

*The Play*

# THE STORY OF PAUL

*Feast*

24th Sunday / Year C

*Characters*

Narrator	Elohim, an Eagle
Paul	A Man
A Bird	Paul's father
Ted, a Dolphin	Paul's mother
Chris, a Camel	Paul's siblings

*Props*

Simple costumes for the animals: the Dolphin all in gray, the Camel all in beige, the Eagle all in brown.  
A water bottle, carried by Chris, the camel.

*Suggestions*

This is a simple story about finding one's voice, though it involves several characters. There is some audience interaction with the narrator asking questions of the audience. Include as many children as want to be involved in the celebration at the end. When Paul goes on his journey, try to imagine three distinct areas in the performing space: perhaps, the sea far left, the desert in the middle, and the mountain on the right. As usual most of the characters are not restricted by gender. Feel free to change names as necessary.

*Running Time*

10 minutes.



**NARRATOR**

*Paul appears  
from the right.  
His parents from  
the left. Paul tries  
to speak but no  
sound comes out.  
He "speaks" to  
his parents,  
the audience, etc.,  
to no avail.  
He is frustrated.*

Once there was a boy named Paul, not too small, not too tall, not at all unlike me or you. Ordinary in every way but two: First, Paul could not speak or even shout. If he tried to talk, no sound came out. You see, when Paul was a baby he lost his voice, not by accident or choice. No one really knew how or why, not his parents or the doctors they brought by. It was a mystery to everyone. "Maybe there was a voice that frightened your son," the psychologists said. The theologians said, "Maybe it was the voice of God that frightened the lad." No matter how it happened, it had. Paul could not speak and it made him sad, and more than anything he wanted a voice so bad . . . a voice for singing, a voice for speaking, a voice to cry out his joy and his despair . . . there was so much Paul wanted to share. O yes, he could write it down on paper or in the sand, he could say it through a word processor or with his hands, but Paul wanted a voice of his own . . . a voice that was his and his alone.

I told you that Paul was ordinary in every way but two: For Paul, although he had no voice at all and could not speak, or sing, or cry, or call, could understand the language of every animal he heard—to Paul all animal sounds had words.

*A bird "flies" in.  
The bird is whistling.*

One day Paul heard a singing bird. Now everyone else's ears heard "tweet, tweet, tweet," but Paul's ears heard a voice, oh so sweet.

**BIRD**

*The bird's whistle  
becomes speech.*

Paul, I know where you can find your voice. But getting there requires a difficult choice. You must cross a sea and a desert and a very large mountain. At the top is a man you can count on. He has wounded hands and feet. Go to him if you really want to speak. But be warned—this is not an easy quest; there is danger and peril and very little rest.

NARRATOR

*Paul summons the courage and "dives" into the water and swims.*

*Ted, a dolphin, swims up behind Paul.*

TED

NARRATOR

*Narrator waits for audience to respond.*

*Paul "rides" the dolphin to shore.*

*Chris, a camel, approaches Paul.*

CHRIS

*Paul drinks from the water bottle.*

With that the bird flew back to its nest. The very next day Paul left his home, without telling a soul, he set out alone. He didn't think about how this would worry his father and mother, or how it would trouble his sister and brother. First, Paul came to the sea and stood there afraid; he wondered about the decision he'd made. Then all of a sudden Paul dove in from the sand. He swam and swam till he couldn't see land.

Paul thought to himself: O, I am so tired, my arms are sore, how will I ever reach the shore? I am so afraid.

And as Paul began to freeze in fear, a voice that called his name drew near.

Paul, Paul, I know who you are; you are looking for your voice; you have traveled far. Paul, come with me, ride with me, hold on to me. I will carry you through the rest of the sea.

Whose voice was it that Paul heard, can you guess? Who could swim so fast and help Paul with his quest?

That's right! A dolphin helped Paul out of his fright. Paul put his arms around the dolphin's fin, and in no time at all Paul was through the ocean. He waved goodbye to his friend from the shore whose name he had learned was Theodore.

Next, Paul came to the desert and started to hike, but you know what deserts are like.

Paul soon was very hot. My legs are tired and I'm thirsty, he thought. I am so very afraid.

And as Paul began to melt in fear, a voice that called his name drew near.

Paul, I know you are tired and thirsty and heated. Come to me and drink this water you've needed. Now come to me, ride with me, hold on with your hands; I will carry you over the rest of the sands.

NARRATOR

Whose voice was it that Paul heard, can you guess?  
Who could give him water in the desert and help with  
his quest?

*Paul "rides"  
the camel.*

That's right! A camel pulled Paul out of his fright.  
Paul climbed on the camel, and in no time at all, he  
was across the desert riding high and tall. He waved  
goodbye to his two-humped supporter—Christopher  
Camel was the friend with the water.

*Paul begins  
to "climb."*

Now Paul was standing beside a mountain so high  
that the topmost part of it touched the sky. Paul began  
to climb up and up, but about halfway there he had to  
stop. He thought: My hands are raw, my feet are tired.  
I don't think I can climb any higher. I am more afraid  
than I ever was before.

*Elohim, an eagle,  
soars in.*

And as Paul began to fall further into fear, a voice that  
called his name drew near.

ELOHIM

*Paul "rides" the  
eagle as it  
soars upward.*

Paul, I know you are looking for your voice and need  
to climb high. Paul, ride with me, come with me, hold  
onto me, and I will raise you up. Together we can fly.

NARRATOR

Whose voice was it that Paul heard, can you guess?  
Who could help him fly and finish his quest?

*Pause.*

*As he waves,  
Paul notices his  
hands and feet.  
They are hurt.*

That's right! An eagle lifted Paul up out of his fright.  
So Paul held the eagle's wings tight, and in no time at  
all Paul was atop the mountain's height. He waved  
goodbye to his feathered companion whose name  
was simply Elohim. Paul noticed his own hands and  
feet were scratched and scraped, and his side had a  
strange dull ache. Suddenly, he heard a voice  
speaking his name.

MAN

Paul.

NARRATOR

*The pace changes here. The man's voice is deliberate and full of love.*

It was the most beautiful voice he had ever known . . . a man whose hands and feet were wounded much worse than his own. The man had made that long trip up the mountain, perhaps many times, perhaps without help. Now he stood in front of a crystal clear fountain.

MAN

*The man points to Paul's heart, then puts his hands on either side of Paul's neck.*

Paul, I know you; I have been waiting for you. You have been looking for your voice. You have so much you want to say, to share. Paul, your voice is here on the top of this mountain, but only because you have brought it here. Your voice is inside you, but it is locked away by fear. Know now that the key to that lock is *the journey you have made and have yet to complete*. Together with your friends on your journey to me, you have overcome *all* fears. No longer be afraid to speak what you feel, what you know. Return home. Complete your journey. Set your voice free.

NARRATOR

*Paul rides Elohim again.*

*Chris and Paul's family enter from the left. Ted is with them.*

Paul was so happy, he could sing, but couldn't yet. He trusted the word of this wounded man he had met. He embraced him and waved goodbye. Paul saw Elohim Eagle standing nearby to take him all the way home from so high. But, do you know when they were soaring the skies, Paul couldn't believe his own two eyes. There was a whole caravan of camels coming across, with Chris his friend leading the way, of course. He recognized his father and mother and his sisters and brothers. They had come to find him through sand and sea. All of a sudden Paul felt the key, and he cried out:

PAUL

Mom, Dad, it's me!

NARRATOR

His Mom and Dad were so happy to find Paul, they almost didn't notice his voice, his call.

MOTHER

Paul, we missed you; we've been searching far and wide, but now you are home; you are found. You're alive!

NARRATOR

*A party!*

*The four friends  
pull down center.*

Well . . . such a celebration, on the edge of the sand. Paul and his family and his friends and a band. Dancing and singing and eating and singing and drinking and . . . did I mention singing? Paul told about meeting the man and the journey to get there and about his feet and his hands. Later, in one quiet moment, Paul found his friends—Theodore, Christopher, and Elohim—and Paul, who was not very tall and not very small, said to them two ordinary words, just two. Paul said in his own voice:

PAUL

Thank You!

