



The Workers in the Vineyard

Matthew 20:1-16

Running time: Approximately 6 minutes

Setting: This series (Units 5 & 6) is set in a barn area of an outdoor camp. The set is designed to look like the interior of a barn, which is the set for Ranger Reggie's talk show, Critter Kingdom. There's a door to enter, a fireplace with stuffed animal heads over the mantle, and a ramp (or steps) to invite children up to participate in object lessons. Orville (a bird on a zip line) slides down and lands in a box containing a plastic egg. The Bible is kept in a crate that lights up; music plays when opened. There are different openings, trapdoors and windows from which the animal of the day can fall and characters and puppets can pop up.

Characters: Ranger Reggie is the Head Bible Counselor at Camp Venture. He is a former explorer and animal seeker, like the "Crocodile Hunter". (For added humor, pronounce all "R"s and "L"s as a "W".) Safari Sam is a survivalist and lover of nature. He is very excitable and has a lisp. Orville is a klutzy carrier pigeon (silent toy bird attached to a zip line) that delivers messages.

Plot: Ranger Reggie and Safari Sam have volunteers act out the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard. We learn that Jesus offers everyone the same reward, life in Heaven with God forever!

Costumes: Pith helmet, camouflage shorts, camp shirt, vest, mustache and eyeglasses. Tan shirt, khaki shorts, explorers helmet, boots, hard hats, tool belts

Props: Toy bird on a zip line, plastic egg with note inside, ant farm, bucket, trunk, fruit (can be represented by ping-pong balls, clothespins or any object), Bible. Note: Each episode introduces a different creature. These may be ten separate puppets, stuffed animals, or one basic sock puppet to represent the 10 following creatures: Falcon (Lesson 23), Earthworm (Lesson 24), Bear (Lesson 25), Ant (Lesson 26), Turkey (Lesson 27), Seagull (Lesson 28), Ostrich (Lesson 29), Pigeon (Lesson 30), Piglet (Lesson 31), Donkey (Lesson 32).

Sound effects (SFX):

1. Intro/Outro music suggestions: "I Like to Move It, Move It" from Madagascar
2. Lion Roar
3. Bible Crate: "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" or other jungle song clip. Music plays when crate is opened during each episode to reveal the Bible
6. Cash register sound

Visual effects (VFX):

1. Video Intro featuring Ranger Reggie is available at ResourceWell.org
2. "Critter Kingdom" slide
3. A crate holds the Bible. When opened, light shines out and music plays.
4. Video or photo of ants carrying food
5. Scripture Slide: **But he answered one of them, "Friend I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a Denarius?" Matthew 20:13**
6. Camper's Code slide:

I will love God with all my heart.
I will love my neighbor as myself.
I will be a light wherever I go!

Adaptations:

1. Sound Effects: instead of using recorded effects, have children make the sounds
2. Voiceovers: may be spoken off stage
3. This illustration is also available in storybook form located at ResourceWell.org

Critter Kingdom
Unit 5, Lesson 26
The Workers in the Vineyard
Matthew 20:1-16

Voiceover (VFX: short video intro)

You are about to join us on an adventure. My name is Ranger Reggie, intrepid explorer, former marine, bible-lover and friend to animals everywhere. I've traveled the four corners of the globe, climbed mountains, forged rivers and faced countless dangers to bring you the world's most interesting creatures...this is Critter Kingdom! (SFX: "I Like to Move It, Move It")

Reggie (Wears hard hat and tool belt.)
Hello! Hello, boys and Girls! Welcome back to Critter Kingdom! (SFX: Lion's roar) Ranger Reggie here with my co-host Safari Sam. Orville told us to come ready to work today!

Sam (Wears hard hat and tool belt.)
That's right. We've got our tool belts and our hard hats on, and we are ready to roll up our sleeves and work!

Reggie (Displays ant farm.)
In honor of our hard labor, we have a special creature for today's Creature Feature! (SFX: "I Like to Move It, Move It") Today's Creature Feature is The Worker Ant! (VFX: ants carrying food)

Sam
The worker ant is very community-minded insect. Worker ants always work side-by-side for the good of the colony.

Reggie

That's true. If ants find a piece of food that's too heavy to carry, they call for help and more ants come to the rescue.

Sam

That's how it is in the ant kingdom. Everybody shares the work and everybody shares the reward! (pause) Do you feel something, Ranger Reggie?

Reggie

No. What does it feel like?

Sam

It's sort of a tickling sensation on my leg, kind of like an...ANT! ANT!

Reggie

Stop, drop and roll, Safari Sam!

Sam (Rolls on ground.)
Get it off! Get it off!

Reggie (Hold imaginary ant.)
Hold still, Safari Sam! I'll get that little bug! Got him! Let's put you back, little fella.

Sam

Wow! That worker ant sure was working on my leg!

Reggie (Puts imaginary ant in ant farm.)
Speaking of working, Safari Sam, we should call Orville and find out why he told us to dress this way.

Sam

Swell idea! Let's all say, "Hey Orville, come on down!" Ready? "Hey Orville, come on down!" (Orville slides down and crashes through window; plastic egg drops down into fireplace.)

Reggie (Unfolds note inside egg.)
Today's parable is "The Workers in the Vineyard!" Why don't I get out our Bibles?

Sam

Why don't I help you?

Reggie (SFX: "The Lion Sleeps Tonight") (VFX: Bible crate opens and light shines out.) **That's very generous of you, Safari Sam.**

Sam

I'm just trying to do my fair share! In today's parable, Jesus is teaching his followers what the kingdom of heaven is like.

Reggie (Chooses two volunteers.)

That's right. Jesus said the kingdom is like a landowner who went out in the morning to hire some workers to work in his field.

Sam

He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day. What's a denarius?

Reggie

It was a valuable coin and it was a very fair payment for one day's work. Come on up volunteers. We need you to take this fruit from this bucket and store it in this trunk. (Bucket and trunk on opposite sides of room.)

Sam (to volunteers)

Let's form a chain. (Volunteers stand side by side and pass the fruit from the bucket to the trunk.) **Good job. Now, the Bible says that about every three hours, he went out and hired some more workers.**

Reggie

(Choose three more volunteers to join in the work chain.) **Come with me guys! Slide on over. Make room for my new workers.**

Sam

Keep passing that fruit down!

Reggie

(choose two more) **Then with only one hour left in the workday, he went out and found still more workers who needed a job. He told them to go work in his vineyard.**

Sam

Aren't these workers doing a swell job? Just like worker ants! Let's give them around of applause!

Reggie

When evening came the landowner told his foreman to line up all the workers and pay them beginning with the last ones hired and going onto the first.

Sam (Gives one coin to each volunteer.)

Ooh! I want to be the Foreman! Okay, guys line up! One for you, one for you, one for you!

Reggie

Now the Bible says the ones hired last got a whole day's pay. When the ones that worked all day saw this, they expected to be paid more. But they were paid the same: one denarius!

Sam

Those guys that worked all day were mad! They said, "Hey, these guys only worked an hour and we did most of the work, but you made us equal! Not fair! Not fair!"

Reggie

Ah, but listen to what the Word of God says: "But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius?'"

(VFX: Scripture slide)

Sam

That's true, they did make a deal!

Reggie

The landowner said, "It's my money. Don't be envious just because I am generous."

Sam

Wow, that's a great lesson! Let's thank our volunteers for helping us learn it! You may have a seat!

Reggie

Thank you for being such good workers.

Sam

But some of those worked harder than others, Ranger Reggie. I mean, those guys that got hired in the morning had a right to be jealous, they got cheated.

Reggie

You could look at it that way... but actually, the owner was both fair and generous. He was fair to keep his promise to pay them one denarius. And he was generous to pay it even to those who had not worked the full day's work!

Sam

I hadn't thought of it that way. He did give a lot of workers a good job and paid them all fairly.

Reggie

That's how Jesus is with us! It doesn't matter if you've served King Jesus for your whole life or if you just met Him today. He offers everyone the same reward, life in heaven with Him forever!

Sam

And we all get to work together for the good of the Kingdom, just like the worker ants!

Reggie

That's right, Safari Sam. And just like the landowner, Jesus always keeps His promise to us.

Sam

And speaking of promises, we should recite our promise to God!

Reggie

Great idea, my friend! Let's all stand, raise our right hand and recite our Camper's Code together!

All (VFX: Camper's Code Slide)

**I will love God with all my heart,
I will love my neighbor as myself,
I will be a light wherever I go!**

Reggie

**(VFX: Critter Kingdom slide) (SFX: Outro music)
Well, Camp Rangers, looks like we're out of time for today's Critter Kingdom. I'd like to thank my co-host, Safari Sam, our vineyard worker volunteers and the worker ant. Until next time...so long, Rangers!**