

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork elements surrounds the central text. The border includes a central cross at the top, a central floral flourish at the bottom, and corner flourishes. On the left and right sides, there are vertical decorative elements consisting of a series of small circles and lines.

God's Favorite

Study Guide



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“For hardship does not spring from the soil, nor
does trouble sprout from the ground.”

-Job 5:6



About Neil Simon



Neil Simon was, and still is, a highly recognized creative writer. He has received more combined Oscar and Tony award nominations than any other writer.

- ❑ Grew up in the Washington Heights area.
- ❑ He briefly went to New York University before transferring to the University of Denver.
- ❑ His first Broadway show, titled *Come Blow Your Horn*, was very successful and ran for two years straight. He then went on to write success after success that would grace the Broadway stage.
- ❑ 1927-2018





More About Neil Simon

- Before his work on the stage, Neil Simon first worked as a comedic writer for a multitude of television shows, and collaborated with his brother Danny Simon.
- He had a total of four wives throughout his life, Elaine Joyce, Diane Lander, Marsha Mason, and Joan Baim.
- He served briefly in the Army Air Force Reserve.
- “Until 1983, no playwright other than Simon got to see a Broadway theater named after themselves. Not because they weren’t successful, but because theaters were always named after a person after they had died. That changed in 1983 when the Alvin Theatre became the Neil Simon Theatre.”







Other Works

Come Blow Your Horn (1961)

Little Me (1962)

Barefoot in the Park (1963)

The Odd Couple (1964)

The Star Spangled Girl (1966)

Sweet Charity (1966)

Promises, Promises (1968)

Plaza Suite (1969)

Last of the Red Hot Lovers (1970)

The Gingerbread Lady (1971)

The Prisoner of Second Avenue (1972)

The Good Doctor (1973)

The Sunshine Boys (1973)

The Goodbye Girl (1976)

California Suite (1977)

They're Playing Our Song (1978)

Fools (1981)

I Ought to Be in Pictures (1981)

Brighton Beach Memoirs (1982)

Biloxi Blues (1985)

Broadway Bound (1987)

Rumors (1988)

Lost in Yonkers (1990)

Jake's Women (1992)

Laughter on the 23rd Floor (1995)


London Suite (1996)


Proposals (1997)

The Dinner Party (2000)

45 Seconds from Broadway (2001)

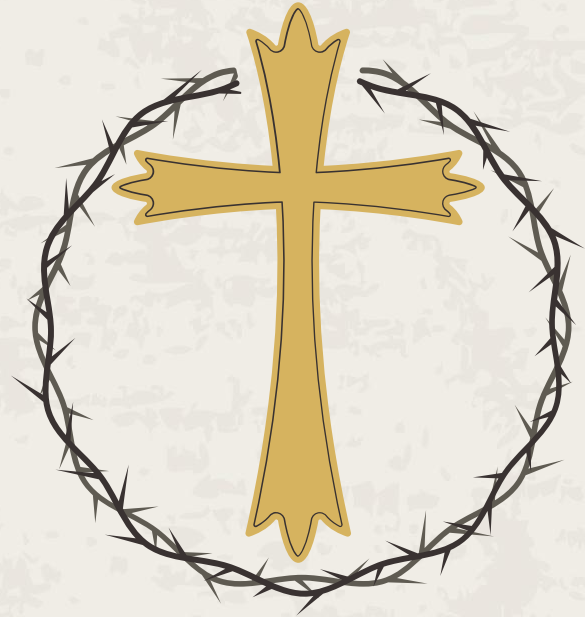
Rose's Dilemma (2004)





God's Favorite

Joe Benjamin, a wealthy businessman, with a privileged out of touch family, and some wise-cracking domestics, is visited by a messenger of God who goes by the name of Sidney Lipton. This messenger has a goal, to test Mr. Benjamin's faith and report back to the biggest boss of them all. *God's Favorite* is a lighthearted comedy dealing with some not-so lighthearted circumstances. Neil Simon uses wit and charm to create a thought-provoking comedic piece unlike any other.



Setting: Long Island, New York 1974



Meet The Family!



Joe

Successful Long Island businessman. Sincere in his religious devotion. The father of the household.



Ben

Joe's spoiled son, relatively useless. Sarah's twin brother. Not too bright.



Mady

The wise-cracking family maid.



Morris

The jaded and sardonic family butler.



Rose

Joe's wife. Demanding and a bit entitled.



Sarah

Joe's daughter and Ben's twin-sister, like him in every way, including a lack of smarts, petulant and bad at keeping her robe closed.



David

Joe's oldest child, big brother to the twins. The drunken black sheep; the prodigal son.



Sidney Lipton

He isn't a part of the family, more of an unwanted guest. Not an angel, but a near-sighted, unassuming, bumbling bike messenger from God on a mission to test Joe; a compulsive film buff.



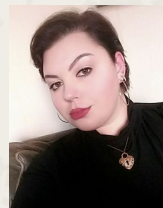
Meet The Family!



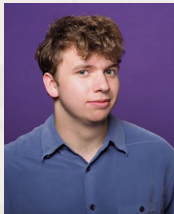
Joe



Rose



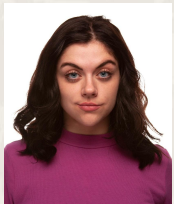
Ben



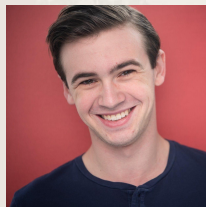
Sarah



Mady



David



Morris



Sidney Lipton





Biblical Parallels

The story of *God's Favorite* comes from the Old Testament book of Job. While “Job” didn’t live in a 1974 Long Island mansion, he shares many similarities with the character Joe.

A Brief Look at the Book of Job

Job was a man that was said to be “blameless” and “upright.” God was very pleased with his obedience and diligence towards Him.



Satan, who wanted to prove a point, made a deal with God. Satan believed that Job’s devotion to God was solely based on the blessings he had received. God granted Satan’s request to torment Job in order to see if he would curse God.

After being tormented and tested by Satan, Job still remained faithful to the Lord. He resisted the Devil’s temptations and remained steadfast in his faith. The Lord in turn blessed Job for his obedience.



References in the Play



"Robert Hall raincoat"- Robert Hall was a popular clothing brand founded in Waterbury, Connecticut. In 1977 their parenting company filed for bankruptcy resulting in the loss of the Robert Hall chain.

"Robert Redford"-A famous American actor. He performed on Broadway in Neil Simon's *Barefoot in the Park* and went on to do more film work.

"Gutenberg Bible,"-A Bible printed using an invention of mass production technology.

"Yoo-hoos,"- A popular chocolate beverage created in Garfield New Jersey by Natale Olivieri in 1928.

"Chinatown," -A popular film released in 1974.

"Jack Nicholson" -Famous American Actor.

"Faye Dunaway" -An American actress who starred in the film *Chinatown*.

"Alan Ladd" -An American actor known for *Shane, This Gun for Hire, The Blue Dahlia, etc.*

"Billy Graham"- An American evangelist.

"Paul Newman"- A famous American actor, starred in *The Long Hot Summer, Hustler, The Sting, etc.*

"Butch Cassidy" -An American train and bank robber.











1974 Fun Facts and Trivia



- President Richard M. Nixon resigned after the “Watergate Scandal”
 - The price of a postage stamp was 10 cents.
 - World Population: 3,928,000,000
 - Popular movies at the time were:
Blazing Saddles
The Towering Inferno
The Trial of Billy Jack
 - Connect Four was introduced in 1974.
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-
- 



Themes

- Value of wealth
 - Loyalty to God
 - Pain and Suffering
 - Questioning and Doubting God
 - Humanity's Status Before God
 - Greed
 - Jealousy
 - Repentance
 - Forgiveness
 - Acceptance
- 
- 
-



Discussion Questions



Is there humor in the Bible?

What do you think Neil Simon's contribution to theatre is?

This play is from 1974, not only before these freshmen were born but even before some of their parents were born. Is the play a little dated?


Is it ok to include God in a joke?




How do we understand humor as Christians?

Neil Simon tends to write about the culture of the Jewish neighborhood where he grew up in Brooklyn. Do you see parallels between that culture and the culture of West Texas?

Does God have a sense of humor?





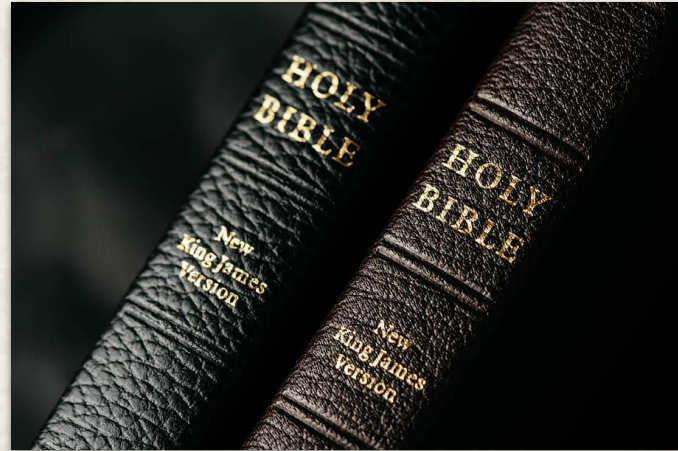
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Articles for Thought

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“Does God Have a Sense of Humor?”

“Humor as Theology”





Theatre Etiquette

We at ACU Theatre want to provide the audience with quality entertainment. While we are the one's putting on the production, we also need **your** assistance to ensure your experience is the best it can possibly be!

Some Rules of Thumb:

- Silence your cell phone.
- Don't talk.
- Refrain from selfies or any photography in general with the performers during the show (I know it's tempting)
- Feel free to laugh, clap, and cry along.

Your participation and engagement is felt among the actors and helps to increase their energy and overall performance! We are so thrilled to have you and hope you experience a magical night at the theatre!

