

Taming the Tongues

James 3:1-12

of puppeteers: 3-4 / # of people: 4-5

Characters: adult + 5 puppet characters: Bible Billy (a southern Bible Revivalist/Re-enactor), Sally (young girl), puppy, chameleon, cow

Note: All animal puppets must have visible tongues. The type and number of animal puppets may vary.

Props: Indiana Jones style hat and bullwhip

Adult: Good morning everyone! I am so glad to see you! I got a call from Bible Billy this morning and he invited us to preview his newest Bible Reenactment. Isn't that exciting! We will be the first ones to see it! Billy? Are you ready for us?

Bible Billy: (appears from below wearing an Indiana Jones type hat) Welcome everyone! Are you in for a treat this morning! You will be the first to witness my newest masterpiece straight from the Good Book. It's an exciting story with action, drama, and tragedy – all in one! And – it stars – yours truly!

Adult: Wow! You are the star, Bible Billy? I can't wait to see it! What's it called?

Bible Billy: This reenactment is straight from the book of James and it's entitled "The Taming of the Tongues".

Adult: Tongues? Like inside our mouth tongues?

Bible Billy: You got it! And now, on with the show! (Billy disappears below.)

Adult: (to the kids) Whoa – this should be interesting. Let's watch it!

(Indiana Jones theme music plays. Billy with a bull whip appears along with Cow, Chameleon, and Puppy. Billy is "taming" the animals' tongues who are protesting, mooing, complaining, etc. Sally is being "saved" by Billy.)

Billy: Hold on Sally. I will save you from these evil tongues!

Sally: (dramatically) Oh, Billy, you are my only hope!

Billy: (heroically) I will tame these tongues! They will not poison you!

Sally: But, Billy, the tongues - the tongues call to me!

Billy: You must resist them Sally! Do not fall to their temptation!

Sally: Oh no! It is too late for me! (Billy stops and stares at Sally. The animals are quiet.)

Billy: What do you mean sweet Sally?

Sally: (in distress) It's too late! Look! I have a tongue! (Sally opens mouth wide to show Billy her tongue. The animals laugh wickedly as they have "won".)

Billy: (looks into Sally's mouth – turns dramatically to the audience and yells...) NOOOOOO!

(The play is over. Music stops. Awkward silence.)

Adult: Oh – is that it? It’s over?

Billy: (unsubtle hint) You’re supposed to clap now...

Adult: Oh, sorry! (awkward clapping)

(Billy, Sally, and the animals all bow and express their appreciation. Animals disappear.)

Adult: Umm, Billy. Can we talk for just a second?

Billy: Of course! Do you want to tell me what a fine reenactment that was? True to scripture – without fail!

Adult: Well...hmmm...why don’t you tell us which verses from the Bible you were using for your play.

Billy: You mean “REENACTMENT”.

Adult: Right - reenactment...remind me what the Bible says?

Billy: (dramatically) James chapter 3 says, and I quote, “The tongue is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one’s life on fire...no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.”

Adult: My goodness – that does sound dramatic! But...do you think the Bible is really telling us there’s no hope for us because of our tongues? I think there is more to that passage.

Billy: Well, sure, but I like to use the exciting parts for my reenactments!

Adult: It was exciting, but don’t you think you also need to include the parts that tell us how to make things good and right? People are not all evil and bad and our tongues are not evil...it’s how we use them that can be bad. I don’t mean to offend you, Billy. I just think there’s a lot more that needs to be said about this passage from the Bible.

Sally: I would like to talk about it. I don’t like the idea that my tongue is evil.

Adult: I don’t want to feel that way, either, Sally. You need to know that James also says that no one is perfect and that we often make mistakes and do things that we don’t mean to do. Sometimes we say things that we really don’t mean or things that we wish we hadn’t said.

Sally: Oh, I know about that. One time my little brother made me so mad that I told him I hated him. And, then I felt really bad about it. I didn’t mean what I said.

Adult: Exactly – and that’s what James means about having evil tongues. Sometimes we say or do things that are bad. But, just because you said something bad, Sally, it doesn’t mean you are a bad person. It just means that you made a mistake.

Billy: So, you’re saying that taming our tongues is really about trying to make sure we don’t let bad things come out of our mouths.

Adult: Yes, Billy, that's right. Think before you speak. Try to always choose your words carefully so that you don't hurt others.

Sally: So, my tongue's not evil?

Adult: No, but that show was really something. Billy, I don't think I'll ever forget it!

Billy: Aw, shucks, that's nice of you – and your tongue – to say!

Sally: (speaking to her tongue) Alright tongue – we're going to be careful to say good things. I don't want any part of me to be evil!

Adult: See – you understand James perfectly! You got it!

Billy: There you have it! Another successful Bible Reenactment! I am so good at this!

Kirsten: (laughing) Yep – and I can't wait for your next play!

Billy: REENACTMENT!

Adult: Sorry – REENACTMENT! Let's say a prayer and then head downstairs for children's church.