



You will need...

- 4 eggs
- 1 hard-boiled egg
- Glass bowl
- Pharisee costume
- Tax collector costume
- Bible

The story

Character/Actions	Lines
	Good morning, it is great to be here for this Assembly. My name is X, I'm here from X Church
Helper holds a bowl and a box of eggs. Narrator picks an egg from the box. Crack the egg into the bowl. Pick another egg. Throw the egg up into the air Helper catches it in the bowl. Cracks Pick a third egg- pick the hardboiled one! Hit the egg onto Helper's head. Give the egg to Helper.	As soon as I hold up an egg, we all feel a little nervous! There's just something about an egg that makes us all a little worried that it might break and go everywhere. We all feel a bit better don't we when it's inside a bowl! Because most of the time, the egg is perfectly safe. So it's perfectly safe. But just occasionally. Something goes wrong, and ... No disaster.



<p>Helper hold up two identical looking eggs</p> <p>Helper leave and change into a Pharisee costume</p>	<p>You see the problem with eggs don't you! You can't tell what they're like on the inside, by looking at the outside. They all look just the same. That's actually how it is with people! We see what people look like, but they all look pretty much the same. As I look at all of you, I can't tell who was naughty yesterday, who is always well behaved in class or gives money to charity. In fact, we often decide what we think of people just by looking at them. But it's not like that with Jesus. He doesn't just look on the outside.</p>
<p>Narrator -</p>	<p>Jesus once told a story about 2 men who were very different. It's recorded for us in the bible in Luke's true story of Jesus' life, Chapter 18. You can read it for yourself later. Jesus made the story up to teach the crowd who were listening something very important.</p>
<p>Enter Pharisee. Look important Look smug</p> <p>Look around</p>	<p>The first was a Pharisee. Here he is. A Pharisee was a religious leader, just like a vicar or a rabbi. His job was to tell other people what to do. He would read, and think, and then read some more. He wanted to get it all just right, so that he knew exactly what to tell everyone else what to do.</p> <p>Jesus said that one day this Pharisee went into God's temple to pray. He found himself a spot where everyone could see him. Then he prayed. And he didn't pray a quiet prayer on his own.</p>



Pharisee: loud, and pompous.
Lifting his hands to the sky

Pointing off stage

Pharisee leaves and changes
into the tax collector

Narrator -

A hunched over tax collector
edges on from a corner.
He looks very embarrassed. He
stands at the edge looking
nervous.

“Oh Lord, I thank you that I am not like other men.
I am not a robber.
I do not do evil things
In fact I do everything right. I am a good man.
I keep all the rules.
I do so much more than anyone else.
I give away a huge chunk of my money to other people who
need it more.
Two days a week, I do nothing but pray- I don't even eat.
I am a very good person.
Thank you God that I am nothing like him.
Amen.”

Like who? He thought he was so much better than this
other person. I wonder who he was talking about.
Jesus said, that at that very moment, out of the shadows
came a tax collector.



	<p>A tax collector? In the temple? You're having me on. You can tell this was a made up story, because this would never happen in real life.</p> <p>You see a tax collector was a horrible human being. He collected money from his own people to give it to the enemy; the Romans. And usually he would steal a whole heap of it for himself.</p> <p>He was hated.</p> <p>The only friends, he would have had would have been other tax collectors. He was a thief, a liar and a traitor. There wasn't a good bone in his body.</p> <p>I wonder why he is in the temple? He can't have come to pray- has he?</p> <p>Whatever the case, he picked a spot where no one could see him, and he prayed very differently to the Pharisee. Let's listen to what he says.</p>
<p>Tax Collector: Quietly and ashamed. Long pause, then: Leave and change into Pharisee costume</p>	<p>"Dear Lord, I am so, so sorry. I don't expect you'll listen to me. But please be kind and forgive me. Amen"</p>
<p>Enter Pharisee</p>	<p>And then he shuffled back into the shadows.</p> <p>Jesus then turned to the crowd to explain the story.</p> <p>Do you remember the Pharisee? He was widely respected throughout the city. He was famous for the public office he held. He had authority, influence and respect. As well as all of that he was super religious. He spent his life trying to get things just right for God. He preached the sermons, he pushed and persuaded everyone into Church, he would have been here doing this assembly- telling you all about God!</p>



<p>Pharisee looks at narrator. Surprised.</p> <p>Pharisee walks off in a huff. Changes into tax collector</p>	<p>Jesus explained that although he was so very pleased with himself, God was not. God saw what no one else saw. He knew what he thought and what he did in secret. The truth is that none of us are as wonderful as we usually think. In fact Jesus said, that he left the temple as an enemy of God that day. Wow! That's not what we expected.</p>
<p>Enter Tax collector</p> <p>Tax collector looks inquiringly at Narrator.</p> <p>Tax collector whoops with joy-loud.</p>	<p>Then there was the other man. Do you remember him? The tax collector. Let's be clear, he was a nasty piece of work. Everyone knew he was dishonest. Everyone could see he stole money. And in secret he was worse. What would Jesus say about him?</p> <p>You're not going to believe this. He explained that although there was nothing in him that was good, there was one thing about him that delighted God.</p> <p>He knew that God had no reason to listen to him. That's what the tax collector thought. That's exactly what God knew. But the man asked to be forgiven. Isn't that amazing? He knew he didn't deserve it, but he asked anyway. And God forgave him.</p>
<p>Tax Collector cheers Tax Collector Leaps Singing and dancing Tax collector leaves</p>	<p>Jesus said that this man went home as a friend of God's. This man went home, loved and cared for by God. This man went home forgiven.</p>
	<p>In Luke's Gospel, Luke tells us that Jesus told this story to those who were very confident of themselves, and looked down on everybody else.</p>



	<p>Did you spot the surprise? It seemed so obvious didn't it? We met the great Pharisee and the awful tax collector. But it was the Tax collector who went home as God's friend.</p>
	<p>Christians believe that we all need to apologise to God. And Christians are certain that whatever we have done, God knows and he will forgive us. Not because we deserve it, but because he is kind. He is loving and longs to forgive us.</p>
Hold up the two eggs.	<p>Remember the eggs? They look so similar. We can't tell the difference by looking at them. God can. And he can see what we're really like. We can't fool God. And compared to Jesus- well, we're really not that good at all. None of us are.</p>
	<p>So, it's good to adjust our own opinion of ourselves. Everyone wins if we're a little less sure of ourselves. And a little more realistic about what we're really like. That's called "being humble".</p>
	<p>That is what we need to be careful of. It is great to be good at things. It is great to know you're good at things. It is great to be honest. It is great to work hard at being good.</p>
	<p>But however good you think you are in all of these areas, don't start acting like you've got all the answers. You might be better than someone else at something. But we've all got a long way to go. God can forgive us just as we are.</p>
With a smile	<p>Almost all of us think highly of ourselves. That's human nature. Perhaps today try to be a little more humble.</p>
	<p>Pray</p>