

A RAINBOW OF PROMISE

by Lawrence H. Balleine



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**A RAINBOW OF
PROMISE**

By Lawrence H. Balleine

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SCRIPTURE READER

(May be one person or as many as thirteen)

NARRATOR

ANGEL

SHEPHERDS

STAGEHANDS

(Five or more)

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PRODUCTION NOTES

A large papier-mâché rainbow consisting of seven sections (one for each color of the rainbow) is prepared before the presentation. The sections are placed (out of sight) at the entrance to the sanctuary. Before the service a backboard (to which the seven rainbow sections will be attached) is also prepared and laid flat on the floor of the chancel. In addition, a large cross is prepared and placed either Stage Left or Right. A large papier-mâché rock is also prepared and placed on a table in a visible location at the front of the sanctuary. At the start of the drama, the Communion table (without the elements) is in place and a lighted candle is placed on the altar. Lighting is extremely dim.

Props:

- Four palm branches
- Two matching candles
- Large wooden cross (six to eight feet high) with a small platform at its cross section
- Hammer, nails, and board
- Communion elements
- Seven sections of a rainbow (Each section is a different color — red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet)
- Backboard upon which sections of the rainbow will be attached
- Card table covered with black cloth
- Papier-mâché rock (approximately 2 x 3 feet in diameter)
- Black veil
- White cloth

Costuming: Modern “dress clothes” are appropriate for all characters with the exception of the angel, for whom a white robe is recommended.

Set Instructions:

- Pulpit and lectern on chancel level
- Holy Communion table set at front center of nave
- Large cross with a small platform at the cross section of the cross is placed at nave level, Stage Right
- Card table with black cloth is placed just to the right of the Communion table
- Papier-mâché rock is placed beside the card table
- Two matching candles — one placed on the altar and the other (temporarily unseen) in the narthex

Music: The hymns suggested in the script are traditional songs that may be found in most hymnals or on the Internet. Please feel free to substitute songs based on availability and familiarity, as you wish.

RAINBOW AND ROCK CONSTRUCTION GUIDE

To construct the papier-mâché rainbow:

1. Obtain a large rectangular sheet of Styrofoam or Fome-Cor (3' x 5' or larger).
2. Draw the outline of the rainbow and its seven sections on the Styrofoam sheet. You may tie a length of string to a pencil and tape the other end to the center of the Styrofoam. Start with the pencil at one side and make an arc across the Styrofoam, keeping the string taut. Shorten the length of the string each time you draw a new section.
3. Carefully cut out the seven sections of the rainbow.
4. Cut several strips of newspaper and submerge them into a plaster of Paris solution.
5. Wrap several of these drenched newspaper strips around each section of the rainbow. Make sure the Styrofoam is completely covered.
6. Allow each section of the rainbow to dry thoroughly.
7. Paint the sections of the rainbow with the appropriate colors (one each of green, blue, indigo, yellow, orange, violet, and red).
8. Attach Velcro strips to the back of each section of the rainbow.
9. Prepare the backboard (1/4" or 1/2" plywood works well). The backboard should be slightly larger than the size of Styrofoam used to make the rainbow. The backboard may be painted either black or white. Attach Velcro strips to the backboard (to match up with the Velcro strips on each section of the rainbow).

The rock should be two to three feet or larger in diameter. To construct the rock:

1. Obtain an appropriate size cardboard box.
2. Using wide-sized masking tape, attach several crumpled sheets of newspaper to "shape" the box so that it resembles a rock.
3. Make sure all the exposed parts of the rock are covered with masking tape.
4. Paint over the masking tape to give the rock the appropriate color(s). Moss (gathered from fallen trees or rocks) may be glued to the rock for added effect.

1 **SONG:** “All Glory, Laud and Honor”

2 **CONGREGATION:** (*Singing*)

3 **Refrain:** All glory, laud and honor,

4 To Thee, Redeemer, King,

5 To Whom the lips of children

6 Made sweet hosannas ring.

7

8 Thou art the King of Israel,

9 Thou David’s royal Son,

10 Who in the Lord’s Name comest,

11 The King and Blessed One.

12

13 *Refrain*

14

15 The company of angels

16 Are praising Thee on High,

17 And mortal men and all things

18 Created make reply.

19

20 *Refrain*

21

22 The people of the Hebrews

23 With palms before Thee went;

24 Our prayer and praise and anthems

25 Before Thee we present.

26

27 *Refrain*

28

29 To Thee, before Thy passion,

30 They sang their hymns of praise;

31 To Thee, now high exalted,

32 Our melody we raise.

33

34 *Refrain*

35

1 Thou didst accept their praises;
 2 Accept the prayers we bring,
 3 Who in all good delightest,
 4 Thou good and gracious King.

5

6 *Refrain*

7

8

Luke 22:7-13

9

Preparations for the Passover Meal

10

11 **SCRIPTURE READER:** Then came the day of Unleavened
 12 Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.
 13 Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make
 14 preparations for us to eat the Passover.”

15 “Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked.

16 He replied, “As you enter the city, a man carrying a
 17 jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that
 18 he enters, and say to the owner of the house, ‘The
 19 Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat
 20 the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a
 21 large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations
 22 there.”

23 They left and found things just as Jesus had told
 24 them. So they prepared the Passover.

25 *(Two or more STAGEHANDS bring forward filled bread trays
 26 and chalices and place them on the Communion table.)*

27

28

BLUE

29

John 16:16-22

30

Jesus Teaches in the Upper Room

31

32 **SCRIPTURE READER:** In a little while you will see me no
 33 more, and then after a little while you will see me.”

34 Some of the disciples said to one another, “What does
 35 he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no

1 more, and then after a little while you will see me,' and
 2 'Because I am going to the Father?'" They kept asking,
 3 "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't
 4 understand what he is saying."

5 Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so
 6 he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I
 7 meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no
 8 more, and then after a little while you will see me'? I tell
 9 you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world
 10 rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.
 11 A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her
 12 time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets
 13 the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into
 14 the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I
 15 will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will
 16 take away your joy."

17 NARRATOR: Blue is the color reminding us of the sadness
 18 felt by the disciples upon hearing Jesus' words that
 19 soon they would not see him anymore. (*A STAGEHAND*
 20 *brings forward the blue section of the rainbow and attaches it*
 21 *to the backboard, then exits.')*

22

23

Luke 22:15-20

24

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper

25

26 SCRIPTURE READER: And he said to them, "I have eagerly
 27 desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.
 28 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds
 29 fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

30

31

32

33

After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take
 this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not
 drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of
 God comes."

34

35

And he took the bread, gave thanks and broke it, and
 gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you;

1 do this in remembrance of me.”

2 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup,
3 saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
4 which is poured out for you.”

5 *(The worship service continues with the sacrament of Holy*
6 *Communion as per the church’s liturgy/custom. After*
7 *Communion has been served, two STAGEHANDS may move*
8 *the Communion table to extreme Stage Left or Right.)*

9

10

INDIGO

11

Matthew 26:36-46

12

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

13

14 **SCRIPTURE READER:** Then Jesus went with his disciples
15 to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit
16 here while I go over there and pray.” He took Peter and
17 the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began
18 to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “My
19 soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.
20 Stay here and keep watch with me.”

21 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the
22 ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this
23 cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

24 Then he returned to his disciples and found them
25 sleeping. “Could you men not keep watch with me for
26 one hour?” he asked Peter.

27 “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into
28 temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

29 He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father,
30 if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless
31 I drink it, may your will be done.”

32 When he came back, he again found them sleeping,
33 because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and
34 went away once more and prayed the third time, saying
35 the same thing.

1 Then he returned to the disciples and said to them,
 2 “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is
 3 near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of
 4 sinners. Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

5 **NARRATOR:** Indigo is the color of the dark night sky as
 6 Jesus prayed in Gethsemane. (*A STAGEHAND brings*
 7 *forward the indigo section of the rainbow and attaches it to the*
 8 *backboard, then exits.*)

9

10 **SONG:** “’Tis Midnight, and on Olive’s Brow,” verses 1 and 2

11 **CONGREGATION:** (*Singing*) ’Tis midnight, and on Olive’s brow
 12 The star is dimmed that lately shone
 13 ’Tis midnight, in the garden now
 14 The suffering Savior prays alone

15

16 ’Tis midnight, and from all removed
 17 The Savior wrestles lone with fears
 18 E’en the disciple whom He loved
 19 Heeds not his Master’s grief and tears

20

21

YELLOW

22

John 18:1-4

23

The Arrest of Jesus

24

25 **SCRIPTURE READER:** When he had finished praying, Jesus
 26 left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On
 27 the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his
 28 disciples went into it.

29 Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place,
 30 because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So
 31 Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of
 32 soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and
 33 Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and
 34 weapons.

35 Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him,

1 went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?”

2 **NARRATOR:** Yellow is the color of the light shining from the
3 torches and lanterns, which pierced the darkness at
4 the arrest of Jesus. (*A STAGEHAND brings forward the*
5 *yellow section of the rainbow and attaches it to the backboard,*
6 *then exits.*)

7

8 **SONG:** “Go to Dark Gethsemane,” verse 2

9 **CONGREGATION:** (*Singing*) Follow to the judgment-hall,
10 View the Lord of life arraigned;
11 Oh, the wormwood and the gall!
12 Oh, the pangs His soul sustained!
13 Shun not suffering, shame, or loss;
14 Learn of Him to bear the cross.

15

16

ORANGE

17

Luke 22:54-62

18

Peter Denies Knowing Jesus

19

20 **SCRIPTURE READER:** Then seizing him, they led him away
21 and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter
22 followed at a distance. But when they had kindled a fire
23 in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down
24 together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw
25 him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at
26 him and said, “This man was with him.”

27 But he denied it. “Woman, I don’t know him,” he said.

28 A little later someone else saw him and said, “You
29 also are one of them.”

30 “Man, I am not!” Peter replied.

31 About an hour later another asserted, “Certainly this
32 fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean.”

33 Peter replied, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking
34 about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed.

35 The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then

1 Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to
 2 him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown
 3 me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.

4 **NARRATOR:** Orange reminds us of the flames from the fire
 5 around which Peter and the others were warmed in the
 6 high priest’s courtyard. (*A STAGEHAND brings forward*
 7 *the orange section of the rainbow and attaches it to the*
 8 *backboard, then exits.*)

9

10 **SONG:** “In the Hour of Trial,” verse 1

11 **CONGREGATION:** (*Singing*) In the hour of trial,

12 Jesus, plead for me

13 Lest by base denial

14 I depart from Thee.

15 When thou see’st me waver,

16 With a look recall

17 Nor for fear or favor

18 Suffer me to fall.

19

20 *VIOLET*

21 *Mark 15:1-20*

22 *Jesus on Trial before Pilate*

23

24 **SCRIPTURE READER:** Very early in the morning, the chief
 25 priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the
 26 whole Sanhedrin, reached a decision. They bound
 27 Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.

28 “Are you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate.

29 “Yes, it is as you say,” Jesus replied.

30 The chief priests accused him of many things. So
 31 again Pilate asked him, “Aren’t you going to answer?
 32 See how many things they are accusing you of.”

33 But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

34 Now it was the custom at the Feast to release a
 35 prisoner whom the people requested. A man called

1 Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who
 2 had committed murder in the uprising. The crowd came
 3 up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.
 4 “Do you want me to release to you the king of the
 5 Jews?” asked Pilate, knowing it was out of envy that the
 6 chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. But the
 7 chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release
 8 Barabbas instead.

9 “What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king
 10 of the Jews?” Pilate asked them.

11 “Crucify him!” they shouted.

12 “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate.

13 But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”

14 Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released
 15 Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed
 16 him over to be crucified.

17 The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is,
 18 the Praetorium) and called together the whole
 19 company of soldiers. They put a purple robe on him,
 20 then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on
 21 him. And they began to call out to him, “Hail, king of the
 22 Jews!” Again and again they struck him on the head
 23 with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they
 24 paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him,
 25 they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on
 26 him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

27 **NARRATOR:** Violet reminds us of the robe that was placed
 28 on Jesus by the Roman soldiers during his trial before
 29 Pilate. (*A STAGEHAND brings forward the violet section of*
 30 *the rainbow and attaches it to the backboard, then exits.*)

31

32 **SONG:** “Ah, Holy Jesus,” verses 1 and 2

33 **CONGREGATION:** (*Singing*) Ah, holy Jesus, how hast Thou
 34 offended,

35 That man to judge Thee hath in hate pretended?

1 By foes derided, by Thine own rejected,
2 O most afflicted.

3
4 Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon Thee?
5 Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone Thee.
6 'Twas I, Lord, Jesus, I it was denied Thee!
7 I crucified Thee.

8

9

RED

10

Matthew 27:35-44

11

Jesus Is Nailed to the Cross

12

13 **SCRIPTURE READER:** When they had crucified him, they
14 divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down,
15 they kept watch over him there. Above his head they
16 placed the written charge against him: This Is Jesus,
17 The King of the Jews. Two robbers were crucified with
18 him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who
19 passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads
20 and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple
21 and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down
22 from the cross, if you are the Son of God!”

23

24

25

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35

In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him. (*One STAGEHAND enters and takes the lighted candle from the altar and places it on a platform of the cross section of the cross and takes a seat in the front pew near the base of the cross; another STAGEHAND pounds nails into a board Off-stage.*)

1 **SONG:** “Were You There?” verse 1

2 **CONGREGATION:** (*Singing*) Were you there when they
3 crucified my Lord?

4 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

5 O! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble!

6 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

7

8 **NARRATOR:** Red is the color of the blood Jesus shed for you
9 and me while dying on the cross. (*A STAGEHAND brings*
10 *forward the red section of the rainbow and attaches it to the*
11 *backboard, then exits.*)

12

13 **SONG:** “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross,” verses 1 and 2

14 **CONGREGATION:** (*Singing*) When I survey the wondrous
15 cross

16 on which the Prince of Glory died;

17 my richest gain I count but loss,

18 and pour contempt on all my pride.

19

20 Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,

21 save in the death of Christ, my God;

22 all the vain things that charm me most,

23 I sacrifice them to his blood.

24

25 *Mark 15:33-41*

26 *The Death of Jesus*

27

28 **SCRIPTURE READER:** At the sixth hour darkness came
29 over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the
30 ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi,
31 lama sabachthani?” — which means, “My God, my God,
32 why have you forsaken me?”

33 When some of those standing near heard this, they
34 said, “Listen, he’s calling Elijah.”

35 One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put



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