

# Augustine of Hippo: Reader's Theatre

## Length:

There are two options available:

1. Augustine as a performance (approximately 45 min)
2. Augustine as a Dinner Theatre (approximately 2 hrs) and needs a point person to organize the dinner

## CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Storyteller (ST)

Sister Vendor (SV)

Augustine

Monica

Patricus

Marcus

Alypius

Random Character (could be someone from band/Chorus)

Mistress (could be someone from band/Chorus)

Priest (could be someone from band/Chorus)

Ambrose (could be someone from band/Chorus)

THE BALLAD SINGING MAN BAND (or a Chorus)

Some of the narrative is sung by a band using the tune from "The Man."

Words: Norma Bennett

Music: Ralph Carmichael - public domain, "There Once Was a Man" (music provided at the end of the script) copyright 1966, Lexicon Music, Inc.

The Band can be placed wherever your stage allows; they can even be set up in the middle of the hall with your dinner tables around them. Be creative with your space!

If a Band is impossible to put together, then make this into a Chorus where the words are spoken by a group (any size, male and female), crisp and clear.

## Setting:

### Stage and Prop Suggestions

*Time in History*

*354–430AD*

*The year is 370*

Read the notes on Reader's Theatre that are provided with this script. (See accompaniments)

#### **A Few Notes:**

Church history made accessible through theatre, the Marketplace Storyteller introduces you to Augustine of Hippo and his conversion to Christ. The audience participates, playing the role of buyers and sellers. The Storyteller entertains and teaches about family, lifestyle, and political/religious climates of the period.

This show may be performed for any audience but for a more interactive family event consider pairing the Reader's Theatre with a family dinner. The hall becomes a busy Italian market place, with both food and costuming themed accordingly. This play, just for fun, has been written with a 1960's costuming and music theme... because... why not?

## Dinner Theatre:

A dinner invitation could look like this:

# The Storyteller

Respectfully requests your presence for dinner and

"The story of AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO"

at the Milan Marketplace

on Saturday, November 7th, at 6pm.

Costuming from the year of our Lord, 1960 is suggested.

The menu will include lasagna, Cesar salad, and freshly baked bread.

The gates to the marketplace will be open to all wanderers, wonderers, and worshipers.

The topic of discussion:

CONVERSION

Presented as an interactive Reader's Theatre

written by Norma Bennett

*(Put this quote on the back of the invitation)*

"And man wants to praise you, man who is only a small portion of what you have created and who goes about carrying with him his own mortality, the evidence of his own sin and evidence that you resist the proud. Yet still man, this small portion of creation, wants to praise you. You stimulate him to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you." Augustine of Hippo (354-430AD)

On each table copies of the Nicene Creed will be placed, for communal recitation at the end of the play. (See Accompaniments)

## Setting:

Marketplace, Milan Italy, 370AD

## Staging:

Before you stage this, read the notes provided by Norma Bennett on Reader's Theatre, in accompaniments.

Busy marketplace in Milan, Italy.

Both ST/SV have stalls set side by side.

Storyteller: flowers, vegetables, fabric etc (must have a pear, nuts, linen, silk)

Sister Vendor: 60s hair salon stuff (must have a wig to comb out)

Their stage business is any and/or everything that is in their stall. They may each have a tall stool.

Between the vendor stalls is a small table with 2 chairs. On the table is books, 2 beer tankards, 2 wine goblets, paper, quill. Upstage.

Tall stool for Monica is placed CS, downstage, right.

Busker's tin bucket for Random Character to throw money is placed DC, downstage, center.

The RT begins with improvisational singing.

Song suggestion list for Sister Vendor:

Hey Jude

(The Beatles)

Heard it Through the Grape Vine

(Marvin Gaye)

Good Vibrations

(The Beach Boys)

(I can't get no) Satisfaction

(Rolling Stones)

I'm a Believer

(The Beatles)

She Loves You

(The Beatles)

Song suggestion list for Storyteller:

Age of Aquarius

(The 5th Dimension)

Turn! Turn! Turn!

(The Byrds)

If I Had a Hammer

(Peter, Paul and Mary)

Where Have all the Flowers Gone

(Peter, Paul and Mary)

I'd Like To Teach the World to Sing

(The New Seekers)

In the Year 2525

(Zager and Evans)

In the script:

Both: We'll Sing in the Sunshine (Gayle Garnett)

Sister Vendor: sings the first line from the theme song (TV show) "The Beverly Hillbillies"; and

Here Comes the Sun (Beatles)

# Augustine of Hippo: Script

Open with Ballad Singing Man Band playing 60s rock and roll. This draws your audience to attention and lets them know the show is about to begin.

When the band stops and the audience is paying attention the ST and the SV begin their improvised 60's songs. They organize their stalls while singing. This can last as long as you want. They stop singing when Random Character walks in front of the stage and throws money into the Busker's tin bucket - this indicates the starting of the script...

Storyteller: Is your market stall set up? Look, the sun is about to rise over that stand of cypress trees. Stop getting distracted, Sister Golden Hair.

*(both look into the audience at the imaginary Racilia)*

Oh look... there she is!

Sister Vendor: Well la-de-da. Does she think the Marketplace in Milan is some sort of fashion show?

Storyteller: Look at that toga...

Sister Vendor: ...died in sea snails, I shouldn't wonder. Looks awfully like Tyrian purple... now, how did she get that?

Storyteller: I'll bet it's been brought from Constantinople by you-know-who...

Sister Vendor: No, who?

Storyteller: Never mind, Sister. There she goes. Off to the baths I suppose. Now aren't we somethin'?

Sister Vendor: *(tsk tsking)* Racilia, Racilia

Storyteller: She's a real piece of genuine Italian work... just cruising the marketplace all toga-ed in purple.

Sister Vendor: What's her story?

Storyteller: Racilia?

Sister Vendor: Of course Racilia! You know everyone's story...

Storyteller: Okay! Don't lose your bell bottoms. Racilia... thirty years old. Married the first time when she was 14. Doomed to failure right from the start. Her uncle sneezed when the wedding soup was served, her brother spilled a jar of olive oil the morning of the wedding, and her husband stumbled on the doorsill. Been married two more times since that first one. Divorce is a disease these rich young matriarchs seem to catch faithfully.

Random Character: Cool story!

*(RC drops money in bucket)*

Sister Vendor/Storyteller: Seriously?

Storyteller: What'd he mean, 'cool story'?

Sister Vendor: Your story about Racilia, of course! And the soap opera playing out in the Marketplace.

*(both look into the audience at the imaginary Racilia)*

Storyteller: Groovy.

*(both turn their attention back to their market stalls)*

Sister Vendor: *(sings)*

"Here comes the sun..." You should stop eating the pears, and get those flowers strung... ya know.