

ENTER ANNOUNCER 1 & 2

Announcer 1: Welcome to a brand new series of The Apprentice. For those who don't watch this kind of telly, you need to know that Sir Alan Sugar is looking for a new assistant to work in one of his many companies.

This week's challenge was to secure at least 2 new business deals by inviting a group of potential customers to a wine and nibbles event. The team who'll win this week and return to the house unscathed will have managed to complete the task most cheaply, leaving the smallest dent in Lord's Sugar's bank account.

Announcer 2: Team B got right on the ball. They spent hours getting what they needed from all the well-known supermarkets. Sadly Team A obviously missed the point. Their most spectacular blunders involved them hiring Buckingham Palace for just 30 guests. They also had several hampers of ready made canapés, pots of caviar, gold-leaf-covered chocolate and a couple of cases of Bollinger all couriered over from Fortnam & Mason's.

All the juicy details of Team A's calamitous exploits have now been brought to Lord Sugar's attention. So he's called in the team leader for a proper dressing down:

EXUENT

ENTER LORD SUGAR & TEAM LEADER

Sugar: Is it true what I've been hearing about you? Have you been taking the mickey out of me this week by throwing a massively expensive but extremely exclusive party and wasting huge amounts of my money?

Team Leader: Uh...

Sugar: The other Team got the job done for £1,500. Do you have any idea how much you spent?

Team Leader: Well, ...

Sugar: £23,650! On your way out, make sure you leave your IMac and memory sticks behind so I can see just what an idiot I was to include you in the first place. I've no need of you. You're fired!

Team Leader: What?!

(aside) What am I going to do now? I've never been jobless before. I'm too wimpy to be a bricklayer, and I'm far too proud to sign on the Dole. Unless I come up with something pretty amazing, I'm only ever going to be remembered as the first one to get 'The Finger'!

(having an "aha" moment)

I know what I'll do!

(to Sugar) Lord Sugar, in my defense, I did manage to get a 15% discount on all those hampers and cases of champagne from by setting up a Direct Debit under your name. And, because we had lots of TV cameras with us, you'll get to watch the free tour we had around the Palace as well! It's a shame the Queen wasn't there but you can't have everything ...

Sugar: Well, I have to hand it to you: those were pretty clever business moves and I suppose you did win me an extra few contracts out of it. I like people who are cunning – it reminds me of myself. But first I need to think this all through again. Go and wait outside.

EXUENT

Announcer 3: Of course, all this is made up but it is based on a strange little story in Luke's Gospel that Jesus told his disciples. To be honest, even people like Fr David isn't entirely sure what Jesus was getting at! Perhaps he was telling his own followers that they could learn a lot from people like the team leader in our story, that the first disciples needed to make as many friends as they could so they could get by in those rainy days that lay ahead.

Preacher: But elsewhere Jesus also tells us that it's only worth putting our energies into getting any kind of good deal in life if they help us to love God more deeply, to pray for our world more fully and serve Jesus and our neighbours better. Put simply, none of us can get on the right side of two masters – either do all you can to serve your God in heaven or focus on protecting and increasing the god of your wealth. But you can't do both. And getting wrapped up in our own little triumphs only leads to a dead end and shooting ourselves in the foot! Pleasing our God in heaven is what really counts. You and I come here each week to bask in awe and wonder at God's amazing love for this little Christian community and each one of us as individuals. Then we can remember every week and accept just a little bit more that God has already hired us for his really crucial business! Amen.