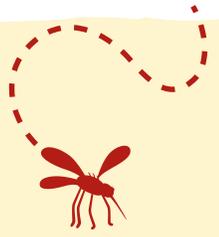




## OPENING SKIT: MEET MARLA



*Leader is in the middle of the opening with the large group when suddenly there is an audible buzzing sound from the back of the room.*

**Leader:** *[tone of concern]* OK everyone, I need you to stay very quiet and very still. I think I hear a mosquito. But if we're all very quiet and very still, maybe she will think the room is empty and she will go away.

*[Enter Marla the Mosquito from the back of the room. It is important that she be female, as only female mosquitoes transmit malaria to humans. On her back (or holding her hand, depending on the size and strength of the actors) is Plasmo the Malaria Parasite. Marla has wings and antenna. Plasmo is dressed all in green, because the malaria parasite is green.]*  
*Order stuffed parasites at:*  
<http://www.giantmicrobes.com/us/products/malaria.html>

**Marla:** Buzz, buzz, hello? Hello? Is anyone in there? I thought I heard voices. *[Marla comes to the front of the room, sits down, and begins to cry]* Oh, I'm so lonely, I thought there were people in here who would be my friends, but now they're all gone again. *[Continues to cry]*

**Leader:** *[cautiously to Marla]* Hi, um... *[pausing as if searching for a name]* what's wrong? Why are you crying?

**Marla:** I'm Marla, Marla the Mosquito *[bursts into another fit of sobs]*

**Leader:** Hi Marla, I'm *[introduces self]* and these are the children from *[name of church or town]*. And we couldn't help but notice that you sounded very upset about something. What's wrong? Why are you crying?

**Marla:** I'm crying because I'm so lonely. I just want to be friends with someone, but every time I come near anyone they run away.

**Leader:** And who's that with you? *[Gestures to Plasmo; Plasmo hisses back with hostility]*

**Marla:** Oh, this is Plasmo, the malaria parasite. He's the source of all my problems. Ever since Plasmo came around no one will be my friend anymore because Plasmo makes them sick. He gives them fevers and chills and all sorts of bad stuff. I wish I could figure out how to make Plasmo just go away!

**Leader:** You know, we might be able to help you. We're all here this week to learn about how to get rid of malaria. In fact, today we're learning all about how Jesus rebuked a fever and made it go away. Do you want to join us and see how we could all fight malaria together?

**Marla:** *[excitedly]* Really! *[Then with resigned sadness]* But I'm just one little mosquito, what difference could I possibly make?

**Leader:** We're all just one person, Marla. But that's why God gave us each other. So that together we could do so much more than we ever could by ourselves. *[To the audience]* What do you think everyone? Should Marla stay and join us? Do you think she could help us in our fight against malaria?

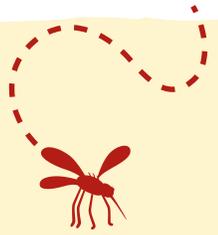
**Audience:** Yes!

**Marla:** Oh my! Thank you so much, it feels so good to be part of something bigger. Watch out Plasmo; you don't stand a chance against us!

**Plasmo:** *[defiantly]* Hiss



## OPENING SKIT: STOP AND GO



*[Skit opens with an audible buzzing sound. Marla the Mosquito and Plasmio enter; Marla looks sad]*

**Leader:** Hi Marla, what's wrong?

**Marla:** Oh, you know. I'm just so frustrated with Plasmio *[Plasmio hisses]*. Everywhere I try to go, someone says STOP. I can't go to school because of Plasmio. I can't play with friends because of Plasmio. I can't ride my bike because of Plasmio.

**Leader:** Mosquitoes ride bikes?

**Marla:** Of course! I love to ride my bike! It's so fun! But Plasmio is so heavy, he always tips the bike over!

**Leader:** *[confused]* Of course.

**Marla:** Anyway, I'm just feeling really discouraged today because it seems like for everything I want to do, Plasmio gets in the way! It feels like all I ever hear is STOP.

**Leader:** You know, Marla, you aren't the only person who malaria says STOP to. Children all over Africa have the same problems you do. When they get malaria they are too sick to go to school or to play with their friends. They don't have enough energy to ride bikes or play games. If their parents are sick it can be hard for their parents to take care of them. All these things can say STOP to children.

**Marla:** Wow, malaria is a really big problem!

**Leader:** Yes it is. But even children here, where malaria isn't a problem, can feel like they're being told to STOP too, like when people think they aren't big enough or old enough to make a difference or when people don't listen to their ideas.

**Marla:** I know what that feels like!

**Leader:** But you know who never says STOP to us? Jesus. Today we're going to learn all about how Jesus welcomed children and blessed them. And we'll talk about how we can take the blessings we've been given and use them to say GO to children all over the world.

**Marla:** Wow, Jesus blessed and welcomed the little children? But will he bless and welcome me? I'm just a little mosquito!

**Leader:** Of course Jesus will, Marla. You are a precious part of God's creation, just like us!

**Marla:** That's some great news! Thanks for sharing! I'm going to GO tell everyone I meet about it! *[Marla and Plasmio depart, Plasmio looking especially grumpy and hissing in an annoyed sort of way.]*



## OPENING SKIT: MARLA'S FAMILY

*[Skit opens with an audible buzzing sound. Marla and Plasmio enter; Marla is carrying a photo album. Inside the photo album are pictures of mosquitoes next to various country flags. Some of the mosquitoes have red figures next to them representing countries with malaria, others do not. Plasmio looks bored.]*

**Leader:** Hi Marla, what do you have there?

**Marla:** I was just looking at some old family photos. See, this is my cousin Magati from Tanzania [*malaria*]. And this is Manasi from Uganda [*malaria*]. This is Mavis, from Minnesota. And this is Martine, from France. Mala is from India [*malaria*]. And Mei, from China [*malaria*].

**Leader:** Wow, you have a very big family!

**Marla:** Yes, I have cousins all over the world! In every continent except Antarctica. But here's something weird I noticed about these pictures: some of my cousins have malaria parasites and some don't. Why is that?

**Leader:** Well, you see, Marla, malaria has been eliminated in many countries around the world.

**Marla:** "Eliminated?" What does that mean?

**Leader:** It means that malaria is gone in those places; people no longer get the disease. By getting rid of standing water, using bed nets and bug spray, and making sure people get the right medicines; we can stop the malaria parasite until it eventually disappears. That's what happened in this country. Malaria used to be a problem in the United States, too, but it's completely gone now. No more malaria parasites live here. And that's what the ELCA Malaria Campaign is trying to do in every country. Get rid of all the malaria so that it cannot be spread.

**Marla:** So the hope is that none of my cousins will ever have to be left out because of malaria! That would be amazing! Is it even possible?

**Leader:** It's not just possible, it's already happening! By partnering with friends around the world we're already seeing a reduction in the number of malaria cases worldwide. And it's not just churches that are working on this, but governments as well. We have powerful friends in this fight!

**Marla:** Wow, that's amazing! I'm going to go write all my cousins to tell them about the ELCA Malaria Campaign and ways they can get involved in the fight against malaria in their countries! Come on, Plasmio, soon you'll be history! [*Marla exits*]



## OPENING SKIT: TOGETHER

*[Marla and Plasmo walk on stage completely tied up in string]*

**Marla:** Help, help, I'm all tied up!

**Leader:** Hey, Marla, what happened to you? *[Goes over and helps to untie them; Plasmo hisses]*

**Marla:** Well, I've been thinking a lot about what we talked about yesterday, about how everyone all over the world can make a difference in fighting malaria *[Plasmo hisses]*. And it got me thinking about what I could do. So I thought I could give some money, but I looked in my potato-bug bank and I only had thirty-seven cents.

**Leader:** Pardon me a second, your potato-bug bank? Don't you mean a piggy bank?

**Marla:** No, pigs are way too big! That would be as big as a house! Piggy bank, that's crazy!

**Leader:** Oh, I guess, relatively. Anyway, you were saying?

**Marla:** Right, so I looked in my potato-bug bank, but I only had thirty-seven cents, so that didn't really help much. And then I thought well, I could make a sign that would teach people about the ELCA Malaria Campaign and how they can get involved, but I'm not really good at spelling, because we don't learn spelling at mosquito school.

**Leader:** And what do you learn at mosquito school?

**Marla:** Oh, you know, buzzing, flying, swimming in stagnant water, stuff like that. Actually, *[proudly]* I was captain of the flying team at my school! And I got straight A's in buzzing. I am a really good buzzer, want to hear? BUZZZZZZZZ!

**Leader:** You are a good buzzer!

**Marla:** I am, but I'm not good at spelling, so I couldn't make a sign. And then I thought I'd draw a picture and hang it up with this string, but then I got all tangled up and *[sighs]*, then you found me. So now I don't know what to do. I just don't think I'll be able to do anything to help the ELCA Malaria Campaign!

**Leader:** Actually, that sounds like a lot you could do! The problem is you're trying to do it all by yourself. But if we all work together, I think you've got the makings of a great project there.

**Marla:** Really?

**Leader:** Yes! Thirty-seven cents may not seem like a lot, but if all of us gave thirty-seven cents, it would add up quickly. And you may not be very good at spelling, but I bet one of these children is. *[To the audience]* Are any of you good at writing or spelling? Could you help Marla make a sign? *[To Marla]* See, any of those children could help. And because you're good at flying and buzzing you could fly up to hang it up and you could attract people's attention to the sign by buzzing. And that's something that none of us could do.

**Marla:** You really think so?

**Leader:** I do! Today we're going to hear a story all about some people who wanted to take their friend to be healed by Jesus, but they couldn't get through the crowd. So they all worked together and their friend got healed. Jesus even said, "For where two or three are gathered in my name ..."

**Marla:** "I am there among them!" Wow, that's some pretty great news. I'm glad I don't have to do it all on my own, but I have all of you to help! I'm going to rush off right now and practice my flying and buzzing! *[Marla and Plasmo exit]*



## OPENING SKIT: ACTION!

*[Marla and Plasmio enter to buzzing sound, Marla looks sad, Plasmio pleased]*

**Leader:** Hey, Marla, why so glum? Aren't you having a good time at Vacation Bible School?

**Marla:** I've been having a great time! And I've learned so much. All about Jesus and how he loves us. And how we can show Christ's love by working together. I learned about how malaria says STOP, but Jesus says GO. And how we have family all over the world. I learned about how each of us has special gifts and when we share our gifts we can do great things.

**Leader:** That sounds like a lot of learning. So why are you still sad?

**Marla:** Well, it's just, Plasmio's still here. I thought if I learned all this stuff and did all this stuff then he would just magically go away.

**Leader:** Ah, I see. Yes, malaria is a big problem, and it doesn't just go away all of a sudden. But even if we cannot just snap our fingers and make malaria history, that doesn't mean that the work that we do doesn't make a huge difference right now.

**Marla:** Really, like what?

**Leader:** Remember the story people you made at craft time on the second day? Those were all real children with real stories whose lives have been made better. Every dollar we raise is another dollar making a direct difference in someone's life. And every person we tell about the campaign is one more person who can join us.

**Marla:** But a dollar is just a dollar, I still don't see how this helps.

**Leader:** It doesn't take a lot of money to make a difference. Just \$1 can buy a malaria test, to find out if a sick person has malaria. And \$2 can provide life-saving medicine; \$10 can buy a bed net. Every gift, big or little, makes a difference. And Jesus sees everything we do equally. In Jesus' eyes, every gift is the most important gift of all, because it's the one that we give. I know it can be discouraging to wait, but I promise you that all of this makes a huge difference for our sisters and brothers in Africa. And one day, if we all keep working together and helping each other, we really can make malaria history! And Plasmio will be gone forever.

**Marla:** Thanks for the encouragement; I feel a lot better. And Plasmio even seems to be feeling a little bit scared with all this talk about all of the ways to put our love into action! I can't wait to see what else we learn today! *[Marla and Plasmio exit]*