

IMAGES OF EASTER

(See the saltedlightly.com blog for ideas on how to stage this piece)

Tableau of Jesus on trial - he at one end of the performance space with soldiers behind him, facing Pilate and/or Herod and/or Caiaphas & more soldiers at the other end.

READER ONE:

He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

Jesus steps forward to the centre.

Other performers adjust so they are in a circle around him. Slow motion miming of shouting, shaking fists etc.

READER TWO:

My God, my God! Why have you forsaken me? Why do you remain so distant? I am scorned and despised by all. Everyone who sees me mocks me.

The performers make the thorns with their hands and come towards him, forming the crown.

READER THREE:

I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint. My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and feet.

Jesus carrying the cross, mime-walking on the spot, stooped down - another performer leaning sideways over his shoulder, arms outstretched as the cross.

(the other performers go to the sides, or crouch watching)

READER ONE:

There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance - nothing to cause us to take a second look. He was despised and rejected - a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. We

turned our backs on him and looked the other way when he went by. Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down.

3 performers form the 3 crosses on the hill - the one Jesus carried in the centre.

READER THREE:

We thought he brought it on himself, that God was punishing him for his own failures. But it was our sins that did that to him, that ripped and tore and crushed him. Our sins! The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

*Joseph of Arimathea, carrying Jesus.
The tomb forms and Jesus is put inside. Joseph rolls the stone in front.*

READER TWO:

All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own. And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong, on him - on him.
He did no wrong and he never deceived anyone, but he was buried like a criminal. He was put in a rich man's grave.

The performers (and possibly readers) form groups making tableaux of emotions, moving very slowly from one to the next, not keeping in time with the other groups - muttering, shouting and whispering repeated key words from "When I survey," each word with its tableau.

*(for example - 1st group - Boast; Sorrow; Nature
2nd group - Charm; Amazing; Pride
3rd group - Richest; Sacrifice; Offering)*

Sound Cue: After 2 or 3 times through these, "When I survey the Wondrous Cross" - recording, or sung live by worship team/choir.

The groups keep repeating the emotion tableaux through the 1st verse.

2nd verse - picture of the crucifixion: a reader as the cross, their back to Jesus, who is in place in front as if hanging on it; the other readers and 1 or 2 performers either side as soldiers. The rest of the performers are mourners, kneeling either side at the foot of the cross.

Jesus and the cross rotate very slowly, ending up facing the same way they started.

3rd verse - Jesus is slowly lifted (the "cross" person's knees bent a little, so their behind and arms are under his; a soldier(s) supporting Jesus's feet, and 2 others - still in character as soldiers on either side, but actually spotting in case he slips. As I say in the blog, obviously only do this if all concerned are comfortable and it's safe).

The 'cross' leans forward a bit, so Jesus is lying along their back, his feet raised a little by the soldier(s), his arms still outstretched.

Jesus is slowly set back down again. He drops his head, dying.

4th verse - simple praise gestures from all but Jesus, ending standing in a circle lifting hands, hiding Jesus from view.

At the end of the song all the performers come close together, kneel and bow down, including Jesus.

READER TWO:

Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed.

The readers cover them with a sheet or parachute silk and kneel around.

READER THREE:

But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over.

READER ONE:

It's what God had in mind all along. The plan was that he give himself as an offering for sin so that he'd see life come from it. Life, life and more life.

Slight movement under the sheet with a little whispering - no words. It stops.

READER TWO:

And God's plan will prosper in his hands. When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he'll see that it's worth it and be glad he did it. And because of what he has experienced, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins.

Suppressed joy, whispering of "He's alive!" and slight movement under the sheet, then stopping again - gradually building each time.

READER THREE:

We are no longer slaves to sin. If we get included in Christ's sin-conquering death, we also get included in his life-saving resurrection. Death no longer has mastery over him. Never again will death have the last word.

More movement and whispering under the sheet.

READER TWO:

The death he died, he died to sin once and for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

More movement and whispering.

READER ONE:

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

More movement and whispering under the sheet. When it subsides, the readers stand, looking at the sheet.

ALL READERS:
It is finished.

They look at each other, smiling, excited, then turn outwards to face the audience.

ALL READERS:
Why do you look for the living among the dead?

They whisk the sheet off and all performers jump up, cheering, clapping, celebrating, shouting "He's alive!" etc.

READER TWO:
The Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead

EVERYONE:
(to the audience) . . . is alive in you!

(Straight into a joyous time of congregational worship, eg "The Greatest Day in History" - possibly with the cast still in the performance space - with choreographed movement or just jumping around and dancing freely, waving flags etc)

The Bible readings in this drama are a combination of the New Living Translation, the Message and the NIV.
Mainly Isaiah 53, Psalm 22 and Romans 6.