Especially after she told me Ah was a
 20 busybody and ought to mind my own affairs! All Ah did
 21 was tell her it's a shame she's gained them fifty pounds
 22 because now she looks older 'n forty instead a younger
 23 'n thirty. Ah was only tryin' to help. Then she insults me
 24 like that. Don't that jest beat all?!

25 **JIM BOB:** Yep. It shore do, Thelma. *(Pause)* But what about
 26 Jesus, Thelma?

27 **THELMA:** Now, what do you mean, "What about Jesus,
 28 Thelma?" Is you tellin' me ah shoulda invited Jesus to
 29 church on Friend Day?

30 **JIM BOB:** Nope. Ah'm not.

31 **THELMA:** Well, that's good, 'cause everybody knows Jesus
 32 is already in church! Everbody knows that when you ask
 33 Jesus to be your saviour, he's with you wherever you go.
 34 Everbody knows that when Jesus is your saviour, he's
 35 also your friend.

1 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.

2 **THELMA:** By golly, Ah think you got somethin' there, Jim
3 Bob. Jesus is our friend and he's always encouragin' us
4 and lovin' us and forgivin' us. He shore is a nice friend.
5 (*JIM BOB looks sideways at THELMA.*) Do you think, Jim
6 Bob, that we oughta be a friend like Jesus is? Always
7 encouragin' and lovin' and forgivin'? Now, there's an
8 idear. If'n he's our friend, mebbe, jest mebbe, we oughta
9 be like him. What do you think of that, Jim Bob? Do you
10 think mebbe we oughta be a friend like Jesus is?

11 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.

12 **THELMA:** You know, Jim Bob, our pastor has been talkin'
13 about stuff like thet in church, too. He's bin sayin' all
14 thet stuff about in-te-gritty. You know, how we's
15 supposed to love other people and how we's supposed to
16 be at peace with God by bein' at peace with other people.
17 Ah guess he's got somethin' there.

18 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh. But what about your friends,
19 Thelma?

20 **THELMA:** Now, what do you mean "What about your friends,
21 Thelma?" What about my friends?

22 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.

23 **THELMA:** You doesn't mean to say that if'n Ah was more like
24 Jesus, my friends might come to church, does you? Well,
25 Ah mean, that's an idear, but Ah'm not so sure. Ah mean,
26 friends are supposed to tell their friends things that'll
27 help them, even if'n it hurts 'em. Isn't they?

28 **JIM BOB:** Is thet encouragin'?

29 **THELMA:** Well, of course it's not encouragin'. When you is doin'
30 something wrong, you doesn't *need* to be encouraged.

31 **JIM BOB:** Is thet lovin'?

32 **THELMA:** Well, of course it's not lovin'. When you is doin'
33 something wrong, you isn't supposed to be loved!

34 **JIM BOB:** You isn't? Well, then is it forgivin'?

35 **THELMA:** Well, now, Jim Bob, Jesus is supposed to forgive.

- 1 Does you think Ah'm supposed to be that much like Jesus?
- 2 **JIM BOB:** Yep. Uh-huh.
- 3 **THELMA:** Well, now. Well, Ah . . . well, it . . . well!
- 4 **JIM BOB:** That's exactly right, Thelma. You're supposed to
5 be like Jesus. An' he'll help you to be like him. And if'n
6 you was like Jesus, (*JIM BOB stands and starts to exit during*
7 *this, very slowly so he ends up in the front, facing the audience*)
8 you couldn't keep your friends away from church, 'cause
9 they'd wanna know jest what made you so encouragin'
10 and lovin' and forgivin'. (*To the audience*) And they'd want
11 to know what the miracle was thet made you thet way.
12 (*He exits slowly.*)
- 13 **THELMA:** Well, Ah declare. Ah never. (*THELMA follows JIM*
14 *Bob.*) What's got into you all of a sudden? You hasn't said
15 that much at one time in all these years we was married.
16 Ah mean, Ah told you —
- 17 **JIM BOB:** (*Interrupting THELMA*) And now Ah'm tellin' you.
18 You cain't be at peace with God if you isn't at peace with
19 your friends. And to do thet, you need to be more like
20 Jesus. Now, that's jest the way it is.
- 21 **THELMA:** Ah declare. Don't that jest beat all! (*She follows*
22 *after him, calling to him.*) Now, wait jest a minute, **Jim Bob.**
23 We gots to talk about all this. Don't that jest beat all?
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