

# 'TWAS THE TIME BEFORE EASTER

*by Kimberlee Mendoza*



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# **'Twas the Time Before Easter**

A pageant/story for children

by Kimberlee Mendoza

## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

**Narrator** (Male or female)

**Peter** (Male)

**John** (Male)

**James** (Male)

**Mary** (Female)

**Mary Magdalene** (Female)

**Thomas** (Male)

**Jesus** (Male)

**Soldier**

(Male, but could be a female, could have extras)

**Angel** (Male or female)

**Other Disciples** (Both male and female extras)

**Crowd** (Both male and female extras)

## PRODUCTION NOTES

This drama may be simple or elaborate, depending on the costumes, props, and set. Consider showing different scenes from the Bible between the Narrator's words. Freeze frame scenes during the Crucifixion could also be powerful. This is done by having the actors getting into the position of a scene, such as when Jesus is crucified. Everyone freezes, the lights fade up, and they hold the pose. When the lights go down, they move into another position. Or you may simply opt to enact the different scenes as written.

**TIME/LOCATION:** 33 A.D. — Passover, the night of the Crucifixion, and Easter.

**SET:** Stage Right is a house with a table and several chairs. Stage Left is a tomb setting that can also double as the Garden of Gethsemane. Consider decorating blocks with stone painted tarps and plants. Place a "rock" there. (This may be a small stool draped in a tarp painted to look like a rock.) Center Stage is where Jesus will walk through the crowd of palm branches and where a cross will need to be placed in the Crucifixion scene. It would be easiest to have it resting on the floor so Jesus may be "placed" on it simply by standing against it and placing his arms in a "T" position. Other items that might dress up your set: baskets, fake fruit, fake fish, additional palm branches, and more rocks.

**COSTUMES:** Narrator wears a nice dress or suit. Jesus wears a white biblical robe with a blue sash. Angel wears a white robe, wings optional. All others wear biblical robes, headpieces, and sandals. The women's headpieces should drape loosely from their heads while the men should tie theirs around their heads with a length of cord.

**PROPS:** Palm branches (real or artificial), hammer, miscellaneous plates for setting the table, loaf of bread, juice in goblets. A fun touch (but optional) is an oversized book for the Narrator with "Twas the Time Before Easter" on the cover. This may be made of Fome-Cor or you may cover a large book, such as a wallpaper sample book, with a paper cover. The Narrator's script may be hidden inside.

**OPTIONAL EFFECTS:** Strobe lights and earthquake sound effects for when Jesus dies and a smoke machine or a blackout for Jesus' ascension.

1           (*CROWD waves palm branches at Center Stage as JESUS*  
2           *walks through them.*)

3   **NARRATOR:** 'Twas the week before Easter, and all through  
4           the street,  
5           Crowds gathered, hoping the Lord they would meet.  
6           Palm branches waving, they started to sing,  
7           "Hosanna! Hosanna to the King of Kings!"

8   **CROWD:** (*Together*) Hosanna! Hosanna to the King of Kings!  
9           Hosanna! Hosanna to the King of Kings! (*CROWD follows*  
10           *JESUS out. Lights out. Lights up on house. DISCIPLES set*  
11           *the table.*)

12   **NARRATOR:** 'Twas a few nights before Easter, and all  
13           through the home,  
14           It was business as usual, from Israel to Rome.  
15           In the daily routine, not one follower or friend  
16           Could predict that the life of Jesus would end.

17  
18           The disciples prepared for the Passover meal.  
19           In the upper room, Jesus would soon reveal (*JESUS*  
20           *enters as DISCIPLES sit around the table.*)  
21           That his time here on earth was almost done.  
22           His life's purpose was to die for everyone. (*JESUS*  
23           *breaks bread and hands it out.*)

24  
25           He broke bread and prayed for all to see,

26  
27   **JESUS:** This is my body given for you; remember me.  
28           (*DISCIPLES each take a piece of bread and eat it.*)

29   **NARRATOR:** Then he took the cup and prayed over it too,

30   **JESUS:** This is my blood, the covenant poured out for you.  
31           (*DISCIPLES drink from their cups. Lights out on house.*  
32           *DISCIPLES exit. JESUS walks to a rock at Center Stage and*  
33           *prays.*)

34   **NARRATOR:** Jesus left soon after to pray for the night,  
35           To gain strength for the coming spiritual fight.

- 1           **Gruff soldiers descended on Gethsemane, (*SOLDIERS***  
 2           *enter and confront JESUS. CROWD also enters here)*
- 3           **Tried him and beat him, then nailed him to a tree.**  
 4           *(JESUS is taken forcibly to the cross. SOLDIERS may*  
 5           *hammer the wood, as if nailing him to the cross. MARY and*  
 6           *MARY MAGDALENE enter, crying.)*
- 7           **JESUS: Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me.**
- 8           **CROWD: (*Together*) Crucify him! Let the thief go free!**
- 9           **JESUS: Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.**
- 10          **SOLDIER: If you are the Christ, then let angels rescue you!**
- 11          **NARRATOR: It was now the sixth hour, and darkness came.**  
 12          **The world would never be the same.**
- 13          **Jesus spoke, and the crowd could hear it:**
- 14          **JESUS: Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.**  
 15          *(Blackout as all exit. Consider using a strobe light and*  
 16          *playing sound effects of earthquake noises. Then lights*  
 17          *slowly rise on the house and its occupants — the DISCIPLES,*  
 18          *MARY, and MARY MAGDALENE, who are visibly upset.)*
- 19          **NARRATOR: 'Twas the hour of Easter, when all through the**  
 20          **land**
- 21          **His grieving followers could not understand.**  
 22          **The disciples were hiding away in fear,**  
 23          **In hopes that Roman soldiers would not come near.**  
 24          *(JAMES enters house. DISCIPLES are scared.)*
- 25          **PETER: Brother James, did you bolt the door nice and**  
 26          **right?**
- 27          **JAMES: Yes. I believe nobody followed me tonight.**
- 28          **MARY MAGDALENE: What will happen to all of us now?**
- 29          **MARY: Don't worry. God will provide for us somehow.**  
 30          *(MARY and MARY MAGDALENE exit. Lights out on house*  
 31          *and up on tomb as MARY and MARY MAGDALENE*  
 32          *approach.)*
- 33          **NARRATOR: At dawn on the first day, they went to the**  
 34          **tomb,**  
 35          **But the Marys found only an empty stone room.**

1           *(ANGEL enters.)*

2           **A glowing white angel approached them and said,**

3   **ANGEL: Do not be afraid. He's risen from the dead!** *(MARY,*  
4           *MARY MAGDALENE, and ANGEL exit. Lights back up on*  
5           *the house with the DISCIPLES.)*

6   **NARRATOR: Then outside the door there arose such a**  
7           **clatter, (DISCIPLES run toward doorway.)**

8           **The disciples ran to see what was the matter.**

9           **Away to the door they flew like a flash,**

10          **Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.** *(MARY*  
11          *and MARY MAGDALENE are in the doorway.)*

12

13          **Frightened and shaking, Mary stood there.**

14

15          **MARY: They've taken the Lord, and we don't know where!**

16          **NARRATOR: The Twelve were confused. Where could he**  
17          **be?**

18          **Hadn't he died? Couldn't she see?**

19

20          **The disciples still believed that Jesus was dead,**

21          **But Peter didn't wait. He ran on ahead.** *(PETER and*  
22          *JOHN exit house. Lights up on tomb as they run up to it.)*

23          **Huffing and puffing, he was quick to arrive**

24          **And gawk at the tomb. Could Jesus be alive?** *(They start*  
25          *to walk away, then JESUS appears.)*

26

27          **When what to their wondering eyes should appear**

28          **But the risen Christ Jesus, standing so near.** *(JESUS*  
29          *pretends to talk.)*

30          **As he talked to them, their spirits soared.**

31          **They knew in a moment it must be the Lord.**

32

33          **More rapid than birds, he disappeared from their sight,**  
34          *(JESUS exits.)*

35          **But for once in three days, they knew all would be**



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