

Ananias and Saphira Dare Lie to God the Holy Spirit  
About 8 minutes, from Acts 5

Participants (*no need to memorize lines; the aim is to relive sacred events, not to perform*)

Barnabas

Peter

Ananias

Saphira

Prompter Shouts a brief line and Echoes repeat it.

Echoes Children and all adults who want to take part. Echoes need no script.

PART I. God punishes those who lie to the Holy Spirit

Saphira Which dress should I wear, Ananias?

Ananias One that shows our social standing, Saphira;  
we will meet with the apostles.

Saphira Yes, we must be careful of appearances.  
I disapprove of some in our group.  
Those Greeks are not of our race,  
they lack social standing in Jerusalem.

Prompter & Echoes Some of them live in hovels!

Ananias Jews from many lands celebrated Pentecost and became believers;  
some stayed on in Jerusalem's our church, without land or income.  
Believers are selling properties to give funds to care for them.

Saphira How foolish! Why don't they just go home!  
Well, it's almost time; let me put on my shiniest jewels, Ananias.

Ananias Barnabas started all the fuss over helping the needy, Saphira.  
He sold some land and laid the proceeds at the apostles' feet!

Saphira Ha! Leave it to Barnabas to make people feel guilty,  
if they don't follow his example.

Ananias He won't outdo us. We've seen that everyone will know that we give.  
We've sold that stony field and set half of the money aside for ourselves.

Saphira Well, the time has come; now here we are in James' home.  
Hello, Barnabas. We appreciate your compassion for the needy.

Barnabas The Holy Spirit has moved all of us to share joyfully with those in need.  
He also gives us power to testify of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus.  
Thousands are coming to faith.

Ananias Barnabas, you talk as if the Holy Spirit were God. There's only one God.

Barnabas The Holy Spirit is God, but we did not come here to discuss theology;  
we're arranging to provide for those in need.

Prompter & Echoes We care for those who suffer.

Ananias Yes. Let's put in a request to the Jewish Sanhedrin's benevolence fund.

Barnabas We give poverty's victims what they need ourselves, Ananias.  
Those with property are selling it to help the destitute.

Saphira Let's build a Nutrition Center and use it to hold social gatherings also.  
Ananias and I also donate. I hope to see our names on a wall plaque'

Ananias Yes, Saphira and I sold a field and we bring to you the entire amount.

Barnabas Later, at another meeting, Peter and I are alone with Ananias.  
Peter confronts him.

Peter Ananias, you let Satan move you to lie to the Holy Spirit;  
you kept back part of the price of the land.  
No one forced you to sell it. It was yours to do as you liked.  
Why did you devise this deceit in your heart?  
You lied not to men but to God!

Prompter & Echoes Perilous!

Peter Hearing my words, Ananias falls down and breathes his last.  
Young men carry him out and bury him.  
Later, his wife Saphira comes, unaware of what happened.

Peter Saphira, tell me honestly if you sold your land for the price you said.

Saphira Of course, Peter. That was the price.

Peter Oh, Saphira! Why did you and Ananias agree together to test the Lord?  
Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door.  
They will carry you out, too.

Barnabas Saphira falls, breathes her last, and they bury her by her husband.

Peter News of this spreads, and all the people fear God now!

Prompter & Echoes A lesson for all time!

## PART II. Ananias and Saphira in a Modern Setting

Barnabas Here are Ananias and Saphira in today's world, with a happier outcome.  
They've learned from their namesakes in the ancient Jerusalem church.

Ananias Saphira, I have always wanted to visit Mexico.  
Since we lead our church's young people, I have an idea.  
Let us ask our elders to send them on a mission trip to Mexico.

Saphira Why, yes, Ananias! You and I will have a free vacation!

Ananias Well, here we are with the elders. Brother Barnabas, we have a request.  
The young people we lead would benefit from experiencing  
another culture and teaching with an interpreter.  
Might the church sponsor a trip to Mexico?

- Barnabas Are you sure that to evangelize in another culture is all you want?  
Might you have other motives, Ananias?
- Ananias No, Barny! We want the kids to see another land  
and tell people about Jesus.
- Barnabas That is all? Are you sure?
- Saphira Of course, Barny! That is our only motive. Nothing else.
- Barnabas Nothing else? Then I can save you a huge amount of money.  
Down the street lives a colony of recently arrived, poor Mexicans.  
They brought their culture, speak no English, and live as they did before.
- Prompter & Echoes Olé!
- Barnabas You will find them receptive, Ananias. I know Spanish; I can translate.
- Ananias Oh. That is not quite what we had in mind, Barnabas.  
The youth want a foreign trip – the excitement of a faraway land.
- Barnabas And perhaps, you, too, would enjoy visiting Mexico?  
A sort of vacation?
- Saphira Ah... Well, Barnabas, that had crossed our minds.
- Barnabas It is normal and wholesome to want to travel  
and see exotic lands, but admit it!  
We must not pretend always to have purely spiritual motives.  
Now, let's start over again.  
Let's discuss a mission trip for our young people.
- Prompter & Echoes Truthfully this time!
- Barnabas A well-planned trip can be useful for you, the kids, and those you visit;  
we might decide that they should go to another land besides Mexico.  
The field you should visit depends on the need and other conditions.
- Saphira That is right. Thank you, Barny.  
We must be honest before God with our motive.
- Barnabas Do you know why many congregations wither spiritually?  
They put their own desires before Jesus' commands,  
and excuse their disobedience by ascribing holy motives to what they do.
- Prompter & Echoes We will be honest before God!