

Dove and Dragon-Church Multiplication



Dove & Dragon is a historically based drama, about 30 minutes. It begins in England in the 1700's, during the birth of the Evangelical Movement, and then moves to today's America.

Guidelines:

Keep it simple.

Participants need no props or costumes, and may simply read their lines, as the aim is not to perform or entertain but to equip harvesters to multiply simple New Testament type "daughter" churches that take Jesus to people who prefer not, or cannot, join a conventional congregation. It requires no rehearsal, although some practice would make it smoother.

You need no audience.

Everyone present has a part; those who receive no written script are Echoes that repeat a Prompter's brief phrases.

Participants

Alf
Rowdy
Suzy
Wilbur
Bruiser
Margie

Prompter Shout a brief line and Echoes repeat it.

Echoes Children and all adults who want to take part. Echoes need no script.

PART I. 18th Century England

Rowdy (*Run among the people, shouting*)
Betsy! Betsy! Come back! Now where did that naughty horse go?

Prompter & Echoes Come back, Betsy!

Suzy Your stupid horse is eating lettuce on that peasant's cart.
Hitch her up quickly; we gotta go to Harpenden.

Wilbur Harpenden, you say? Marvelous!
We must be going to the same installation rites.

Suzy (*Face Wilbur*) Well now, such grand priestly attire!
Sir, I don't care if you be the Archbishop himself.
Alf and me, we was here first we was, so this cab is ours.

Wilbur My good lady, we will share it. I am the Reverend Wilbur.
My church is the one with the highest steeple in Saint Albans.

Alf Sir, you may call me Alf. This lady is my wife, Suzy.
I am shepherd and janitor of New Life Chapel, down by the livery stables.

Wilbur The livery stables! I dare say!
Why serve in such a smelly place, brother Alf?

Alf God chose it for us, sir.
I yearn to take Jesus to all those poor people,
but my flock takes up all my time, which is sad,
because so many are ready to receive Jesus!

Wilbur Indeed. Well, I prefer quality to quantity, my son.
My church's motto is, "You cannot take it with you, so leave it with us."

Rowdy Old Betsy be ready, folks. My name is Rowdy.
Now, old Betsy, trot!

Prompter & Echoes Clip clop!

Wilbur Ah! This is the grandest day of my life, pastor Alf!

Suzy Oh, my!
The cab's swaying and the steady hoof beats make me sleepy.

Prompter & Echoes Clip clop!

Alf Me, too. The Rev. Wilbur is already snoring!

Prompter & Echoes Clip clop!

Suzy Oh! This nauseating stench woke me! Garbage in this lane is reeking.

Wilbur Faster! Your lazy mare is trudging too slowly, Rowdy. Go faster!

Rowdy Can't, Sir. Too rocky.

Wilbur You will, cabby. I dare not miss the installation rites.
I have waited for this grand moment all my life. Use your whip! Now!

Rowdy Won't. Too rocky.
Ouch! Stop squeezing my shoulder! Your grip is hurting me.

Wilbur Lash that horse, I say, or I will squeeze your skinny throat.
Let us hear that whip!

Prompter & Echoes CRACK! CRACK!

Wilbur Not that fast! Slow down!
You lurched forward so abruptly that my hat fell off.

Suzy Oh, my! We're bouncing like a kangaroo, we are!
Look at poor old Betsy race, eyes ablaze, tail flowing behind, ears flattened!
Chickens and children are fleeing from those pounding hooves!

Prompter & Echoes Thud!

Wilbur Now what, Rowdy? You stopped so abruptly that my spectacles slipped off.

Rowdy (*Groan*) Old Betsy slipped on a loose stone and threw a shoe.
A lady she is, and I'll not drive her improperly dressed, barefoot on one leg.
Yer fault, yer highness. Ya made me drive 'er too fast.

Wilbur Insolent lip! Now, stop predicting where I will spend eternity,
or I will reciprocate in the proper ecclesiastic language.
You have made me miss the installation rites.

Rowdy No sir. Saint Alban halted us by my friend Bruiser's blacksmith's shop.
Bruiser's a good man he is; he helped me find Jesus.
Come to his shop. Watch yer step; horse plop is lying all over.

Suzy Eeee! A scruffy rat scurried into that pile of broken cartwheels.

Rowdy Duck down, gentlemen, or you'll bump yer heads
on them plucked chickens, hanging from the doorframe.

Prompter & Echoes Watch out!

Wilbur I say, who was that little guy? He bumped into me as he rushed out!

Alf He's wearing an Anglican priest's garb and has an ugly scar on his cheek.

Suzy He jumped on his horse and galloped off like a whirlwind.

Rowdy Blimey! Sure and it was the Rev. John Wesley!
He helps us poor folk, he does.

Bruiser Welcome to my shop, gentlemen! I'll take care of yer horse in a jiffy.
Please join us. We be worshiping.

Prompter & Echoes Amen!

Bruiser Brother Rowdy, wipe the soot off them nail kegs, so the reverends can sit.
Now everyone, you be surprised at such noblemen joining us,
but stop jabbering, or I'll pound yer skulls with me hammer.



Wilbur I say! How shocking that the Rev. Wesley would minister here.
It's such a degraded hamlet!

Prompter & Echoes Wicked and worldly!

Margie It's because Brother Wesley loves to serve us poor degraded sinners, sir.

Bruiser Aye! Listen to what Wesley done fer me
before I got borned all over again. I shut my ears to his words,
but his compassion sneaked into my heart another way.
You seen that ugly scar on Brother Wesley's cheek? I done that.

Prompter & Echoes Oh no!

Bruiser He tried to stop me from breaking another drunken brawler's face in the pub,
so I sent brother John sprawling with the back of me hand, I did.

Prompter & Echoes Cruel!

Bruiser He wiped off the blood, and blessed me in Jesus' name,
and that's the truth. God's grace pulsated in his kindness,
forgiving me while he absorbed my abuse!

Prompter & Echoes So gracious!

Bruiser Then he invited me to come talk with him,
and called the cook fer another slice of kidney pie!”
Fer the first time since I was a nipper, I wept.

Margie Wesley loves us poor folk he does,
unlike some people around here that looks down on us.

Wilbur Well now, I know who and what you are, you pudgy wench!
You cleaned house for my wife before you became a bar maid,— and worse.

Prompter & Echoes Oh, my!

Bruiser Margie is my wife now, sir. You will mind your words.
Now listen everyone.
We'll all discuss what God wants us to do this week.

Wilbur This is wrong, my good man.
Such free discussion during worship lets laymen impart falsity.

Bruiser I hope so, sir! Get any falsity out in the open, before it festers and divides.
The apostle Paul urged believers to discuss God's word freely
with one another.

Wilbur Your way of worship would displease the head of our church,
our good King George.

Prompter & Echoes Long live the king!

Bruiser This week we will go in pairs to take Jesus to our friends.
Rowdy, you and me will go to them shanties down by the garbage dump.

Rowdy I can't go around in public in my tattered shoes and patched trousers.

Bruiser Yes you can, Rowdy. You'll go to folk whose clothes are just as tattered.
All right everyone, let's confess our sins. We all got lots to confess!

Prompter & Echoes Be honest before God!

Bruiser Now, that's done. See this bread?
Our Lord said, “Take, eat, this is my body.”

Wilbur Stop! Stop I say!
I cannot receive Holy Sacrament from layman's hands.

Bruiser Brother Wesley blessed this bread beforehand, sir,
so any bloke can serve it.

Margie Brother Wesley told us to receive Communion in the Anglican Church.
Me and Bruiser went, but the high and mighty priest eyed my patched dress,
and he passed us by when he served Communion, he did.

Prompter & Echoes How terrible!

Margie Bruiser begged him to come serve us Communion here,
but he called Bruiser uncouth, and turned away.

Bruiser I told the bloke I didn't see nothing of Christ's image in him.
He got red in the face and said to me,
“Someone pulled you down from a tree, cut off your tail,
and taught you to make human noises.”

Prompter & Echoes Cruel!

Bruiser Poor Margie, she cried 'er heart out all the way 'ome, she did.

Wilbur I disapprove of what that priest did.
Nevertheless, you cannot serve Communion, my son.

Rowdy Jesus commands it. Whom do we obey, you or Jesus?
We cannot obey both.

Prompter & Echoes Obey God above all.

Wilbur Mr. Blacksmith, today I will be made Bishop over Saint Albans,
so do as I say. You'll stop pretending that this travesty is a church.

Bruiser It is a church, Sir.
We do all that Jesus and his apostles require of a church.

Wilbur You will obey me, my son,
I have the full authority of the Church of England.

Prompter & Echoes Well, kiss his ring!

Suzy Look, Alf! The blacksmith is facing the priest, eye to eye.
Rev. Wilbur's eyes are spitting fire.

Rowdy Them two men be locked in a battle they is,
the soon-to-be bishop and the powerful blacksmith.

Suzy Everyone is so silent! My goodness!

Alf (*Groan*) Two voices in my soul are tearing me in two, Suzy.
One hisses. It said, "Heed your soon-to-be Bishop,
or he'll revoke your ordination."
The other voice coos like a dove; it said:
"Don't fear man; just obey Jesus."

Suzy Look! Bruiser won the stare-down!
Rev. Wilbur sat, crossed himself and began humming a tune.
Now we are having Communion.

Prompter & Echoes Take, eat; this is my body.

Bruiser Now that our worship is over, gentlemen,
yer horse will be ready in a few minutes.
Wait outside to avoid the smoke from me forge.

Prompter & Echoes He is pumping the bellows.

Wilbur Ah! Fresh air! Listen, Elder Alf. This is all wrong, you know.
If sinners really want to know Christ, they'll come to our churches.

Suzy But you know they do not, Sir.
Rowdy's britches had patches upon patches.
He would be shunned if he sat in one of our pews.

Prompter & Echoes Ding dong!

Wilbur I say! The church bell! I still have time!
I can make it after all to the installation rites!

Rowdy I told ya we would, reverend.

Wilbur Elder Alf, that toothless old hag warbled off key, trying to sing!
 Even worse was that young woman holding her brat: she howled so!
 Such confusion is of the devil, for sure! Of Satan, I say!

Alf Whoa, brother! You came close to blaspheming the Holy Spirit!
 That young woman was totally focused on Jesus.

Wilbur So you say. One fellow actually confessed he'd stolen a mule last week.

Suzy But he promised to return the mule, and they restored him.

Wilbur Oh! Here comes that ruffian with the horse; it's ready to go.
 I say, Mr. Bruiser, you must be using a very heavy hand
 to get your followers to do so much work during the week.

Bruiser No Reverend Wilbur. It be Jesus who moves them. He will do the same
 for yer people. Surely, some of them yearns to do more fer Jesus
 than what you let them do.

Wilbur Some do, and they give me ulcers, always straining to do new things!

Alf Goodbye, brother Bruiser.
 Suzy, that voice is hissing again;
 it warns me that to embrace this madness would ruin my career,
 but the coo says to do as Jesus said and did:
 go and love the poor, rejected people.

Suzy Oh, Alf, I've been praying!

Prompter & Echoes Talking with God!

Alf That hiss is louder now; it says my church needs no change.

Suzy Don't listen to it! It's the Old Dragon, the devil.

Alf The gentle voice says to serve Jesus humbly and stop craving power.
 The hissing voice promises to make me popular and wealthy. Oh, Suzy!

Prompter & Echoes Such tension!

Alf Rev. Wilbur, what should I do? I cannot bear the strain!
 Wesley's way cannot be true! I will not let it! I won't!

Wilbur Now you've come to your senses, my lad!

Alf Suzy, that dove's voice warns me to decide; it is God's countdown time.

Prompter & Echoes Five. Four. Three. Two...

Alf I surrender! My congregation will send out harvesters.

Suzy Yes! Some of us will love to be freed to gather new believers
 in home churches.

Alf Rev. Wilbur, I see it now, what I was searching for!
 Whatever kept me so blind?

Wilbur You have a fever, brother Alf. You are raving!
 My barber's shop is nearby. He is an excellent blood-letter.
 I will take you there as soon as I clean off my shoe.

Suzy Alfie, our Lord has won a huge victory today!

Prompter & Echoes Hallelujah!

PART II Today's America

Alf Now, we have crossed the Atlantic Ocean!

Prompter & Echoes The scene has changed!

Suzy Oh! Here we are, in the 21st century, in a room with these men!

Prompter & Echoes In today's America!

Margie Thank you, elders, for inviting Suzy and me to explain our project.

Suzy Margie and I saw how to do it in a story about John Wesley and a blacksmith. It took place in England when the Evangelical movement began.

Margie Thank you for letting us explain our plans. I'm so glad!

Suzy Not me, Margie; I'm scared!

Prompter & Echoes Poor Suzy!

Alf We elders will not bite, Suzy.
Girls, please tell us why you want to start home churches.

Margie Most of the younger generation won't come to our older church;
so, we take the church to them.
They love to gather in homes with friends and share experiences.
We will gather small, New Testament type congregations
that enjoy healthy, interactive dialogue,
six to eight adults ideally, and no more than twelve.

Suzy Such little flocks are multiplying all over the world today.
It's awesome! They're reaching huge numbers of sinners for Christ.

Prompter & Echoes Millions!

Suzy We need you elders to stand with us, Elder Alf,
as we battle the Old Dragon.

Alf Yes. The devil always counterattacks after the Holy Spirit drives him
from a stronghold. It's the centuries-old battle between Dove and Dragon.
Are you girls ready to do such serious warfare?

Margie Suzy and I are ready, but are you elders ready?
It's not just Suzy's and my project;
our church as a body will birth the little daughter churches.
Suzy and I are merely the spiritual midwives.

Prompter & Echoes To facilitate the births!

Alf What do you want us elders to do?

Margie Send us like the Antioch church sent Paul and Barnabas, and pray.

Suzy Prayer is the most effective Dragon Repellant.

Margie Our biggest challenge is to leave behind some of our church procedures;
we cherish them, but neither Jesus nor his apostles practiced them.
We must simplify, so home churches can multiply as in the New Testament.

Alf Will you need financial support, Margie?

Margie No. We will pay for our own gasoline, Elder Alf,
 and we need no demographic experts to do a survey to find receptive folk.
 We visited schools yesterday, and read Chamber of Commerce surveys.
 We know where the most receptive people live: in the Lost Pearl district.

Prompter & Echoes Oh, no! Never!

Alf Lost Pearl! That place is wicked!
 It's the most unsafe neighborhood in the city!

Suzy So, we will touch the leper, just as Jesus did.

Prompter & Echoes And as John Wesley did!

Alf Gentlemen, stop grumbling! Poor Suzy's wiping a tear.

Suzy I'm more afraid of you elders than I am of Lost Pearl!
 You can veto our project. Please free us to use the gifts
 that the Holy Spirit has given us!

Alf I'm sorry that you fear us, Suzy. Now, a question.
 Can you and Margie deal with all the details of running a church?

Suzy No, but we won't run the churches, will we Margie?

Margie No, we won't. We'll only start them, Elder Alf,
 by having them obey Jesus' general commands.
 These commands sum up all that he ordered,
 to repent, baptize, serve Communion, love, pray, give, and make disciples.
 That is what his Great Commission requires.
 The new leaders will use a training course that covers other details.

Suzy We trust the Holy Spirit to give us the power that Jesus promised.

Alf Do you plan to baptize and serve the Lord's Supper, Margie?
 Our denomination lets only ordained male clergy officiate the sacraments.

Margie We asked our pastor about that.
 He said that men's rules can force churches without clergy to disobey Jesus.
 He said to simply obey Jesus' commands,
 and he will stand behind us when complaints come.

Alf Gutsy!

Margie Obeying God above man is a price we pay to win many, many to Jesus.

Suzy Jesus said, "If you love me, obey my commands."
 We have no choice, Elder Alf.

Prompter & Echoes Love and obey Jesus!

Alf Wow! Elders, our denomination is declining;
 God holds us accountable to avoid decline.
 We have prayed about this project. Say *Amen* if you agree.

Prompter & Echoes Amen!

Alf Praise God! Elders, I have an announcement.
 My wife and I plan to join Suzy and Margie in this project,
 and to recruit others.

Suzy (Clap) Awesome!

Alf The congregation will commission its harvesters as you requested, Margie.

Prompter & Echoes See what God does next!

Suzy At last, Margie!
Here we are, prayer walking in the Lost Pearl district.
Let's talk to that big guy leaving this gym.

Margie Sir, we are prayer walking.
May we tell you what Jesus has done for us?

Bruiser Not interested. Have a good day, girls.

Prompter & Echoes The brute!

Suzy Well, Margie, that was not a very promising start!
Oh, those guys leaving that bar are leering at us.
Hurry! Let's go to a residential area.

Margie Ah! This street looks healthier.
Look, Suzy. Here is a school; the kids are getting out.

Suzy Yeah. That cute little blonde kid is coming toward us;
he is about 3rd or 4th grade.

Margie Look at him! Hair disheveled, dirty shirt half out, face smudged!

Suzy He's cute. He is just standing there watching us, soaking in our smiles.
Don't say anything, Margie. Such moments need only smiles.
See? He's coming.

Rowdy My name's Rowdy.
Promise not to tell nobody, if I show ya my sling shot?
It's the kind ya swing around yer head in circles.

Prompter & Echoes It can be deadly!

Margie We promise not to tell, Rowdy.
What do you plan to hit with your slingshot?

Rowdy I gonna kill my mom's boyfriend next time he kicks her.
He kicks me, too.

Margie Lift up a pant leg, Rowdy. Please.
Oh, my! Such ugly bruises!

Suzy Oh, no! Have you told anyone about this?

Rowdy He will kill me and my mom if I do. So you can't tell no one.

Suzy Rowdy, go bring your teacher. We must tell her about this.

Rowdy You lied to me!

Prompter & Echoes You broke your promise!

Suzy Oh! Don't run off! Stop crying and come back, Rowdy.
We will keep our promise.

Margie Do you have a relative that you could stay with?

Rowdy Uncle Bruiser said they'd keep me when mom's spaced out on drugs.

Margie Good! Let's go see your uncle Bruiser right now.

Suzy Please God, help the boy.

Prompter & Echoes Help Rowdy!

Suzy Look! Uncle Bruiser is the same brute that we saw!
He wouldn't let us talk to him about Jesus!

Margie Sadly! Well, Rowdy, show your uncle those bruises

Bruiser Appalling! Who did this to you, Rowdy?

Rowdy My mom's boyfriend. I hate him.

Bruiser I apologize for rebuffing you girls back at the gym. I am very sorry.
Listen. Rowdy's unmarried mother has urged me to raise Rowdy for her.
I will consider it.

Prompter & Echoes Time passes and God works!

Bruiser Well, Rowdy, I have good news: my wife and I will adopt you.
Suzy and Margie, I have news for you also.
You helped us see that Jesus died and rose from the dead
to forgive us and give us life. We will be baptized and follow him.

Prompter & Echoes Wonderful!

Suzy Bruiser, would you like to give a party to celebrate?

Bruiser Yes! We'll invite our friends and tell them what Christ has done for us.

Suzy Awesome!

Margie Oh, look! Here comes Elder Alf and his wife.

Bruiser Welcome, folks!
Suzy told us that you two also serve Christ here in Broken Pearl.

Suzy Tell us how you guys have gotten along, Elder Alf.

Alf We started out with a bump.
We met a proud poodle leading her pet human on a leash.
We told the lady that we were prayer walking,
and would pray for any needs she had.
She wanted to join us, in order to invite people to her church.
We told her we gather those who receive Jesus in home churches.
She lost interest then.

Suzy Margie and I talked with a few sour people,
but we are too stubborn to give up. We did a lot of walking.

Prompter & Echoes Just like Jesus and Paul!

Alf We met Wilbur mowing his lawn; he had a parrot on his shoulder.
When I came near him; the bird squawked and spread its wings to attack!

Prompter & Echoes Squawk! Squawk!

Alf Wilbur invited us to come back tomorrow, along with you two girls.

Prompter & Echoes Tomorrow brings a blessing!

Alf Wilbur, I've certainly enjoyed talking and praying with you.

Wilbur I needed your prayers. I taught electronic engineering at the University,
but they sacked me for drinking too much.

Alf I'll help you recover, Wilbur. I will meet with you daily, until Jesus sees you through it all, if you really want to quit.

Wilbur I do, now that I've found Jesus.
I guess I should say, "Since Jesus found me."

Alf All right. Let's start right now. Go pour all your booze down the sink.

Wilbur Oh! Okay. I will. Here it goes, down the drain!

Prompter & Echoes Gurgle, gurgle!

Wilbur Oh, what a relief!

Suzy Awesome! (*Clap*)

Wilbur Several religious scalpers have been here to see us;
all they did was talk talk talk!
You folks are different: you listen with caring interest.
That is what convinced me, not so much your words;
I saw Christ in you.

Prompter & Echoes Hear what God does next!

Alf It's a joy to give you elders our report. The university restored Wilbur.
He and his wife hosted a great party, just as Bruiser's family had done.

Suzy A new believer's faith is contagious!

Alf It's because an obedient church body, like all living things that God created,
passes on its DNA to reproduce after its own kind.

Prompter & Echoes Jesus' parables reveal this!

Alf 1 Corinthians 14 says if we dialogue together as a loving body,
visitors will sense Jesus' presence and repent.

Suzy Yes! We saw it happen!

Margie During Wilbur's party, we lost control:
cussing, booze and drug fumes filled the air.
However, the Holy Spirit never lost control.

Suzy I wept for joy!

Margie Others wept, too, and shared needs for which we prayed.
Several trusted in Jesus. God has blessed Broken Pearl
with two new home churches.

Alf There'll soon be more. We reorganized our two teams into four:
Margie works with Rowdy's aunt, who is now Rowdy's new mother.
Suzy is with my wife; I'm with Bruiser, and Prof. Wilbur Is with his wife.

Suzy The Old Dragon has counterattacked, Elder Alf.
Some of our friends ridicule our house churches,
but everyone is remaining firm.

Margie The old devil can no longer keep our mother church from multiplying.
The Holy Spirit is carrying its DNA to birth tiny daughter churches.

Suzy So now we have granddaughter and great-granddaughter churches!
Our elders have let God's grace flow freely!

Prompter & Echoes Praise God from whom all blessings flow!