Theme: Faith, Family, Grace, Joy

Scripture: John 14:6, Romans 10:9
Duration: 25 min
Scenes: 2
Participants: 5
Memorization: Yes

EXCHANGING BURDENS

PURPOSE: Carrying many burdens, Jack meets three young siblings who show him the reason for their joy and discover how Jesus gladly takes our sins and burdens when we bring them to Him.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

- *Speak loudly and clearly so residents may hear every word.*

TOTAL CAST MEMBERS:

- **MOM:** *(Loving, patient)*
- **JACK:** *(Burdened)*
- **TRISTON:** *(Oldest, looking after siblings)*
- **LARRY:** *(Middle child; joyful, carefree)*
- **MIKE:** *(Youngest; playful, funny)*
- *If more girls than boys are interested in participating, characters can be adapted to be either male or female roles.*

Scene 1 – Jack's House

CAST FOR SCENE 1:

- **JACK**
- **MOM**

PROPS:

- Bookbags
- Large sack (trash bag/pillowcase)

MUSIC CUES:

***"My Jesus"* by The Yuns (Anne Wilson cover)**

SCENE 1

With a large bag of blocks next to him, JACK sits at a table writing on a block. Mom enters from stage left.

MOM: *(Enters with backpack in hand.)* Good morning, Jack.

JACK: Good morning, Mom.

MOM: *(Leans over Jack's shoulder, curious.)* What are you writing?

JACK: (*Shrugs, puts block in bag)* Just something. (*Let audience see expression of burden.)*

MOM: *(Hold backpack toward Jack.)* Jack, that bag is heavy with worries. Why don't you take this new backpack to school today?

JACK: (*Defensive, shaking head. Stomp your foot subtly to show frustration.)* I can't, Mom! These are things I need to carry. If I don't carry them, who will?

MOM: (*Softly, hands clasped, glance up as if praying silently.)* But Jack…

JACK: *(Interrupts, hurrying, stumble slightly under the bag weight.)* I gotta go! I'm gonna be late! *(Exit)*

MOM: *(Stand center stage, looking up, whispering to God)* Oh God, help him see he doesn't have to carry these burdens. I can't help him see, but You can. *(Pause.)* Thank You, Jesus.

SCENE CHANGE:

***"My Jesus"* by The Yuns (Anne Wilson cover)** *(Play the first part only – until the first chorus.."He makes a way…")*

Option: Mom to sing the first part of song.

Scene 2- Pathway to School

CAST FOR SCENE 1:

- Jack
- Triston
- Larry
- Mike

PROPS:

- Three bookbags
- Silk leaves
- Large sack (trash bag/pillowcase)
- 5–8 cardboard blocks. Label one with “Wasted Years” and “Anger” on the other side.
- In Mikes bookbag: Large Words written on paper: **JESUS IS THE WAY – THE TRUTH – AND THE LIFE *John 14:6***

MUSIC CUES:

***“My Jesus”* by The Yuns (Anne Wilson cover)**

SCENE 2

Path lined with with leaves on the ground. TRISTON, MIKE AND LARRY enter from stage left. MIKE running ahead, kicking up the leaves.

MIKE: (*Run excitedly across the stage, kick leaves into the audience path.)* Hey! Who wants to make a leaf pile after school today?

TRISTON: *(Walk casually, pick up a leaf, look at it with awe.)* Mike, slow down! Wait for us!

MIKE: *(Toss leaves toward the audience, grin widely.)* We could make it huge! Like a big feather bed!

LARRY: (*Laughing. Arms out, spin slightly.*) Yeah! A leaf mountain!

JACK: *(Enters from stage right, struggling with bag over his shoulder. Muttering, struggling.)*

TRISTON:*(Looking away from Jack.)* Whoa—look at this bright one. *(Hold the leaf up to the audience, smile. Step back a few steps, and accidentally bump into Jack.)*

JACK: *(Steps forward, annoyed. Shake fist lightly.)* Hey, watch where you're going!

TRISTON: *(Holds hands up apologetically)* Sorry! I didn't see you.

JACK: *(Cross arms, step aside.)* Maybe because you're too busy looking at leaves instead of people right in front of you!

TRISTON: *(Friendly, step forward confidently.)* You're right. *(Pause)* I'm Triston, these are my brothers, Larry and Mike.

JACK: Finally! Someone admits when they were wrong.

LARRY: What's your name?

JACK: Jack.

LARRY: *(Point at the bag, step closer.)* What's in that bag? Looks heavy.

JACK: *(Frustrated, toss bag on ground; block labeled "Wasted Years" falls out.)* It is heavy! What do you care anyway? It's mine to carry.

MIKE: *(Picks up block, hold block up, turn to audience to show text.)* What does "Wasted Years" mean?

JACK: *(Snatches it back)* Hey give that back. None of your business!

MIKE: *(Open backpack.)* My backpack is light. Want to see what's in it?

JACK: *(Surprised at friendliness. Skeptical, take a step forward)* A light bookbag? Huh good for you! You have no idea what I have been through, the wrong turns…or…the regrets I am carrying!

TRISTON: Hey Jack, it's alright. I am sure it isn't easy carrying all that stuff. There is a better way.

JACK: *(Sarcastically)* A better way? I guess the "better way" is in your "light bookbag?"

MIKE: *(Pulls out a sheet of paper. Facing the audience.)* JESUS IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE." *John 14:6*

JACK: *(Confused, gestures to bag)* Okay… what does that have to with my heavy bag?

LARRY: *(Step forward, pointing to bag)* All that stuff you're carrying is too heavy. That's why Jesus came—to take it for us.

JACK: *(Sarcastic, step back, fold arms, tilt head.)* How does He do that? Carry it for me!?

TRISTON: *(Step next to Jack, gesture toward him gently.)* I have done a lot of things wrong too. *(Pause.)* God calls those wrong choices "Sin." I learned that God loves me very much.

JACK: *(Angrily, turns the "Wasted Years" block over to reveal the word "Anger")* What about all the wrong things others did to me?

TRISTON: *(Pause)* I forgave others who hurt me. God took that heavy load from me.

JACK: Just like that!? Just forgive and forget? *(Pause. Pick up bag, and turn to leave.)* I gotta go!

TIRSTON: Wait!

JACK: *(Turns to look at Triston.)*

TRISTON: Jesus suffered a painful death. *(Pause)* He was put on a cross to die! He said "Father, forgive them."

JACK: *(Pause. Let the weight of that moment sit. Humbly.)* He forgave them?

LARRY: We have all done wrong things, and we deserve the punishment. *(Pause)* The punishment is death. *(Winces. Pause.)* Jesus loves us so much, He died in our place.

JACK: He died for me?

MIKE: Jesus didn't stay dead! God raised Him! So His grave is empty!

TRISTON: *(Step closer to Jack, looking at him then the residents.)* Jesus forgives us and He never remembers our wrongs again – when we ask Him. *(Pause)* He said, "We should forgive others too".

(Pause) When we do, He gives us Joy and life instead.

JACK: *(Humbled.)* Joy?

LARRY: *(Holding John 14:6 Bible verse)* Sin is very heavy. *(Pause.)* We were never meant to carry those wrong choices around.

JACK: *(Humbly, looking at the "Wasted Years" block in his hand.)* Joy and Life?

(Pause) Jesus' death removes wasted years and sins.

(Throws the "Wasted Years" block on the ground. Pause briefly. Slowly bow head.) Jesus, I am sorry for it all… please take it! *(Look down at the sack of burdens. Empty the bag fully on the ground.)*

(*Pause. Look out at the audience.)* I forgive others that hurt me too. *(Pause. Look up. Point upward.)* I want to live for You Jesus.

LARRY: *(Looking out at the audience.)* God will never turn away someone who asks for forgiveness. That's GOOD NEWS!

TECHNICIAN: *Start "My Jesus" song where left off and continue playing. All Sing*.

OPTION: *Jack Solo Verse: (Step forward, hands over heart, eyes closed for emotional impact.) "Who would take my cross to Calvary? Pay the price for my guilty? Who would care that much about me? Let me tell you 'bout my Jesus."*
