

A Targeted Sketch

This easy-to-perform sketch offers humorous parallels to the Luke 4.16–24 reading. By showing the legendary freedom fighter Robin Hood as we have never seen him before, it brings echoes (1) of the longing in Jesus' day for a Messiah/freedom fighter, (2) of Jesus' agenda to set people free, (3) of the Bible as God's love letter to us, and (4) of the inclusive nature of God's offer of freedom and forgiveness – for Jews and Gentiles, for good and bad.

An ideal point to use the sketch would be early in the service before the Bible reading and sermon. It is probably best left without introduction, but afterwards it would be helpful to make the connexion clear. Perhaps say something on these lines: 'That was Robin Hood, the freedom fighter as we have never seen him before, using Maid Marion's love letters to help him free the people from tyranny. Now in our Bible reading Jesus announces the sort of liberty he would bring – to the people of his day who were equally hungry for freedom.'

Cast:

- Robin Hood
- Little John
- Maid Marion (Off-stage)

(Although these are gender specific roles, there is no particular reason why they can't be played by the opposite sex.)

Props:

- Toy bow and arrows
- Bundle of letters

Costume can be as elaborate or simple as desired. A pair of hats with feathers would go a long way to creating the impression of the Merry Men.

Script:

ROBIN HOOD aims an arrow in the wings.

Robin: I am Robin Hood, the greatest archer the world has ever known. I can split a hair at a hundred paces. My aim is sure and my cause is just. And there's surely no way I can miss the target thirty times in a row.

ROBIN releases the arrow into the wings. There's a yell of pain from LITTLE JOHN, who enters rubbing his bottom and brandishing an arrow.

John: (Angrily) Is this yours by any chance?

Robin: Er, perhaps.

JOHN looks at him threateningly.

Robin: Oh, okay. I suppose I was a little off target.

John: A little? If your arrow was a musical note it'd be off enough for you to be in the X-Factor! What's gone wrong? You're meant to be a perfect shot every time.

Robin: Yeah, well, you shouldn't believe everything you read in the tabloids.

John: Friar Tuck says dodging arrows is playing havoc with his sermon preparation.

Robin: Good. Maybe his sermon will be short for once.

John: But you're meant to be the Che Guevara of the Middle Ages!

Robin: Who?

John: If you can't hit the target, how can we rise up and free the country from the tyranny of the evil Sheriff of Nottingham? And how will you ever be able to marry Maid Marion?

Robin: I haven't got a chance with Marion. I stink.

John: I know; I've watched you practise for an hour now and you haven't hit the target once.

Robin: No, I mean I haven't got a chance with Maid Marion because I stink. It may sound romantic living in Sherwood Forest but do you know how long it's been since I had a bath?

Oh, it's so depressing. We're going to be forever imprisoned in this wretched wood. I'm going to be forever stuck sharing my pillow with a badger; when I do my business I'll eternally live in fear of accidentally wiping with a stinging nettle-

John: Too much information! Still, look on the bright side: at least you don't speak with an Aussie accent.

Robin: I give up.

ROBIN slumps down, chin in hands. JOHN joins him.

John: Seriously, what's gone wrong? I thought practising was meant to make perfect.

Robin: Yes, but I've forgotten my technique. I can't remember how to hold the bow, how to get my breathing right or how to line up the target.

John: How did you get it right before?

Robin: Maid Marion was teaching me.

John: Maid Marion? But the Sheriff won't allow her into Sherwood.

Robin: Oh, she hasn't been doing it in person. She's been telling me how in her letters.

John: So what's the problem? Reread her letters.

Robin: I would. I used to reread them every night-but they've gone missing. I kept them all together, tied up in a bundle. But they've vanished and I don't know where.

John: Ah. That's a problem.

Long pause.

JOHN looks off stage. He points.

John: Hey, what's that?

Robin: That's the target I've been trying to hit.

John: Yes, but what is it? What have you been using as the target?

Robin: Just some old bundle of papers.

JOHN looks at him reprovingly.

Robin: Oh no, you don't think...?

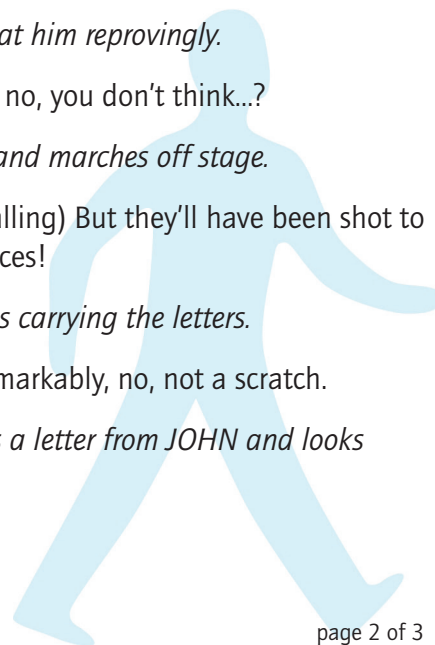
JOHN nods and marches off stage.

Robin: (Calling) But they'll have been shot to pieces!

JOHN returns carrying the letters.

John: Remarkably, no, not a scratch.

ROBIN takes a letter from JOHN and looks down it.



Robin: Thank Heavens. Here we are. Listen to this.

Marion: 'Dearest Robin, one of the most important things to get right when you shoot an arrow is your breathing; nice and steady and let your arrow fly with your breath. Of course, when I think of you it's impossible to keep my breath steady. My pulse starts to race whenever -'

John: Yes, yes, I get the idea.

Robin: But this is it. With the help of Marion's loving instruction I'll get back my archer's mojo and we can liberate England from tyranny.

John: Oh, I can't wait to see you turn the Sheriff of Nottingham into a pincushion!

Robin: John, are you suggesting I shoot the Sheriff?

John: Isn't that the point of being the world's best archer, so that you can hit the baddies?

Robin: No, the point of being the world's best archer is that you don't hit the baddies. You're meant to shoot their swords out of their hands and pin them to the wall by shooting arrows through their cloaks.

John: How does that get rid of them?

Robin: I'm not trying to get rid of anyone! I'm trying to liberate the Sheriff as much as anyone else. I want to help him to see the error of his ways and set him free from evil. I just want to make sure that he's not in a position to poke me with a sword while I do it.

John: Liberate the Sheriff of Nottingham? But he's done some terrible things.

Robin: Maybe so. But everyone deserves a second chance. And he had a bad start in life.

John: Why, what happened?

Robin: Well, he grew up in Nottingham for starters-

John: Say no more. I'll go set up the target, shall I?

Robin: That'd be great, thanks.

JOHN exits. ROBIN looks down at the letters.

Marion: 'P.S. Remember Robin, I love you forever - even if you haven't showered for ten years. Get on and free England so we can be together again.'

Robin: Ah. Now, isn't that motivation enough for championing the rights of oppressed peasants?

ROBIN runs after JOHN.

Robin: Come on, John, the quicker you get this target set up, the sooner we get out of the forest!

Written by **Tim Crooks**. Tim is a freelance scriptwriter/performer whose writing credits include BBC 7 and SAT7 TV. For further information, visit his website: www.wingandaprayerproductions.co.uk

