

# B.J. and Emily Appreciate Their Church School Teacher

dorothy henderson  
education for the faith, ministry with  
children and youth  
ext 271  
dhenders@presbyterian.ca



Writer: Dorothy Henderson

Based, with permission, on a story by Rev. Hope Harle-Mould, West Seneca, New York

B.J. and Emily are two puppets—a boy and girl—who have appeared in previous PCPaks. Any hand puppet will do, but if you want to purchase a "real" B.J. and Emily, they can be purchased at Image Puppet Productions, 45 Wardrope Ave., Stoney Creek, ON L8G 1S1; info@imagepuppets.on.ca; 905-664-1242 or 905-664-3552.

This play can be used in the following ways:

- ♦ as part of a worship service
- ♦ as part of a teacher appreciation event
- ♦ at special all-ages gathering of church school children and their teachers.

Note: This script uses the term "church school." Feel free to substitute "Sunday school" if this is the term you use.

Prior to using the play...

In preparation for the puppet play, provide:

- ♦ two puppets—BJ and Emily, a small table for B.J.'s colouring, two stools for the puppeteers, and two music stands to hold the puppet scripts
- ♦ Call teachers prior to the event and tell them that you would like to honour them and host a moment of appreciation
- ♦ Prepare a "TV" made from a small cardboard box covered in brown wrapping paper with a picture glued on the front
- ♦ Arrange to have an adult off stage who provides the mother's voice behind the scene
- ♦ Invite all the children in your church school to prepare, prior to the event, a thank you card or picture for their church school teacher. These can be presented at the end of the puppet play
- ♦ Prepare a prayer of thanksgiving to be offered after the play. Include characteristics, qualities and activities that are particular to your congregation.

Hymn Suggestions

- #348: Tell me the stories of Jesus
- #378: Jesus, Jesus, Jesus in the morning
- #373: Jesus loves me this I know
- #570: I have decided to follow Jesus
- #571: Lord, I want to be a Christian
- #631: Jesus' hands were kind hands
- #656: Jesus, friend of all the children
- #646: Lead me, Jesus; I will follow
- #641: One more step along the world I go
- #773: Jesus bids us shine

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*Emily is on stage, has a TV remote in her hand and is flicking channels. After about five seconds, B.J. enters.*

**B.J.:** (B.J. has a paper and marker in his hand) Hi Emily! What are you doing?

**Emily:** (*yawning*) Oh, just watching TV. But there's nothing good on. (*She makes a motion to flick off the TV*) There! Do you want to do something? Maybe play some hockey in the driveway? I have a new stick!

**B.J.:** That would be great, but first I have to finish this card. (*B.J. settles down at the desk and begins to work with his paper and marker. He looks up suddenly.*) Hey, Emily...why aren't you doing your card?

**Emily:** What card?

**B.J.:** (*exasperated*) The card for our church school teacher! Didn't your mom tell you?

**Emily:** (*slowly*) No...well...maybe I was watching TV and didn't hear.

**Mother's voice off stage:** Emily! Did you hear me tell you that it is Saturday morning and time to tidy up that bedroom of yours! There are so many things on the floor that I can hardly wade through them.

**Emily:** (*humming and fiddling with the TV remote*)

**B.J.:** Are you going to do that, Emily?

**Emily:** Do what?



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B.J.: What your Mom asked?

Emily: Mom asked something?

B.J.: Emily! You're my best friend, but today you just aren't listening! I know that the minister (*insert name of your minister*) asked your mom to help you make a special card for our church school teacher. I'm sure your mom must have mentioned it to you.

Emily: A card! Why do we have to make a card? Is it the teacher's birthday?

B.J.: No! We're making cards to say thank you to our teacher for taking so much time to get all those great Bible stories and activities ready for our church school classes every week.

Emily: B.J., I know you think I don't listen sometimes...but I do read. (*Emily holds up a story book while B.J. continues to work on his card.*) Hey, B.J., do you want to hear about a story I read from my Sunday school paper (*substitute church library if that is more appropriate*).

B.J.: (*Looking up, surprised*) Well, sure!

Emily: It is a story about a little girl named Suzie. Do you know anyone called Suzie, B.J.?

B.J.: (*shrugging*) I dunno. What does it matter?

Emily: Well...pay attention. It's part of the story. This girl, Suzie, didn't go to church school that much. She just stayed home and watched TV. She wasn't trying to be bad. When she did go, she had a good time. She liked acting out Bible stories, doing art, playing games and having a snack with the other kids. But, somehow she just didn't get around to going to church most Sundays.

B.J.: So what happened?

Emily: One day, when she managed to get up on time to go to church school, her teacher told her class the story about Jesus calling the four fishermen, Simon, Andrew, James and John. Jesus wanted them to follow him and learn to do whatever he did.

B.J.: (*absent mindedly*) Mmmmm...yes, I know that story.

Emily: Well, the funny thing is... The teacher said, "Jesus wants each one of you children to follow him and learn to do whatever he does. Suzie suddenly had this great idea come into her head.

B.J.: (*suddenly alert*) Oh, yeah? Was it like one of your brainwaves, Emily? (*B.J. goes back to his colouring*)

Emily: (*laughing*) Hey, it was better! Suzie had this idea pop into her head—She thought to herself (*Emily says triumphantly*) I think Jesus is asking me to go to church school every Sunday and learn everything I can about him.

B.J.: (*B.J. looks up from his colouring*) That's it? That was Suzie's great idea?

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**Emily:** Well, the story said that Suzie never did find out why it was so important that she go every week, but she noticed that the more she went, the more interested she became in Jesus and what Jesus was teaching. Sometimes she even stayed behind in class and asked the teacher some questions.

**B.J.:** Questions?

**Emily:** Yah, you know the really hard questions like, What happens after we die? How does God answer our prayers? Why are there so many hungry people? (*Emily pauses.*) Know what B.J.? One day Suzie found out that her real name—which is Susanna—came from the Bible. Susanna was one of Jesus' followers too, just like Simon, Andrew, James and John. Susanna was a faithful and loyal friend—just like me! (*Emily shakes her shoulders proudly.*) Susanna even followed Jesus to the cross and was there at the tomb on Easter morning.

**B.J.:** (*folding his card and acting low key about Emily's story*) Well, that's great, Emily.

**Emily:** Well, the interesting part of this story was this: The minister was talking to Suzie's teacher and asked how the church school teaching was going. The teacher said, "Oh, I was so discouraged that I thought I should quit. I didn't think the kids were learning anything or even paying attention. Then...I had this one kid...Suzie...who just kept hanging around after class asking me questions. How could I give up when she was so keen to learn about Jesus?"

**B.J.:** Oh, that's a neat story, Emily. So something made the teacher change her mind.

**Emily:** It wasn't something! It was someone.

**Mother's voice off-stage:** Emily! This is your mother calling! Can you hear me?

**Emily:** Oooohhh...someone is helping me change my mind. (*Calling to her mother.*) Coming, Mom! That room will be neat as a pin before lunch...but first I have to write a thank you note to my church school teacher. B.J, pass the markers, please!

