

ALLEYTHEATRE

HAND TO GOD

By Robert Askins

Directed by Mark Shanahan

Research Packet

Compiled by Skyler Gray and Ryan Dumas

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COMEDY:

ABBOTT AND COSTELLO – “Who’s On First?”

- Link to complete routine from “The Actors Home” episode (1953)
 - Link (and routine) starts at 0:53
 - <https://youtu.be/kTcRRaXV-fg?t=53s>
- ANOTHER VERSION - Link to routine from 1945 film “The Naughty Nineties” – was first performed as part of stage act
 - Link (and routine) starts at 1:03
 - <https://youtu.be/sShMA85pv8M?t=1m3s>



Abbott and Costello

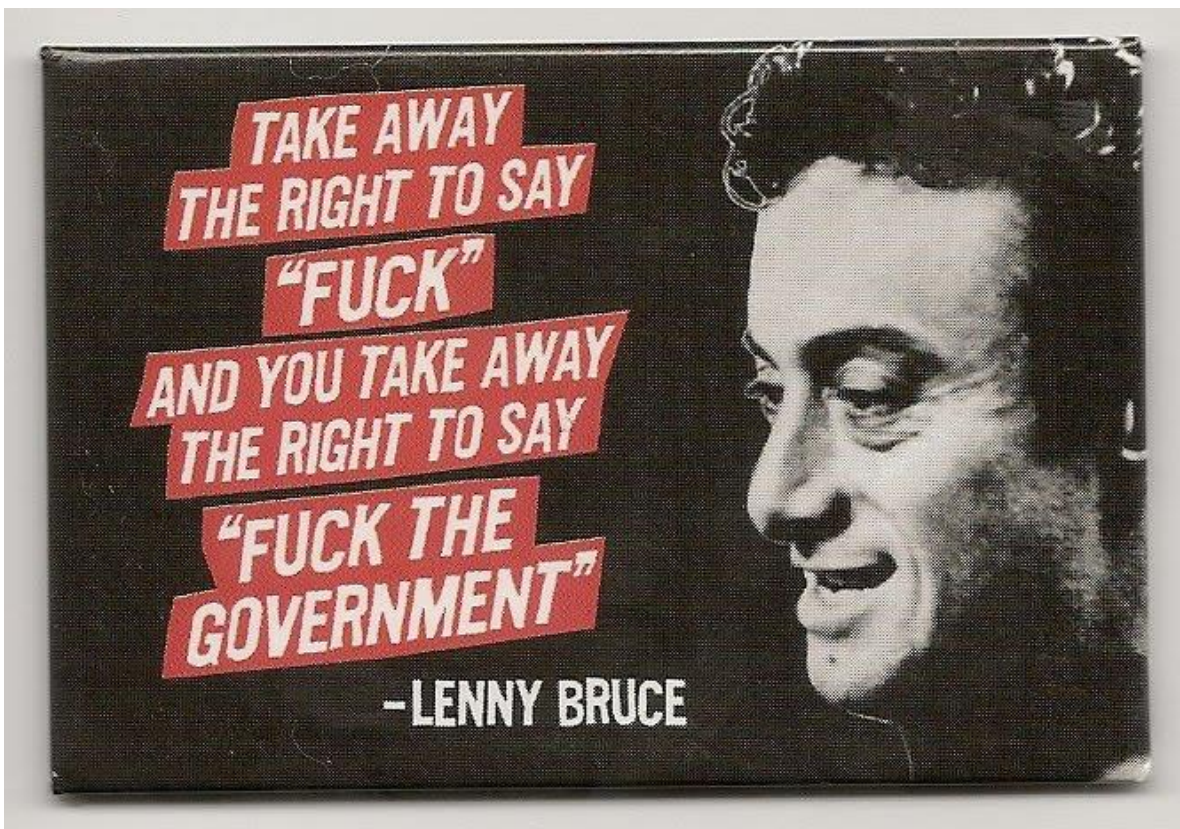
LENNY BRUCE

- “As the 1960s rolled around, so did trouble for Lenny Bruce. In the fall of 1961, he was arrested for possession of prescription narcotics and for obscenity while performing onstage. He was acquitted of the latter charge in 1962, but the police began monitoring his shows. Also in 1962, the now-controversial comedian was banned from playing Australia and was again arrested for drug possession and on two separate obscenity charges, with figures such as Woody Allen, Bob Dylan and Allen Ginsberg coming to his aid during the trial (in November 1964, a guilty verdict came in nonetheless).”
 - <http://www.biography.com/people/lenny-bruce-9229168#stand-up-marriage-and-a-leper-colony>
- “His profanity-laced act offered fearless monologues and vulgar word-pictures which tickled the edges of the First Amendment, got him arrested numerous times, and rendered

him nearly unbookable. Clubs were threatened with stiff fines or the revocation of their licenses if they chose to feature him as a headliner. He was also a jailtime regular for drug-related offenses, heroin and morphine chief among them. He provoked the wrath of the Catholic Church, the police, and the political structures which protected them both.

At the Troubador Theater in Hollywood, he was arrested for using the phrase 'dwarf motherfucker'. He was arrested at the Jazz Workshop in San Francisco on October 4, 1961 for violating the California Obscenity Code after uttering the word "cocksucker." His trial, which forced him into bankruptcy, was considered a landmark in the fight to preserve the freedoms set forth in the First Amendment."

- <http://www.nndb.com/people/406/000022340/>
- POPULAR ROUTINES (You might want to wear earphones if you are in public...)
 - "Thank You, Mask Man"
 - Audio from his stand-up routine
 - <https://youtu.be/1tjWYEMQ70w>
 - "The Difference Between Men & Women"
 - <https://youtu.be/xFNvqBQ3b6w>
 - "The Meaning of Obscenity"
 - <https://youtu.be/gDkoCtMOFOg>
 - "To is a Preposition; Come is a Verb"
 - <https://youtu.be/cyY5rBvD0LI>



PUPPETRY

PUPPETRY 101

- “How to Make A Puppet’s Mouth Move”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r13KMIaKPfQ>
- “What Are Hand and Rod Puppets?”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmrW8N-llkQ>
- “Performance: How to Use Rods on Rod Puppets”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhgnRwgVRRc>
- “How to Make a Puppet”
 - <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Puppets>
 - *Farther down the page is a step-by-step guide on how to make a sock puppet*
- “A Guide to Puppetry”
 - <http://rainbowpuppets.com/guide.htm>

FAMOUS PUPPETEERS/PUPPETS

- **Shari Lewis**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eA1UHiA18Bq>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2b4vUZ7wR4>
- **Burr Tillstrom**
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANi_zOCDCEc
- **The Muppets**
 - “Jim Henson Talks About the Muppets”
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4xnBca2_Nc
- **Frank Oz**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqtodXTfTk8>
- **“31 TV puppets we still love”**
 - <http://www.digitalspy.com/tv/news/a505472/sooty-kermit-edd-the-duck-31-tv-puppets-we-still-love/>
- **Bill Baird**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbuDaXjN8o8>



Shari Lewis' *Lamb Chop's Play-Along* on PBS



Jim Henson and Kermit the Frog

HISTORY OF PUPPETRY

- “Puppet Shows—The History of the Puppet”
 - <https://www.bransonshows.com/articles/PuppetShowsHistoryofthePuppet.htm>
 - “The Japanese often used puppets to replace human actors, as a means of illustrating and symbolizing things a human actor could not. Actors are also typically harder to work with, more demanding, and often unruly. This took the human element out so the script could be focused on more fully.”
- “History of Puppetry & Puppet Theater”
 - <http://www.theaterseatstore.com/history-of-puppetry>
 - “Puppetry is an ancient form of artistic expression that is a variation on storytelling or human theatrical productions. In puppetry, a drama unfolds that is entirely or primarily acted out by specialized representational objects, which are manipulated by a puppeteer. The human animator may or may not be visible to the audience. Cultural variations of puppetry developed independently in many parts of the world, with distinctive types still carried on today in Japan, China, Germany, Indonesia, and the United States, among other places. Some specific puppets became international icons in the age of television, including Howdy Doody, Lamp Chop, and Jim Henson’s Muppets”
 - “Beginning at the turn of the 20th century, a cultural mindset arose in Europe and the United States in which puppets began to be used in an experimental way, aimed solely at adult audiences. In productions spurred by this movement, a performance might combine actors and puppets or use actors as if they were puppets.”
- “History of Puppets”
 - <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKEwjGusPijrzNAhWC4SYKHZc1BlgQFggeMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.puppetsnow.com%2Fhistory-of-puppets.html&usq=AFQjCNE2Q3BCjhBMKj6hSr3PgEdiVKGuEQ&bvm=bv.125221236,d.amc>
 - “While it is impossible to be certain, puppetry had its birthplace in India, almost a thousand years B.C. From this era, you can find stick puppets that were used to play out the Indian epics like the Maha-Bharata and the Bala-Ramayana.”
- Puppetry in America Display at the Smithsonian
 - <http://americanhistory.si.edu/puppetry>
 - “Usually made of cloth, a hand puppet is a flexible, glove-like structure. The puppeteer inserts a hand and manipulates the figure by moving fingers and wrist. This method can be traced to prehistoric times, when storytellers used their hands to make shadows to illustrate their tales. It evolved into the use of highly sophisticated objects of wood, plastic, paint, and fabric.”

- “Two traditional hand puppets are the quarreling duo of Punch and Judy, rooted in the knockabout traditions of the 17th-century Italian commedia dell’arte and the 18th-century British theater. Intended largely for adult audiences, their shows were criticized for comic violence. “
- “A rod puppet has external wooden sticks or wire rods attached, allowing the puppeteer to manipulate its movements. Some puppets, notably those created by Jim Henson, combine both hand and rod manipulation.”
- Balinese Shadow Puppetry
 - Balinese Wayang (Shadow Puppet) Theater
 - <http://www.bali-indonesiabeach.com/about-us/Balinese-Wayang-Shadow-Puppet-Theater.html>
 - Shedding light on Indonesia’s shadow puppet tradition (video included)
 - <http://www.cnn.com/2013/10/04/world/asia/indonesia-bali-shadow-puppet/index.html>

PUPPETRY AND RELIGION

CHRISTIAN PUPPET MINISTRY

- “Puppet Ministry gets Word across to young minds”
 - Puppet Ministry at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Houston
 - <http://www.chron.com/life/houston-belief/article/Puppet-ministry-gets-Word-across-to-young-minds-1776688.php#photo-1383305>
- “Gospel for Dummies”
 - 2000 article about the International Festival of Christian Puppetry and Ventriloquism
 - <http://partners.nytimes.com/library/magazine/home/20000820mag-phenomenon.html>
- “Entertainer uses puppet ministry to spread Gospel message”
 - Article about Gene Cordova, leader of Cordova Creative and a puppet minister
 - <http://www.knoxnews.com/entertainment/family/entertainer-uses-puppet-ministry-to-spread-gospel-message-ep-407972994-358602841.html>
 - VIDEO OF SOME OF GENE’S PERFORMANCES
 - <http://www.cordovacreative.com/ViewVideo.htm>
- Bethel Missionary Baptist Church Puppet Ministry Performance
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQ6T74ahQ3I>
- Puppet Ministry Performance – on this page
 - Musical performance by a Christian Puppet Ministry team
 - <http://www.cogic.org/childrensministry/ministries/new-page/>
- Newton Christian Church – Puppet Ministry performance at competition
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izd8gMr42Lg>
- Webstore for Christian Puppets
 - <http://www.creativemin.com/>
- Husband and Wife team describe how to create a puppet ministry
 - http://puppets-etc.com/blueprint_index.htm



Christa Robinson and Anita Hardy display some of the puppets used in Stepup, a puppet ministry at North Shelby Baptist Church in Alabama.



Black Light Ministry at First Baptist Church Alma in Georgia



Members of Fielder Road Puppet Ministry in Texas

VENTRILOQUISM

The production of the voice in such a way that the sound seems to come from a source other than the vocal organs of the speaker.

HOW TO DO VENTRILOQUY

- “Ventriloquism”
 - <http://www.brownielocks.com/ventriloquism.html>
 - Speaking without moving your lips, sound substitutions, word endings “-ing” and “-able”
 - These instructions are a few scrolls down
- “How to Do Ventriloquism (With Pictures and Video)”
 - <http://comedyventriloquist.com/how-to-do-ventriloquism-pictures/>
 - Defines ventriloquism as “creating the illusion of life”
- “Learn how to be a ventriloquist”
 - <http://boyslife.org/hobbies-projects/funstuff/28635/learn-how-to-be-a-ventriloquist/>
 - Tips from famous ventriloquist Ronn Lucas

FAMOUS VENTRILOQUISTS

- Jeff Dunham
 - “Can you hear me now?” with Peanut
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A38YO3f2Bv4>
 - “Walter the weatherman” with Walter
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcAq6fRADzI>
- Nina Conti
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2puwRopD8E>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3vBYHvG2wE>
- Edgar Bergen
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wizwZV7EyLA>
- Paul Winchell
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhPDwsoWzng>



Jeff Dunham



Nina Conti

HISTORY OF VENTRILOQUISM

- <http://www.kimn.net/vent/history.htm>
 - The first recorded use of ventriloquism was the Oracle of Delphi
 - “Pythia would stand as if in a trance, mouth still, as words came from the sky or out of a sacred stone--a relatively easy deception for a ventriloquist.”
- <http://www.ventriloquistcentral.com/ventriloquism-tribute/tribute-to-ventriloquism/index.htm>
 - General list of links
- <http://www.ventriloquistcentral.com/ventriloquism-tribute/ventriloquists-history/index.htm>
 - Individual Ventriloquists
- “Ventriloquism: Ecstatic Exchange and the History of the Artwork” by David Goldblatt
 - PDF Downloaded
- POSSIBLE OTHER BOOKS
 - *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* by Steven Connor
 - *I Can See Your Lips Moving: The History and Art of Ventriloquism* by Valentine Vox
 - http://houseofdeception.com/Ventriloquism_History.html

VENTRILOQUISM AND THE DEMONIC

- “The Demonic Origins of Ventriloquism” by Andy Wright
 - <http://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/the-demonic-origins-of-ventriloquism>
 - “Back [in Ancient Greece], ventriloquists were called “engastrimyths.” Steven Connor says in his book [Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism](#), this was a mashup of ‘en in, gaster the stomach, and mythos word or speech.’ Basically, people believed engastrimyths had demons in their stomachs who belched words from their host’s mouths.”
 - “Christianity took a particularly dim view of ventriloquism in the 16th century, when witch trials swept through Europe, believing it was “to be regarded a practice spawned by hell itself” according to Vox. Disgruntled God-fearers believed mysterious voices emanated from any number of holes in the ventriloquists body—from the vagina to the nostrils. Sometimes even other animals found their way into the body. An account of the possession of a boy in 1500s England declared baying hounds could be heard in his stomach.”
 - “Legendary Broadway critic Walter Kerr wrote of a 1977 Greenwich Village cabaret act featuring ventriloquism, ‘Do you realize what an ominous presence a ventriloquist’s dummy can be, often is?’ He compared them to Frankenstein’s monster and the artist’s fear their creation could destroy them.”
- “Demonic ventriloquism and Venetian skepticism in Othello” by Blair Morris
 - Documents (Both FULL and CUT versions) available
 - “Working from the position of official conformist policy, Harsnett, Deacon, and Walker attempted to debunk Darrell’s exorcisms by insisting that demonic possession did not really exist as a physical manifestation; that the age of miracles

ended after the apostolic era; and that the vocal effects achieved by so-called demoniacs were actually produced through ventriloquial fraud. The longstanding emphasis on ventriloquism as an unnatural manifestation of demonic guile was thus increasingly transferred to the realm of natural human deceit.”

- “Archie Andrews: The rise and fall of a ventriloquist's dummy”
 - <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/archie-andrews-the-rise-and-fall-of-a-ventriloquists-dummy-516992.html>
 - “The anxiety that they induce has been identified, according to the website, *Changethatsrightnow.com*, as *automatonophobia*, which is defined as ‘a persistent, abnormal, and unwarranted fear of ventriloquist's dummies, animatronic creatures or wax statues’.”
 - “But while their heyday has come and gone, the terror that they can instil lingers. From *Magic to Dead of Night*, through episodes of *The Twilight Zone*, *Edgar Lustgarten Presents* and *Hammer House of Horror*, the ventriloquist's dummy has been a recurring object of malign possession, of semi-demonic powers, bespeaking madness, paranoia and heart-stopping terror.

There are several reasons for the ongoing legacy of creepiness. We're not talking about a benign Pinocchio-like figure who metamorphoses into a real boy; we're talking about a shiny faced, approximately life-sized wooden doll, ghastly of aspect, which is invested with a wholly unnatural "life" through the medium of the ventriloquist. The dummy never looks anything other than what it is, a totemic miniature human, clearly lifeless, that nonetheless speaks and exudes a personality. And while the reality is that one is witnessing two voices from a single source, the illusion is that one is watching two personalities sparring with each other.

Add a third party and something odd happens; the vent virtually disappears. The invited guest or stooge will address all his remarks to the dummy, leaving the vent to evaporate. This peculiar relationship between dummy and handler, slave and master, is therefore psychologically complex in the extreme.”

- “From Demon Possession to Magic Show: Ventriloquism, Religion, and the Enlightenment”
 - <http://www.materialreligion.org/journal/magic.html>
 - “By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, ventriloquism, loosened from the confines of theological debates over demonology, had become a salient category in rationalistic discussions of religion and had taken center stage as a form of enlightened entertainment. This expanded construction of ventriloquy provided a tangible way of thinking about revealed religion as rooted in illusion--that, indeed, various wonders of the devout ear such as divine calls, the voices of demonic possession, prophecy, mystical locutions, oracles, and even the sounds of shamanic spirits had their origins in vocal deceptions that empiricists could pinpoint and magicians could demonstrate. The new ventriloquism, in its sober appraisal of all sectarian enthusiasm and religious credulity made suspect the very claim that God could speak to or through the human. In performative practice, the ventriloquist's art shifted the focus of learned attention from the divine struggle over the soul to the protean malleability of personal identity, the fears and attractions of imposture, and the sheer pleasures of amusement.¹”

- “Ventriloquism” from the Chicago School of Media Theory
 - <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/ventriloquism/>
 - Why ventriloquy and puppetry can be dangerous for the operator
 - “What the animated automaton Hugo exposes is a sense of alterity that is always at the heart of the production and perception of ventriloquism. A puppet is the extension not only of the puppeteer’s hand but also of his voice. The extension takes places as an alienation of the puppeteer, or rather, an amputation, as the puppet often speaks in a half mechanized, disagreeing voice that has some extralinguistic quirky sound (e.g. in its timbre). The Hugo example also shows that the ventriloquial voice is neither inside nor outside of the spectacle, as the image—for example, the dummy’s moving lips—fails to contain the essentially other voice. Hugo therefore stands as a perfect metaphor for the uncanny automaton, a dangerous promise made by the ventriloquist. As Marshal McLuhan insightfully observes, electric technologies such as printing not only extend the power of man but also trigger “a desperate and suicidal autoamputation, as if the central nervous system could no longer depend on the physical organs to be protective buffers against the slings and arrows of outrageous mechanism” (McLuhan 43). The danger of autoamputation, the flip side of automation, already lurks in ventriloquism performance, as we can see from Hugo. To activate that automation, the ventriloquist needs no more technology than his own hand and voice in the case of the puppet. Despite the extremity that Hugo represents, precarious uncanny animation of the puppet still lurks in more amiable situations, for example, when the famous American ventriloquist Edgar Bergen first introduced himself on television as the “best friend and severest critic of [his puppet] Charlie McCarthy.”[1]”

Famous Horror Movies with Demonic Ventriloquist Dolls:



SAW



DEAD SILENCE

SAW: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0387564/>

MAGIC: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0077889/?ref =fn_al_tt_1

DEAD SILENCE: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0455760/?ref =nm_ov_bio_lk2

VENTRILOQUISM AND RELIGION

- “How Consciousness Explains Ventriloquists and Religion” by Michael Graziano
 - <http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/05/the-social-benefits-of-consciousness/481836/>
 - “The human tendency to perceive (and sometimes misperceive) consciousness in each other is often overlooked in philosophy. When you talk to another person, of course you realize intellectually that she’s probably conscious and may have this or that specific thought in her head. You’re performing your own version of the Turing test. But beneath all that noisy cognition, beneath the level of language and philosophical argument, perceptual machinery in your brain is quietly constructing a model of a mind and projecting it onto the other person.
This “social perception” is a little like visual perception. The visual machinery in the brain constructs a model of that blue car. You have cognitive access to the perceptual model and therefore you “know” there’s a blue car in front of you. You can’t choose to not know it, or choose to see it as a green bird instead of a blue car. It isn’t an intellectual exercise. Perception is automatic.
One of the more surreal examples of social perception is ventriloquism, which pits perception against cognition. Everyone in the audience knows cognitively that there’s no mind in the puppet’s wooden head, but we still can’t help falling for the illusion. The ultimate example may be our attribution of consciousness to ourselves.
Spirituality is another example. God is a social perception. Deities, angels, ghosts, devils, and presences are all consequences of the same machinery in the brain constructing models of conscious minds and attributing them to the spaces around us. People “know” these things not because they logically deduce them, but because machinery in the brain constructs the information at a level deeper than cognition, and in a way that doesn’t easily allow for doubt.
The ultimate example may be our attribution of consciousness to ourselves. The brain constructs a self-model, just as it constructs models of other minds. The self-model is more detailed, more continuous, but essentially the same. We’re just as convinced of the existence of our own inner essence as Terri Schiavo’s parents were of their daughter’s consciousness.”

<https://endtimesprophecyreport.com/2016/03/06/ventriloquism-an-ancient-religious-practice-rebranded-as-entertainment/>

GRIEF

Deep sadness caused especially by someone's death.

GRIEF MANAGEMENT

- WebMD's Information on Grief
 - Overview of Treatment
 - <http://www.webmd.com/balance/tc/grief-and-grieving-treatment-overview>
 - <http://www.webmd.com/balance/tc/grief-and-grieving-home-treatment>
 - Helping Teens with Grief
 - <http://www.webmd.com/balance/helping-teens-who-are-grieving>
- "Helping Yourself When Someone You Love Has Died"
 - <http://www.dignitymemorial.com/en-us/library/article/name/gml-when-someone-you-love-has-died>
- "Helping Yourself When Your Parent Has Died"
 - <http://www.dignitymemorial.com/en-us/library/article/name/gml-when-your-parent-has-died>
- "Helping Yourself When Your Spouse Has Died"
 - <http://www.dignitymemorial.com/en-us/library/article/name/gml-when-your-spouse-has-died>
- "How to Help a Grieving Teen"
 - <http://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/how-to-help-a-grieving-teen/>
- "Good Grief"
 - Article on dealing with grief by a behavioral psychology expert
 - http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/wellness_articles.asp?id=962
- "How To Find Help Treating A Grief Management Problem"
 - <http://www.psychguides.com/guides/how-to-find-help-treating-a-grief-management-problem/>
 - "Teenagers and young adults can feel invisible or forgotten during a time of grief, especially if the person lost was a parent. This is because much of the attention is placed on the spouse suffering the loss of his or her spouse. If you are a parent who's suffering from grief, be sure to give adequate focus to your teenage children and make sure they have a support team too. According to Kids Growth, it's crucial that you listen to the teenager rather than just providing advice. Teens need sympathetic listeners during times of grief. If you feel you can't manage your teenager's grief, you should seek an outside resource such as a grief counselor to help your teen through this difficult process."
- "Bible Teaching about Grief Management"
 - <http://www.bible-teaching-about.com/griefmanagement.html>

- “The Bible teaching about grief management indicates there is an enormous advantage to being a Christian. The ultimate answer boils down to hope, because death has been defeated in Christ (1 Corinthians 15: 51-58).”
- “We can summarize the Christian advantage to grief management this way. You and I can gain emotional and social support from other Christians. We can gain personal strength thorough our relationship with God. We can put meaning and perspective on the death by looking to the hope of the future.

The future consists of being alive and present in heaven with Christ and other believers who traveled on before us. The other believers include our loved ones. Our experience is not that of loss, but a temporary absence in which our loved one went on a trip to a place that we shall soon be ourselves.”

Unusual/Interesting Manifestations of Grief

- Forum thread about interesting ways people deal with their grief
 - <http://nanowrimo.org/forums/character-cafe/threads/309576>
 - “Going to store and buying dental floss”
 - “ancient Egyptian practice of shaving one’s eyebrows in mourning after the death of a cat”
- “The ‘Weird’ Things We Do In Our Grieving” by Katie Lemieux
 - <http://familyandcouplescounseling.com/blog/2014/7/20/we-are-all-connected-somehow-in-our-grieving>
 - “Doing ‘weird things’ - like keeping letters or clothes after months or years after the death smelling them or preserving them, buying the favorite food the loved one liked even though no one will eat it because no one except the loved one liked that special treat, leaving the other side of the bed untouched for your spouse or partner, maintaining a similar routine as if your loved one was still alive, ironing your loved ones clothes and placing the clothes back in the closet, putting a place setting out for dinner even though your loved one never comes, speaking to their picture or urn, and the list goes on.”
- “NPR Reporter Tweets Mom’s Final Moments: Touching or Undignified?”
 - <http://www.adweek.com/fishbowldc/npr-reporter-tweets-moms-final-moments-touching-or-undignified/112826>

RELIGION IN TEXAS

RELIGIOUS LAYOUT OF HOUSTON

- Best Places.net (as of June 2014)
 - 58.40% of Houstonians report being “Religious”
 - 1.07% of Houstonians report being “Lutheran”
 - The most represented religions are “Catholic,” “Baptist,” “Other Christian,” “Methodist,” and “Islam”
 - <http://www.bestplaces.net/religion/city/texas/houston>
- 2014 Religious Landscape Study (Pew Research Center)
 - 73% Christian
 - http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/07/29/major-u-s-metropolitan-areas-differ-in-their-religious-profiles/ft_15-07-28_metrorelig/
- Texas Almanac (as of 2010)
 - 0.53% of Texans report as Lutheran-Missouri Synod
 - 0.44% of Texans report as Lutheran-E.L.C.A.
 - These numbers are decreases from 2000
- “Religious Diversity in Houston” – The Boniuk Institute at Rice University
 - https://boniuk.rice.edu/diversity_in_houston.aspx
 - “Half of the population identify themselves as Protestant (51 percent), about one-third are Catholic (31 percent), 1 percent are Jewish, 6 percent have other religious preferences, and 11 percent say they have no religion.”

CYPRESS, TX & RELIGION

- Rob on Cypress
 - <http://www.houstoniamag.com/articles/2015/5/3/an-interview-robert-askins-hand-to-god-playwright-broadway-may-2015>
 - “When my grandparents arrived in Cypress in the ’70s, it was very rural. Then all these oil and gas workers came in who were upper-middle class. Then, as the property values and the median incomes and education levels of those areas rose, these small communities of fairly rural people were exposed to a whole other strata of human being, some of whom did not like that they were in Texas, some of whom looked down on us because we were hicks. They were very wealthy, fancy people from the North who just had to be here to do a job. So it was an interesting time to be in that place.”
- 77429 (Cypress Area Code) Religion Data
 - <http://www.homefacts.com/religions/Texas/Harris-County/Cypress/77429.html>

- 1.28% report as members of the Lutheran Church
- 0.49% Report as members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Both of these numbers rank behind the numbers for practitioners of Islam and Mormonism
- Top 5 religions are Catholic, Southern Baptist, Non-Denominational Christian, Methodist, or Muslim.



Cypress, TX

- **St. John Lutheran Church & School**

- **Rob's childhood church, where he participated in his mother's puppet ministry**
 - https://youtu.be/_sOGYE5KXGY?t=1m52s
 - Source interview
- <http://stjohn-lutheran.net/church/>
- **WHAT WE BELIEVE:** With the universal Christian Church, St. John, along with other churches of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod teaches and responds to the love of the Triune God: the Father, creator of all that exists; Jesus Christ, the Son, who became human to suffer and die for the sins of all people and to rise to life again in the ultimate victory over death and Satan; and the Holy Spirit, who creates faith through God's Word and Sacraments, and pours out His blessings on God's people each day; dwelling in the hearts of believers. The three persons of the Trinity are coequal and coeternal, one God.

Being Lutheran, our congregation accepts and teaches Bible-based teachings of Martin Luther that inspired the reformation of the Christian Church in the 16th century. The

teaching of Luther and the reformers can be summarized in three short phrases: Grace alone, Faith alone, Scripture alone.

- Grace alone: God loves the people of the world, even though they are sinful, rebel against Him and do not deserve His love. He sent Jesus, His Son, to love the unlovable and save the ungodly.
- Faith alone: By His suffering and death as the substitute for all people of all time, Jesus purchased and won forgiveness and eternal life for them. Those who hear this Good News and believe it have the eternal life that it offers. God creates faith in Christ and gives people forgiveness through Him.
- Scripture alone: The Bible is God's inerrant and infallible Word, in which He reveals His Law and His Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. It is the sole rule and norm for Christian doctrine.



The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is a denomination that confesses the historic, orthodox Christian faith, a faith built on “the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone” (Eph. 2:20).

The LCMS, headquartered in St. Louis, Mo., is mission-oriented and Bible based. LCMS doctrine reflects the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther, as summarized in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*.

- Learn more about [our beliefs](#).

The LCMS Today

Today, the LCMS has more than 2.3 million baptized members in more than 6,100 congregations and more than 9,000 pastors. Two seminaries and 10 colleges and universities operate under the auspices of the LCMS, and its congregations operate the largest Protestant parochial school system in America.

LOCAL RELIGION IN THE NEWS

- “Joel Osteen responds to those who call his messages too positive, soft in tone” by Craig Hlavaty
 - <http://www.chron.com/life/houston-belief/article/Joel-Osteen-responds-to-those-who-call-his-7218135.php>
 - “John Osteen was the hard-nosed coach rallying the losing team during a halftime locker room speech, while Joel Osteen is the friend slapping you on the back and reminding you that you’ll get them next time.

The elder Osteen’s traditional, revival-tent style wasn’t quite as universal as his son’s but the man was nonetheless able to build an impressive church home. His call-and-answer devices and the opening Bible affirmation were his trademarks.”

- “Anti-religion signs at Dairy Queen spark controversy” by Jennifer Bauer
 - <http://www.click2houston.com/news/anti-religion-signs-at-dairy-queen-spark-controversy>
 - “The signs show several pictures, religious and political leaders and flags but one of the signs specifically mentions Hinduism.

“Racism is the foundation of Hinduism,” said Mohammad Dar, owner of the restaurant. Dar is Muslim and insists his messages are not opinion but fact. He said along with ice cream he wants to serve up some education to his customers and that’s all he’s trying to accomplish with his signs.”

- “Sunglasses, wide-brim hats approved for Mormon missionaries”
 - <http://www.chron.com/life/houston-belief/article/Sunglasses-wide-brim-hats-approved-for-Mormon-7965554.php>
- “Joel Osteen: Christians lack respect for opinions of others” by Craig Hlavaty
 - <http://www.chron.com/life/houston-belief/article/Joel-Osteen-Christians-lack-respect-for-opinions-6561621.php>
 - “Lakewood Church pastor, radio host, and best-selling author Joel Osteen told a major religious news outlet this week that Christians should likely refrain from arguing over religion with those of different faiths.

According to the Christian Post, Osteen says that when it comes to debating the points of Christianity some of his fellow Christians lack respect for differing opinions.

"I think [Christians should] take the high ground and respect where [other people are] coming from," Osteen said told the Christian Post.

He thinks that a lot of Christians try to outdo others of the same faith with intense debate.”

ROB ASKINS

Interviews

- “An Interview with Robert Askins, Hand to God Playwright” by Michael Hardy
 - <http://www.houstoniamag.com/articles/2015/5/3/an-interview-robert-askins-hand-to-god-playwright-broadway-may-2015>
- “Playwright and Baylor alum Rob Askins talks New York City and Poppa Rollo’s” by Helena Hunt
 - <https://baylorlariat.com/2016/04/12/playwright-and-baylor-alum-rob-askins-talks-new-york-city-and-poppa-rollos/>
- “I Interview Playwrights Part 382: Robert Askins”
 - <http://aszym.blogspot.com/2011/09/i-interview-playwrights-part-382-robert.html>
- Interviews with Rob from Ensemble Studio Theatre about *Hand to God*, *Princes of Waco*, and an additional interview
 - <http://www.ensemblestudiotheatre.org/robert-askins/>

