

Jesus' Phony Trial before the Chief Priests  
About 5 minutes, from John 18:14 — 19:16

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

Peter

Girl

Voice (of Jesus)

Accuser

Pilate

Prompter ....Shout a brief line, and Echoes repeat it.

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

Peter It's chilly tonight! (*Pretend to warm your hands by a fire.*)

Girl (*Point at Peter*) Hey, you there, warming your hands.  
You're one of that rebel's disciples!  
Why are you here, hanging out in the High Priest's court?

Peter I'm not one of that man's disciples!

Prompter & Echoes Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Accuser I just heard a rooster crow. It's an early bird!

Peter They're holding the false trial at night, which is illegal.  
Now the High Priest is questioning Jesus about His teaching.  
Hear him reply.

Voice I've spoken openly in synagogues and the temple;  
I've said nothing in secret. So why do you question me?  
Question those who have heard what I spoke.

Peter Oh! That officer struck Jesus' face and asked him,  
"Is that how you answer the high priest?"

Accuser Hey you! (*Point at Peter.*) You're a follower of that imposter.  
You cut my cousin's ear off, when we arrested the Nazarene  
in Gethsemane.

Peter I do not know that man, I tell you!

Prompter & Echoes Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Peter Oh, no! No! Jesus told me I'd deny him, and the rooster would crow.

Girl Hey, that guy rushed out of the court weeping bitterly.

Accuser Our trial is over; we have found the Nazarene guilty of blasphemy.  
Now the Roman governor Pilate will try him. He's speaking now.

Pilate What accusation do you Jews bring against this Man?

Accuser If he were not an evildoer, we would not have brought him to you.  
He claims to be King of the Jews, Governor Pilate.

Pilate Then take him and judge him according to your own law.

Accuser We have judged him,  
but our law does not permit us to put a felon to death.

Pilate *(Face Voice.)*  
You, whom some call King of the Jews, are you a king?

Voice  
My kingdom is not of this world,  
or my servants would fight to defend me.  
You say correctly that I am a king.  
For this I was born, to testify to the truth.

Prompter & Echoes What is truth?

Pilate  
I find no guilt in this man.  
You Jews have a custom that I release someone  
at your Passover feast.  
Do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews,  
or should I release the insurrectionist Barabbas?

Prompter & Echoes Barabbas!

Peter  
Look. The soldiers are whipping Jesus cruelly.  
Blood is all over the stone floor.  
They made a crown of thorns and pressed it onto his head;  
they put a purple robe on him and whipped his face with a rod.  
How can they? Hear them mock him!

Prompter & Echoes Hail, King of the Jews!

Pilate  
Hear me. I find no guilt in this man. Look how they've beaten him!

Accuser  
Crucify Him!

Pilate  
Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt worthy of death.

Accuser  
By our Law he must die because he claims to be the Son of God.

Pilate  
Son of God? Oh, what have I gotten myself into?  
Jesus, where are you from?  
Why do you not answer me?  
I have authority to free you, or to crucify you.

Voice  
You would have no authority over me,  
unless it had been given you from above;  
for this reason he who delivered me to you has the greater sin.

Accuser  
*(Shout angrily and shake a fist in the air.)*  
If you free him, you are no friend of Caesar!  
Anyone pretending to be king defies the Emperor!

Peter  
Look. Pilate appears shaken.  
Would this ironfisted Roman ruler let the people decide this?  
Unheard of!

Prompter & Echoes Democracy!

Peter  
Look! Pilate has brought out a basin of water in front of the Jews.

Pilate  
I wash my hands of this affair. Do as you wish to this man.

Accuser  
Yes! Yes! Let His blood be on us and on our children!

Prompter & Echoes How fateful those terrible words!