

# THE LAST-MINUTE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

*by Bob Hostetter*



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**THE LAST MINUTE  
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT**

**By Bob Hostetler**

## The Last-Minute Christmas Pageant

*A no-fuss alternative – no rehearsal required*

**By Bob Hostetler**

**SYNOPSIS:** Someone forgot to prepare this year’s Christmas pageant, so the church’s leaders try to stage a last-minute Christmas pageant using readily available props and people from the audience.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(3 either, extras)*

**PRINCIPAL ROLES:** These roles can easily be adjusted to “Music Minister” or “Church Leader,” etc. However, the play works best if the three principal participants are three people who would normally be expected to plan and prepare holiday programs.

PASTOR 1 (m/f) ..... (30 lines)

PASTOR 2 (m/f) ..... (28 lines)

WORSHIP PASTOR (m/f) ..... (23 lines)

**IMPROMPTU ROLES:** These roles may be drawn from the children in the audience.

READER (m/f).....(1 line)

MARY .....*Non-speaking*

JOSEPH.....*Non-speaking*

DONKEY .....*Non-speaking*

1-2 ANGELS .....*Non-speaking*

1-2 SHEPHERDS .....*Non-speaking*

**DURATION:** 60 minutes

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## PRODUCTION NOTES

**SETTING:** Fairly normal worship stage setting, but a manger does need to be on one side of the stage as the evening starts. There must also be a Christmas tree in the auditorium, and there must be silver tinsel on the tree.

**SUGGESTED MUSIC:** These songs are merely suggestions. They were chosen because they fit into the situation or dialogue. Feel free to substitute any songs of your choosing, provided they fit the context. Many of the songs are familiar Christmas carols, available in any hymnal. Whenever a contemporary song is listed, a traditional song is added as an alternative, in case you have difficulty locating a song or it is unfamiliar. Information for the contemporary songs is as follows:

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“Christmas Offering” by Paul Baloche, copyright © 2003 Integrity’s Hosanna! Music, administered by Capitol CMG Publishing (IMI). CCLI Song #7005509. Recorded by Casting Crowns on their album *Peace on Earth*.

“Grown-up Christmas List” by Linda Thompson-Jenner (lyrics) and David Foster (music), copyright ©1990 Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corporation, Linda’s Boys Music. Recorded by Foster (with singer Natalie Cole on vocals) for his 1990 album *River of Love*, and by Amy Grant for her 1992 album *Home for Christmas*.

**NOTE TO ACTORS:** At any point in the play, feel free to interact with the kids and ad lib questions to them and allow them to answer. These interactions could be the most memorable (albeit dangerous) parts of the evening!

### **PROPS**

- A scarf (planted in the congregation)
- A tall staff or walking stick (to be placed backstage)
- One or two John Deere caps or cowboy hat (planted in the congregation before program)
- A Bible with Luke 2:1-20 marked (for a child to read) or a printout of the passage
- Donkey ears (an audience member needs to be supplied with a set of donkey ears before the program's start and told simply to speak up when they are asked for in the program)
- 1-2 Tinsel haloes (may be precut and waiting in the tree, or they may be spontaneously formed from the tinsel on the tree)
- White elephant or other weird gift (optional)
- Slips of paper and pens/pencils (for writing offerings)
- Small candles with drip shields

1 **AT START:** *Prior to the service, all audience helpers should be*  
2 *given their props – scarf, donkey ears, and hats, if necessary. The*  
3 *shepherd staffs are backstage. Candles with shields should either*  
4 *be handed out by ushers or placed in baskets for congregants to*  
5 *take as they enter the sanctuary. Paper slips and writing utensils*  
6 *should be readily accessible. WORSHIP PASTOR and PASTOR 1*  
7 *may either be On-stage to start, or enter following the two songs.*

8

9 *MUSIC: “Joy to the World” and “Angels We Have Heard on High”*  
10 *(Congregation Participation.)*

11

12 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** Good evening, everybody, and welcome to  
13 this extra-special Christmas celebration! We are here to  
14 worship and to prepare our hearts for the day of days when we  
15 celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have prepared  
16 a wonderful Christmas pageant for you, with traditional carols,  
17 handmade costumes, shepherds, sheep, angels, camels, wise  
18 men –

19 **PASTOR 1:** *(Interrupting.)* Wait, wait, wait. I’m sorry to interrupt,  
20 but we’re not doing any of that.

21 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** Not doing any of that? What do you mean,  
22 we’re not doing any of that?

23 **PASTOR 1:** Yeah. Unfortunately, we don’t have any of that  
24 stuff.... The shepherds, angels, none of it. We just can’t do it.

25 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** Can’t do it? *Can’t do it?* Why not?

26 **PASTOR 1:** We, uh... well, I kinda... um, forgot to schedule the  
27 rehearsals.

28 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** You forgot? *You forgot?*

29 **PASTOR 1:** Yeah. Sorry.

30 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** Oh, OK. So you’re sorry. That makes it  
31 better. It’s only Christmas Eve! What are we supposed to do  
32 now?

33 **PASTOR 1:** Well... *(Looks around.)*

34 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** You know what? You let me know when  
35 you figure it out, OK? Until then, I’m outta here. *(Starts to*  
36 *leave.)*

- 1 **PASTOR 2:** (*Rushes On-stage, blocks WORSHIP PASTOR'S*  
2 *way.*) Wait! Wait! Just wait! You can't leave.
- 3 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** Oh, yes I can. Watch. (*Like doing the hokey*  
4 *pokey.*) I just put the left foot out... and put the right foot out...  
5 and put the left foot out... and that's what I'm all about!
- 6 **PASTOR 2:** No, no, wait. It's OK. We can do this. We really can!
- 7 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** How? This knucklehead didn't schedule  
8 any rehearsals!
- 9 **PASTOR 1:** She's right.
- 10 **PASTOR 2:** But, look. (*Gestures to congregation.*) We've got  
11 worshipers. And (*Indicates children who are present.*) we've  
12 got kids. We've got music. All we need is a little imagination,  
13 and I think we can do something special.
- 14 **PASTOR 1:** Like what?
- 15 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** Yeah, like what? Did I mention this  
16 knucklehead didn't schedule any rehearsals?
- 17 **PASTOR 1:** You might have mentioned it.
- 18 **PASTOR 2:** Yeah, you did. But remember, there was no  
19 rehearsal for the first Christmas, either! No one on earth even  
20 knew for sure when it was gonna happen. But if I remember  
21 right, God showed up and made it pretty special.
- 22 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** Yeah, but *if you'll recall*, he had angels and  
23 stars to command!
- 24 **PASTOR 1:** (*Indicates kids.*) We've got a few angels of our own.
- 25 **PASTOR 2:** (*Pats band member on the back.*) And maybe even a  
26 few stars.
- 27 **PASTOR 1:** Maybe we *can* do this! We can call it our Last-Minute  
28 Christmas Pageant!
- 29 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** OK, so what happens now?
- 30 **PASTOR 2:** Well, if you've got a song you can sing, why don't  
31 you do that? It'll buy us a few minutes to get ready. OK?
- 32 **PASTOR 1:** This is gonna be magic!
- 33 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** Or tragic....
- 34
- 35 **MUSIC:** "We Need a Little Christmas" Alternate: "Hark! The Herald  
36 Angels Sing" (*Sung by band and congregation. While they are*  
37 *singing, PASTOR 1 and PASTOR 2 go to children and enlist a*  
38 *MARY and JOSEPH – and a DONKEY, too. If there's any trouble*

1 *enlisting a child, it could be fun to ask a teen or even an adult –*  
2 *the taller, the better – to serve as the donkey.)*

3

4 **PASTOR 1:** We did it! (*Introduces kids.*) We've got Mary, Joseph,  
5 and a donkey!

6 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** What about costumes?

7 **PASTOR 2:** Well, Mary just needs a scarf. I bet someone here  
8 will loan us a scarf for poor Mary's head, right? (*Gets scarf*  
9 *from audience and puts it on MARY.*)

10 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** It sure would be nice if Joseph had a staff.  
11 You know, like they show in some paintings.

12 **PASTOR 1:** I've got it! Be right back! (*Goes backstage, retrieves*  
13 *a large wooden staff, and hands it to JOSEPH.*)

14 **PASTOR 2:** Great, and maybe while everyone sings the next  
15 song, we can have Mary, Joseph, and the donkey make their  
16 way to the manger. (*Positions them and tells them to walk*  
17 *slowly across the stage during the next song, ending in a*  
18 *tableau at the manger.*)

19 **PASTOR 1:** Sure would be nice if the donkey had, like, some  
20 donkey ears, wouldn't it?

21 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** Donkey ears? Where are we gonna find  
22 donkey ears?

23 **PASTOR 2:** I don't suppose anyone has donkey ears on you, do  
24 you? (*Prearranged audience member speaks up. PASTOR 2*  
25 *goes into audience, gets donkey ears, and puts them on the*  
26 *DONKEY.*)

27 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** Unbelievable.

28 **PASTOR 1:** It *is* unbelievable, isn't it? Kinda appropriate for  
29 Christmas Eve, wouldn't you say?

30 **PASTOR 2:** I'd say so. (*Turns to MARY, JOSEPH, and*  
31 *DONKEY.*) Ready? Let's start the journey to Bethlehem!

32

33 **SONG:** "New Star Shining"; Alternate: "O Come, All Ye Faithful".  
34 (*Sung by band. While band sings, MARY, JOSEPH and DONKEY*  
35 *make their way to the manger, with guidance and encouragement*  
36 *from PASTOR 1 or PASTOR 2 if needed. Once there, they freeze*  
37 *in a tableau.*)

38

- 1 **PASTOR 2:** Now that our Mary and Joseph are in place –
- 2 **PASTOR 1:** And the donkey. Don't forget the donkey.
- 3 **PASTOR 2:** Of course, and the donkey. So now I guess we just  
4 need some shepherds, don'tcha think?
- 5 **PASTOR 1:** And angels, too! We should have no problem finding  
6 angels. I mean, look at these kids! Anybody wanna be an  
7 angel? (*Chooses one or two kids to be ANGELS and brings*  
8 *them On-stage.*)
- 9 **PASTOR 2:** Or a shepherd. Who wants to be a shepherd?  
10 (*Chooses one or two kids to be SHEPHERDS and brings them*  
11 *On-stage.*)
- 12 **PASTOR 2:** What about costumes for the shepherds?
- 13 **PASTOR 1:** Well, let me think. Shepherds were kinda like  
14 ranchers of their day, right? So... (*Looks out into crowd.*)  
15 anybody got a John Deere cap or a cowboy hat we could  
16 borrow? (*Runs out into crowd, borrows a cap or two, and*  
17 *places them on SHEPHERDS.*)
- 18 **PASTOR 2:** And the angels. We need wings for the angels, don't  
19 we?
- 20 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** I suppose one of you just "happened" to  
21 bring some angel wings with you tonight. (*Looks out at*  
22 *audience.*) No?
- 23 **PASTOR 1:** We may not have wings, (*Runs to Christmas tree,*  
24 *pulls off a string or two of tinsel.*) but we have haloes! (*Puts*  
25 *tinsel on ANGELS' heads. SHEPHERDS and ANGELS join the*  
26 *tableau.*)
- 27 **PASTOR 2:** Now it's really coming together!
- 28 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** I have to admit, they *are* adorable.
- 29 **PASTOR 1:** Didn't I tell you? It doesn't take much to make  
30 Christmas special, because God already did that two thousand  
31 years ago, when he sent his only begotten Son to be born to  
32 the Virgin Mary in a tiny little town called Bethlehem. And he  
33 did it through some ordinary people and pretty stressful  
34 circumstances.
- 35 **PASTOR 2:** And sometimes all the traditions and trappings can  
36 cause us to lose sight of what's really important.  
37

1 *OPTIONAL VIDEO CLIP: A Charlie Brown Christmas (“True*  
2 *Meaning of Christmas,” Luke 2.) [IMPORTANT: You need a Public*  
3 *Video Screening License to legally show this clip.] ALTERNATE:*  
4 *Rather than showing the video clip of Linus reciting Luke 2:1-20, a*  
5 *child – preferably an older child who is known to be a good reader*  
6 *– may be enlisted to read the Scripture.*

7

8 **SONG:** “Christmas Offering” Alternate: “What Child Is This?”

9

10 **PASTOR 2:** *(Interrupts song after first verse mentions wise men –*  
11 *or, in the case of “What Child Is This?” the verse beginning,*  
12 *“So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh.”.)* Wait, wait, wait! Hold  
13 everything! We can’t sing about the wise men yet! We don’t  
14 have any wise men!

15 **PASTOR 1:** Well, yeah, but you know, biblically speaking, the  
16 wise men didn’t really show up on Christmas day. They arrived  
17 sometime afterward, apparently after Joseph and Mary and  
18 Jesus had found a house to stay in.

19 **PASTOR 2:** Yes, I know that. But every Christmas pageant I’ve  
20 ever been to has wise men in it.

21 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** OK, but take a look around. *(Indicates*  
22 *crowd.)* Do you see even one wise man?

23 **PASTOR 2:** *(Scans crowd long and slow.)* Good point.

24 **PASTOR 1:** So are you just saying we do without wise men? We  
25 become the first church ever in the history of Christmas  
26 pageants to put on a pageant without a single wise man  
27 anywhere to be found?

28 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** Well, wait a minute. The great part about  
29 the story of the wise men is that they brought gifts to the Christ  
30 child, right? That’s the main reason we give gifts at Christmas  
31 to begin with... right?

32 **PASTOR 1 and PASTOR 2:** *(Ad lib.)* Right, Yeah, Go on.

33 **WORSHIP PASTOR:** So it seems to me that everyone here has a  
34 chance to fill those shoes. Everyone here can bring an  
35 offering.

36 **PASTOR 2:** You mean like money?

37



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