

THE TWELVE APPRENTICES

By Rod

This sketch is based on the TV programme 'The apprentice'. It aims to bring out the cost of discipleship; following Jesus is no easy option. The main action draws on the scene at the Last Supper where Jesus sends Judas off, knowing he is going to betray him, but also refers to other events involving the apostles – notably Peter and John.

Main references: Matt: 26 vv 17-25,31-35; 20 vv 20-28; 10 vv 32-39; 18 vv 1-5,10

CAST

Narrator Need not be seen. Could provide voice-over introduction

Jesus

Peter

John Ideally younger than the others

Judas

If possible a graphic/trailer with the 12 apprentices could be shown to a voice-over narration. Or all 12 could appear briefly and walk across stage. There is a long table. One chair is on one side, there are three on the other.

Narrator They come from the four corners of Galilee. And they consist of men with different temperaments and from all walks of life. Andrew and Peter are brothers, and they run their own fishing business. James and John work for their father in the company, "Zebedee and Sons". Matthew is employed by the Government collecting taxes for the Inland Revenue. Thomas is one of twins; for him – seeing is believing. Simon is active in local politics. Philip and Bartholomew are good friends and they come from the lakeside town of Bethsaida. James, son of Alphaeus, is small in stature but big in determination. Thaddaeus is a warm-hearted character, in contrast to Judas Iscariot; he has a certain light-fingeredness with money and an eye for the main chance.

Together they are "The Twelve Apprentices".

Their aim is to please one man: Lord Jesus Christ.

[Enter Jesus. He stands at one side of stage. The opposite side to the one from which the 3 apprentices will later enter] He built a successful carpentry business in his home town of Nazareth selling

hand-made furniture. But now his sights are set higher; he is looking for apprentices to help him establish a world-wide kingdom.

Some have thought of him as meek and mild, but this sugary image should not distract you from realising he has a steely, focussed inner-determination. And he makes exacting demands of his apprentices....

Jesus Do not think I have come to make your life easy. If you love your father or mother more than me, or your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of me.
If you don't go all the way with me, through thick and thin, you don't deserve me. If your first concern is to look after yourself, you'll never find yourself. But if you forget about yourself and look to me, you'll find both yourself and me.

Narrator The twelve apprentices have had to learn to live together and to work together. They have been given tasks to perform, including open-air marketing, the provision of first aid, mass catering with scant resources and the procurement of transport.
Jesus has told them that he is looking for:...

Jesus Men who are shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves.

Narrator And now the time has come for the twelve to be reduced to eleven. Three of them have come to the attention of Lord Jesus: Peter, John and Judas. One of them will be fired. But which one?

Enter Peter, John and Judas. They sit at the table. Jesus moves across to sit at the table facing them.

Jesus Peter, you have shown yourself to be headstrong and you have made some bold assertions.

Peter That's the way I am, Lord. I tell it like it is.

Jesus But you do tend to open your mouth and rush in before you have thought about things.

Peter I know. I'm sorry. But I am sure I can learn and do better.

Jesus Working for me is not going to be easy. Many people will fall by the wayside.

Peter Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.

Jesus I tell you the truth; this very night , before the cock crows, you will deny knowing me three times.

Peter Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.

Jesus There you go again, Peter. Are you sure you can learn?
[Turning attention away from Peter to John] John.

John Yes, Lord Jesus.

Jesus You, along with your brother James, said you wanted to be my right hand man.

John Yes, Jesus, I believe I can do it.

Jesus You're very young.

John I still believe I can do it. Age shouldn't matter; if you're good enough, you're old enough.

Jesus Is that you speaking or is that something your mother said to you. I seem to remember it was actually her who made the request on your behalf. I want people who will aim to please me – not their mothers.

John No, it's me speaking, Jesus; I believe I can do it.

Jesus You and your brother weren't too popular with the others when you made your request. Are you sure you are not too big-headed to be my apprentice? First and foremost I am looking for servants and team-players – not people who want to lord it over others behind big desks. *[Turning away towards Judas]*
And then we have you, Judas.

Judas Yes, Jesus.

Jesus What exactly have you been doing with my money?

Judas Just a little creative accounting, Jesus. And anyway, you told us not to store up treasures on earth. I put it to good use.

Jesus Good personal use no doubt. And now I gather you have another little money-making scheme on the go.

Judas I might have.

Jesus You do have; one involving a kiss-o-gram for which you will be paid thirty pieces of silver. Am I not right?

Judas I am always looking for good business opportunities. I seem to remember you telling us to aim to be as shrewd as snakes. And anyway, a kiss can be as gentle as a dove.

Jesus But the outcome may not be so gentle. [*Standing and addressing all three*] I tell you the truth, one of you is going to try to undermine my work and betray me.

P,J&J together Surely not me Jesus.

Jesus Peter, you are hot-headed and need to learn greater patience.

Peter Yes, Lord, I will.

Jesus John, you are young and big-headed; you need to learn greater humility.

John Yes, Lord, I'll try.

Jesus But Judas, you are no longer any use to me. If I were to say to you "You're fired", it wouldn't be the case. The truth is – you have fired yourself. What you are about to do, do quickly. Now go.

Exit Judas.

THE END