Sister Thea Bowman Puppet Show
(this show follows the show on St. Mary Magdalen and was created for a VBS program in Mississippi, where Thea Bowman lived)

Billy	*(flying around again)* Take that EVIL! I am a follower of Jesus Christ! I am the great, the fast, the BRAVE Saint Marvin Magdalen!!!!
Susie	Um, excuse me, Billy?
Billy	Oh. I didn't see you there. Er… how long have you been standing there listening – er, watching me?
Susie	Long enough, MARVIN Magdalen!
Billy	Well, you don't expect me to pretend to be a GIRL, do you?
Susie	I guess not. Marvin Magdalen. It has a ring to it. Okay. Resume superhero behavior.
Billy	I can't, NOW.
Susie	Why not?
Billy	The moment has passed. I'm not inspired any more.
Susie	Do you need me to tell you another inspiring hero story?
Billy	You have ANOTHER one?!!!
Susie	Oh, our Catholic history is FULL of great hero stories.
Billy	No way.
Susie	Way.
Billy	Okay. But let me guess this time.
Susie	Okay.
Billy	Is he really big and strong, like me?
Susie	Nope. Not even a HE. But she was considered tall.
Billy	Oh, man. Why can't you tell me about some BIG GUYS?
Susie	Because I think you still could use some work on appreciating the women of our Catholic history, and I've got a great one and I'm not changing my mind, and if you want to travel through time you've got to go where I SAY!
Billy	Okay. Who is she?
Susie	Sister Thea Bowman.
Billy	Sister?

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Susie	Yes, she was a religious sister, a nun.
Billy	Why isn't she a saint?
Susie	Somebody's working on that. She's called a "servant of God," already, and she'll probably get to be called Saint Thea. I think they're already throwing a big party for her in heaven.
Billy	No way.
Susie	Way.
Billy	So, who was she?
Susie	Maybe I'd better start at the beginning. Sister Thea was born right here in Mississippi in 1937, about X years ago. *(update years, as appropriate)*
Billy	Here in Mississippi?
Susie	Yes, in Canton, to very good Christian parents.
Billy	They weren't Catholic?
Susie	Nope. Her father was a Methodist and her mother was an Episcopalian. And her grandfather had been an actual SLAVE.
Billy	No way.
Susie	Way. He was a slave, bought and sold in the days when it was legal to buy and sell human beings.
Billy	That's HORRIBLE.
Susie	Yeah. Horrible.
Billy	But that must have made her Grandpa feel just TERRIBLE.
Susie	It made a lot of people feel terrible. But Thea's father became a doctor and her mother became a teacher.
Billy	Wow. They started out with big problems and ended up doing such good things.
Susie	Yes. They must have been people of great faith and strong character.
Billy	Dude. *(nodding his agreement)*
Susie	Well, because of slavery, things were hard for black families in this country. It set them back, you might say.
Billy	They needed a superhero to fly in and bop those bad guys…those people-buyers and sellers… right in the… *(catches a look from Susie, remembers)* er… I mean, they needed a superhero to follow Jesus' way of love!
Susie	Now you're talking, brother Super-dude!

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Billy	Righteous! So this little girl, this girl named Thea… did she follow Jesus' way of Love?
Susie	Boy did she ever!
Billy	How did she do it?
Susie	She was a teacher.
Billy	Yeah? What did she teach?
Susie	She taught regular school, but she especially taught joy and love. And she taught people of all colors to respect each other. She taught black people to bring their culture into the Catholic church and celebrate with Jesus in their own special way! You want to go back in time and listen to her?
Billy	I sure do! She sounds like a ton of fun! Let's go!
Susie	Okay. Take my hand, brother Marvin.
Billy	Hey, cut that out.
Susie	*(laughs)* Okay. Come on, Billy. Sister Thea, we'd like to hear… the words you spoke to cast out fear!!!!! *(they fly backwards and disappear – Sr. Thea appears and speaks to the children in the audience – it might help to have some back-up characters repeating her statements Gospel-style, chanting alleluiahs and singing with her. Here is a suggested rhyme-chant conversation with some puppet characters and with the children in your audience…)*
Sr. Thea	*(with great joy and humor)* Hello out there! My name is Sister Thea. And I am here to speak to you about letting your light shine to the GLORY of God!!! Glory halleluiah! Can anyone tell me Who the Light is that shines inside each one of us?
Kid 1	Superman?
Sr. Thea	No, little one. It is not superman. Any other guesses? *(take guesses from the audience until someone guesses Jesus)* Yes! You have got it right! You have got it right! It is JESUS. Jesus is the LIGHT! Now let me ask you: do you have to be WHITE to shine with Jesus' light?
Kid 1	No way!
Sr. Thea	You're right! You don't have to be white to shine with Jesus' light. But it is alright to shine with that light if you are black or red, brown, yellow or white!
Kid 2	Amen, Sister Thea!

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Sr. Thea	Now does that light have to be a huge shining light? Does your light have to be very, very, very bright?
Kid 1	Yes! Like a supernova!!!
Kid 2	Or a volcano or a humungous light bulb!
Sr. Thea	Not so, little children, not so! But I see that YOU both have a glow! Your light can be small, not big at all. You can shine with a flicker, you can shine with a glow, but shine you must! It's the only way to go!
Kid 1	But Sister Thea, HOW do we shine?
Sr. Thea	You shine when you are kind, you shine when you are good, you shine when you do the things you know that you should. You are pleasing to God when you sing and when you pray, so let's all be candles lit up with love today!!!!
Kid 2	Sister? Is my light shining when I put my toys away?
Sr. Thea	Yes, child, that's so right after you play.
Kid 1	Is my light shining brightly when I listen to a sad friend?
Sr. Thea	Yes, my precious baby, so that broken heart can mend. Share the Good News of Jesus Christ by listening, praying, working and playing with love in your heart. Bring the Good News to all.
Kid 2	But Sister, what if they've already heard the Good News?
Sr. Thea	Tell it to them again! **Do you know anybody who has heard too much good news?** [*actual quote*] And if you teach one person, they will teach another and another. Repeat after me: **EACH ONE TEACH ONE!** [*actual quote*] Wonderful. Louder! EACH ONE TEACH ONE! Very nice! We must spread the news to ALL people and rejoice for it is our greatest gift.
Kid 2	Then if my friends and I work together, each with our little light….
Sr. Thea	You've got it, child of Jesus! You'd all be burning bright!
Kid 1	Sister, what colors can shine again? I can't remember. Was it purple and blue and orange, too?
Sr. Thea	Listen up, my children, I will teach a game to you. Take the fingers of one hand, hold them up spread out and strong… Now learn the people colors and we all will sing along! *(demonstrate the five fingers and count them off as "red, brown, yellow, white, black." It might be funny to have an actual human hand rise up next to Thea for her to count on. Have the children count off with you until they have the order and then sing this song to the tune of "Glory, glory*

	halleluiah!") *(sing)* Red, brown, yellow, white and black, Are the colors of our people, Everyone is made from God's love, His truth is marching on! Red, brown, yellow, white and black, Each one is so good and lovely, Make God smile with your bright color, His truth is marching on! Glory, glory halleluiah! Glory, glory halleluiah! All the colors of our people are made in the image of God! *(end of song)*
Kid 2	Sister, what color are you?
Sr. Thea	I am black, my child.
Kid 2	I like your dark skin.
Sr. Thea	Thank you! **I like being black. I like being myself, and I thank God for making me my black self.** [*actual quote*] I like your skin, too!
Kid 2	Thanks Sister! But what if someone tells me that I'm the wrong color and won't play with me?
Sr. Thea	You tell that person that THAT's just bunk, because almighty **God does not make junk!** [*actual quote*] Come, let's sing another song. Sister Thea loves to sing. Did you know that Saint Augustine said that when you sing you pray TWICE? It's true! Songs are a very special way of praying. Now let me teach you to sing my favorite song. This Little Light of Mine. Do the gestures with me, okay? This little light of mine [*index finger up like a candle*] I'm gonna let it shine [*arms opening up and out in an arc*] This little light of mine [*index finger up like a candle*] I'm gonna let it shine [*arms opening up and out in an arc*] This little light of mine [*index finger up like a candle*] I'm gonna let it shine [*arms opening up and out in an arc*] Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine [*arms still open, wave them back and forth*] Won't let anyone *(blow)* it out [*mime blowing and shaking head "No"*] I'm gonna let it shine [arms *opening up and out in an arc*]

	Won't let anyone *(blow)* it out [*mime blowing and shaking head "No"*] I'm gonna let it shine [*arms opening up and out in an arc*] Won't let anyone *(blow)* it out [*mime blowing and shaking head "No"*] I'm gonna let it shine [*arms opening up and out in an arc*] Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!! [*arms still open, wave them back and forth*] *(note: do not say the word "blow," actually make a blowing sound)* Very nice, children! Praise God.
Kid 1	Sister Thea, why do you like to sing so much?
Sr. Thea	I sing because I'm happy! I sing because I'm free! His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me! [*sing this, if you know the tune*]
Kid 1	And me?
Sr. Thea	Yes! He watches all of us! Now I want you to repeat after me: [*one line at a time, actual quotes edited from her talks with children*] "**I am somebody. / I'm somebody special. / I'm God's child. / I can change things. / I can make life better for myself, / for my family, / for my community, / for the church, / for the world. / I make life better when I say yes to God's will in my life. / And I want to say yes to God. / I want to say yes to life, / yes to hope, / yes to love, / yes to you, / yes to eternity."** Sing with me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so! Now go out, children and make a joyful noise unto the LORD!!!! *(she and the others fade back and Susie and Billy re-appear)*
Billy	Wow! Sister Thea is a great hero! And what a joyful NOSE she had!
Susie	What?
Billy	She said something about her joyful nose.
Susie	No, Billy, she said make a joyful NOISE unto the Lord. Noise. She means singing and shouting for joy.
Billy	Oh. (*pause*) Well, ***I*** thought she had a joyful nose.
Susie	Oh good grief.
Billy	And her ears were pretty joyful, too.

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Susie	(*mildly disgusted*) Alright. I'll see ya later. (*more cheerfully*) I gotta go share the Good News! (*exits*)
Billy	(*calling after her*) And her eyelids! Definitely joyful! (*to the audience*) Didn't you think so? And what a smile. (*sighs*) She made me happy to just be me, alive in God's loving hands. Yeah, that Sister Thea is one great hero. (*singing, dancing and exiting*) He's got the whole world in His hands…

The End

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