

Modern Family
The Family Altar

by

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ACT ONE

INT. MITCHELL & CAMERON'S CONDO -- DAY

Mitchell, in pajamas, lounges on the couch with a newspaper and coffee. Cameron, in a suit and loud tie, puts the chapter tabs on the pages of a Bible. Highlighters surround him.

CAMERON

She likes it. It fits her inner
Catholic school girl. Cute, not
slutty.

Lily wears a plaid skirt. She clutches a teddy bear in a WWJD? t-shirt and reaches for one of Cameron's highlighters. He highlights passages of the Bible in different colors.

MITCHELL

I agree with the expensive private
preschool. I get the play dates
with mommies who drink a little
too much before four p.m. I even
understood your need to jump on
the Baby Beanie Bump Guard
bandwagon-

We cut to a shot of Lily wearing a cloth covered helmet while sitting in her high chair eating Cheerios.

MITCHELL

But baptism in a conservative,
probably all-Anglo American,
hypocrisy-laden, church?

Cameron breaks the spine of the Bible. He crunches some of the pages and sets his coffee cup on it, leaving a ring. Mitchell looks pointedly at what Cameron's doing.

CAMERON

You cannot go to church with a new
Bible, no siree Matthew, Mark,
Luke, or John.

INTERVIEW -- MITCHELL & CAMERON

CAMERON

There is nothing wrong with
letting our daughter know there's
a big 'ole man up in the sky
watching over her, making sure
she's safe.

MITCHELL

God is not your personal Elton
John in the clouds.

CAMERON

There's nothing wrong with a
little creative imagery.

MITCHELL

I think we should wait until
Lily's old enough to decide on her
own if she wants to engage in a
spiritual practice. My mom forced
me to participate in organized
religion against my will and it
ended badly.

Cut to an adolescent Mitchell. He wears a Christmas tree
sandwich board in a church pageant and sobs hysterically as
other tree- and barnyard animal-clad kids dance around him.

INT. MITCHELL & CAMERON'S CONDO -- CONTINUOUS

Cameron picks up Lily and his Bible and heads toward the front
door.

MITCHELL

Did you even think about her
Vietnamese heritage? She wasn't
born into a family of country mice
like you or a *happy* Christmas and
Easter church family like me. She
has a very unique cultural history
we should explore.

CAMERON

So what you're saying is you don't
want to confuse her.

MITCHELL

I'm saying maybe we shouldn't jump
the bones of the first religious
institution that drops off
snickerdoodles on a Monday
morning.

CAMERON

But they were really good, just
the right amount of cinnamon.

MITCHELL

So we agree?

(MORE)

MITCHELL (CONT'D)
 We'll look into her Vietnamese
 history a little before making a
 decision?

Cameron is giddy but tries to control himself.

CAMERON
 Sounds like a plan, Mitchell. And
 I love a good plan.

INT. JAY & GLORIA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Manny, in a suit and tie, smooths his hair in the hall mirror. Gloria stands behind him, in a tight dress and large crucifix necklace.

GLORIA
 Aye, Manny, we are going to be
 late.

MANNY
 A good Catholic has to look the
 part, you know, walk the walk.

He struts down the hallway like a runway model, toward Jay, clad in a track suit. Jay carries a newspaper, the television remote and a large cinnamon roll.

JAY
 It's walk the talk and I don't
 think they're referring to
 wiggling your hips.

GLORIA
 You're sure you won't come with
 us?

JAY
 I bow at the altar of football.

Gloria scowls and moves Manny toward the door.

MANNY
 Don't worry Jay, I'll pray for
 your sins to be forgiven and your
 soul to ascend directly at the
 time of your demise.

JAY
 Of course you will. Say, does Cam
 know that Lily can't be baptized
 Catholic?

MANNY

We don't hold that against them.
He could convert if he wants, it's
a few months of classes, a few
rosary lessons, no sweat. Being a
good Catholic's all about the
practice.

JAY

(to Gloria)

You should tell him he's not-

GLORIA

Aye, we're late! Enjoy your fake
foot-ball!

INT. PHIL & CLAIRE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Alex reads in the corner as Phil and Luke watch Harry Potter on
the couch in the family room.

PHIL

Snape's so misunderstood.

LUKE

I wonder if there's a potion that
only works on girls and not boys?
Maybe you could turn all girls
green or something, that'd be
cool.

Claire grabs her purse and stops in front of the couch.

CLAIRE

Are you still watching the *same*
movie? It's a beautiful day
outside-

PHIL

We're doing a marathon of all the
Harry Potter movies in preparation
for the final one. It's been on
the calendar for weeks.

Claire looks at the calendar. It reads 'Phil's Harry day'.

CLAIRE

Okay. I'm off to...run some
errands.

PHIL

Enjoy your 'me' time.

LUKE
You should get your toes painted
purple again. It was like they'd
all been smashed.

SFX: DOORBELL

Claire opens the door to reveal Dylan.

CLAIRE
Hey, Dylan. Haley's still in bed,
go on up.

DYLAN
Cool.

Dylan races up the stairs.

ALEX
Best idea yet today, Mom.

Claire looks at Alex then at Dylan as it dawns on her. Phil
slips on Harry Potter glasses and pulls out a wand.

CLAIRE
Dylan, no, stop-

Dylan stops.

PHIL
Dylan-do! Wanna share a butter
beer with the boy and me?

Cut to Luke who's spooning margarine into a bottle of root
beer. Claire shakes her head.

DYLAN
No, that's okay, I had a big V-8
this morning.

PHIL
Wouldn't it be so cool if I could
apparate upstairs to get Haley?
Some day man, some day.

Claire moves toward the stairs.

PHIL
Go, I've got things covered here
at the castle. It's your day off.

INTERVIEW -- CLAIRE

CLAIRE

Sundays are usually our only free days. No soccer practices or parent-teacher conferences. That means I can spend a little time alone. I mean, I love my family but if I didn't get away for the occasional pedicure or massage, there would be way more blood than there already is on a typical Monday.

Cut to Luke in his pajamas. He tosses the basketball around with Phil, in his pajamas, as the school bus rolls up outside of the house.

CLAIRE (O.C.)

Underwear! NOW!

INT. PHIL & CLAIRE'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Phil, still in his Harry Potter glasses, flicks his wand as he descends the stairs.

PHIL

Haley's "putting on her robes".

DYLAN

She's not singing in the choir, she doesn't have to wear a robe, Mister-

LUKE

(off the TV)

I can't believe the snake didn't eat her. I so would've eaten her.

Phil flicks his wand in Luke's direction.

PHIL

Silencio-itis!

(to Dylan)

That means he can't talk. I've tied his tongue in a knot.

Luke looks at Phil and then pulls out his tongue in an attempt to examine it. He shrugs and goes back to the movie.

PHIL

Where are you first-years off to on this fine day?

DYLAN

I'm not a first-year, Mister Dunphy. We're going to my parents' church. They have this kick-ass potluck every week and my mom made cheesy potatoes this morning.

PHIL

You go to church?

DYLAN

Yeah. My dad's a lay leader which basically means he wears a name tag.

PHIL

But doesn't it all seem like...like...
(whispers)
magic?

DYLAN

No.

PHIL

Come on! How'd they get the guy to stay up there on that cross? And making water into wine? Where were the grapes? And I've gutted fish, how could that guy stay alive in there?

DYLAN

They're just stories. My mom always says-

PHIL

So your whole family's witches. That explains a lot.

Haley bounds down the stairs.

HALEY

Do you think Mrs. Taylor's going to bring her chocolate pie today? Oh my God, that was so good last week-

PHIL

You've been there before? Honey, I think we need to talk about how you'll handle yourself in a duel if you're ill-prepared.

Haley rolls her eyes and drags Dylan toward the front door.

PHIL

We never trained you properly. You haven't been granted any special powers, you'll be susceptible to their charms!

INT. CAR -- DAY

Cam drives, Gloria is in the passenger seat. Manny and Lilly occupy the backseat.

MANNY

(to Lily)

They stuck these really sharp swords into him. He bled and bled but didn't die right away. He was kind of like a zombie. And the crown on his head? Horrible puncture wounds, probably led to a nasty staph infection.

Cam looks at Gloria, horrified.

GLORIA

That movie, Passion of the Christ, was On Demand last month. He freeze-framed the death scene. The Hollywood-hype is worse than anything you'll hear at Mass. Cross my heart, hope you'll die. Right? That's how you promise?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. MITCHELL & CAMERON'S CONDO -- DAY

Cameron reads to Lily. Mitchell enters the condo.

CAMERON

'And then Buddha transformed', see
the light around his head, Lily?
Isn't it pretty? Don't you want
light around your head?

Mitchell notices an altar set up in the room. There's a Buddha,
a Taoist figure, a Yin and Yang symbol, a photo of a smiling
Jesus on the cross, and a bowl of oranges.

MITCHELL

Cam?

CAMERON

Citrus is on sale this week, you
wouldn't believe how cheap-

MITCHELL

Cam.

Mitchell motions to the altar.

CAMERON

The religion in Vietnam is Tam
Ciao, a combination of Buddhism,
Confucius, and Taoism. So why not
add our culture in and make a big
spiritual smoothie?

MITCHELL

Like an Orange Julius, right. Come
on, Cam. We need to be serious
about this.

CAMERON

Oh I am. The Vietnamese believe in
ghosts and failure to pray or pray
correctly to them means hungry
ghosts. Do you want our house
filled with hungry ghosts,
Mitchell?

INTERVIEW - MITCHELL AND CAMERON

CAMERON

The religious rituals I grew up
with were comforting.

(MORE)

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Wakes when someone passed on,
blessing the fall harvest. They
gave me a sense of peace and I
want that for Lily. Well, except
when the pastor would pray over
the hogs before the slaughter. The
squeals seemed to overpower his
angelic voice and it just sounded-

MITCHELL

Wrong?

CAMERON

No. Maybe ill-timed. That's all.

EXT. JAY & GLORIA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Manny comes out of the house in the same suit, different shirt
and tie, it's another Sunday. Jay washes the car.

MANNY

Exodus twenty tells us to remember
the Sabbath and keep it holy. You
should wash the car tomorrow, Jay.

Jay continues to wash the car.

JAY

The monkey suit again?

MANNY

If I'm going to be an honorable
uncle I need to set a good
example. Lily's spiritual welfare
rests in my hands.

Gloria comes out of the house in another tight dress, same
crucifix.

JAY

I thought we were going to the
club for brunch. That Greek guy is
making gyros again.

GLORIA

Church first, right Manny?

MANNY

Good Catholics praise the Lord
before enjoying a good gyro.

JAY
 (under his breath)
 Maybe you're not the good
 Catholics you think you are.
 (to Manny)
 What happens if you eat the bread
 and drink the juice and you're not
 Catholic?

GLORIA
 Jay.

JAY
 There's always a doubter in the
 pack, right Manny?

MANNY
 I'll pray for you Jay. Hard,
 really hard.

INTERVIEW -- MANNY

MANNY
 I like the idea that this guy who
 got strung up on some two-by-fours
 ended up okay. I mean, he died but
 he came back, right? In Columbia
 these kids strung my underwear up
 on the flagpole at school. And
 they weren't even clean. Do you
 think Jesus had to take gym class?

INT. MITCHELL & CAMERON'S CONDO -- DAY

Mitchell picks up his briefcase and glares at the altar.

CAMERON
 You're the one who told me to
 explore her heritage.

MITCHELL
 And I'm the one who forgot that
 you can't ever do anything half-
 way.

CAMERON
 We got several calls today. The
 associate pastor at the Lutheran
 church plays squash with the
 deacon at Hearts Afire and heard
 we're church shopping. They've got
 an opening on their nursery help
 schedule. I could get in next
 month.

MITCHELL

I thought we were going with the altar.

CAMERON

Nothing's carved in stone.

He waits.

CAMERON

You know, like the Ten Commandments?

Mitchell nods, like yeah.

CAMERON

And I got a call from the black church down the street.

MITCHELL

The 'black church'? That's what's on the stationary?

CAMERON

They'd love to have us as guests at their next bingo night. We'd be a real coup for them.

MITCHELL

And why is that?

CAMERON

White and gay with an Asian daughter? Can you spell photo on the brochure?

INT. PHIL & CLAIRE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Phil and Luke watch Harry Potter again. Claire carries laundry past them.

CLAIRE

Seriously? How many of these movies are there?

PHIL

We're watching them with commentary now, there are seventeen hours of extras on this one.

CLAIRE

Luke, you want a sandwich? Granola bar?

Luke shakes his head.

CLAIRE
I still can't believe he's "under
your spell".

PHIL
We've got to figure out the
counter spell, right little buddy?

Luke nods, sadly. Claire rolls her eyes. She walks to the counter and presses play on the answering machine.

CAMERON (V.O.)
Hi Claire, and Phil and Haley and
Alex and Luke! Mitchell and I were
wondering if you'd honor us by
hosting a family dinner after
Lily's baptism. Nothing big, just
the ten of us. Give me a call, no
pressure. And Mitchell's having
problems digesting corn right now
so, okay. I'll chat ya up later.

Claire erases the message and is startled to find Phil next to her.

PHIL
Claire, the baptism thing. It's-

CLAIRE
I know, I know. Like sprinkling
some stale water on her head's
going to keep her safe. They have
no idea what it's like to keep
them alive year after year.

Cut to Luke who's got Phil's wand pointed dangerously close to his eyeball. Claire rips it out of his hand.

PHIL
So you're with me? We don't have
to go to church?

CLAIRE
It's Mitchell and Cam, of course
we have to go. We might think what
they're doing is no more
reasonable than, well, than
that...

She motions to the television screen where a quidditch game is underway.

CLAIRE
...but we're going.

INTERVIEW -- CLAIRE

Phil and I were married in a courthouse. Neither of us really believe in church or religion. If the kids want to believe when they grow up, that's fine. But our parents pushed religion on us and-

She looks around to make sure no one's listening.

CLAIRE
(whispers)
I have to agree with Phil on this one. It kinda freaks me out.

INT. MITCHELL & CAMERON'S CONDO -- DAY

Lily sits in her high chair, juice cup in hand. Cameron places a bag of Goldfish crackers on the altar and bows his head. He crosses himself, snaps, and does a little dance spin. He picks the Goldfish up and moves toward Lily.

INT. PHIL & CLAIRE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Phil flicks his wand at a can of soda on the counter. Nothing happens. Claire takes the wand and gives it to Luke. Alex jumps up on the counter and takes a swig of soda.

PHIL
Did you explain to Mitchell that I'm really uncomfortable going to church with them?

ALEX
You know, choosing to have a child dedicated in a certain religion is more a means of fitting in with a community than dedicating her to a God or a particular belief system.

CLAIRE
Alex, this is a grown-up conversation.

Phil unwraps a straw, slurps up soda then spits it back out of the straw onto the wrapper. It grows into a wrapper snake.

CLAIRE

It's fine for you to decide to believe in magic or whatever when you're older but right now you're impressionable.

Phil blows bubbles into his soda with the straw. Claire gives Phil the eye. Luke mimes drinking and shrugs his shoulders.

ALEX

So it's fine for dad to put a spell on Luke that Luke believes is real but I can't have an opinion on engaging in a normal social convention such as going a church?

Claire, Phil, and Luke all stop and look at Alex. She jumps off the counter.

ALEX

I'm going to the mall.

INTERVIEW -- ALEX

ALEX

We're studying world history, including world religions, this year. The need to belong to a larger group that has similar life practices and moral beliefs is not new to our generation. But no one ever listens to me. Cause yeah, the one with the glasses is always stupid.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. PHIL & CLAIRE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Phil, Luke, Haley, and Dylan eat pizza in the kitchen. Claire searches the drawers.

CLAIRE

I buy those little pads with the magnets all the time. And there's never one around when I need to make a list.

PHIL

Recite it to me, I've got a mind like a rememberall.

CLAIRE

A what?

PHIL

You know, the thing in Harry Potter that keeps all the memories in a big punch bowl on Dumbledore's desk. I've got one right here. Whatcha need to remember.

CLAIRE

Everything for the family dinner Sunday. And I have to get the supplies for Alex's science project. Speaking of?

Claire yells up the stairs.

CLAIRE

Alex! Lunch!

PHIL

See, I *knew* I forgot to do something. Wait, we're still doing the baptism dinner?

Alex joins them and grabs the last piece of pizza out of Luke's hand. He bares his teeth at her and motions angrily.

ALEX

I love this version of my little brother.

PHIL

(to Luke)

I'm still working on the counter
curse, buddy.

CLAIRE

Yes, we're doing the lunch, we
have to.

PHIL

No we don't. We don't have to be a
party to a ritual that nearly
drowns innocent children and tells
them they'll be safe from the
evils of the world and does
nothing to prepare them for the
fight.

ALEX

They rarely use immersion baptism
for babies.

DYLAN

My cousin Davey was baptized last
year. He got a lot of presents and
we had really awesome chocolate
cake afterwards. Plus, now he's
official and stuff. It's pretty
cool.

Luke sneaks a soda from the fridge.

HALEY

Hey, I don't need to go to this
baptism thingy, right?

CLAIRE

We're all going.

HALEY

But what if I'm an atheist? Yeah,
I mean I get to practice my
religion, right? And if I'm an
atheist then I get to take the
Sabbath off per my religion so
that means I don't have to do
anything on Sundays.

Claire pats Haley's head. She takes the soda from Luke's hand
and replaces it with a bottle of water. He stomps away. Phil
slides his wand from up his sleeve and "practices" with it
under the table.

PHIL
 (whispering)
 Undo-iticus.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT -- DAY

Mitchell and Cameron put Lily into the car.

CAMERON
 It was a brand-new bowl from the fall Tupperware line. Limited-edition lime green. You can't just reorder those, Mitchell.

MITCHELL
 You're not banned for life. I'm sure they'll calm down and you can get your 'salad luncheon' bowl back.

Another couple walks by with a stroller. They shoot Mitchell bad looks.

CAMERON
 No, not banned. Just humiliated.

Lily cries from the backseat. Cameron opens the diaper bag and pulls out a bottle of apple juice. He unscrews the nipple, takes a large swig, puts the nipple back on, and hands it to Lily. A group of older people have stopped to stare.

MITCHELL
 And I'm the one who humiliated you?

Cameron wipes his mouth with the back of his hand.

CAMERON
 Daddy's had a very long morning.

FLASHBACK -- DAY

Mitchell and Cameron sit in a church pew amidst the congregation and listen to the minister preach.

MINISTER
 But the LORD provided a great fish to swallow Jonah-

Mitchell rolls his eyes, he can barely contain his discomfort.

MINISTER

And Jonah was inside the fish
three days and three nights.

Mitchell jumps to his feet.

MITCHELL

I object your honor, minister,
reverend, whatever. You're really
going to try and convince all
these people that a human survived
being eaten by a whale. Come on.

The congregation whispers and points in Mitchell's direction.

MITCHELL

And we're just supposed to believe
that this giant whale spit him
back out? People are not that
gullible, are they?

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT -- DAY

Mitchell and Cameron get into the car.

CAMERON

When I asked what I could bring to
Saturday's Spaghetti Supper you
know what they told me?

MITCHELL

Please enlighten me, Cam.

CAMERON

They said they were fine. Fine
Mitchell, fine. Have you ever
known a Methodist to turn down
free food?

MITCHELL

Apparently that whale did.

INT. JAY & GLORIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jay stops outside of Manny's room and pops his head in. Manny's
hard at work at his desk.

JAY

Time for bed, amigo.

MANNY

I have to say my rosary first, and
I have a lot to go through
tonight.

JAY

Didn't you do that this morning?

MANNY

And?

Jay shuts his mouth and walks down the hall.

INT. JAY & GLORIA'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS -- NIGHT

Gloria does her nails in bed. Jay sits next to her.

JAY

I think Manny's taking this
religious hogwash a bit far,
Gloria.

GLORIA

He's washing a hog? I don't
understand-

She crosses herself.

JAY

Does he know why he's Catholic? Or
why he's doing all this stuff?

GLORIA

He knows he's a good boy, it's
just a phase, he'll move on soon.
For now he's learning his
heritage. It's important.

JAY

Even if his heritage is a lie?

INTERVIEW -- JAY AND GLORIA

GLORIA

I wanted to baptize Manny when he
was a baby, to ward off el diablo.
We were at the church my parents
were married in and we were all up
at the altar, ready to go when
Manny's father's second cousin
recognized the priest from a drug
deal gone bad and BAM! He shoots
him.

(MORE)

GLORIA (CONT'D)

There was no water then, only blood.

JAY

Just a regular Sunday back in Columbia, eh?

GLORIA

So Manny was never formally baptized but it doesn't matter. What's in his heart is what matters.

JAY

Last week his heart was full of Frank Sinatra music and pretzel M&Ms.

GLORIA

But they *are* so good, salty *and* sweet.

JAY

Yeah, it's true. They are.

INT. MITCHELL & CAMERON'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Cameron and Mitchell are in bed. It's dark. Cameron sits straight up.

CAMERON

Oh shoot noodles, I forgot to feed the ghosts.

MITCHELL

Cam.

CAMERON

I do not want to be responsible for making them angry. Do you?

Mitchell rolls over.

INT. PHIL & CLAIRE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Phil watches Harry Potter on television as Claire reads a magazine in bed.

CLAIRE

I will never understand your obsession.

PHIL

Isn't it better to believe in this little guy with the lightening strike tattoo who's right here than some guy who might never have been alive who does bad things and smites people for touching chicken fat? I could touch Harry Potter if I wanted to. I can't touch God.

CLAIRE

I think it's pigskin you can't touch.

PHIL

It's a little weird, right? To not raise kids to believe in themselves, in their family but it some unseen creepy old guy instead?

SFX: FRONT DOOR SLAMMING SHUT

CLAIRE

Go check on your daughter and make sure she's not touching the guy downstairs.

Phil pauses the movie and grabs his wand.

INT. PHIL & CLAIRE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Phil descends the stairs to see Dylan kiss Haley.

PHIL

Dyl-o! Hal-o! What's happening' my peep-o-s?

Haley ignores her father and walks up the stairs.

PHIL

They teach you that kissin' stuff in church, Dyl-o? I mean, kissing's not bad, I'm just curious what your cult considers appropriate behavior.

INTERVIEW -- HALEY AND DYLAN

DYLAN

Going to church has taught me to know that no matter what happens in life, like if I get ass cancer or lose my job at the pizza place, I'm still going to be okay. That's pretty great.

HALEY

Yeah, I mean that's totally why I'm an atheist. I know I'm always going to be okay.

INT. CLAIRE & PHIL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Phil shuts the bedroom door. Claire prepares for bed. A piece of paper slides under the door. Phil picks it up.

PHIL

(reading off the paper)
This is a formal request to be let out of the curse. I'll do anything, well, I don't want to clean Haley's room. She has things under her bed that freak me out.

Phil laughs. Claire snatches the paper away.

CLAIRE

This has gone too far.

She opens the door. Luke stands there with a look that says, "Well?"

CLAIRE

You can talk, Luke. You could always talk. Curses aren't real. Harry Potter isn't real. It's fun but it's not real, honey.

Luke lets out a SIGH of relief. Alex walks by.

ALEX

Mom, no! This is what we've been praying for since he learned to talk.

(defeated)

Maybe God is dead.

INT. MITCHELL & CAMERON'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Cameron gets back into bed with Mitchell.

CAMERON

I didn't get a reminder call about the rummage sale at the Episcopal church. That's your fault, you know.

MITCHELL

Oh I know.

INTERVIEW -- CAMERON AND MITCHELL

Cameron holds up a very large christening gown.

CAMERON

My mom sent this when she heard we were thinking of baptizing Lily. I wore it when I was a few months younger than she is now. It's so important for kids to have a sense of belonging, a connection to the past.

MITCHELL

You were a husky baby, weren't you.

CAMERON

Someday I hope Lily prays for your soul.

INT. JAY & GLORIA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Manny plops down on the bed next to Gloria. Jay flips channels on the television.

MANNY

We need to talk about my Eucharist, Mom.
(to Jay)
That's a first communion, in Catholic-speak.

GLORIA

When you're ready, I'll talk to Father Frederick.

MANNY

I'm already a late bloomer when it comes to this. The typical age one receives their first taste of grace and redemption in the form of wine and wafers is seven. I'm eleven and three-quarters.

(MORE)

MANNY (CONT'D)

We need to get this show on the road.

GLORIA

Are you sure you're ready?

MANNY

I've been working on my look.

INT. MANNY'S BEDROOM -- PAST

Manny tries on a military-style dress uniform in front of a full-length mirror. He gets out his sewing kit and tacks down one of the gold braid cords.

INT. JAY & GLORIA'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS -- NIGHT

As before.

MANNY

The gold braid aiguillettes were giving me fits but I think I've got them in place now.

JAY

(to Gloria)

The boy has a right to know *his heritage*. Before he does something sacrilegious.

GLORIA

Aye, Manny.

She pulls him close in an embrace.

GLORIA

You were never baptized, mi hijo. I'm sorry, I should have told you sooner but it wasn't important, God loves you. I love you.

Manny is quiet.

JAY

We can go out back and I'll dunk you in the pool if that'll help, bud.

MANNY

Is this a safe environment where I can be truthful?

GLORIA

Always.

JAY

Unfortunately.

MANNY

Frankly, I'm relieved. Being a good Catholic is a lot of pressure on a boy my age. Now I can get back to the calligraphy class I've been ignoring on Sunday mornings.

Gloria smiles, and Jay kisses her forehead.

INT. MITCHELL & CAMERON'S CONDO -- DAY

Mitchell walks by the altar and spots a box of donuts.

MITCHELL

A special trip to the Donut Drop just for the ghosts?

Cameron yells out from the kitchen.

CAMERON

Fed ghosts are happy ghosts. Lily's diarrhea disappeared as quickly as it came so everyone wins.

INT. PHIL & CLAIRE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Haley and Dylan get ready to leave. Claire folds laundry as Alex reads. Luke plays a video game.

CLAIRE

Where are you two going?

HALEY

Youth group at Dylan's church. If we attend for the next four weeks we get to go to Six Flags for free. For *free*, mom.

Claire shakes her head and smiles. Haley and Dylan leave.

ALEX

I've decided I'm going to Uncle Mitchell and Uncle Cam's church for Lily's baptism.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

I agree with their parenting choice and I want to support it.

CLAIRE

It's nice you want to support your family, Alex.

(to herself)

Even if it is for some arcane ritual that's just creepy.

LUKE

Was I baptized?

CLAIRE

Your grandmother insisted we have Haley baptized but she went a little cuckoo shortly after. So no.

LUKE

I think it'd be cool to be dunked in a big lake. Do they hold you under until you think you're about to die like in that movie Dad let me watch that one time?

ALEX

That's called waterboarding.

Claire takes the book out of Alex's hands and plops it into Luke's lap. She takes the video game away from him.

CLAIRE

Luke, read a book. Alex, go do your hair or something.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOURINT. MITCHELL & CAMERON'S CONDO -- DAY

Cam is dressed in a suit and tie, Lily in a gorgeous white dress. He picks up his keys and yells toward the bedroom.

CAMERON

You really want Lily to remember
this day without red-headed Daddy?
That's so sad, Mitchell.

MITCHELL (O.S.)

I still don't know how you went
from being excommunicated to a
baptism in a day and a half.

CAMERON

They had an opening, I'm not
questioning God. Or the well-fed
ghosts.

We cut to the altar where there's a platter of cinnamon rolls,
a bowl of fruit, and a plate with eggs and bacon.

CAMERON

And I agreed not to hog the mike
at the next Karaoke Klutch. That
Eileen is a pistol when you get
between her and her Elvis songs.

Mitchell comes out of the bedroom in a suit and tie.

MITCHELL

You know she's not going to
remember this day at all, right?

Cameron grins.

CAMERON

But I will.

INT. PHIL & CLAIRE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Claire stands by the front door as Phil descends the stairs
with a black and yellow scarf around his neck.

CLAIRE

We cannot be late for this thing.

SFX: CAR HONK

CLAIRE

She's not driving, I don't care if she has "the arms of her atheist creator around her".

PHIL

This church thing? We're really doing it?

CLAIRE

It's going to be totally fine honey. What's with the scarf?

PHIL

I'm a member of the house of Hufflepuff, they're the most inclusive of the four houses at Hogwarts.

CLAIRE

Still with the Harry Potter?

PHIL

They value patience, friendship, and hard work. What's wrong with inclusivity, Claire?

She pushes him out the door.

CLAIRE

Nothing, nothing at all.

INT. JAY & GLORIA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Manny wraps a gift.

JAY

Is that a Bible?

MANNY

A copy of the Essential Calvin and Hobbes. That stuffed tiger never fails to produce a chuckle. As Lily's uncle I'm going to make sure she knows all the comedy greats.

EXT. CHURCH -- DAY

Cameron sits on the steps with Lily. Mitchell paces. His family joins them.

GLORIA
What's wrong?

CLAIRE
(to Phil)
I told you we were late, you just
had to iron that stupid scarf.

MITCHELL
We got the time wrong. The janitor
told us services ended an hour
ago.

CAMERON
He did have a bucket of water he
offered us, such a nice man.

INTERVIEW -- MITCHELL AND CAMERON

MITCHELL
I want Lily to know where she came
from. That she had a mother who
loved her enough to give her to us
so we could love her.

CAMERON
And there's nothing wrong with big
grand gestures of love. Babies
sense those just as much as they
sense sadness and passive
aggressiveness.

MITCHELL
I said I was sorry for eating the
ghosts' grapefruit!

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT -- DAY

They all walk to their cars. Jay stops and turns around, he
looks at everyone.

JAY
No, this isn't right.

He takes Lily from Mitchell and puts an arm around Cameron.

JAY
We're going to dedicate this
little Kung Pao shrimp right here.
We're going to dedicate her to *our*
family.

ALEX
(under her breath)
So. Wrong. And yet-

She puts an arm around Manny. Mitchell and Gloria hold hands. Haley slips her arm through Luke's. Phil attempts to grab Gloria's other hand. Claire grabs it away and he kisses her on the cheek.

JAY
Because if we have each other, we
can figure out the rest.

INTERVIEW -- MITCHELL AND CAMERON

CAMERON
I think we'll keep the altar up
for a while. To remember this
experience, this time of spiritual
awakening. If Lily chooses to
travel a spiritual path we want to
make sure she knows her way home.

Mitchell takes Cameron's hand.

INT. MITCHELL & CAMERON'S CONDO -- NIGHTCAM

Mitchell stumbles out of the kitchen with a glass of water. He sees the altar and a plate with cookies on it. He starts to eat and after a moment realizes what he's done.

He goes to the fridge, pulls out a loaf of bread and places it on the altar. He bows, crosses himself, and folds his hands to pray. Then he picks up the cookies and takes them with him to the bedroom.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW