

# GODSPELL



STUDY GUIDE



# GODSPELL

Book by John-Michael Tebelak  
Music by Stephen Schwartz  
New Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz

## A WELCOME NOTE FROM PRODUCER KEN DAVENPORT

It is with great pleasure that I invite you to deepen your experience of the first ever Broadway revival of the legendary rock musical *Godspell*.

As Stephen Schwartz said to me, "*Godspell* is essentially about a community of people coming together." This production has brought together an incredible community of creative theater artists, a spectacular ensemble, and a host of dedicated support staff. I've even put together the largest community of producers ever to mount this historic 40th Anniversary production. By experiencing the show as an audience member, engaging in discussion, and sharing the wealth of material available through our website and social media, you'll become a part of our community.

*Godspell* is one of those rare and unique breeds of shows that allows the company to use its creativity and unique gifts to mold and shape it into what they want it to be. I encourage you to use your own creativity and unique gifts to shape your experiences of *Godspell* into new ideas, personal discoveries, and memories that will last a lifetime.



Ken Davenport

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Teachers are encouraged to use this guide to elicit student discussion before the show, guide them through aspects of the production, and engage them in activities once they return to the classroom. Our goal is to help teachers utilize the production as a catalyst for student education, collaboration, and inspiration.

One of the many themes of *Godspell* involves people coming together as a community to learn from each other through words and deeds. We hope that your students are inspired by the production and can learn from you, from themselves, and from each other through these activities.

Please feel free to copy the materials in this guide to aid you in sparking classroom interest and discussion before and after the performance. Enjoy the show!

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by Timothy Reid for:



[www.showstudies.com](http://www.showstudies.com)

[WWW.GODSPELL.COM](http://WWW.GODSPELL.COM)



# THE STORY OF GODSPELL

## THIS IS THE BEGINNING...

*Godspell* began as a student master's thesis project at Carnegie Mellon University in 1970. The original production was a collection of improvised scenes based on the Gospel according to St. Matthew and music based on traditional hymns created and directed by John-Michael Tebelak. The show transferred for a ten week run to New York City's La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club in 1971. Producers interested in opening the show Off-Broadway approached composer Stephen Schwartz about writing new music and lyrics. With a new score, *Godspell* moved to Off-Broadway where it soon became one of the longest-running Off-Broadway musicals, before moving to Broadway in June 1976. It ended its run in September 1977 with a total run of more than 2,600 performances.

The show centers on a group of followers who are called to gather together to create a community following a very loving and knowledgeable teacher. By sharing stories about living good lives and singing about love, joy, gratitude, judgement and redemption, the group of disparate individuals band together with a common purpose to face challenges and obstacles as they are tested along the way.

In this innovative 40th anniversary revival, director Daniel Goldstein has grounded his vision for the play "in a dilapidated theater" as 10 people come out of a storm "both literally and figuratively." These characters find "love and community through the teachings of a charismatic individual." The show is being staged in the round which is new for this musical and contains new arrangements and music from Stephen Schwartz. Goldstein describes his creative approach to



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this work as a "love letter to the theater, to what theater can do." The ensemble is charged with bringing a range of stories to life for the audience utilizing a host of theatrical devices including vaudeville, puppetry, story theater and varied song stylings. Goldstein says that he'd like the audience to experience through *Godspell* the "spirit of community and the idea to always treat others as you would have them treat you."



# PREPARE YE

## Ideas for students to consider before seeing the show

- Use the information in this guide and the web resources as a starting point to get to know *Godspell* the musical. It's always a good idea to have some background information about the play and the subject matter so you can get deeper into the show. The show's open format has created a wide variety of productions. Get your brain thinking about what you'll experience.
- Become a fan of the show on Facebook® and follow the buzz circulating the production on Twitter®. Get the inside scoop and find out what's happening surrounding the show!
- Take the opportunity to learn what you can about musical theater. How does this type of theater tell a story? How do the scenes and musical numbers work together? How does the choreography help? *Godspell* has a very unique open format where scenes, stories and songs flow one into another. How do you think the story of this production will be told in scenes and music?
- Take a peek at the discussion questions in the *Did You See That?!* section of the guide. Give yourself an idea of what issues, ideas, and situations the show deals with. Get yourself a jump start for the class discussion after the show.
- After absorbing all of this important background information, think about what your expectations of the play are. What will you see on stage? What will the story be like? How will the characters interact with each other? How will it begin and end?

## AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS

Going to see a Broadway show is an incredibly exciting and entertaining experience. In order to enhance that experience, here are some things to keep in mind:

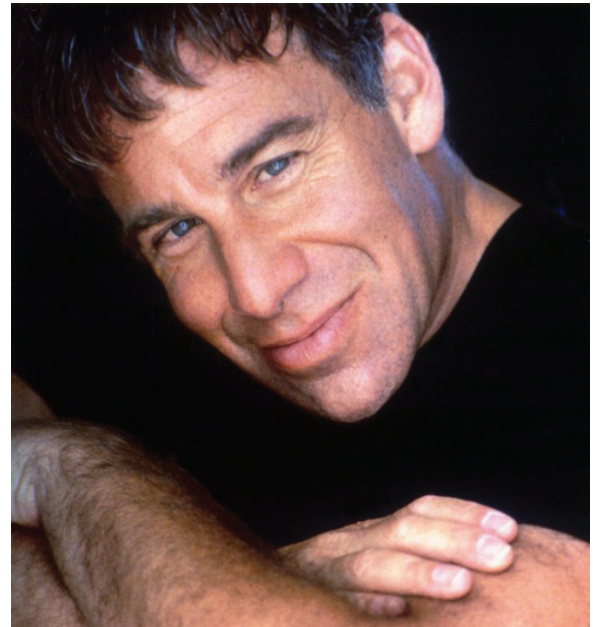
- **Take your seat.** The show is staged in the round so you'll have an experience like spectators at a concert! There's an exciting dynamic as you are aware of the audience fully around the action. You might even see the performers interact with the audience or you may be invited on stage!
- **Turn off your cell phone.** The messages and texts can wait until later - get into the world of the show completely!
- **Get ready to watch carefully.** The wonderful thing about live theater is that it's happening right there before you! Be sure to soak it all in.
- **Let the actors do the talking.** Feel free to laugh at the jokes and be moved by the drama, but save your commentary for the conversation with the class after the show.
- **Show your appreciation.** When the show is over, applaud for the actors and wait for the curtain call to be over before leaving your seat. To show them your highest praise, give them a standing ovation.



# "A-ONE, A-TWO, A-ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR!"

## AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

Stephen Schwartz has contributed music and/or lyrics to *Godspell*, *Pippin*, *The Magic Show*, *The Baker's Wife*, *Working* (which he also adapted and directed), *Rags*, *Children of Eden* and the current Broadway hit, *Wicked*. He collaborated with Leonard Bernstein on the English texts for Bernstein's *Mass* and wrote the title song for the play and movie *Butterflies Are Free*. For children, he has written songs for two musicals, *Captain Louie* and *My Son Pinocchio*. For films, he collaborated with Alan Menken on the songs for Disney's "Enchanted" as well as the animated features "Pocahontas" and "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" and wrote the songs for the DreamWorks animated feature "The Prince of Egypt." Mr. Schwartz has recently been given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame. Other awards include three Academy Awards, four Grammy Awards, four Drama Desk Awards, and a tiny handful of tennis trophies.



### What inspired you initially about getting involved in the first production of *Godspell*?

**Stephen Schwartz:** I actually saw the show in an earlier form performed at an off-off-Broadway theater called The Cafe La MaMa. I was invited to see it by the eventual commercial producers, Edgar Lansbury and Joe Beruh, who were interested in transferring the show for a commercial run but felt that it needed a score. When I saw it, the thing that impressed me about it most, beyond the creativity of how it was staged, was the concept of the show. These parables and stories have been around for almost two thousand years and no one before John-Michael Tebelak, who created the show, had ever realized that they could be funny.

So I think it was the humor – not satirical humor, sending it up – but finding the humor in human behavior that's embodied in these stories that interested me. The fresh and original concept of that, plus the overall joyousness of the piece, made me want to be part of it.

### Could you describe your creative process of combining the parable stories with the classic hymns and your own ideas?

**Stephen Schwartz:** John-Michael selected the Episcopal hymns that he wanted used in the show, and together he and I determined where the best place to use them would be. Once we had decided that, I wrote new music to the lyrics of these hymns, and I based the music on a few things. First of all

was the character who was going to sing the song, because each of the songs features a different one of the characters as the lead singer. Having seen the cast at Cafe La MaMa (although we replaced two cast members), I basically knew who was going to sing the songs in advance, and therefore could tailor them to those specific voices and personalities. In addition, I based the music on what the theatrical task at hand was. Did it require something that was sort of funny and sassy like "Turn Back O Man," or did it need to be high energy like "We Beseech Thee," or "Bless the Lord," or sincere and catchy like "Day by Day"?

I was influenced by the kind of music I was listening to at the time on the radio and records, the singer-songwriters that I admired, and what the pop music of the day was. I often refer to the score now as "pop pastiche", because each of the songs has its own pop identity.

There were a few other songs in the show that were not from the hymnal but were musicalizations of Bible passages, such as "Alas for You" or "Light of the World". And there were other songs, that I also wrote lyrics for, that were specifically written to advance a theatrical moment in the show, such as "All for the Best" or "Learn your Lessons Well."

### You've added some new arrangements and music to this new production - can you talk about the new additions?



**Stephen Schwartz:** There are two sequences that weren't musicalized before that, at the request of the director, Danny Goldstein, I've musicalized now. One of them, in fact, occurs in "Learn Your Lessons Well." That song was the last song written for the original show. It was written in rehearsal because there was an area in the first act that felt as if it needed music, a long period of time without a song. Originally, it was just two quick verses that existed independently of one other, sung by the character of Gilmer, and in the middle there was a spoken section of text. Danny asked if I could musicalize that text so that "Learn Your Lessons Well" could become one unified musical sequence. The other new section of music is the lead into the last song of the first act, "Light of the World." That used to be a group chant, and since Danny was using the group chant idea elsewhere in the show, he wanted something different for that section, so I musicalized it.

This production also includes "Beautiful City," which was originally written for the movie, but which I revised several years later for a benefit concert following the LA riots. That version of the song subsequently began to be incorporated into many productions of the show, and it's in this new production as well.

### What about this new production excites you?

**Stephen Schwartz:** Every time *Godspell* is done, it is basically created anew, because it grows out of the improvisations of the cast and the directorial concept. So it's always interesting and exciting to see what each group doing the show comes up with.

### What do you think it is about *Godspell* that makes it such an endearing show and still makes it relevant in its 40th anniversary production?

**Stephen Schwartz:** The content of it didn't spring up anew 40 years ago. As I said, the content has been around for two thousand years, and the stories and lessons and philosophy have remained relevant for all that time. That being said, the original *Godspell* was created at a time of great national dissension and division, centered on the Vietnam War. It was a time when the fabric of our society was badly frayed, and we seem to, for various reasons, be at another such time in American society. There is great polarization again now, with different sides really being unwilling to listen to one another at all, so that there seems now to be an increasing inability

to come to any national consensus about anything.

*Godspell*, at its heart, is about the formation of a community out of disparate people coming together over very basic and simple philosophical concepts, such as: "Always treat others as you would have them treat you" or (as Jesus says to his followers), "Anything you do for one of your brothers here, you do for me." These are concepts that don't seem very present now in our way of dealing with one another, and therefore I think they have great current relevance as something our society needs to try to return to. That being said, *Godspell* is never intended to be preachy or to be a "Sunday school lesson". It's funny and joyous, so I don't mean to imply a kind of earnestness in the intention of this production. But that's why I think it has particular relevance at this time.

### Is there a theme that runs through your musical theater work?

**Stephen Schwartz:** I think most writers have a couple of themes that they seem to return to over and over again. I probably have two or three. Although as you write, you're not generally conscious of the thematic relation of what you're currently doing to other things you've done in the past.

I think I deal a lot with characters who see themselves as outsiders and who are dealing with how and whether to fit in. I also often deal with the theme of what's important in life and what's not. I think, in a way, both of these ideas pertain to *Godspell*. (Then there are some themes that I frequently deal with regarding relationships between generations which I don't think particularly figure in *Godspell*.)

### What advice would you have for aspiring composers/lyricists?

**Stephen Schwartz:** I have a couple of pieces of advice. One is to try to acquire knowledge and craft through studying: learning about music and music theory, listening to a lot of things, and learning what you respond to in all different kinds of music. This will increase the palette, if you will, for what you can "paint." I think that it's important for people who want to be writers to write, to start writing songs or musical theater pieces or whatever they're interested in. Maybe at school, they could get a group together to read or sing through what they've written. They should start to have the experience of writing and having things performed to see how people respond to it.



# AN INTERVIEW WITH HUNTER PARRISH

Parrish reprises his role as Silas Botwin on the seventh season of Showtime's critically acclaimed show "Weeds." He made his Broadway debut to critical acclaim as Melchior, the smart young hero in the Tony Award-winning hit musical *Spring Awakening*.

**The character you're playing in *Godspell* is different than your other roles - what have your preparations been like?**

**Hunter Parrish:** For this character in *Godspell*, I'm reminding myself to have fun. That's what this show is about - letting loose and reminding everyone else to have joy. There's a song called "Light of the World," which is the sentiment of the whole show - that we are all beautiful lights and that we should shine on others. That's really been a focal point for me in trying to portray Jesus. On the other side, preparing for Broadway in general, performing can be pretty exhausting. So, resting my body is important, taking care of my vocals, and working with a vocal coach to keep those muscles working is important. All of that is helpful to allow me to tell the story 8 times a week.

**You play such a charismatic and inspiring character. Who would you say inspires you?**

**Hunter Parrish:** To be completely relevant to *Godspell*, I grew up as a Christian, so the character I'm playing has actually been a great influence in my life. His teachings are really important to me. There are a few people in my life, personally, that I look up to for the little things they do, for the little bits of joy they spread, for the love that they give out, that inspire me.

**There is a great deal of improvisation and creativity in the show - what has that experience been like for you?**

**Hunter Parrish:** That has been one of the most exciting parts of this process. Most of the time you get a script, you learn your lines, the director tells you where to go, and that's how you do a play - and you bring your own ideas to it. With *Godspell*, it's taught me such a personal lesson - so much of the magic that can happen on stage happens because you're vulnerable. That's the environment that Danny the director has set up - you can be vulnerable and there are no bad choices, nothing is "wrong." So you learn to love yourself deeper than you ever thought you could and that's a huge part of the magic that's come out of this rehearsal process.

**Do you think there is a special kind of community created at a Broadway show? With *Godspell*?**

**Hunter Parrish:**

Absolutely. I grew up loving Broadway. Every show I saw, I would save the playbill, I would get a poster, I would get the cast album. Those are a huge part of the memorabilia I have at home in scrapbooks. It's always fun to meet someone outside of New York City and talk with them about the shows that they have seen. You find out how much you have in common with people who see plays and enjoy Broadway, so I do think it develops community. Traditionally you go see a play, you're entertained, you're swept up in it and you walk away singing the music, but part of it is left there. With *Godspell*, there are no stars - it is about 10 people coming together to tell a story in front of an audience. It doesn't feel separated. It feels like we're all there together at that specific time having that specific moment. As an audience member, *Godspell* will not just be something that they see, but something that they are a part of.

**What overall lessons do you think there are to be learned from *Godspell*?**

**Hunter Parrish:** "Love your neighbor as yourself," "Treat others as you want to be treated," "Judge not, and you shall not be judged." But I think the main message of *Godspell* is a that of love, joy, and fun. We live in a world that's become so rigid and structured - this production is the antithesis of that. The message is to remind yourself to have joy and have fun.

**How did you get your start in theater?**

**Hunter Parrish:** I came to New York when I was 6 years old and I saw *Cats* on Broadway. I saw all of those people in costumes, flipping around, doing twists and turns, singing songs. There was all of this magic for me as a 6-year-old. I knew that it was something I wanted to do. I didn't know what that was until I was older and understood the world a little more and I understood myself a little more. But I knew that it looked like fun that I wanted to be a part of whatever story they were telling on stage.



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# AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNA MARIA PEREZ DE TAGLE

She is best known for her role as Ashley Dewitt on the Disney Channel's hit series "Hannah Montana." Her other performing credits include acting, singing and dancing in "Camp Rock" (Disney/Sudden Motion), the motion picture *Fame* (MGM/Lakeshore) and the recent "Camp Rock 2: The Final Jam."

## Can you describe your character?

**Anna Maria Perez de Tagle:** I get to play myself initially. We keep our actual names for the musical, so I will be "Anna Maria." I play the innocent pure one who instantly follows Jesus and tries to get everyone else to follow him as well. I am very honored, as my character sings the hit song, "Day by Day." She jumps in right away. I don't want to give away too much - but that's what my character is like.

## What role does your character play in the ensemble?

**Anna Maria Perez de Tagle:** She starts out very timid and very shy and doesn't speak for herself, really. She discovers, throughout the show, who she really is. There's a great moment before she sings "Day by Day" where she breaks out of her shell. I think she was called to be in that group because she really wants to break out and be heard. This particular group of people allows her to do that.

## What's it like working with this group of actors to create the *Godspell* community?

**Anna Maria Perez de Tagle:** From the very first rehearsal, I knew that we would all have great chemistry. We bonded immediately. We've already got a bunch of inside jokes. Everybody in this cast is extremely talented in their own special ways. We all have distinct voices for each of the songs. The cast is amazing, so everyone is in for a great show. The key messages of *Godspell* are community and undying love for all people. We are that kind

of group in that we are all so unique in our own ways. So for us to come together for this production - it's like we're having our own *Godspell* experience, in a way.

## What has the rehearsal process been like to put together such a creative show?

**Anna Maria Perez de Tagle:** It all started very improvisational. Our rehearsal process has been so much fun. We're coming up with new things every day. The story and the songs will be the same, but we're presenting it in our own way. Because we are in the round at Circle in the Square, the audience will surround us, making a unique, more intimate Broadway experience. Of course we're honoring the original, but we're making it exciting for today's and tomorrow's audiences. What's great is that, since we are essentially playing ourselves, we can explore and create as we go, so no two performances will be the same.

## What in your acting or theatre experiences prepared you for your role in *Godspell*?

**Anna Maria Perez de Tagle:** I grew up doing musical theater in San Jose. A lot of people know me from the Disney Channel as I did "Hannah Montana" and "Camp Rock." Not only was it my Disney stint, but it was also the U.S. and South American tour I did with the Jonas Brothers and Demi Lovato last year that prepared me. The discipline while touring definitely prepared me for the rigorous schedule on Broadway which is eight shows a week. I'm definitely looking forward to it. I'm so excited!

## What message do you think *Godspell* holds for audiences?

**Anna Maria Perez de Tagle:** I think people will leave the theater inspired to do good, to care for people, to live their lives in the right way. They are not only going to be leaving the theater singing the great Stephen Schwartz songs - the newcomers will be hooked and the people who remember *Godspell* will fall in love again. It's about loving people and doing what you think is right.



# BY MY SIDE

## BECOME A PART OF THE GODSPELL ONLINE COMMUNITY

Using the amazing connectivity now available through internet sources and social media, you and your students can become a part of the *Godspell* community before the show to get prepared for your visit and after the show to have your voices heard. Connect with other fans of the show. Check out the resources highlighted below - then visit [www.godspell.com](http://www.godspell.com) and follow the links at the bottom of our home page to get started.



Producer Ken Davenport has provided us with an incredible resource that illuminates the process of creating this production. Visit [www.godspellblog.com](http://www.godspellblog.com) and discover a fascinating day by day insider's glimpse at his adventures producing *Godspell* on Broadway from initial budget analysis through casting, design, promotion, and final preparations for opening night!

**facebook**

Connect with us on Facebook for up-to-date information, behind the scenes rehearsal photos, and insights into the people involved with the production.  
<http://www.facebook.com/Godspell>

**twitter**

Follow us on Twitter to hear first hand about production developments, rehearsal notes from the cast and creative team, and to get inside information day by day.  
<http://twitter.com/BwayGodspell>

**You Tube**

Explore our YouTube Channel to view a special message from Stephen Schwartz and see our cast members showcase the talents they're bringing to *Godspell*.  
<http://www.youtube.com/BwayGodspell>

**★BroadwaySpace.com™**

Visit our Broadway Space profile page to join this community and link up with other theater fans. Get updates on *Godspell* and other Broadway events.

<http://www.broadwayspace.com/profile/GodspellBroadway>

**WWW.GODSPELL.COM**



# LEARN YOUR LESSONS WELL

**TEACHERS:** The cross curricular exercises on the following pages are intended to help you utilize the play to generate some great classroom activity and discussion. They allow your students to use the ideas and questions of the play as a way to make connections with their own experiences. Activities are classroom ready and can be used singularly or combined into a larger unit. Photocopy a class set and away you go. Utilize the other pages in this guide as you and your students need them to complete tasks.

## THE ACTIVITIES UTILIZE THE FOLLOWING STANDARDS:

### ELEMENTARY

#### WRITING

- Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.

#### SPEAKING & LISTENING

- Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.
- Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.
- Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

#### READING

- Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
- Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).
- Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

#### WRITING

- Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and

publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

#### SPEAKING & LISTENING

- Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

### HIGH SCHOOL

#### LANGUAGE ARTS

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

#### SOCIAL STUDIES

- Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

#### VISUAL ARTS

- Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
- Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
- Using knowledge of structures and functions
- Making connections between Visual Arts and other disciplines

Standards utilized from: [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

**WWW.GODSPELL.COM**



# DID YOU SEE THAT?!

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- In *Godspell* there is a story about a man who is given more time to pay his debts but does not do the same for one who owes him. What do you think the message in this story is?
- Why do you think it's better to do good deeds in secret rather than announcing all of them?
- The show's lessons are often told through metaphor, for example: "no servant can be slave to two masters." What do you think this phrase means? How does a metaphor creatively convey a message?
- The parables or stories used throughout the production are intended to get people thinking about their lives in deep ways. Why do you think a creative story might be a better way to convince people of something?
- The story of the Prodigal Son - the story of the father who gratefully welcomes home his wasteful son - is about loss and redemption. Why do you think these two themes are popular themes for stories?
- One of the main targets of criticism in the stories of the show is the "hypocrite." What is a hypocrite? Why is this character trait, that of being hypocritical, one to avoid?
- A critical character is told, "you who is faultless shall throw the first stone." What does this figurative language mean? Why is this an important statement?
- What's the difference between the phrases "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" and "if someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn and offer him your left"? What different philosophies or ideas do these statements represent? Which one do you believe in most? Why?
- One of the themes from *Godspell* is "Always treat others as you would have them treat you." What do you think this statement means? How does a person live by these words?
- Many of the stories and songs in *Godspell* offer words to live by. What lessons will you take from the show? What words do you live by?

In *Godspell*, characters bicker, argue, tease, and fight, but never **bully**. How would you use the ideas discussed above (examining your faults before faulting others, turning the other cheek, treating others as you would have them treat you, coming together as a community) to create some anti-bullying messages for your classroom? How can you use the ideas from *Godspell* to create a caring community in your own classroom? In your school? In your town or city?

# DID YOU SEE THAT?!

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- This production may be the first one you've ever seen that's been staged in the round. What was that experience like for you as an audience member? How do you think this choice relates to the themes of the show?
- The way that cast members interacted with the audience and spoke to them directly was a technique called "breaking the fourth wall." Find out what you can about this fascinating theatrical concept. How does this "break" intensify the actor/audience relationship?
- This production incorporates a wide variety of theater styles - from story theater to slapstick, and musical styles - from pop to rap. What do you think this variety of styles adds to the overall impact of the show?
- Many of the character names for performers in this ensemble are their actual names in real life. What do you think that interesting choice says about what *Godspell* is saying to audiences?
- Throughout this guide, *Godspell* has been described as a show about community. How did the show make you feel as if you were a part of a community? What other communities are you a part of?
- Stephen Schwartz says that this show is created anew each time it's produced because "it grows out of the improvisations of the cast and the directorial concept." What creative ideas did you see from the cast or the director throughout the production? What would you bring to the production?
- Hunter Parrish believes that one of the important messages from *Godspell* is that we all have talents that we should let shine. What talents do you possess that you could share with others?
- Anna Maria Perez de Tagle describes a moment where her character "breaks out of her shell" because the group "allows her to do that." What qualities in a group or community allow people to open up? Why is that important?
- Many people believe that *Godspell* is still relevant today because groups in our society are not often able to listen to one another or come to a consensus (agreement). Why might that be an important issue for our society?





**YOUR TASK:** Take a walk with your teacher and explore the area outside your classroom. Explore things outside and think about what you like about nature. Using the boxes below, draw or paste in the things in nature you're thankful for and explain why.

I am thankful for...

because

I am thankful for...

because

I am thankful for...

because

I am thankful for...

because

Have you ever helped out a person who you didn't know? Use the space below to write a short story about a "Good Samaritan." Use the ideas from the original story to make a new story with your own new details. You can use your own experiences helping people if you like.

Title of the story: \_\_\_\_\_

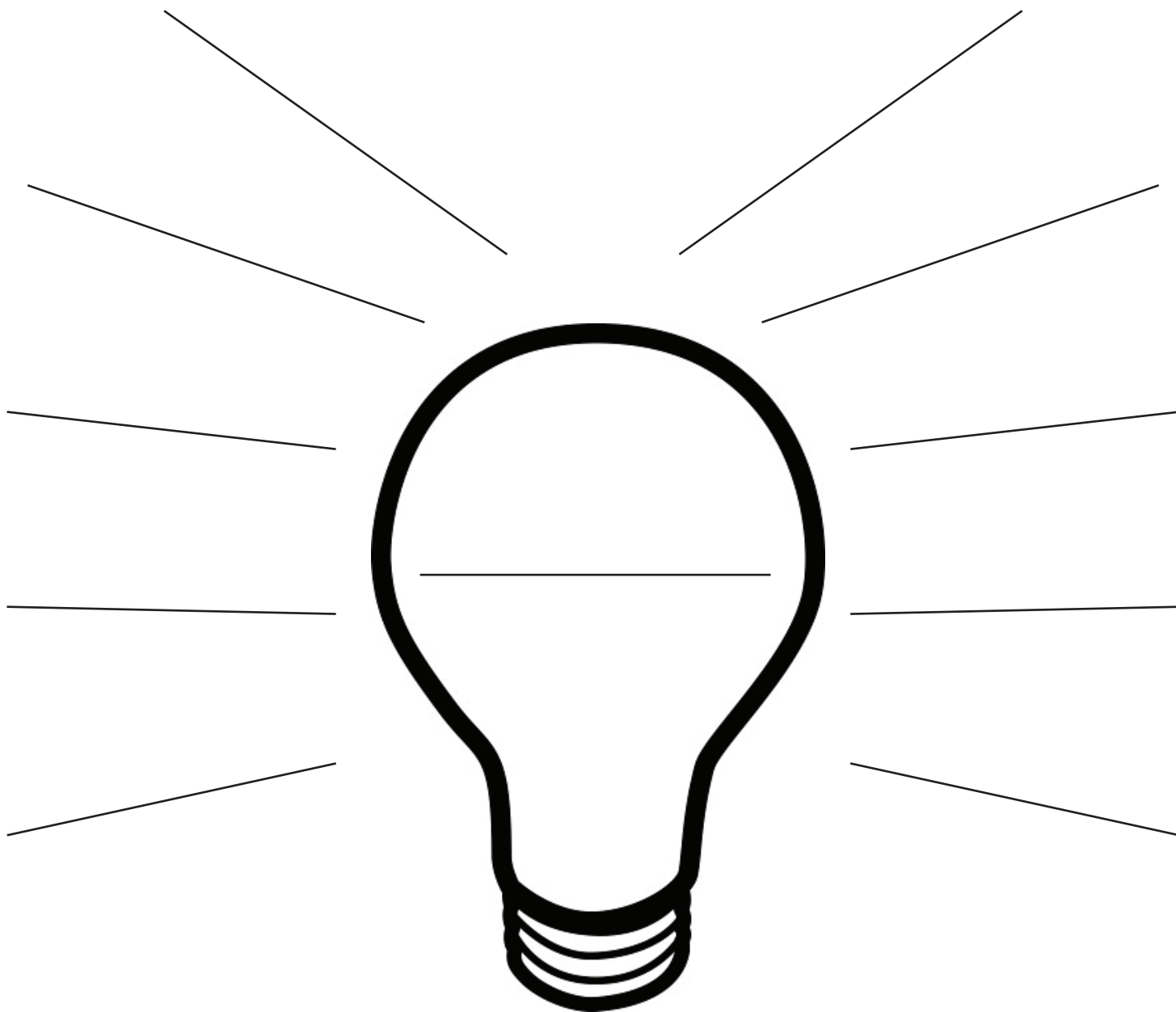
This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

You may use the back of this paper for your story if you need more space.





**YOUR TASK:** The cast of *Godspell* sings about being “The Light of the World.” They sing about the good things they are doing for their communities. In the middle of the light bulb below write your name. Then use the light lines to write the good things that you are doing for your communities. Your communities can be your family, your town, your school, your class, or other groups that you belong to.



After you’re done filling the lines in with your good things, show them to a classmate. Use the back of this paper to write some of the good things your classmates are doing that you could do.



**FOR TEACHERS:** One of the important themes of *Godspell* is that of building a community through working and, thus, learning together. The following exercises can be used to teach students about community building and cooperation by having them experience it first hand.

**SOUND & GESTURE CIRCLE** - students stand in a circle. The group leader initiates a simple gesture (hand wave, hop, body move, etc.) coupled with a sound effect (a beep, word, exclamation, etc.). This same gesture and sound combination is then repeated by each person in the circle in turn until it reaches the initiator. The next person in the circle then creates his/her own sound & gesture combination which gets repeated around the circle. Each successive person delivers their own unique sound and gesture that repeats around the circle until everyone has contributed.

**SOUND & GESTURE CIRCLE - NAME VARIATION** - students stand in a circle. The group leader says his/her name with a gesture to accompany it. Each successive person in the circle must repeat each prior person's name(s) and gesture(s) before adding in their own name/movement combination.

**NUMBER CIRCLE** - students stand in a circle (groups of 10 or less is best to start, so break up larger groups). The group leader explains that the students have to count from 1 to 10 as a group effort. Each person has to shout his or her number out loud in turn. However, students cannot go in any circular order, cannot go twice in a row, and must each participate at least once. If two people say the same number at the same time they have to start again from the beginning. The group leader instructs the students to shut their eyes and begin. After the group makes it to 10 raise the final number to 20.

**ZIP - BOP - ZAP - BOING** - students stand in a circle. The group leader initiates a swoosh gesture with both hands and "passes" it either to the left or right while saying "Zip!" - asking students to pass the sound and movement around the circle as quickly as possible. Next, the group leader introduces the "Bop!" sound and gesture (two hands up as a block) combination which reverses the direction of the "Zip" movement when used. This runs the circle a few times. Next, the leader introduces a "Zap!" sound with a ray gun gesture that allows students to shoot the energy to another member of the circle. This runs the circle a few times. Finally the group leader introduces the "Boing!" sound effect with a gesture (hands on the head as you sink down and rise up a bit) - once this sound/gesture is initiated by a student the whole circle has to say "Boing!" and do the gesture. After the group gets going with this, try it with eyes closed!

**ZIP - ZAP - ZOP** - students stand in a circle. The group leader asks students to pass an imaginary ball of energy, using a hand gesture similar to passing an actual ball, while repeating "Zip!" then "Zap!" then "Zop!" in turn after each pass. It's important for students to make eye contact with the person they're passing the energy to. This routine can be repeated many times until the energy level in the circle has reached a high point.

**ZIP - ZAP - ZOP - FORTUNE VARIATION** - students stand in a circle. While students pass the imaginary ball of energy, they contribute one word at a time to a phrase that might sound like a fortune cookie message. When the group thinks it has reached the end of the phrase the group sighs in agreement as if they've just heard something very enlightening. EX: "The - red - dog - has - green- shoes - Ohhhhhhh!"





**YOUR TASK:** Take a look at the description of idiom below and the list of idiomatic expressions that follow. Then use one of the idioms as the title of a story you'll write to illustrate what that idiom means.

In the musical number "Light of the World" from *Godspell*, a character sings, "But if that light's under a bushel, it's lost something kind of crucial." The phrase "hide light under a bushel" has come to mean that a person should not hide his/her talents but should let them "shine" - share them with the world. A phrase like this that has a meaning different than the literal meaning of its words can be called an *idiom*. Our language is loaded with idioms or idiomatic expressions such as:

A Blessing in Disguise

A Shot in the Dark

A Piece of Cake

Actions Speak Louder than Words

Cry Wolf

Go For Broke

Icing on the Cake

It Takes Two to Tango

Off the Hook

Out of Sight, Out of Mind

Practice Makes Perfect

Pulling Your Leg

Sink or Swim

Turn Over a New Leaf

When it Rains, it Pours

When Pigs Fly

Select one of these idioms that appeals to you: \_\_\_\_\_

What does this expression mean? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now use your writing skills to create a story that uses the message above as its main idea.

Use the original idiom as the title and create an original story that illustrates the meaning of the idiom you selected. What will your story be about? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**YOUR TASK:** Write a letter from one character of *Godspell* to another. This letter should express some important thoughts that the first character wants to express to the other. You'll be expressing that character's point of view on a particular event that happened in the play. It may be a friendly greeting, an apology, a question that needs answering, or something you think they'd need to share or speak about.

Which character would you choose to write the letter? Why?

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Which character would you write the letter to? Why?

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Outline below what the main points of your letter will be. Just what do you have to say?

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Now that you've outlined what you have to say, write the letter. Be sure to use the proper letter format with an opening greeting and a final message and signature. Organize your ideas paragraph by paragraph so they develop smoothly and flow from one idea to the next. Try to use the character's "voice" as you write as much as possible.





**YOUR TASK:** Look at the quote below from the production and think about what it means. Then use your interpretation to write an essay in which you agree or disagree with the quote. Be sure to use specific examples to support your opinion in a well-organized essay.

Judge not, that you yourself not be judged.

Use the space below to write the statement in your own words:

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Do you agree or disagree with this statement? \_\_\_\_\_

Think clearly and carefully about why you agree or disagree with the statement. What evidence or examples could you use to convey your point of view? Be sure to be as specific as possible in your explanations of your ideas so the reader can understand why you feel as you do.

Use a clear opening paragraph to introduce the reader to your main thesis and give a brief overview of what you'll say in the essay. Organize each of the body paragraphs around a single idea. Make sure your ideas and paragraphs flow smoothly from one to the next. Use the final paragraph to summarize your ideas and leave the reader with a final impression.



**YOUR TASK:** Look at the selection below from the song “Turn Back, O Man” from the production and think about what it means. Then use the questions to help you in your interpretation of the song lyric as a poem.

Turn back, O man, forswear thy\* foolish ways.  
Old now is Earth, and none may count her days.  
Da-da-da-da-da  
Yet thou\*, her child, whose head is crowned with flame,  
Still wilt not hear thine\* inner God proclaim,  
Turn back, O man  
Turn back, O man  
Turn back, O man  
Forswear thy foolish ways.

\* “thy”= “your”    “thou”= “you”    “thine”= “your”

Answer these questions on a separate piece of paper:

1. What are your initial reactions to the poem?
2. Who do you think the speaker is speaking to? Is it to one person or a broader audience?
3. What might the phrase “Old now is Earth, and none may count her days” mean?
4. The phrase “none may count her days” contains personification - what is personification and how does it work in a poem?
5. Why do you think the phrase “forswear thy foolish ways” is used at the beginning and at the end? What effect does this have?
6. What does “Turn back” mean? Could that have a deeper meaning? What does the speaker want the “man” to do?
7. What do you think the head “crowned with flame” could mean? What does the child need to hear?
8. What do you think the overall message of this passage is?





**YOUR TASK:** The prologue, or opening, of *Godspell* is sometimes called “Tower of Babble” because it presents philosophers and thinkers who have contrasting ideas. There are many points in history where thinkers, figures in power, critics, or philosophers had ideas that clashed. Using the sections below, analyze a time where ideas clashed and the outcomes this clash produced.

**THE SITUATION:** Describe the historical context where these ideas came into contact/conflict:

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**THINKER ONE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Outline the main ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

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**THINKER TWO:** \_\_\_\_\_

Outline the main ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

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**THE SOLUTION?:** What was the result of these two ideas coming into contact/conflict?

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Use the back of this worksheet to state why you believe ideas continually clash throughout history.



**YOUR TASK:** Think about the notions of community and the humanitarian themes throughout *Godspell*. Look up humanitarians through the years in your Social Studies textbook or on the Internet. Use the prompts below to work through your ideas.

Humanitarian you will focus on: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe his/her position in society: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What were his/her contributions to help others? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What were the effects of their humanitarian contributions? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

What do you think are the lasting effects of their generosity? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_



**YOUR TASK:** Look at the visual below from the production. Study carefully how it uses a variety of textures to achieve the overall look of the figure. Choose a character from the production and create a portrait of him/her using a variety of artistic textures to achieve your effect.



Art By David Edward Byrd © 2008

*Notice the use of black and white to create strong contrast and bring a powerful graphic look to the work.*

Which contrasting patterns will you utilize in your work?

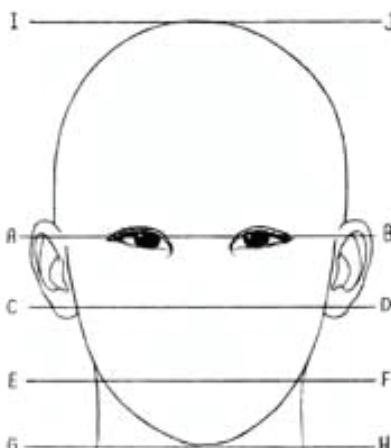
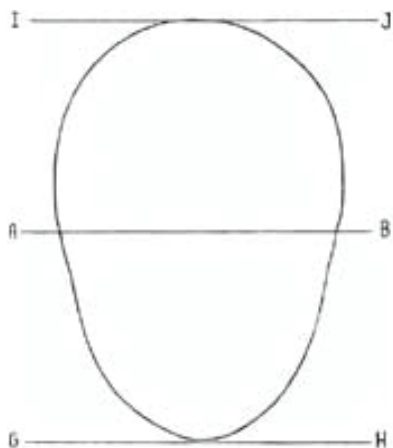
*The subtle use of the color red adds a special emphasis to the cheek.*

What colors will you use to give your portrait just the right touches?

*The face has a graceful symmetry that captures your attention and adds to the graceful look.*

Why is symmetry so important to artistic work? How is it present in the human face? How will you utilize it in your portrait?

Use the facial proportion sketch below to design your portrait (from: [www.drawspace.com](http://www.drawspace.com))





**YOUR TASK:** Search for some every day items that hold artistic potential around your house or around your neighborhood and utilize them along with your creative talents to make new art that tells a story.

In the production of *Godspell*, director Daniel Goldstein has utilized everyday items in creative ways to illustrate stories. In order to tell the story of the Good Samaritan, for example, the cast re-purposes a ladder, shoes, and sheets of newspaper to creatively and artistically share the story with the audience. Artists have always used the materials that are present around them to fashion their work.

Sketch out the items you've found with artistic potential:

Sketch out your ideas for how to reuse the materials to create a new artwork:

What story does it tell?



# RESOURCES

## WEB RESOURCES

Official web site for *Godspell* on Broadway:

<http://www.godspell.com>

Online community where fans can record videos, watch other fan videos and connect with each other:

<http://www.mygodspellmemory.com/>

Facebook Page:

<http://www.facebook.com/Godspell>

Twitter Feed:

<http://twitter.com/BwayGodspell>

YouTube Channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/BwayGodspell>

Broadway Space Connection Page:

<http://www.broadwayspace.com/profile/GodspellBroadway>

Inside perspective on producing *Godspell*:

<http://www.godspellblog.com/>

Ken Davenport's perspective on Broadway and beyond:

<http://www.theproducersperspective.com/>

Stephen Schwartz official web site:

<http://www.stephenschwartz.com/>

## ANTI-BULLYING RESOURCES

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/>

## MUSICAL SCORES

*Godspell* (Vocal Score Series) Hal Leonard Corporation

*Godspell: Vocal Selections* Hal Leonard Corporation

## THEATER GAMES/IMPROVISATION

<http://www.creativedrama.com/theatre.htm>

<http://improvencyclopedia.org/>

<http://www.spolin.com/games.html>

## CAN YOU MAKE IT ALL THE WAY TO THE BROADWAY HALL OF FAME?

Find out when you play Be A Broadway Star -

<http://www.beabroadwaystar.com/>