

In Our Hands – a dramatic reading for worship

Genesis 1:26-31a

(Adapted from a resource of unknown origin, circa 2009)

Actors/Readers:

Youth: 2-6 readers

Elders: 1-4 readers

Narrator

Starting positions:

Ideally, youth and elders will stand together in two separate groups.

Narrator may read from their seat or a central position.

Narrator: Once upon a time there was a village.

There are youth. *(Youth wave.)*

There are elders. *(The elders wave.)*

There are a lot more youth than elders!

The tradition in this village is that the elders look after the village, care for the village, and make the decisions.

One day when the youth gather...Well, let's listen in...

Youth 1: Hey, did you ever notice how the old folks always make the decisions?

Youth 2: Yeah, they make the rules and we have to follow them.

Youth 3: They are not bad rules, but why aren't we included in making the decisions?

Youth 4: To tell the truth, they have never made a rule we did not like. But it is time that we took over!

Youth 5: But how will we do it?

Youth 6: *(slowly)* I think I have a plan.

Youth 4: What is it?

Youth 6: We ask the elders a question! *(Pause)*

If they answer the question correctly,
we will follow tradition and their rules.

If they answer the question incorrectly,
then we get to take over!

Narrator: Most of the other youth agree excitedly.

Youth 2,3,4,5: *All together, nodding ad using words similar to:* OH, YEAH! GREAT! AWESOME!

Youth 1: Wait a minute... *(Other youth listen attentatively.)*

They are wise elders.

What question can we possibly ask
that they will not know the answer to?

Youth 6: Ah, here is the genius of my plan.

I catch a small bird and hide it in my hands.

We ask them: "Is this bird that I have alive,
or is it dead?"

Narrator: Most of the youth enthusiastically support the idea.

Youth 2,3,4,5: *All together, nodding and using words similar to:* Oh, yeah! Great! Cool! Awesome!

Youth 1: Wait a minute... they still have a 50-50 chance of getting the answer right.

Youth 6: Ah, *(All listen to him/her)*

If they say the bird is dead, we show them the live bird.

And...if they say the bird is alive--*(dramatic pause)*

I snap its neck in my hands!

Youth 1,3,4,5: Oh, yeah! Great! Cool! Awesome!

Youth 2: Ewwww...Gross! That is a terrible thing to do!

Youth 6: *(slowly)* Well, that's true.
But, it is what we need to do.

Youth 2: *(doubtfully)* I guess.

Narrator: So, the youth approach the elders with their plan.

Elder 1: *(to the youth)* Good morning. May we help you?

Youth 1: Elders, we have a request.

Elder: 1 Yes?

Narrator: One of the youth approaches the elders with hands clasped behind their back.

Youth 6: *(Hands behind back)*
If we are able to prove that you elders are NOT always right and that you do not ALWAYS know the right answer, can we take over?

Narrator: The elders look at each other questioningly, then all nod affirmatively.

Elder 1: We are getting old and tired, so...yes, we agree.

Narrator: One youth steps forward with hands clasped together as if holding something.

Youth 6: *(holding clasped hands up high)*
Is the bird in my hands alive or dead?

Narrator: The youth's question surprises the elders who get puzzled looks on their faces.

Elder 2: Will you give us a moment to consider the question?

Narrator: The youth look at one another, shrug their shoulders and nod in agreement.

Youth: Sure. Take your time.

Narrator: The elders huddle, consult and murmur to one another. They think. They wonder. Then one elder steps forward to answers the question posed by the youth, "Is the bird alive or dead?" Their answer is...

Elder 1: *(Pause before saying)*
In our wisdom, we have found the answer to your question...Is the bird dead or alive? Our answer is:
It is in your hands.

Stop Action. Actors/readers return to their seats.

Narrator: "It is in your hands." It is in *our* hands.
God has given *us* dominion over all God's creatures. The animals of the earth remind us of our Creator. They remind us of God's power: consider the whale, the elephant, the tiger. They remind us of God's grace: consider the horse, the eagle, the swan. They remind us of God's humor: consider the platypus, the kangaroo and the otter. The care, safety and wellbeing of all God's creatures, great and small, is in our hands.

Pray with me. Creator God, we marvel at the creatures that have come from your hand – from the platypus to the elephant, from the aardvark to the zebra, and everything in between. Instill in us a love for each and every creature, big and small. You have entrusted their care into our hands. Create in us a passion for protecting and caring for your creation, that we might offer security, safety and well-being to our pets – those present here today and those present in our hearts, and to all the creatures in the wilds of this earth. Amen.