

WORD POWER - Master 3.8.22

A One Act Musical for Middle School and Elementary Students
about the
Impact of the Words We Speak

by

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THIS IS A COLOR CODED PERUSAL SCRIPT.

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SYNOPSIS

WORD POWER is set in a present day classroom. The class has been studying what the Bible says about the power of our words. It's Presentation day - time for these classroom characters to share what they've learned. Each "Student Presentation" is based on a scripture verse. You may choose to do some or all "Presentations."

The central character is NELLIE who starts off petrified to speak in front of the class. She makes progress with unexpected support from an unlikely ally, with important discoveries along the way.

WORD POWER HAS AN OPTIONAL GOSPEL PRESENTATION.

CAST - 3 Female, 5 Either Gender, Unlimited Ensemble

CLASSROOM STUDENTS: K-8TH, unlimited number

MR./MRS. MARTIN: (Male or Female) the classroom teacher. Dialogue driven, no singing required. May be played by an adult, an older student, or a peer. Since Mr./Mrs. Martin speaks from a lectern, it's possible for this actor to use the script or index card prompts. This character manages the transitions between Presentations. For a festive twist, this role could be played by a community character: Principal, favorite Dad, local hero, etc.

NELLIE: (Female) Central character, terrified to speak in front of the class. Makes progress with the help of an unlikely ally. An advanced singer is a plus.

GIGI: (Female) Cheerleader. Need not be a great singer, but must sing duet. Shiny surface, appears to have it together, intimidating to other students. Action reveals her insecurities just beneath the surface, and her true heart.

SAM: (Male or Female) Curious, even nosy, sees opportunity to gain status, comic instinct/physical comedy or athleticism a plus. Optional vocal solo. Also could be played as a "Ninja" type character, sneaking in and out, appearing from behind the lectern, etc.

SIDNEY: (Male or Female) First day at this school. Transferred in with 3 Spelling Bee and 2 Geography Bee championships from former school. Must sing solo.

CASEY: (Male or Female) Focused on sports, watching, following, playing. Has big dreams of scholarship/career. You may choose the sport to fit actor. Sings brief solo.

FELISHA (Female) Focused on fashion...clothes, accessories, shoes, hair, make-up...only the latest. Sings brief solo.

CHARLIE: (Male or Female) Has trouble focusing, lovable, honest, fun-loving, easily distracted. Brief solo - need not be great singer.

SET

The entire show takes place in a present day classroom. This can be implied with just chairs, tables and chairs, or with desks. MARTIN works from a lectern. MARTIN may use lectern for script, prompts, or notes if desired. An erasable white board is optional.

SOUND AND LIGHTS

LIGHTS - WORD POWER can be produced without stage lighting.

SOUND - Microphones are helpful but not necessary, assuming your students can project adequately in your performing space. If you have mics/stands to place along the downstage edge, students may play their scenes/songs into the mic. If you only have one mic, have cast or crew members move downstage to the mic as needed for their lines or songs. Musical arrangements are written specifically to allow students to cross downstage to a mic during applause or instrumental measures.

NOTE ABOUT "PRIVATE SCENES" - The audience must accept the illusion that what happens "Private Scenes" with NELLIE, SAM, and GIGI is not seen/heard by other characters. This will work if all Private Scenes take place the the same established location.

STUDENTS who are not in focus may do BUSY WORK, without looking at, or reacting to the scene. They may also FREEZE, which is more challenging.

COSTUMES

Standard school clothes or your school uniform can be worn by all. You may choose to pepper in scout wear, cheerleader or athletic uniforms.

PROPS

"Flingin Those Words Around" props - grad cap, party blower, small flag, stuffed Dalmatian, plastic fireman hat, nurse hat/syringe/lab coat, straw hat, dollar bills

WORKING ORDER

"IT'S PRESENTATION DAY" 1, 2 and 3 - Nellie and Full Cast Entrance

"INTRODUCING SIDNEY" - Sidney
"NELLIE'S LAMENT" - Nellie
"CASEY'S LAMENT" or "CASEY'S LAMENT ADVANCED" - Casey
"FELISHA'S LAMENT" or "FELISHA'S LAMENT ADVANCED" - Felisha
"CHARLIE'S LAMENT" or "CHARLIE'S LAMENT ADVANCED" Charlie
"RETURN OF SIDNEY" - Sidney
"FLINGIN' THOSE WORDS AROUND" - Full Cast Opening Theme Song
"THE GOSSIP SONG" - Ensemble in Presentation A (full cast may join)
"HOLD YER HORSES" - Cast in Presentation B (full cast may join)
BRAGGING GRANDMAS/GRANDPAS - 2 Actors in Presentation C
"GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT" - Ensemble in Presentation D (full cast may join)
"AT THE CIRCUS" - Ensemble of Tumblers/Mover/Dancer/Puppeteers in Presentation E (full cast may join)
"COUNTDOWN TO CALM DOWN" - Ensemble in Presentation F (full cast may join)
"I HAVE A GIFT" - Nellie, Gigi and Full Cast
"FLINGIN' THOSE WORDS AROUND" REPRISE - Bows

TRACK CUES WORKING ORDER

- 1 It's Presentation Day part 1 - NELLIE
- 2 It's Presentation Day part 2 - underscore/GIGI's entrance
- 3 It's Presentation Day part 3 - Full Cast Entrance
- 4 School Bell - MARTIN entrance
- 5 Introducing Sidney - SIDNEY
- 6 Nellie's Lament - NELLIE
- 7 Casey's Lament (A or B) - CASEY
- 8 Felisha's Lament (A or B) - FELISHA
- 9 Charlie's Lament - (A or B) - CHARLIE

10 Return of SIDNEY - SIDNEY
11 Flingin' Those Words Around - Full Cast Theme Song
XX The Gossip Song - Presentation A
XXA Hold Yer Horses - Presentation B entrance
XXB Hold Yer Horses - Underscore for jokes
XXC Hold Yer Horses - Presentation B exit
XX Garbage In, Garbage Out - Presentation D
XX At the Circus Presentation E
XX Countdown to Calm Down - Presentation F
XX I Have a Gift - NELLIE and GIGI
(NO TRACK/ACAPPELLA) I Have a Gift - FULL CAST
XX Bows/Flingin' Those Words Around (Reprise/Finale)

PREVIOUS

PERUSAL

SCENE ONE - NELLIE, GIGI, SAM ESTABLISH PREMISE, CAST ENTERS

Early morning, before school starts, NELLIE enters the quiet, empty classroom alone. She looks around and tries to muster her courage for the dreaded Presentation Day.

TRACK CUE #1 IT'S PRESENTATION DAY PART 1-NELLIE RT 1:01

NELLIE
IT'S PRESENTATION DAY.
AND I KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
BUT WHEN MR./MRS. MARTIN LOOKS AT ME
I'LL LOOK THE OTHER WAY.
THEN PRETEND TO LOOK AROUND,
FOR SOMETHING ON THE GROUND,
LIKE A CONTACT, OR A PENCIL,
OR A THING THAT MUST BE FOUND.

IT'S PRESENTATION DAY.
MY WORK DESERVES AN A,
BUT SOME OF US GET NAU-SEA-OUS
AND WANT TO RUN AWAY.
TO THE DENTIST FOR THE DAY.
SCRUBBING TOILETS WOULD BE PLAY.
ON THE WORST DAY, THE FIRST DAY
OF PRESENTATION DAY.

TRACK #2 IT'S PRESENTATION DAY PART 2-UNDERScore RT: :22

NELLIE, somewhat out of sight, sinks into her corner chair, pulls hood over head, as underscore continues.

GIGI enters, unaware that NELLIE is present. Thinking she's alone, she decides to have some fun teacher's lectern.

GIGI
(clears throat)
Thank you! Thank you all so much. Literally, I want to thank all my millions of fans and followers of my Gigi Squad for this award. You are all literally the little people who make my life possible. And now, literally, I'll sing my new hit single "Swingin' Those Words Around."

GIGI attempts the theme song, badly.

GIGI (CONT'D)

EVERYBODY'S SINGIN', EVERYBODY'S FLINGING,

GIGI is not a bad singer. She just doesn't know the song, so she's doing a lot of guessing on notes/rhythms. She knows it's not right, and definitely does not know anyone is listening.

GIGI (CONT'D)
EVERYBODY'S SINGIN', EVERYBODY'S FLINGING,

NELLIE makes an accidental noise such as dropping a book or pencil. GIGI is startled, turns immediately.

GIGI (CONT'D)
Who's there?

Silence.

I demand you reveal yourself immediately!

NELLIE rises, now more nervous than ever.

Nellie Parsons, are you spying on me?

NELLIE
...Uh, no, of course not! I just came in early, cause I get nervous when I have to **speak** in front of the class.

SAM/SPY STUDENT (M/F) enters classroom. S/He is noticed by NELLIE, but unseen by GIGI. SAM is enthralled with their juicy interaction.

SAM quickly ducks behind the Teacher's lectern or other hiding spot. The lectern could be on casters for extra fun.

Throughout the scene, SAM is desperate to hear as much as possible without being seen by GIGI. We see the lectern mysteriously rolling toward the action, then freezing every time GIGI might see it.

SEE DIRECTOR'S GUIDE and STAGING VIDEO.

GIGI
(annoyed)
Too bad for you. Did you see anything?

NELLIE
No!

GIGI crosses to NELLIE, threatening.

GIGI
What did you see?

NELLIE

Nothing!

GIGI now softens, changing tactics.

GIGI

Look, I know I haven't always been the nicest to you, but I can change that.

NELLIE

(petrified)

Really. Nothing. I didn't see anything.

GIGI

Nothing but me being stupid. Nellie Parsons, if you ever tell anyone...

SAM does huge take here, as in, "This I gotta hear!"

NELLIE

I would never tell what I saw. I mean didn't see.

SAM does takes throughout the following.

GIGI

(bargaining)

Do I need to pretend we're friends at lunch for a month to keep you quiet about this?

NELLIE

No. Not unless you want to.

GIGI

Do I need to give you all my lip gloss rejects for the rest of the year?

NELLIE

No.

GIGI

(sarcastically)

Lemme guess, you want to post a picture of us together, as if we actually hang out.

NELLIE

No! I wouldn't tell something bad about someone on purpose.

GIGI

You wouldn't? Wow, that's a new one.

Beat for GIGI to absorb this revelation.

GIGI (CONT'D)

What a concept.

NELLIE

You want some help with the song?

GIGI

(desperate to prep song)

Yeah, I guess. Thanks. I know we're supposed to have it down by today.

NELLIE

NELLIE sings the proper melody.

EVERYBODY'S SINGIN',

GIGI

EVERYBODY'S SINGIN',

NELLIE

EVERYBODY'S FLINGIN',

GIGI

EVERYBODY'S FLINGING,

NELLIE

EVERYBODY'S SINGIN', FLINGIN', A LITTLE MUD SLINGIN'

Hey, you have a nice voice. Really nice, actually.

NELLIE (CONT'D)

Thanks.

GIGI

Thanks for your help.

TRACK #3 IT'S PRESENTATION DAY PART 3 - CAST ENTRANCE RT 1:14

GIGI (CONT'D)

(upon hearing cadence intro)

Here come the animals.

FULL CAST enters. GIGI moves to desk, SAM falls in line with FULL CAST.

CAST (CHANT)

IT'S PRESENTATION DAY.

IT'S PRESENTATION DAY.

IT'S PRESENTATION DAY.
IT'S PRESENTATION DAY.

CASEY

IT'S PRESENTATION DAY.
I THINK I'LL DO OK.
I WOULD HAVE DONE IT BETTER
BUT THE BALL GOT IN THE WAY.

CAST

IT'S PRESENTATION DAY.
IT'S PRESENTATION DAY.

FELISHA

IT'S PRESENTATION DAY?
I THINK I'LL DO OK.
I WOULD HAVE DONE IT BETTER
BUT THE MALL GOT IN THE WAY.

CAST

IT'S PRESENTATION DAY.
IT'S PRESENTATION DAY.

CHARLIE

IT'S PRESENTATION DAY.
I THINK I'LL DO OK.
I WOULD HAVE DONE IT BETTER
BUT IT ALL GOT IN THE WAY.

NELLIE

TAKE A MATH TEST? SURE! OK!
BEING LECTURED WOULD BE PLAY.

ALL

ON THE WORST DAY, THE FIRST DAY,
I WISH I HAD REHEARSED DAY.
THE WORST DAY, THE FIRST DAY
OF PRESENTATION DAY. (SIT)

All STUDENTS sit on musical button.

SCENE 2 - INTRODUCTION OF CHARACTERS/STUDENT SOLO OPTIONS

TRACK CUE #4 SCHOOL BELL - at peak of applause

MARTIN enters on bell.

MARTIN

Good Morning, class.

STUDENTS

(*ad lib*)

Good Morning, Mr./Ms. Martin.

MARTIN

You all sound so excited to be here. I hope everyone had a nice weekend. As you know, for first period today we're closing our unit on Basic Human Communication. Hopefully, you've all been working on your final Presentations for several weeks now and I'm looking forward to hearing them all.

Hmmm...it looks like we have a new student joining us today.

MARTIN scans students, spots SIDNEY.

Welcome. Would you mind introducing yourself to the class, please?

SIDNEY

I'd be delighted!

TRACK CUE #5 INTRODUCING SIDNEY :30

INTRODUCING SIDNEY

I'M SIDNEY AND I'M NEW TODAY.
THERE'S SOMETHING THAT I NEED TO SAY:
I LIKE TO HELP MY CLASSMATES OUT,
SO SOMETIMES I MIGHT GIVE A **SHOUT**.
I HATE TO SEE THEM STRUGGLE SO
WITH ANSWERS THAT I KNOW I KNOW.
HONESTLY, I HATE TO BRAG,
BUT INTELLECT IT IS MY SWAG.

MARTIN

Well...uh...thank you Sidney. Here's our new student paperwork for you to start on.

MARTIN hands SIDNEY stapled paper stack.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Alright class, time for some Presentations. In our current unit on Spoken Communication, we've learned that our words have great power for both good and evil. Why don't we just take a moment to refresh our memories. Who can share our theme verse for this unit?

All Students look busy to avoid answering as SAM drags NELLIE far downstage for PRIVATE DIALOGUE #1.

SAM
Hey, what happened this morning?

NELLIE
What do you mean?

SAM
You know what I mean. Between you and GIGI?

NELLIE
There's nothing to talk about.

SAM
C'mon, you can tell ME!

NELLIE
I AM telling you: There's nothing to talk about.

SAM
Oh right, GIGI was worked up because of what **didn't** happen?

NELLIE
It wouldn't be right.

SAM
You mean wouldn't be right to say something bad about GIGI.

NELLIE
It wouldn't be right to say something bad about **ANYBODY**.

MARTIN
(reclaiming attention)
OK, so now who can start us off by reciting our theme verse for this unit?

TRACK CUE #6 NELLIE'S LAMENT :30

Throughout the play, MARTIN calling on STUDENTS gives opportunity to move actors in focus to mics or as far downstage as possible.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Nellie?

NELLIE
PLEASE DON'T CALL ON ME,
CAUSE I'M REALLY REALLY SCARED TO SPEAK.
GIVE SIDNEY THERE A GLANCE,
I'LL TELL YOU IN ADVANCE,
I HOPE S/HE'LL YELL THE ANSWER OUT
BEFORE I'VE HAD A CHANCE.
IT'S JUST I HATE TO TALK OUT LOUD,

ESPECIALLY IN A CROWD.
I THINK THE ANSWER'S...

SIDNEY jumps to feet, blurting out.

SIDNEY

Pr. 10:19? "When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise?"

MARTIN

Oh...um...thank you Sidney. That's a very good guess. How about you sit up here by me so you can focus on your paperwork?

MARTIN (CONT'D)

OK, let's try that again. Who can start us off with our theme verse for this unit?

TRACK CUE #7A or B CASEY'S LAMENT :30

MARTIN (CONT'D)

CASEY?

CASEY

Ad lib: Scratch, sniff, cough, etc.

PLEASE DON'T CALL ON ME,
THOUGH I TAKE THIS VERY SERIOUSLY.
I COULDN'T MAKE MY ANSWERS STICK,
MY MIND IS ON THE DRAFT PICK.
THE BRAVES ARE GONNA BE THE CHAMP, YOUR TEAM
I FOLLOWED THEM SINCE TRAINING CAMP.
I'M FOCUSED ON THE THEORIES
ABOUT THE WORLD SERIES.
I ALSO LOVE THE OAKLAND A'S.
GO A'S

SIDNEY jumps front and center, waving pocket Bible.

SIDNEY

Pr. 17:27? "A person of knowledge uses words with restraint?"

MARTIN

Well Sidney, you certainly weren't exaggerating when you said you like to help your classmates out. Speaking of "restraint"...How about you try these headphones out while you finish up that paperwork?

*MARTIN places giant 80's padded headphones on SIDNEY.
An antennae would be funny.*

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Is there such thing as too much Bible drill?

MARTIN (CONT'D)

(syrupy smile)

OK, third time's a charm. Now, once again, who can start us off with our theme verse for this unit? Someone who's name does not begin with "S"?

TRACK CUE #8A or B FELISHA'S LAMENT :30

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Felisha?

FELISHA

Ad lib: "At least let me put away my favorite lipgloss. "It's Raspberry Rose."

PLEASE DON'T MAKE ME THINK.

WOW I REALLY LIKE THIS POLISH IT'S CALLED PASSION PINK.

THE MACY'S SALE WAS SATURDAY, I COULDN'T TEAR MYSELF AWAY. **FILL IN YOUR LOCAL STORE.**

I ONLY BOUGHT 4 PAIR OF SHOES, IT WAS SO HARD TO CHOOSE.

SIDNEY, IS THE BRAINIAC.

SIDNEY, DO YOU HAVE MY BACK?

(S)HE'LL BLURT THE ANSWER OUT RIGHT NOW.

ON "right now," FELISHA points to SIDNEY, who is wearing giant padded headphones.

SIDNEY

Ps. 17:28? "Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent?"

FELISHA

You go girl!

MARTIN

(desperate)

Uhhh, yes Sidney. **Silent** being the operative word here.

How about you go ahead to the office with that paperwork that you so **adroitly** filled out.

SIDNEY

(like a spelling B)

Adroitly: A-D-R-O-I-T-L-Y, adroitly: skillfully or cleverly. That was one of my SAT words...back in the Third Grade.

MARTIN prods SIDNEY with papers.

MARTIN

To the office.

SIDNEY

(not bragging, just explaining)

Of course, Mr/Ms. Martin.

I know right where it is - well...because I memorized the school map last night while I was studying the student handbook...again...on the toilet.

SIDNEY yells from the wings while MARTIN dramatically guards the door with hands and feet splayed. door with hands and feet splayed.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

(yelling)

Just correcting the typos...

MARTIN

OK, finally. Now, hurry up, quickly students... can someone PLEASE share our theme verse for this unit? Anyone? PLEASE?

TRACK CUE #9A or B CHARLIE'S LAMENT :30

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Charlie?

CHARLIE

Ad lib: "OHHH, It's only 10 o'clock? Nooooooo!
 HELP I'M TRAPPED HERE IN THIS CHAIR.
 MY REAR IS SORE, THIS CLASS IS BORING. I NEED AIR.
 HEY LOOK, A CAT WITH KITTENS! I LOVE MY NEW GREEN MITTENS.
 WHAT'S FOR LUNCH? EH, LEAN CUISINE,
 WHO'S ON THAT TRAMPOLINE?
 IS THAT A FLYING STICKY BUG?
 DID JACK SPILL KETCHUP ON THE RUG?
 REMIND ME WHAT THE QUESTION WAS...
 SQUIRREL!

SIDNEY

(loudly whispering to CHARLIE)

Charlie, try **Pr. 10:10?** "A chattering fool comes to ruin!!!"

SIDNEY bursts through entrance, MARTIN comically jumps aside accordingly.

MARTIN

Ohhhh...SIDNEY...I see you're back already.

SIDNEY

Yes, I was just having coffee with the school nurse. We were discussing the medical history of hiccups.

TRACK CUE #10 RETURN OF SIDNEY :30

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

ALL DONE I MADE A TON OF FRIENDS.
 THE FUN IN THIS SCHOOL NEVER ENDS!
 HAS EVERYBODY HAD A CHANCE?
 DID ANYBODY NEED THE ANSWER?
 GLAD I FIXED THE OFFICE STAFF'S
 COMPUTER GLITCH, WE SHARED A LAUGH.
 I MOST ENJOYED THE PRINCIPAL,
 WE WORKED OUT NEXT YEAR'S BENCHMARK GOAL.

STUDENT

Mr/Mrs. Martin, can we just **sing** the theme song? That's so much easier to remember.

MARTIN

OK, great idea! Let's jump into the theme song. Maybe it will jog your memory.

TRACK CUE #11 "FLINGIN' THOSE WORDS AROUND" FULL CAST THEME SONG 2:00

Over intro, SAM does nasty take to NELLIE.

CHORUS - ALL STUDENTS

EVERYBODY'S SINGIN'
 EVERYBODY'S SWINGIN'
 EVERYBODY'S SINGIN', SWINGIN', A LITTLE MUDSLINGING,
 FLINGIN' THOSE WORDS AROUND.

VERSE ONE - SOLOS, DUETS, FEATURE VOCAL GROUPS. OTHER STUDENTS MAY HANDLE SUGGESTED PROPS. SEE GUIDE.

WELL THERE ARE GRAD U A TION WORDS,
 CELEBRATION WORDS,
 OUR GREATNATION WORDS,
 SWEET DALMATION WORDS.
 WORDS WE USE FOR YELLING, WORDS WE USE FOR SELLING,
 WORDS WE'RE PRETTY SURE AREN'T TRUE.
 WORDS LIKE, "PLEASE HOLD, YOU'RE VERY IMPORTANT TO US -
 YOU'RE CALLER # 32."

CHORUS

VERSE TWO - SOLOS, DUETS, FEATURE VOCAL GROUPS.

OTHER STUDENTS MAY HANDLE SUGGESTED PROPS. SEE GUIDE.

WELL THERE ARE FIRE STATION WORDS,
 MEDICATION WORDS
 MY VACATION WORDS
 YIKES! TAXATION WORDS.
 WORDS WE USE FOR BOASTING, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE'RE POSTING,
 WORDS WE PROBABLY SHOULDN'T SAY, WORDS LIKE,

"THIS IS NOT THE KINDEST, BUT DUE TO THE "ONLINE-NESS" I'M GONNA SAY IT ANYWAY."

REPEAT CHORUS

TAG

OPTIONAL AD LIBS

SIDNEY catapults front and center urgently blurting out:

SIDNEY

I got it, I got it, I got it!!! Proverbs 15:4? "The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit."

Stunned jaw drop and gasp from entire cast.

MARTIN

Thank you, Sidney. You are correct.

SIDNEY

Wanna know how I did it?

MARTIN

Not in the least little bit. See we have a lot to cov-

SIDNEY

I just counted up the total number of verses in the Bible, **divided** that sum by the number of scripture verses specifically about our words, **multiplied** that by-

MARTIN

(escorting SIDNEY to seat)

Right! So what you're saying is: Clearly, we have a **choice** about the words we speak.

Or DON'T speak.

God has enabled us to **choose** our words. So let's choose wisely, and not thoughtlessly "fling our words around."

Amusing him/herself.

Get it? I crack myself up.

So, class, your Presentations should be focused on this wonderful freedom - and responsibility - of being able to speak. Now, who'll go first?

All students look busy to avoid answering as SAM drags NELLIE far downstage for PRIVATE DIALOGUE #2.

SAM

C'mon, cough it up, NELLIE.

NELLIE

Would you stop!?!

SAM

You don't recognize an opportunity when it smacks you in the face, do you.

NELLIE

What are you talking about?

SAM

This is our chance to get the respect we deserve from Gigi. She doesn't even speak to me - she acts like I don't exist. So if **YOU'VE** got some good dirt on her, **I** need to know it. If we can blackmail her, we might just turn out to be her sudden new best friends!

NELLIE

I don't tell things when people ask me not to. That's not how friendship works, Sam.

SAM

(sarcastically)

Right!!! You're a **PERFECT** friend, Nellie. You **NEVER** tell secrets, you **NEVER** gossip. How about the time you told -

SCENE 3 - BODY OF PROGRAM - STUDENT FEATURE AND FULL CAST OPTIONS

MARTIN

Again, who will go first? No volunteers? OK, then I'll choose. Let's see...who had the verse about **gossiping?**

GOSSIP SONG cast sheepishly cross downstage as SAM and NELLIE return to seats.

GIGI, FELISHA OR ANY STUDENT

Our verse was Proverbs 11:13. "A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret."

Snaps fingers to summon track.

Hit it!

TRACK CUE #XX GOSSIP SONG :20 FOR EACH REPEAT. OPTIONAL ROUNDS.

**GOSSIP SONG - SOLO FOLLOW BY DUET, TRIO, BUILD TO ALL
DON'T TELL ANYONE BUT THIS IS WHAT I HEARD,
I PROBABLY SHOULD NOT REPEAT SO PLEASE DON'T SAY A WORD.
IT'S ONLY WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FROM WHAT I HEAR AND SEE.
I'M TELLING YOU IN PRIVACY AS IT WAS TOLD TO ME.**

REPEAT FOR ROUNDS

MARTIN

(ironic throat clear)

Yes, maybe we can all take a note on that. Okay thank you.

Now, who had James 1:26? About "**bridling our tongues?**" How about you go next?

STUDENT (S)

OK. Um..James 1:26 "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not **bridle** his tongue, he deceives himself, and his religion is worthless."

MARTIN

Great! And before you start, who can tell us what "**bridle**" means? Does it mean you're getting **married**? Not unless you have a "**groomal**," right?

Self amused.

STUDENT

A bridle is how you guide a horse.

MARTIN

Ok, very good. Go right ahead.

Cowboys and gals enter singing on horses.

TRACK CUE #XX HOLD YER HORSES ENTRANCE :45

COWBOYS HOLD YER HORSES, HOLD YER TONGUE.
 THINK BEFORE THOSE WORDS ARE SLUNG.
 STICKS AND STONES CAN BREAK MY BONES,
 BUT WORDS CAN HURT FOREVER.
 SO SAY IT SMART, HAVE A HEART, USE YER WORDS FOR GOOD.

TRACK CUE #XX - HOLD YER HORSES UNDERSCORE

WRANGLER

How bout we camp here for the night?

COWBOYS

*They "dismount" and gather round the imaginary
 "campfire" for jokes.*

WRANGLER

Let's get that campfire a-goin' and cook us up some vittles.

WRANGLER (CONT'D)

Hey, that reminds me, where do Cowboys cook their meals?

COWBOY(S)

I don't know...where do Cowboys cook their meals?

WRANGLER

Home..home on the range. Get it?

Ad lib laughs, "That's a good one!" etc.

WRANGLER (CONT'D)

What do ya call a guy who wears Cowboy clothes?

COWBOY (S)

I don't know. What do ya call a guy who wears Cowboy clothes?

WRANGLER

Ranch dressing.

Ad lib laughs.

WRANGLER (CONT'D)

Okay, one more. Why did the Cowboy die with his boots on?

COWBOY (S)

I don't know. Why did the Cowboy die with his boots on?

WRANGLER

He didn't want to stub his toe when he kicked the bucket.

Ad lib laughs.

WRANGLER (CONT'D)

Alright, now that's enough horsin' around cow folk. Let's mount up and get along little doggies.

TRACK CUE #xx HOLD YER HORSES EXIT :45

COWBOYS HOLD YER HORSES, HOLD YER TONGUE.
 THINK BEFORE THOSE WORDS ARE SLUNG.
 STICKS AND STONES CAN BREAK MY BONES,
 BUT WORDS CAN HURT FOREVER.
 SO SAY IT SMART, HAVE A HEART, USE YER WORDS FOR GOOD.

Cowboys ride off on horses, return to seats.

MARTIN

Great job, Cowboys and girls. OK, who can go next?

Scans students again.

Let's see, who had Proverbs 27:2?

Two STUDENTS play Grandmas or Grandpas. Each holds a picture of their grandkid.

STUDENT (S)

I did. Proverbs 27:2 "Let another praise you and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips."

GRANDMA ONE

Ralph/Gladys, Have I shown you this picture of my Jacob?

GRANDMA TWO

Frank/Bertha, I've seen it 13 times. How about this picture of my Brandon's baseball team?

GRANDMA ONE

You sure he's in there?

GRANDMA TWO

Yes he's in there. You know he hit a home run.

GRANDMA ONE

My Jacob hit two home runs.

GRANDMA TWO

Over the fence?

GRANDMA ONE

Over the fence, across the Johnny Hunt Highway and thru the Bojangles drive thru. If Bojangles hadn't been there, it would still be going. *Fill in your local.*

MARTIN

OK, thank you, students. Who can go next? Let's see, who had the Matthew verse?

Sam drags NELLIE far downstage for a Private Dialogue #3.

SAM

Soo...back to you being PERFECT...

NELLIE

I never said I was perfect.

SAM

All of a sudden, you have rules about what you should and shouldn't say or repeat?

NELLIE

I've always had rules about what I, "...should or shouldn't say or repeat."

SAM

Oh right. You HAVE rules. You just break them whenever it's good for you.

NELLIE

Sam, just because I've made mistakes in the past doesn't mean I shouldn't try to do better.

SAM

(sarcastic)

Better for who?

NELLIE

What?

SAM

Better for **YOU**, Nellie. How about **ME**? How about helping ME out a little here?

MARTIN

OK great! Students, I like the way you're taking these verses to heart and **speaking kindly**. Who's next? Who had that verse from Matthew about what comes out of our mouths? I would love to hear from that group.

STUDENT FROM GARBAGE CAST

Our group has been studying Matthew 15:11. "What goes into a man's mouth does not make him unclean, but what comes out of his mouth...that is what makes him unclean. The things that come out of the mouth come from the heart."

(to those presenting)

Ready guys? Here we go.

TRACK CUE #xx GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT RT 1:55

WHAT'S IN MY HEART COMES OUT MY MOUTH.
IF GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT.
FROM EAST TO WEST AND NORTH TO SOUTH.
WHAT'S IN MY HEART COMES OUT MY MOUTH.

VERSE

I WILL BE SMART,
GUARDING MY HEART EACH DAY.
CAUSE WHAT COMES IN MY EYES AND EARS
GOES IN MY HEART AND COMES OUT HERE.

REPEAT CHORUS- REPLACE "GARBAGE" WITH "GOOD THINGS"

REPEAT VERSE

REPEAT CHORUS

MARTIN

Great job on that, Students!

MARTIN scans STUDENTS.

Who's next? How about we learn about **"taming the tongue?"**
Who had that verse?

CIRCUS students ad lib as they gather to starting places, speaker at mic.

STUDENT

James 3:7 and 8 "All kinds of animals, birds and reptiles, and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison."

TRACK CUE #xx AT THE CIRCUS ~ TAMING THE TONGUE

1. Create a Circus setting. *STUDENT/Lion Tamer enters grandly, bows, stands on circular circus type pedestal in center, holding a "training chair" or "prop whip."*
2. Other *STUDENTS* (tumblers/dancers/puppets) become the surrounding wild animals, acting vicious and threatening toward the *TAMER*. Cast can make wild animal noises.
3. After animals tumble and act wild for a few measures, Two *STUDENTS* enter as humans. (For extra laugh, use two *ADULTS*.) They are talking non-stop about sports, video games, movies, whatever. This can be mimed or aloud. Audience need not be able to hear them, but needs to see they are engrossed in conversation.
4. Over the music, *TAMER* mimes, "1,2,3 freeze!" and all animals obey/freeze, but humans continue talking.
5. *TAMER* commands humans to freeze a second and third time. Animals obeyed the first time and remain frozen, but humans continue jabbering. *TAMER* blows his whistle, exasperated. (Can mime whistle, or blow a real whistle.) Track ends.

LION TAMER

(Referring to the two humans,
who are still talking.)

You see what I mean!?

(repeats verse)
 ... no man can tame the tongue."

MARTIN laughs at punchline and transitions to next Presentation.

SAM drags NELLIE downstage for Private Dialogue #4.

SAM

(Mounting anger in following exchange.)
 Ok, Nellie. Maybe YOU don't have anything to tell, but I do.

NELLIE

What are you talking about?

SAM

I'm talking about what happened with you at Rachel's party last summer? Between you and-

NELLIE looks sick at the recall.

NELLIE

Oh come on, Sam. You wouldn't! That's a secret! I trusted you!

SAM

OHHHHHH, OKAAAY. You trusted me **THEN**. So you can trust me **NOW**. Tell me whatever you've got on GIGI.

NELLIE

(She's had enough. Escalating anger.)

Sam, stop! I thought I was your friend.

SAM

You **ARE** my friend! And now **GIGI** is gonna be my friend as well. Yours too, when you cough it up. Go ahead...

NELLIE

That is SOOOO mean! So unfair!

SAM

You're a scaredy cat, Nellie! Everybody knows it.

NELLIE

Yeah? Well everybody says you're a big trouble maker. Always in everybody's business!

SAM

Oh really! Well I have a few things to say about you too. And so do your so-called "friends." First of all -

MARTIN

(syrupy)

Alright class! So proud of the way all you guys are learning about the power of **KIND** words.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

OK, so who had the verse about anger? Can we have that group next?

COUNTDOWN TO CALM DOWN students cross downstage.

STUDENT

Our verse was Psalm 39:1a. "I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin."

TRACK CUE #xx COUNT DOWN TO CALM DOWN RT 2:09

COUNTDOWN TO CALM DOWN

VERSE ONE - SOLO/DUET/FEATURE

MY BROTHER MADE ME ANGRY WHEN HE CRASHED INTO MY ROOM.
I FELT LIKE I SHOULD YELL AT HIM, IT SEEMED THE THING TO DO. SO I SAID,
WAH WAH, WAH, WAH, WHA...
NO WAIT, JUST KIDDING, THAT'S NOT WHAT I SAID. I SAID,

PRECHORUS BRIDGE - SOLO OR FULL COUNTDOWN CAST

"NOW SELF YOU BETTER CALM DOWN KEEP YOUR ANGER IN CHECK. IT'S BEST TO TALK ABOUT IT WHEN YOU'RE NOT AN ANGRY WRECK."

CHORUS (CAST)

I'M GONNA COUNT DOWN,
I'M GONNA COUNT DOWN TILL I CALM DOWN.
7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2
I'M GONNA COUNT DOWN,
I'M GONNA COUNTDOWN TILL I CALM DOWN.
7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2
INSTEAD OF SAYIN' WHAT I COULDA
WOULDA' SAID WHEN YOU WERE AROUND.

VERSE TWO - SOLO/DUET/FEATURE

MY SIS REALLY TICKED ME OFF AND I TOOK THE BLAME.
I WANTED TO LIGHT INTO HER AND TELL HOW I FELT SO I SAID,
WAH WAH, WAH, WAH, WHA...
ALRIGHT, NOT REALLY, IF I SAID THAT I'D BE DEAD. SO I SAID,

PRECHORUS BRIDGE REPEAT

CHORUS REPEAT

**FINAL PHRASE
REPEAT**

SCENE 4 ~ WRAP UP - ACTION PEAK, RESOLUTION, UNRAVEL,
CHARACTER DISCOVERIES, GROWTH, OPTIONAL GOSPEL PRESENTATION

MARTIN

Class, these Presentations have just been excellent!! Thank you all for your wonderful work. We've all been reminded of some very important truths, right Casey?

CASEY

Uhhh, right, right. When I play...I'll... watch what I say.

MARTIN

Very good, Casey. Felisha?

FELISHA

I talk a lot about dressing out...but there's so much more that life's about.

Like make-up!

Just kidding.

MARTIN

Thank you, Felisha. Charlie?

CHARLIE

When someone speaks I'll focus more...instead of looking at the floor! Or... out the door...or in the drawer...or

MARTIN

That's fine Charlie. Sidney?

SIDNEY

Talking less could be my goal, but that requires self control. Maybe I should conduct a poll.

STUDENTS

NO!

MARTIN

No poll, Sidney, that's fine. We've ALL been guilty of speaking too much at some point, and especially of saying things we wish we hadn't. I know I have. I think we can all do better with our words.

OPTIONAL GOSPEL PRESENTATION. FEEL FREE TO USE OURS OR WRITE YOUR OWN.

*****IF NO GOSPEL PRESENTATION, PICK UP HERE*****

OK, how about we wrap it up by repeating...

SAM raises hand.

MARTIN

Yes, Sam?

SAM

(subtly spiteful)

Mr./Ms. Martin...Nellie hasn't gone yet! I can't imagine she would bypass the opportunity to **SPEAK** in front of the class.

MARTIN

OHHHH, Nellie, I'm so sorry I overlooked you. Please forgive me.

NELLIE

That's OK Mr./Mrs. Martin. Really. I don't need to go today.

MARTIN

But of course you do! We wouldn't have you left out.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Go right ahead and begin, Nellie.

Nellie? You did prepare your Presentation, didn't you?

After an awkward stall, GIGI jumps up.

GIGI

May I say, Mr./Ms. Martin, that Nellie informed me privately that she might actually like to SING her presentation.

GIGI makes eye contact with NELLIE, working her into this idea.

Right. She would actually rather SING it than SPEAK it. Class, please give Nellie your undivided attention. In fact, if I may, Mr./Ms. Martin, I'd like to lead the class in a little cheer of support for Nellie.

MARTIN nods consent, though uncertain.

GIGI (CONT'D)

Everyone please stand.

CLASS stands.

GIGI (CONT'D)

Please repeat after me.

GIGI assumes "Cheer Stance," leading chant rhythm with clapping and cheer motions.

Ready, OK.

When someone speaks don't be a pest.

STUDENTS

When someone speaks don't be a pest.

GIGI

Help them do their very best.

STUDENTS

Help them do their very best.

GIGI

How about if it were you?

STUDENTS

How about if it were you?

GIGI

These are things that you can do.

STUDENTS

These are things that you can do.

GIGI

Listen.

STUDENTS

Listen.

GIGI

Make eye contact.

STUDENTS

Make eye contact.

GIGI

Don't look around.

STUDENTS

Don't look around.

GIGI

Or make a sound.

STUDENTS

Or make a sound.

GIGI transitions immediately to pacing, lecturing with authority.

GIGI

Yeah, and don't ever whisper or even make eye contact with anyone else. Just focus on the speaker. Have you ever seen two people whispering or laughing, or giving each other a look when you're not included? It always feels like they're talking bad about you, even if they aren't! So don't do that.

Beat.

And actually, I'm not gonna do that anymore either.

Students ad lib stunned reactions.

(big announcement)

Everybody, please give Nellie your full attention. Me included. Nellie, take it away!

NELLIE

(nervous, haltingly)

Uh, thank you, GIGI. OK, well, my verse was Psalm 37:30.

NELLIE (CONT'D)

TRACK CUE #xx "I HAVE A GIFT" :57

NELLIE (CONT'D)

Psalm 37:30 "The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks what is just."

I HAVE A GIFT TO GIVE

VERSE ONE- NELLIE

LIFE'S SPINNING ALL AROUND ME,
YET IT'S JUST BEYOND MY REACH.
SO MUCH I'LL NEVER KNOW AND CAN'T CONTROL.
I'M IN A CROWD OF PEOPLE, YET I'M FEELING SO ALONE.
HOW CAN I MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON MY OWN?
I WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON MY OWN.

CHORUS - NELLIE

I HAVE A GIFT TO GIVE, THOUGH NOTHING'S IN MY HAND.
I WILL REMEMBER WHEN I SPEAK, MY WORDS WILL ALWAYS LAND
IN SOMEONE'S HEART, AND RING FOREVER,
LIKE AN OLD FAMILIAR SONG.
MAY I CHOOSE WORDS OF LOVE, THAT ECHO ON AND ON AND ON.
MAY I CHOOSE WORDS OF LOVE, THAT ECHO ON.

VERSE TWO - NELLIE

A MILLION WORDS AND PHRASES WHISPER SOFTLY IN MY HEART.
THE KIND ONES FADE, THE CRUEL ONES ALWAYS STAY.
LORD, HEAL THE WOUNDS AND HEARTACHES
WHEN THE ARROWS COME MY WAY.

HELP ME KNOW THE POWER OF WHAT I SAY.
I WANT TO KNOW THE POWER OF WHAT I SAY.

GIGI crosses to NELLIE and joins in.

CHORUS REPEAT - NELLIE AND GIGI (UNISON OR 2 PART)
I HAVE A GIFT TO GIVE, THOUGH NOTHING'S IN MY HAND.
I WILL REMEMBER WHEN I SPEAK, MY WORDS WILL ALWAYS LAND
IN SOMEONE'S HEART AND RING FOREVER,
LIKE AN OLD FAMILIAR SONG.
MAY I CHOOSE WORDS OF LOVE THAT ECHO ON AND ON AND ON.
MAY I CHOOSE WORDS OF LOVE THAT ECHO ON.

NELLIE invites GIGI to Private Dialogue #5. MARTIN and STUDENTS do busy work.

NELLIE (CONT'D)

Thank you for helping me through that GIGI.

Listen, I'm not ever gonna tell your secret. But I do want to ask you for a favor.

GIGI

Ah, so you do want that picture after all.

GIGI strikes pose with NELLIE, phone up for selfie.

NELLIE

No, not exactly.

GIGI

Then what?

NELLIE

Will you be nicer to Sam? Treat him like s/he has feelings? Say "Hi?" Act like s/he's alive? Maybe sit with him/her at lunch once in a while? S/he has the same feelings you do, you know?

Beat.

GIGI

Wow. You're really something, Nellie.

OK, I can do that. Deal.

GIGI and NELLIE end naturally at MARTIN'S interruption. STUDENTS reengage.

MARTIN

(Moved)

Thank you Nellie - and thank you, Gigi.

What a wonderful way to end the class today. I just love that song. How about, as a class, we sing it together?

GIGI begins song chorus, a cappella, followed immediately by NELLIE, then gradually FULL CAST stands and joins in. SAM last.

SONG/NO TRACK I HAVE A GIFT - chorus full cast acappella :42

I HAVE A GIFT TO GIVE, THOUGH NOTHING'S IN MY HAND.
I WILL REMEMBER WHEN I SPEAK, MY WORDS WILL ALWAYS LAND
IN SOMEONE'S HEART AND RING FOREVER,
LIKE AN OLD FAMILIAR SONG.
MAY I CHOOSE WORDS OF LOVE THAT ECHO ON AND ON AND ON.
MAY I CHOOSE WORDS OF LOVE THAT ECHO ON.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

OK, time for PE/Specials/Connections, etc.

Students gather {backpacks} and trickle out or line up at door, etc. Be true to your setting.

GIGI

(to SAM, as they exit)

Hey Sam, wanna sit at my table?

SAM stops cold, does a "pinch me" take.

SAM

You talking to me? Are you talking to me? Uhhh...yeah! Hey and have you heard what Ricky said about...

GIGI puts her flexed hand in SAM's face.

GIGI

"Two ears, one mouth." There's a reason. I'm gonna try less talking and more listening.

SAM

(light bulb moment)

Riiiiggghht, riiggghht. Good idea.

GIGI and SAM exit. MARTIN addresses NELLIE.

MARTIN

Nellie, you are such a gifted student. Maybe you should be our new class Spokesperson for Student Council!

NELLIE does appropriate take.

TRACK CUE #xx: BOWS SWING THOSE WORDS AROUND

CAST BOWS

THE END

PERUSAL