

Wanted: A Family

By Doug Irving & Gary Randolph



Theme and Purpose

This three-scene sketch, which can be used for either Thanksgiving or Christmas, subtly discusses several themes, including responding to God's call, using our gifts, forgiveness, redemption, and the joy of the present moment. The setup for this sketch really happened. In that case, the person invited became an unofficial and welcomed part of the family for some twenty years. We like to hear of such happy endings. But in real life, before we get to the happy ending, we often have a very uncertain beginning. Did Abraham know where he was going? Did Joseph the patriarch as he sat in prison have any idea why God had sent him to Egypt? The Christian walk is not for the squeamish. When God calls us to do something, He often asks us to step out with a great deal of faith, and it may be years before we understand why.

Cast list	Tony – dad of the family, aged thirties or forties Michelle – mother of the family, aged thirties of forties Eric – teenage son Ashleigh – teen or pre-teen daughter Vic – middle-aged or a little older
Approximate Running Time	Scene 1: 4 min Scene 2: 3 min Scene 3: 2 min
Scene Description	Scenes 1 and 3 take place in the family dining room with table set. Scene 2 takes place at the front door, which can be stages with a door in its door frame positioned along a side "wall."
Prop List	Table, chairs, dishes, serving dishes, etc. including a plate of rolls. Newspaper Laptop computer Side table to hold newspaper and laptop computer Door frame with door that can stand independently
Other Production Notes	The three scenes can be presented all in one service or spread across three weeks. There are several ways of getting the actors offstage at the end of each scene. One way would be to have them freeze until the next worship segment begins and then leave discretely. If you can lower the lights the actors can leave when the platform is darkened.

Related Scriptures

Hebrews 13:2; Isaiah 58:10; Ephesians 2:10; Matthew 1:18-25; Genesis 12:1; Psalm 30:5

Song Suggestions

Heart and Soul (Geoff Moore), Little is Much

Scene 1

*A simple dinner table is set on stage.
Michelle comes in carrying a serving dish
and sets it down on the table.*

Michelle:

Come on, everyone. Dinner's ready.

Tony, Ashleigh, and Eric come in and sit around the table.

Tony:

Let's say grace. *(Everyone bows head)* Lord, for that which we are about to receive, we give thanks. Amen.

Murmurs of Amen around the table. They begin passing dishes. Everyone takes a roll.

Tony:

I saw an ad in the paper last night. I wanted to talk to you all about it. *(Gets up and gets paper from a side table)* Here it is. "Wanted: Family to share Thanksgiving dinner with.¹ Will supply turkey." Then it gives a phone number. I've been thinking about it all day. Maybe we should invite this person over. What do you guys think?

Ashleigh:

I think we should. Isn't that the Christian thing to do?

Eric:

Probably some loser. Do we want someone hanging around that no one else wants?

Pause. Everyone looks at Michelle.

Michelle:

I ... Ashleigh makes a good point about it being the Christian thing to do. But ... Well, we don't know anything about this person. He could be a burglar, casing the joint.

¹ If Christmas sketch, change to: "Wanted: family to share Christmas dinner with."

Eric:

Casing the joint? Mom, you've got the lingo down pat.

Michelle:

Well, he could be a burglar. He could be a creep who shows up with a gun or something.

Tony:

He could be a she. He could be a lonely person on the verge of despair.

Ashleigh:

He could be a reclusive billionaire looking for someone to give a million dollars to.

Eric:

That would be sweet! Probably not. I still say he's a loser. Let me see that paper. Or like Mom says - an axe murderer.

Eric scans the paper then gets up and grabs a laptop. He starts typing.

Michelle: *(getting up to move the empty roll plate back to the side table - stays standing.)*

I didn't say he was an axe murderer! But what if this person has just gotten out of prison or something. Tony, we have to think about the kids.

Tony:

I think I am thinking of the kids. We need to model for them love and acceptance of people. Even if they have made mistakes.

Eric:

OK. I did a reverse phone lookup.

Michelle:

You can do that? *(She moves around behind Eric to look at the laptop.)*

Eric:

Mom, with a little money I could get his credit and criminal record. Anyway, his name is Victor Lazinski. Sounds like an old guy. He lives downtown. Maybe one of those apartment buildings. Some of them are kind of pathetic.

Michelle:

How much money to get his criminal record?

Tony:

We are NOT getting his criminal record.

Michelle:

Just a thought.

Tony:

No. We either do this or we don't. But we aren't going to build a dossier on him first.

Ashleigh:

Right. Then we'd be the creeps.

Eric:

We could compromise. Invite him over, and I'll invite over some friends - some muscle just in case.

Michelle:

Oh, no. I'd have to stay up all night cooking for your *(makes quote signs with fingers)* "muscle."

Tony:

Look. I have reservations about this, too. I like having Thanksgiving as a family day, a day when we focus on just us.² And I'm not so anxious to bring in somebody else. But something about this ad... *(takes newspaper and stands)* Maybe it's the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Eric:

Oooh. Dad's heard from God!

Tony:

I don't know. But isn't that what the Holy Spirit does?

Ashleigh:

I think we've already heard from God. Doesn't the Bible say that we should entertain strangers?

Eric:

But is it so black and white? Wasn't that a different time and place?

Tony:

We say grace for what we receive. We give thanks for our blessings. I can't help but think that the reason we have been given all these things is so we can share them with others.

² If Christmas sketch, change to: "I like having Christmas as a family day, a day when we focus on just us."

Michelle:

Yes, but how to do it - that's the question. It's not as if we don't already share. I wrote a check to the Red Cross just last week.

Tony:

We do share. But this ad... What if we are supposed to do this also - and we don't?

Pause. Everyone looks around the table at everyone else.

Michelle:

So what do we do?

Fade to black.

Preview

Scene 2

Stage is dark as want-ad in accompanying PowerPoint slide is flashed on screen. If Scene 2 is presented on a different week from Scene 1, you may want to add a few seconds of video from Scene 1 or off-stage voice-overs of some of the lines. Scene opens on doorframe placed perpendicular to audience. Michelle is working inside, clearing the table with a dish cloth in her hand. Vic, carrying a frozen turkey, walks up to door, hesitates, and then knocks. Michelle answers the door.

Vic:

Mrs. Donnelly? I'm uh... I'm Vic Lazinski. I brought over the turkey.

Michelle:

Mr. Lazinski. Thank you. We're looking forward to having you with us for Thanksgiving.³ *(pause)* I would invite you in for a chat, but there's no one else here. I hope you understand.

Vic:

I... Yeah. Same reason as why you wanted me to bring this *(raising turkey)* over ahead of time instead of cooking it myself. "Candy from strangers" and all that.

Michelle: *(embarrassed)*

Oh, it's not that... It's just...

Vic:

No. No. I understand. You don't know me.

Michelle:

Well, we'd like to get to know you. Tell me about yourself Vic.

Vic: *(smiling uncomfortably)*

There's not that much to tell.

Michelle:

Do you have children?

³ If Christmas sketch, change to: "We're looking forward to having you with us for Christmas."

Vic:

I have a son in Seattle and a daughter somewhere in Florida.

Michelle:

Will you be getting together with them over the holidays?

Vic:

Their mother and I divorced years ago. Ever since they haven't had much to do with me.

Michelle:

Umm. I can't imagine what that would be like - not seeing my children. Isn't there anything you can do?

Vic:

It's pretty hard to undo some mistakes. If yesterday was just yesterday... maybe. But too many yesterdays have passed. (*pause*) But, you know, there are still tomorrows. And there are todays. (*breathes in and looks at sky.*) Just feel this crisp air today. Look at the blue in the sky.

Michelle:

It is a beautiful day. I hope it's this pretty on Thanksgiving.⁴

Slightly awkward pause.

Vic:

Anyway... That's my checkered past. (*looks at the turkey and lifts it up*) So... is the invitation still open... now that you know about me?

Michelle:

Sure. Sure. (*voice trails off awkwardly*) Oh, sure.

Vic holds out the turkey. Michelle hesitates for a moment. Then smiles broadly and takes it from his hand.

Michelle:

We're looking forward to having you, Vic. Come at 11:30. We'll eat at noon.

Vic: (*nodding*)

I'll be here. Have a good day.

⁴If Christmas sketch, change to: "I hope it is this pretty on Christmas."

Vic turns and walks away. Michelle watches him go as Ashleigh walks in, passing Vic on the way. Michelle and Ashleigh enter the house.

Ashleigh:

Who was that, Mom?

Michelle:

That was Vic. The guy who's joining us for Thanksgiving.⁵

Ashleigh:

So what's he like? Is he a loser like Eric says.

Michelle: *(pauses before answering)*

I... I suppose he is. Or not... Maybe like most of us, he's lost some things. But not others. Anyway I'm looking forward to having him join us.

Fade to black.

⁵ If Christmas sketch, change to: "The guy who's joining us for Christmas."

Scene 3

Stage is dark as want-ad in accompanying PowerPoint slide is flashed on screen. If Scene 3 is presented on a different week from Scenes 1 and 2, you may want to add a few seconds of video from Scenes 1 and 2 or off-stage voice-overs of some of the lines. Scene opens on family and Vic sitting at the table at the end of the meal. Vic, Tony, and Michelle have cups of coffee.

Vic:

Michelle, that was really quite a meal. I can't remember when I've had such a feast.

Eric:

Yeah. Great meal, Mom. May I be excused? I want to go shoot some baskets to work off this meal.⁶

Michelle:

You may, Eric.

Ashleigh:

How about a game of horse?⁷ May I be excused, too, Mom?

Michelle nods. Both kids leave.

Tony:

Vic, I'm glad we did this. You know, I wasn't sure how this was going to work out.

Vic:

Me neither. Quite honestly, I put that ad in the paper, and then I kept wondering what kind of weirdoes might answer it.

Tony:

Hmmm. We wondered about you, too. If you were an axe murderer...

Michelle: *(clears throat pointedly)*

Tony!

⁶ If Christmas sketch (depending on climate), change to: "I want to go play some Xbox."

⁷ If Christmas sketch (depending on Eric's line), change to: "Me, too."

Tony:

Uh... or a mysterious billionaire. We even talked about that verse in Hebrews about entertaining strangers because they might be angels in disguise. All through the meal I kept waiting for you to snap your fingers and disappear.

Vic:

Let's try (*snaps fingers*) Still here. I guess I'm no angel.

Tony:

I kept feeling like this was some kind of test.

Vic:

You too? The idea of placing that ad just popped into my head. I didn't even really want to do it. I mean, I'm pretty content on my own. But I just thought I needed to do it for some reason.

Michelle:

So now that the dinner is done, do any of us know what the reason was? Did we pass the test?

Tony:

Maybe the reason was just for us to share a meal together and get to know each other. I don't know. But I know my faith has been stretched. That's a good feeling. Say, Vic, what are you doing for Christmas?⁸

Michelle: (*brightly*)

My mother will be here for Christmas, Vic - my young, widowed mother.⁹

Tony: (turning to Vic with a frightened look and speaking in loud stage whisper)
Run, Vic!

Fade to black

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⁸ If Christmas sketch, change to: "... what are you doing New Year's?"

⁹ If Christmas sketch, change to: "My mother will be here for New Year's, Vic - my young, widowed mother."