BIBLE VERSES

Played out with some similarity to THE APPRENTICE format.

There is a desk and chair centre stage. TWO is sitting on the chair behind the desk, occasionally looking at his/her watch. ONE enters, carrying notepad, paper, pen, etc. in a brisk businesslike fashion.

CHARACTER ONE: All right, are we all here?

(TWO jumps up, ushers ONE to the seat and pushes it in to the table,

then stands to the right of the desk.)

CHARACTER TWO: All present and accounted for. I've taken the liberty of warming your seat this chilly morning. I got here seven and a half minutes before our agreed rendezvous in order to arrange the desk, prepare refreshments and, as I mentioned, warm your seats for the optimum three minutes.

CHARACTER ONE: Er…thank you.

(THREE enters stage left, breathless, limping)

CHARACTER THREE: Sorry, terribly sorry, held up … traffic … bus … bike … crunching ... pain

CHARACTER ONE: Yes, yes, you're late, just get a move on it's a big day.

CHARACTER TWO: (to THREE) I warmed the seat.

CHARACTER THREE: What? Yes, sorry I was late, I'm ready now, the pain is bearable.

CHARACTER ONE: OK who can tell me what today is?

CHARACTER TWO: It's the one-week anniversary of the day we arrived here and began experiencing the remarkable, kind, wise guidance that your unique abilities afford one just starting out in business …

CHARACTER ONE: (proudly for a moment) So it is … I am rather good, aren't I?

CHARACTER THREE: Actually, it's the day it begins.

CHARACTER ONE: Did you say something? Ah yes, it is indeed the day it begins.

CHARACTER TWO: (furiously tapping at an iPhone or similar) The day what begins? I don't have this in my iPhone app.

CHARACTER ONE: It is the day, you'll recall, that I asked you to present me your plan for starting it all off, telling me how it begins.

CHARACTER TWO: Starting…it all off? 'It begins? 'It' being …what, specifically?

CHARACTER THREE: Changing the world.

CHARACTER ONE: Absolutely right, today is the day that I tasked you to present your ideas for changing the world. (to TWO) What have you got for me?

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CHARACTER TWO: (flustered) Well, what with all the seat warming and preparation, and lack of reminder in my app for the day, I, er, I haven't exactly ... um …

CHARACTER ONE: (interrupts, annoyed) You haven't exactly done anything have you? No plan, no idea about how to begin to change the world …

CHARACTER TWO: (interrupts as an idea hits) POWER! MONEY! Yes, that's it, power, and money.

CHARACTER THREE: What? That's just putting a plaster on it!

CHARACTER ONE: (puts hand up to stop THREE talking) I'm listening . . .go on.

CHARACTER TWO: (making it up on the spot) Yes, my idea is to make sure that most of those who have the power and money are all gathered into one place …

CHARACTER THREE: Like the northern hemisphere you mean?

CHARACTER TWO: … and that they buy, well, stuff that makes everything better, eventually.

CHARACTER THREE: Like medicines that can be sold to the poorest people? That won't deal with the deeper issues of poverty, suffering, disease …

CHARACTER ONE: Well, it is an attractive proposition. Money always is.

CHARACTER TWO: Coffee?

CHARACTER ONE: Don't mind if I do. (to THREE) So what have you come up with?

CHARACTER THREE: (clears throat) I would like to introduce you to someone.

(THREE beckons to the wings and a child shuffles on stage. Clearly poor, with a placard around the neck. ONE and TWO look unnerved, a little embarrassed)

CHARACTER ONE: What do have we here?

CHARACTER THREE: My idea.

CHARACTER TWO: It's ridiculous; this child doesn't have any money or power. (characters laugh)

CHARACTER ONE: I must say I am a little surprised at your decision to bring this child here, fish out of water and all that. Not altogether appropriate, don't you think?

CHARACTER THREE: (kindly, to the child) Show them. It's OK.

CHILD: (child turns the placard around to reveal the words "It begins with me")

CHARACTER TWO: That's ridiculous! Changing the world begins with, with…this child?!

CHARACTER THREE: Yes. That's it. It's simple.

CHARACTER ONE: There's nothing original about this.

CHARACTER THREE: You have to give the boy/girl a chance — what if you were in his/her position?

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CHARACTER ONE: Well I'll never be in his/her position will I? Look, there's nothing new here. I've seen thousands, probably millions of children like this, and quite honestly they're all forgotten very early on.

CHARACTER THREE: If you change this child's story, you can begin to change the world.

CHARACTER ONE: Now that would be extraordinary and of course very desirable, but let me just remind you of a few harsh realities. There are about 143 million children like him/her in the developing world, and 1 in 13 are orphans. Every day around the world, 30,000 children die — 1 every 3 seconds. More than 10 million children under 5 die each year. Two-thirds — more than 6 million — die from preventable causes. They have little education, they are vulnerable to disease and predators, and they are frankly too great a problem to know how to deal with. And he/she is just another one. There's simply no point in pursuing this idea. It's impossible to make any real difference. It's the way the world is.

CHILD: (speaks) If you want to change the world, then it begins by changing the world for me, and others like me. We're the future, and we're a big part of the present. I just need the opportunity. The rest is up to me.

CHARACTER TWO: (who has been thoughtful for a while) So … if I give this child an opportunity, I can really make a difference. I can change his/her story. That's like an act of compassion.

CHARACTER ONE: Hey! Let's get some perspective here. This is one child. There are far too many of them out there. They are all hopeless. They'll fade away anyway. It's impossible to give them all an opportunity or make a difference. That's the way it is. I don't want to pursue this idea.

CHARACTER THREE: (bravely standing up to the boss) Well want to make a difference for this one.

CHARACTER ONE: I have taught you well. (to TWO) I'll give you the casting vote then.

CHARACTER TWO: (torn) I can't decide, I can't.

(a stagehand walks on, whispers something in ONE's ear)

CHARACTER ONE: Well, we've had a message from the producer to guide us in our decision. Apparently we are to remember to let the children come to him and we mustn't stop them — because the whole future of the show belongs to them.

(TWO and THREE nod in agreement)

CHARACTER ONE: Let's ask the audience.

CHARACTER TWO: Audience?!

CHARACTER THREE: People are watching?

CHARACTER ONE: Yes, we're interactive. They're watching us closely.

(They all turn and look at audience – TWO and THREE shuffle nervously)

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Audience, you know the choice we have to make. We could ignore the Producer. We could pretend no-one's watching. We could decide to go with power and money. Or we could listen to the other choice, which says if we want to change the world it begins with this child.

One day, you might have to make a similar choice.
Because in the end it begins with each one us.

(ONE looks at TWO and THREE…hold for a beat…
they nod at each other… and they turn back to the audience)

We have made our decision.

(Turns to the child)

CHARACTER ONE: It looks like you've got your opportunity. It begins with you.

(THREE embraces the child)

CHARACTER THREE: We're doing what we can; we're changing one story.
Then another, and another, until the world changes!

CHARACTER ONE: We're not done yet.

CHARACTER TWO: Can I top you off?

CHARACTER ONE: No need. You're fired!

(TWO is aghast, runs off crying)

And you. (to CHILD) You're hired!

(Freeze. Hold. Lights out, or walk off stage)

ENDS

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