

A Christmas Pageant



*"Thank you so much for your lovely 'Christmas Pageant'. Our parents and girls really loved it!
It was a wonderful success."*

Mentone Girls Grammar School, Australia

*"Easy to rehearse with specific classes doing specific roles and choirs able to participate.
Something for all levels to do easily. Very simple concept. Well received by parents."*

*"The show was very well received by the audience. They enjoyed the script and hearing the Christmas carols.
The children all had an opportunity to participate with the older children starring in the key roles.
The script and songs were easy to follow. We were able to adjust the script
and songs to suit the children - it's wonderfully flexible."*

Williams PS, Australia

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You can order *A Christmas Pageant* at www.bushfirepress.com/pageant

A Christmas Pageant

Then and Now

From Bethlehem to Bondi

by Lynne Bartlett, Mark Leehy & Kevin O'Mara

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- *APPLICATION FOR PERFORMANCE of A **Christmas Pageant** should be made to the publisher and acknowledged before rehearsals commence.*

PRODUCTION NOTES

SYNOPSIS

Part 1: Bethlehem, 2000 years ago – the birth of Christ

The first half of the pageant is the story of the Nativity – the birth of Jesus. It is told in a series of sketches and known carols. The sketches are designed to be short and simple – and to tell the story in a friendly and entertaining way, with glimpses (sometimes humorous) into the characters who feature in the story.

Part 2: Christmas traditions around the world

The second half of the pageant looks at the Christmas traditions that grew up around the world – again through short sketches and known Christmas songs and carols.

PLAYERS

NARRATOR 1
NARRATOR 2

HEROD – King of Judea
HEROD'S ASSISTANT (his 2 IC)
MESSENGER

WISE MAN 1
WISE MAN 2
WISE MAN 3
GOOGLE – research assistant to Wise Men

JOSEPH
MARY
DONKEY – optional
INNKEEPER
INNKEEPER'S WIFE

SHEPHERD 1
SHEPHERD 2
ANGEL

KING WENCESLAUS
FINN – his page

HOUSEHOLDER

STORY READER

Chorus of Travellers (*from the Wise Men's caravan*)
Chorus of younger students
Chorus of shepherds
Christmas tree procession students
Carol singers
Group of 'story-listeners'
Group of 'Aussies'

THE SONGS

All songs and carols may be reproduced and distributed to the audience.

Lyrics are also found on the CD ROM. These files can be used for data projection in rehearsal for the cast and also in performance for the audience.

The audience should be encouraged to join in and sing along.

This can be done via an announcement at the beginning of the performance or can appear as a note in the program.

THE CHOIR

A single choir can be used, positioned in tiers to one side of the stage or in two groups:



They can remain on stage throughout the performance.

They may wear black, black & white, red & green ... or may dress in school uniform.

The choir will need torches with coloured cellophane (red & green work well) for the song ***O Christmas Tree***.

Alternately, different choirs can be brought on and off for different songs.

THE NARRATORS

2 Narrators are used in the script.

They can be on one side of the stage (OP) near a microphone.

They can sit on stools between their speaking parts.

Alternately – different sets of narrators can be brought on for different scenes.

SONGS, POEM AND MUSICAL PIECES

Part 1

Silent Night

O Come, All Ye faithful

We Three Kings – instrumental chorus & verse

We Three Kings

Away in a Manger

Sting – shimmering harp

The First Noel

Silent Night (instrumental verse)

Joy to the World

Joy to the World (instrumental play-out)

Part 2

Good King Wenceslaus

Jingle Bells

O Tannenbaum/O Christmas Tree

Deck the Halls

The Night Before Christmas

The Twelve Aussie Days of Christmas

We Wish You a Merry Christmas

READING THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

This can be read by a teacher or a student, by the Narrators, the choir or by a special group of students. Alternately, the 'read' on the CD can be used.

MUSIC

The double CD contains vocal demonstrations and instrumental backing tracks for rehearsal/performance. There is a vocal score in the back of the Master Book.

CD ROM

This contains PDF files of song lyrics, suitable for data projection in rehearsal and performance.

VIDEOTAPE & DVDs

If you intend videotaping your own production, or making a video/DVD, please complete an application form, available from the publisher. Royalties are payable if videos or DVDs are made available (whether a fee is charged or not).

A CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Then & now

(from Bethlehem to Bondi)

PART 1 - EXCERPT

WHOLE CAST *on stage.*

SILENT NIGHT

Silent night Holy night
All is calm all is bright
'Round yon virgin Mother and Child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night
Shepherds quake at the sight
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia
Christ the Savior is born
Christ the Savior is born

Silent night, holy night
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth

CAST EXITS, NARRATORS *and* CHOIR *remain on stage.*

NARRATOR 1: This is the story of Christmas.

NARRATOR 2: A story that goes way back in time ...

NARRATOR 1: ... and way into the future.

NARRATOR 2: It begins two thousand years ago.

ENTER HEROD *and* ASSISTANT OP.
They come CENTRE STAGE.

HEROD: I am Herod, King of Judea.

ASSISTANT: And I am his 2IC (that's second in command – pretty important).

HEROD: It's a tough place to rule – but things are quiet and peaceful at the moment.

ASSISTANT: Yeh – we've pretty much got everything under control (HEROD *glares at him*)
Well – it's mostly your work, of course, Mr Herod, sir ... but I do try to help out.

ENTER MESSENGER, PS.
Goes to HEROD.

MESSENGER (*handing message to* HEROD): Excuse me, Your Highness – a message from Emperor Augustus.

MESSENGER EXITS PS.

HEROD (*looking at message*): Oh, dear.

ASSISTANT: What is it? Trouble?

HEROD: Oh – just another pointless request from the Emperor. This time he wants a census.

ASSISTANT: What's a census?

HEROD: He wants to know how many people live in the Roman Empire ... AND ... he wants to know where they come from! So everyone has to travel back to the place of their birth and be counted.

ASSISTANT (*panicking*): That means we'll be flooded with people! We'll have to find places for them to stay, food for them to eat ... extra staff

HEROD (*annoyed*): AND ... we'll have to fill out lots of boring forms. Honestly!

ASSISTANT: He must think we've nothing better to do with our time.

HEROD (EXITING PS): Come on, come on – we'd better get ready – they'll start arriving any minute.

ASSISTANT (*following*): Emperors – tsh!

CHOIR *sings*:

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant
O come ye, oh, come ye, to Bethlehem
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels

**O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord**

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, in the highest

**O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord**

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing

**O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord**

NARRATOR 1: And come they did.

NARRATOR 2: From all over the Roman Empire, people returned to the place of their birth.

NARRATOR 1: And ... there were others that came -

NARRATOR 2: - for different reasons.

NARRATOR 1: A caravan of travellers came from the East ... following a star -

NARRATOR 2: - that would lead them to the birthplace of the Messiah.

INSTRUMENTAL CHORUS of **WE THREE KINGS** begins.

CARAVAN of TRAVELLERS ENTERS OP, *pointing to Star, talking among themselves, etc.*

As **MUSIC ENDS**, ENTER THREE WISE MEN, OP.
They come CENTRE STAGE.

WISE MAN 1: I am a wealthy King.

WISE MAN 2: I am an astronomer.

WISE MAN 3: I am a philosopher.

WISE MAN 1: I rule many people.

WISE MAN 2: I study many stars.

WISE MAN 3: I think about lots of stuff.

WISE MAN 1: I am responsible for making sure my people are fed.

WISE MAN 2: I am responsible for making sure my people are educated.

WISE MAN 3: I think about lots of stuff.

WISE MAN 1: I am seeking the one who will be the greatest king.

WISE MAN 2: I am seeking the one who will be the greatest teacher.

WISE MAN 3: I am seeking the one who thinks about lots of stuff.

ALL sing:

WE THREE KINGS

We three kings of orient are
Bearing gifts we travel so far
Field and fountain, moor and mountain
Following yonder star

**Oh, star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to thy perfect light**

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain
Gold I bring to crown him again
King for ever, ceasing never
Over us all to reign

**Oh, star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to thy perfect light**

WISE MEN *and* TRAVELLERS EXIT PS.

NARRATOR 1: Meanwhile, on his way to Bethlehem was a man called Joseph.

NARRATOR 2: He led a donkey.

NARRATOR 1: The Donkey carried his wife, Mary.

NARRATOR 2: And Mary carried a very special baby inside her.

ENTER JOSEPH, MARY *and* DONKEY, OP.

JOSEPH (*looking around*): So ... this is Bethlehem?

MARY (*worried*): Wherever shall we stay? All the Inns are full ...

JOSEPH (*comforting her*): Don't worry. Here is one last inn. I'm sure they'll have room.

ENTER INNKEEPER's WIFE, PS.

WIFE (*brusquely*): I hope you are not looking for a place to stay.

JOSEPH: Is there no room at all? We are here to be counted for the census.

MARY: We have travelled a long way.

WIFE (*brusquely*): So has everyone else. I have people here from all over the empire. They are crowded into every room and every space.

ENTER INNKEEPER, PS, *wiping hands on tea towel*.

INNKEEPER (*to WIFE*): Can I get some help back here in the kitchen? We've got hungry mouths to feed!

JOSEPH (*to INNKEEPER*): Sir - you are our last hope – we have nowhere to stay.

INNKEEPER: My good friends, I would help if I could. But there is simply no room.

JOSEPH (*to INNKEEPER*): Kind sir - my wife is about to have a baby.

INNKEEPER (*thinking*): Hmmm ... all I can offer is a stable out the back. It's not the best place for a baby to be born, but at least the straw is fresh and clean. You will be warm, dry and ... somewhat comfortable. And I won't charge you for it.

WIFE (*to INNKEEPER*): What! No charge? You're too soft! (*She STORMS OFF PS, complaining*)

PART 2 - EXCERPT

LIGHTS DOWN.

CHOIR *turn on their torches.*



INSTRUMENTAL VERSE of **O CHRISTMAS TREE** begins as a procession of 2 lines of STUDENTS moves across stage from PS. The first 1 or 2 pairs carry a CHRISTMAS TREE, which they place UPSTAGE CENTRE. (CHOIR shuffles either side to make room for TREE, if required). The first 1 or 2 pairs now move OFF OP. The procession continues, each pair attaching decorations to the tree and moving OFF OP. The procession should have completely moved OFF OP by the time the INSTRUMENTAL VERSE of **O CHRISTMAS TREE** finishes.

As the INSTRUMENTAL VERSE of O CHRISTMAS TREE is playing, NARRATORS speak.

NARRATOR 1: One of the best loved Christmas traditions comes from Germany.

NARRATOR 2: It is the tradition of decorating a special tree.

NARRATOR 1: A 'Tannenbaum'.

NARRATOR 2: Which is German for the evergreen 'Fir Tree' ...

NARRATOR 1: ... or ... Christmas tree.

NARRATOR 2: For centuries, people in Germany decorated their Christmas Trees with candles, coloured glass balls, red and green ribbons and little wooden toys.

NARRATOR 1: And they sang this song around the tree.

NARRATOR 2: In German, of course.

*ALL sing the carol. During the song, each successive pair places an item on the tree and
EXITS OP.*

O TANNENBAUM

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum
Wie grün sind deine Blätter!
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum
Wie grün sind deine Blätter!

Du grünst nicht nur zur Sommerzeit
Nein auch im Winter, wenn es schneit
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum
Wie grün sind deine Blätter!

NARRATOR 1 (*to* NARRATOR 2): What did you think?

NARRATOR 2 (*to* NARRATOR 1, *a little concerned*): Hmmmm ... well ... (*indicating audience*)
they all tried really hard ...

NARRATOR 1 (*to audience*): That was a very good effort, everyone.

NARRATOR 2 (*to audience*): And we really appreciate having all of you sing the songs with
us.

NARRATOR 1 (*to* NARRATOR 2): But I get the feeling that there are not too many German-
speaking people here tonight.

NARRATOR 2 (*to* NARRATOR 1): Or German-singing people.

NARRATOR 1 (*to* NARRATOR 2): Shall we try it again?

NARRATOR 2 (*to* NARRATOR 1): Yes – but in English, this time, I think.

NARRATOR 1 (*To audience*): Are we all ready?

NARRATOR 2 (*to audience*): In your best voices.

O CHRISTMAS TREE

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree
Your branches green delight us!
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree
Your branches green delight us!

They're green when summer days are bright
They're green when winter snow is white
O, Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree
Your branches green delight us!

NARRATOR 1 (*To audience*): Let's all sing it again.

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree
Your branches green delight us!
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree
Your branches green delight us!

They're green when summer days are bright
They're green when winter snow is white
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree
Your branches green delight us!

LIGHTS UP, TORCHES OFF.

The CHRISTMAS TREE remains in place for the rest of the show.

NARRATOR 1: Another old Christmas tradition still happens in cold countries.

NARRATOR 2: Carol singers go from house to house –

NARRATOR 1: - singing their Christmas songs –

NARRATOR 2: - and hoping to be given food or sweets for their singing!

A group of CARROLLERS ENTERS OP. They may be of different sizes. They are dressed in scarves and beanies (and gloves, if required). They carry sheet music. One CARROLLER carries 'goodies' bag. One may carry a lantern on a staff. They sing the words of the song, but leave the 'fa-la-la's' to the CHOIR.