

= Grilled Cheesus =

" Grilled Cheesus " is the third episode of the second season of the American television series Glee , and the twenty @-@ fifth episode overall . It was written by Brad Falchuk , directed by Alfonso Gomez @-@ Rejon , and premiered on the Fox network on October 5 , 2010 . Prior to its broadcast , series co @-@ creator Ryan Murphy predicted the episode would be Glee 's most controversial , as it focuses on religion and what God means to the members of the glee club . When Burt Hummel ( Mike O 'Malley ) has a heart attack , the glee club rally around his son Kurt ( Chris Colfer ) , attempting to support the Hummels through their various faiths . Meanwhile , club co @-@ captain Finn Hudson ( Cory Monteith ) believes he has found the face of Jesus in a grilled cheese sandwich .

Murphy hoped to produce a balanced depiction of religion , and he , Falchuk and series co @-@ creator Ian Brennan worked to ensure that there was an equality between pro and anti @-@ religious sentiments expressed . The episode features seven cover versions of songs , each of which charted on the Billboard Hot 100 , marking the series ' one @-@ week debut high in the US . Critics disagreed over the appropriateness of the musical performances , with some complaining of the tangential relationship between the numbers and religion , and others appreciating that the Glee versions brought new meaning to the songs .

" Grilled Cheesus " was watched by 11 @.@ 20 million US viewers , and was the second most watched scripted show of the week among adults aged 18 ? 49 . It received mixed reviews , with Colfer and O 'Malley receiving critical acclaim , and several reviewers praising Glee for successfully balancing opposing viewpoints . However , other reviewers criticized the episode for its lack of subtlety , and Lisa Respers France of CNN denounced " Grilled Cheesus " as an Emmy @-@ submission showpiece for Colfer .

= = Plot = =

Glee club co @-@ captain Finn Hudson ( Cory Monteith ) believes he has found the face of Jesus in a grilled cheese sandwich , he asks for three prayers to be granted : for the school football team to win a game , for his girlfriend Rachel Berry ( Lea Michele ) to let him touch her breasts , and for him to be reinstated as quarterback . When his first prayer comes true , he asks the glee club to join him in honoring Jesus through song .

Club member Kurt Hummel ( Chris Colfer ) is devastated when his father Burt Hummel ( Mike O 'Malley ) suffers a heart attack . His best friend Mercedes Jones ( Amber Riley ) sings Whitney Houston 's " I Look to You " to him , hoping he will find strength in faith . However , Kurt reveals that he is an atheist . Cheerleading coach Sue Sylvester ( Jane Lynch ) , also an atheist , takes umbrage at the glee club singing religious songs in a public school setting , and has Kurt make a formal complaint . When confronted by guidance counselor Emma Pillsbury ( Jayma Mays ) , Sue admits that as a child , she prayed that God would cure her sister Jean ( Robin Trocki ) , who has Down syndrome . Her prayers went unanswered , leading her to conclude that God simply does not exist .

Mercedes , Rachel and Quinn Fabray ( Dianna Agron ) pray for Burt , with Rachel singing " Papa , Can You Hear Me ? " from Yentl at his bedside . Kurt is resistant , and later at glee club rehearsal sings The Beatles ' " I Want to Hold Your Hand " , stating that his faith takes the form of love for his father . He accepts an invitation from Mercedes to attend her church , where the choir sing " Bridge over Troubled Water " . At the church service , Mercedes asks the congregation to pray for the Hummels .

Finn 's remaining prayers also come true . Rachel comes to Finn 's house one evening , and in his bedroom she admits that she would prefer to raise her children in the Jewish faith ; she would not be able to have a future with him if he puts his faith in Jesus . Finn agrees that their children would be raised as she chooses , so to confirm her trust and appreciation of him , she allows him to touch the side of her breast as they make out . Later , Finn is also reinstated as quarterback , but it occurs because his replacement Sam Evans ( Chord Overstreet ) is injured during a game , dislocating his shoulder . Finn feels responsible and confesses his guilt to Emma , who tells him it is unlikely God is

communicating specifically with him through a grilled cheese sandwich . A despondent Finn doubts his new @-@ found faith , singing R.E.M. ' s " Losing My Religion " .

At Burt 's bedside , Kurt tells his still unconscious father that he feels he should have accepted his friends ' prayers . As Kurt cries , Burt begins to regain consciousness and is able to squeeze his son 's hand . Meanwhile , Sue visits Jean in her residential home and discusses God with her sister . Jean asks Sue if she may pray for her , and Sue accepts . Later , the glee club comes together to sing Joan Osborne 's " One of Us " . Sue watches the performance , but tells Will she will not report him for allowing a religious song . At home , Finn eats the remainder of the grilled cheese sandwich .

= = Production = =

" Grilled Cheesus " is intended to begin a season arc depicting the glee club members rallying around those who are subject to bullying and persecution . For Glee 's second season , Murphy confirmed plans to cast a Christian character on the show , expressing desires to keep Glee a " show about inclusiveness " . In an interview with TV Guide , Murphy said on Christianity , " If we 're trying to form a world of inclusiveness , we 've got to include that point of view as well . " He predicted " Grilled Cheesus " would be the most controversial episode of the series to date , as it depicts the spiritual and emotional importance of God to the characters . Murphy aimed to address religion in a " socially responsible " way , and compared " Grilled Cheesus " to topical Norman Lear shows of the 1970s . He hoped to produce a balanced depiction of the subject matter , and he , along with co @-@ writers Brennan and Falchuk , checked the script to ensure that for every anti @-@ religious sentiment conveyed , there was a pro @-@ religious one to counterbalance it . The episode references several religions apart from Christianity ; Puck and Rachel are both Jewish , Kurt hires an acupuncturist who is a Sikh , and makes a reference to the Flying Spaghetti Monster .

Sue 's philosophical argument with Emma about religion is the scene that Murphy is " most proud to have been involved with in [ his ] entire career . " Explaining Sue 's stance on religion , he stated : " Sue 's an atheist , but I love that she doesn 't want to be . She and [ Kurt ] are both saying to the world , ' Prove us wrong : If God is kindness and love , make me believe in God . ' " Murphy felt it would have been easy to have Kurt sing an anti @-@ religious song , but instead chose to have him sing about his faith in love .

O 'Malley was a recurring cast member throughout Glee 's first season , and was promoted to a series regular starting in season two . He commented that the episode would be an emotional one , developing the father @-@ son relationship further . Recurring characters who appear in this episode include glee club member Mike Chang ( Harry Shum , Jr . ) , football player Sam Evans , Principal Figgins ( Iqbal Theba ) , football coach Shannon Beiste ( Dot @-@ Marie Jones ) , Finn 's mother Carole Hudson ( Romy Rosemont ) , and Sue 's sister Jean Sylvester . An eight @-@ year @-@ old Kurt appears in a series of flashback scenes , including his mother 's funeral , played by child actor Adam Kolkin .

= = Music = =

The episode featured cover versions of Billy Joel 's " Only the Good Die Young " , Whitney Houston 's " I Look to You " , " Papa , Can You Hear Me ? " as performed by Barbra Streisand in the musical film Yentl , The Beatles ' " I Want to Hold Your Hand " as covered by T. V. Carpio in the musical film Across the Universe , R.E.M. ' s " Losing My Religion " , Simon & Garfunkel 's " Bridge over Troubled Water " as covered by Aretha Franklin , and Joan Osborne 's " One of Us " . Monteith said he and series music producer Adam Anders " had a bit of a different idea " about how " Losing My Religion " should be performed . While Anders " always brings the songs in very positive , very upbeat " , he felt the song " was expressing a betrayal " , and with Finn feeling both betrayal and anger , Monteith wanted his performance to reflect that . All songs performed were released as singles , available for download , and " I Want to Hold Your Hand " and " One of Us " are included on the album Glee : The Music , Volume 4 . All singles charted on the Billboard Hot 100 and

Canadian Hot 100 . With seven new entries , it marked the series ' one @-@ week debut high in the US . The best performing single was " I Want to Hold Your Hand " , which reached number 21 in Canada and 36 in the US . With 69 @,@ 000 copies sold in the US , it also reached number 15 on the Hot Digital Songs chart .

Zap2it 's Carina Adly MacKenzie commented positively on Michele 's " beautiful " rendition of " Papa , Can You Hear Me ? " , however expressed displeasure that Rachel had cried during her solo in three consecutive episodes , suggesting the producers give her a more uplifting song . She praised Salling 's " Only the Good Die Young " , which was selected by Lisa de Moraes of The Washington Post as the best performance of the episode , for being the most in @-@ keeping with Glee 's usual tone . Erica Futterman of Rolling Stone praised " I Want to Hold Your Hand " , writing that , " the Beatles ' coy flirtation is replaced with a simple , wistful plea that hits just the right note . " She commended Riley 's vocals on " Bridge over Troubled Water " , commenting that Murphy should assign Mercedes more solo performances . Futterman criticized " Losing My Religion " , however , observing that Monteith struggled to reach the notes , resulting in a performance " more awkward than inspired . "

Anthony Benigno of the Daily News commented positively on the arrangement of Monteith 's song , grading the performance " A " . His lowest grade went to " Papa , Can You Hear Me ? " , which he gave a " C " . Benigno felt that both Michele and Colfer 's solos were damaged by the fact that the songs ' only link to the episode 's plot were their titles , finding it particularly jarring to hear Kurt singing " I wanna be your man " about his father . The A.V. Club 's Todd VanDerWerff felt that the music was the worst aspect of the episode , similarly criticizing song selections based on their tangential relationship to religion . He felt that Kurt 's performance was the only number which worked even slightly , commenting , " it genuinely grows out of the moment , although the fact that Kurt is singing it to his dad never stops being kind of weird . " Both Jessica Derschowicz of CBS News and MTV 's Aly Semigran enjoyed that the performance of " I Want to Hold Your Hand " brought new meaning to the song , with Semigran naming it her favourite number of the episode . She felt that " I Look to You " was the episode 's weakest song , preferring Riley 's " more powerful " rendition of " Bridge over Troubled Water " . Amy Reiter of the Los Angeles Times expressed disappointment in both of Riley 's songs , which left her " strangely unmoved " . She suggested that , " Mercedes sang admirably , beautifully even , but she didn 't seem truly transported by the music ; so we weren 't . "

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

During its original broadcast , " Grilled Cheesus " was watched by 11 @.@ 20 million American viewers and attained a 4 @.@ 6 / 13 Nielsen rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic . Viewership and ratings both decreased from the previous episode , which was watched by 13 @.@ 51 million viewers and attained a 5 @.@ 9 / 17 rating / share . " Grilled Cheesus " was the most watched scripted show for the week of broadcast among adults aged 18 ? 49 , and the twenty @-@ second most watched show among all viewers . In Canada , the episode was watched by 1 @.@ 99 million viewers and was the eleventh most watched show of the week . It was again down on the previous episode , which was watched by 2 @.@ 46 million viewers , making it the sixth most watched programme of the week . In Australia , " Grilled Cheesus " drew 1 @.@ 029 million viewers , placing eleventh for the night . In the UK , the episode was watched by 2 @.@ 502 million viewers ( 2 @.@ 175 million on E4 , and 327 @,@ 000 on E4 + 1 ) , becoming the most watched show on E4 and E4 + 1 for the week , and the most watched show on cable for the week .

= = = Critical response = = =

The episode received mixed reviews from critics . Tim Stack of Entertainment Weekly named it as

one of his favorite episodes of the series , calling it " not only funny and moving , but incredibly important " , both for its religious element and message of tolerance . Stack praised the performances by Colfer and O 'Malley , as did USA Today 's Robert Bianco , who deemed the episode a " smart , moving , musical exploration of the power and limits of faith and religion in a democratic society " . Bianco commented positively on the way Colfer 's singing was used to " dig beneath the archness and anger in Kurt 's behavior " , calling it " a textbook example of what music can add to drama . " Mark Perigard of the Boston Herald went further in his praise , deeming " Grilled Cheesus " " the perfect blend of music , characterization and plot - and easily the most provocative scripted hour in prime @-@ time of the new season . " Perigard appreciated the fact there were no easy answers presented , with no characters undergoing religious conversions during the course of the episode . Raymund Flandez of The Wall Street Journal felt that " Grilled Cheesus " succeeded in balancing opposing viewpoints , resulting in " a nuanced , atypical episode of Glee that was both conflictually emotional and confidently serious about the topic of religion " , and Semigran similarly commended the episode 's balance , writing that Falchuk " covered both sides of controversial debate with grace , humor , and most importantly , respect . " In an article discussing Glee 's increasingly inconsistent tone , characterizations , and weird moments in the second season , film and television critic Matt Zoller Seitz cited " Grilled Cheesus " as an exception : " an episode built around an earnest , Afterschool Special @-@ style contemplation of faith that improbably turned out to be one of the series ' boldest , silliest , maybe finest hours " .

Robert Canning of IGN felt that " Grilled Cheesus " was too varied tonally , failing to effectively bring together the " true anguish " of Kurt 's storyline and " lunacy " of Finn 's . He rated it 7 @. @ 5 / 10 , signifying a good episode , though his overall opinion was mixed . Canning commented that the Hummels ' relationship is " the most affecting " of the show , and praised O 'Malley 's " outstandingly nuanced " performance as Burt , yet felt that the religious element gave the episode an after school special vibe and almost became " over @-@ the @-@ top preachy and self @-@ important " . VanDerWerff graded the episode " B- " , commenting that he was uncertain whether he genuinely loved it , or was overlooking flaws because it handled the religious element acceptably . VanDerWerff stated that it would be easy to criticize Glee , but while television as a whole does not do earnestness well , Glee at its best , as in " Grilled Cheesus " , " revels in just how damn earnest it can be " . James Poniewozik of Time wrote that the episode 's premise was " absurdly ambitious " , yet felt it was largely successful in being respectful to both atheism and religion . He criticized the musical numbers for detracting from the plot , but appreciated the focus on Kurt and Burt , also naming theirs one of Glee 's " strongest and most nuanced relationships " .

Lisa Respers France of CNN was dismayed that the episode felt forced , like an Emmy submission showpiece for Colfer . She disliked Kurt 's angry , " overwrought " reaction to his friends ' prayers and the " silly " grilled cheese sandwich subplot , however wished there had been more focus on the " rich , barely tapped vein " of the Sue subplot . The Atlantic 's Kevin Fallon criticized the episode 's lack of subtlety , feeling that in its attempt to be controversial , Glee became a clichéd after school special . Fallon had been excited to see religion and homosexuality tackled on Glee , but was disappointed that the end result was " completely devoid of humor " , with dialogue " so stilted , wooden , and earnest that the treatment of the subject was largely ineffective and far too easy to make fun of . " Benigno also commented negatively on the lack of subtlety , deeming it Glee 's " biggest flaw " . He commended Lynch 's performance as Sue , however , writing : " It 's outrageous how good she is despite having only three scenes of screen time . "