

**A TRADITIONAL
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT**

by Nancy Seale



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A Traditional Christmas Pageant

by NANCY SEALE

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ANNOUNCERS, two or more as desired.
 ANCIENT PROPHETS, three or four.
 ANGEL GABRIEL
 MARY
 JOSEPH
 SHEPHERDS, three to six as desired
 ANGEL
 HEAVENLY HOST, as many as wished.
 THREE WISE MEN
 KING HEROD

May number from fourteen to thirty or as desired. For example, the Heavenly Host can be an entire class of younger children such as kindergarten or nursery-school age, wearing wings and halos.

COSTUMES

Biblical robes and headdresses as noted in script. These are fairly easy to improvise, using illustrations from a Bible storybook as a guide.

PROPERTIES

Scroll for Prophets, and writing tool; manger and Baby; star on a pole; shepherds' crooks; Herod's scepter and Wise Men's gifts.

SETTING

Bare Stage. Ideally this is done as a chancel drama. However, it can be performed in any hall, auditorium, or stage, using center aisle for entrances as noted in script. A platform is helpful for tableaux at Center to aid in visibility. A platform at far end of center aisle is also beneficial for Shepherds at the start of Scene 4 and for Wise Men and Herod at beginning of Scene 5.

MUSIC

Organ or piano accompaniment for carols. Carols other than those suggested in script may be preferred. For example:

Scene 1 — “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

Scene 2 — “I Know A Rose-tree Springing”

Scene 3 — “Away in a Manger”

Scene 4 — “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”

Playing Time: 20 to 30 minutes. (Time may be shortened by using fewer stanzas of songs)

The arrangement of this pageant is fine for involving a great number of participants. Classes may rehearse their individual scenes by themselves. Only one or two rehearsals with the entire group are necessary. Individual characters' lines should be memorized (such as Angel, Gabriel and Mary). However, Announcers and classes may have scripts, backed by red or green paper, to refer to. They should be familiar with script, only glancing at text from time to time. Each class need only have the scene it is responsible for.

Announcers and those in tableaux will be lined up in order of their appearances. Classes will line up behind them. All enter during processional hymn. Announcers go to Left and Right. Tableau performers sit in choir stalls or front seats. Others sit by classes in front pews or seats.

PROCESSIONAL:

“God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen”

**God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay.
Remember Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas Day,
To save us all from Satan’s power
When we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy!**

**From God our heavenly Father
A blessed angel came;
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same;
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name. (Refrain)**

**“Fear not, then,” said the angel,
“Let nothing you affright;
This day is born a Savior
Of a pure virgin bright,
To free all those who trust in him
From Satan’s power and might. (Refrain)**

**Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood**

1 **Each other now embrace;**
 2 **This holy tide of Christmas**
 3 **Doth bring redeeming grace. (Refrain)**
 4

5 SCENE 1:

6 The Prophecy of the coming of Christ the King.
 7 *(Tableau #1: As Announcer speaks, three or four An-*
 8 *cient Prophets come to Center. One of them holds a*
 9 *scroll, partly unrolled, and holds a writing tool poised*
 10 *above it as others watch. Prophets wear long robes,*
 11 *sandals, and are preferably bearded.)*

12 **ANNOUNCER**

13 **ONE:** **Long before the birth of Jesus, ancient**
 14 **prophets foretold of a wonderful event — the**
 15 **coming of a Prince of Peace, who would be the**
 16 **Son of God and would bring a beautiful**
 17 **message of love and hope to all the world.**
 18 **Listen to the words of Isaiah, spoken hundreds**
 19 **of years before the birth of Jesus:**

20 **CLASS #1:** *(Standing and facing congregation. Isaiah 9:6 and*
 21 *52:7.)* **How beautiful upon the mountains are**
 22 **the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that**
 23 **publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of**
 24 **God, that publisheth salvation.**

25 **CLASS #1**

26 **GIRLS:** **For unto us a child is born. . .**

27 **CLASS #1**

28 **BOYS:** . . .**unto us a son is given:**

29 **CLASS #1:** **And the government shall be upon his shoulder**
 30 **and his name shall be called**

31 **CLASS #1**

32 **INDIVIDUAL:** **Wonderful!**

33 **CLASS #1**

34 **INDIVIDUAL:** **Counsellor!**

35

1 CLASS #1

2 INDIVIDUAL: **The Mighty God!**

3 CLASS #1

4 INDIVIDUAL: **The Everlasting Father!**

5 CLASS #1: *(All)* **The Prince of Peace!**

6 CLASS #1: *HYMN*

7 *“Come Thou Long-expected Jesus”*

8 **Come, thou long-expected Jesus,**

9 **Born to set thy people free;**

10 **From our fears and sins release us,**

11 **Let us find our rest in thee.**

12

13 **Born thy people to deliver,**

14 **Born a child, and yet a king,**

15 **Born to reign in us forever,**

16 **Now thy gracious kingdom bring.**

17 *(Ancient Prophets seat themselves again as*

18 *Announcer speaks. Class #1 sits.)*

19 ANNOUNCER

20 TWO: **Many years passed before the words of the**
 21 **prophets were fulfilled.**

22

23

SCENE 2:

24 The Appearance of the Angel before the Virgin Mary.

25 *(As Announcer speaks, Angel and Mary take places*

26 *Center. Mary seats herself on a stool, looking with*

27 *fear and wonder at the Angel Gabriel. Mary is dressed*

28 *in a blue robe and headdress; Angel in traditional*

29 *white gown with wings and halo.)*

30 ANNOUNCER

31 TWO: **Then to a simple maiden of the city of Nazareth**
 32 **came the greatest honor and glory yet**
 33 **bestowed upon woman. Hear the words of St.**
 34 **Luke telling of the Angel Gabriel’s appearance**
 35 **before Mary.**

1 **CLASS #2:** *(Standing and facing congregation)* **And in the**
 2 **sixth month the Angel Gabriel was sent from**
 3 **God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to**
 4 **a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was**
 5 **Joseph, of the house of David,**

6 **CLASS #2**

7 **GIRLS:** **And the Virgin's name was Mary.**

8 **CLASS #2**

9 **BOYS:** **And the angel came in unto her and said:**

10 **ANGEL**

11 **GABRIEL:** **Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is**
 12 **with thee. Blessed art thou among women.**

13 **CLASS #2:** **And when she saw him she was troubled at his**
 14 **saying and cast in her mind what manner of**
 15 **salutation this should be.**

16 **MARY:** **Thou art the Angel Gabriel, I know. But I am**
 17 **frightened.**

18 **ANGEL**

19 **GABRIEL:** **Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with**
 20 **God. And behold thou shalt conceive in thy**
 21 **womb and bring forth a son, and shall call his**
 22 **name JESUS.**

23 **MARY:** **Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it**
 24 **be to me according to your word.**

25 *(Class #2 sing carol "What Child Is This?", standing*
 26 *and facing congregation. Angel Gabriel and Mary*
 27 *hold pose.)*

28 **CLASS #2:**

CAROL

29 *"What Child Is This?"*

30 **What child is this, who, laid to rest,**
 31 **On Mary's lap is sleeping?**
 32 **Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,**
 33 **While shepherds watch are keeping?**
 34 **This, this is Christ the King,**
 35 **Whom shepherds guard and angels sing.**

1 **Haste, haste to bring him laud,**
 2 **The Babe, the Son of Mary.**

3
 4 **Why lies he in such mean estate**
 5 **Where ox and ass are feeding?**
 6 **Good Christian, fear: for sinners here**
 7 **The silent Word is pleading. (Refrain)**

8
 9 **So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,**
 10 **Come, peasant, king, to own him,**
 11 **The King of kings salvation brings,**
 12 **Let loving hearts enthrone him. (Refrain)**
 13 *(Members of the tableau and Class #2 seat them-*
 14 *selves)*

15
 16 **SCENE 3:**

17 **The Birth of Christ in Bethlehem.**

18 *(As Announcer speaks, Mary and Joseph walk slowly*
 19 *down center aisle.)*

20 **ANNOUNCER**

21 **ONE:** **The first Christmas, nearly two thousand years**
 22 **ago, was a seemingly unimportant event — the**
 23 **birth of a Child in a lowly manger in Bethlehem.**
 24 **Listen to the beautiful story in the words of St.**
 25 **Luke.**

26 **CLASS #3:** *(Standing and facing the congregation)* **And it came**
 27 **to pass in those days that there went out a**
 28 **decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world**
 29 **should be taxed. And all went to be taxed,**
 30 **everyone into his own city. And Joseph also**
 31 **went up from Nazareth to the city of David,**
 32 **which is called Bethlehem (because he was of**
 33 **the house and lineage of David), to be taxed**
 34 **with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with**
 35 **child. (By this time in the recitation, Mary and Joseph**

1 reach down Centerstage area. Two Angels, one from
 2 Right, one from Left, bring a stool for Mary and a
 3 small manger bed. Another Angel brings the doll
 4 which represents the Baby Jesus and puts it in Mary's
 5 arms during next line of St. Luke's gospel.) **And so**
 6 **it was, that while they were there, the days**
 7 **were accomplished that she should be**
 8 **delivered. And she brought forth her first-born**
 9 **son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes,**
 10 **and laid him in a manger, because there was**
 11 **no room for them in the inn.** (*Mary tenderly lays*
 12 *the Baby in manger, and Angels group themselves*
 13 *behind Mary and Joseph and hold pose during*
 14 *singing of carol.*)

15 **CLASS #3:**

CAROL

"Silent Night"

16
 17 **Silent night, holy night**
 18 **All is calm, all is bright**
 19 **Round yon virgin mother and child**
 20 **Holy infant so tender and mild,**
 21 **Sleep in heavenly peace.**
 22 **Sleep in heavenly peace.**
 23
 24 **Silent night, holy night,**
 25 **Shepherds quake at the sight,**
 26 **Glories stream from heaven afar,**
 27 **Heavenly hosts sing alleluia;**
 28 **Christ the Saviour is born!**
 29 **Christ the Saviour is born!**
 30
 31 **Silent night, holy night,**
 32 **Son of God, love's pure light**
 33 **Radiant beams from thy holy face,**
 34 **With the dawn of redeeming grace,**
 35 **Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

1 **Jesus, Lord at thy birth.**

2 *(Class #3 sits. Holy Family tableau remains.)*

3

4

SCENE 4:

5

The Worship of the Shepherds.

6

(As Announcer speaks, Shepherds take places at far

7

end of center aisle. Angel walks from Holy Family

8

tableau toward Shepherds and stands about half-way

9

down aisle to speak.)

10 **ANNOUNCER**

11 **ONE:**

**Among the few who first heard of the birth of
the Christ-Child were some humble shepherds
in the hills near Bethlehem.**

12

13

14 **CLASS #4:**

(Standing and facing the congregation) **And there
were in the same country shepherds abiding in
the field, keeping watch over their flock by
night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon
them, and they were sore afraid.** *(Shepherds fall
upon their knees, showing fear.)*

15

16

17

18

19

20 **ANGEL:**

**Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings
of great joy, which shall be to all people. For
unto you is born this day in the city of David,
a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall
be a sign unto you: you shall find the Babe
wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a
manger.**

21

22

23

24

25

26

27 **CLASS #4:**

**And suddenly there was with the angel a
multitude of the heavenly host, praising God
and saying:** *(Heavenly Host joins Angel)*

28

29

30 **ANGEL AND**

31 **HEAVENLY**

32 **HOST:**

**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace,
good will toward men.** *(Angel and Heavenly Host
go to Center tableau and group themselves behind
Holy Family)*

33

34

35

HERD: **Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.** (*Shepherds rise and walk down aisle. When they reach manger, they bow and group themselves on either side in front of Holy Family, taking care not to obscure tableau. This is during singing of carol.*)

S #4: (*Facing congregation*)

CAROL

“The First Nowell”

**The first Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields as they lay, keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter’s night that was so deep.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.**

**They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night. (Refrain)**

**This star drew nigh to the northwest,
O’er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where Jesus lay. (Refrain)**

(Class #4 sits. All in tableau hold pose.)

SCENE 5:

The Worship of the Three Kings
(As Announcer speaks, Herod and Three Wise Men take places at far end of aisle. Herod with a crafty look, appears to be listening to the story the Three Wise Men are telling him. All are richly dressed. Herod carries a scepter and wears a crown. Wise Men

1 *carry their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.)*
2 **ANNOUNCER**
3 **ONE:** **Poor shepherds were not the only worshippers**
4 **at the cradle in Bethlehem. Great kings also**
5 **came, bearing fine gifts.**
6 **CLASS #5:** *(Standing and facing congregation)* **Now when**
7 **Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the**
8 **days of Herod the king, behold there came wise**
9 **men from the east to Jerusalem, saying:**
10 **WISE MAN 1:** **Where is he that is born King of the Jews?**
11 **WISE MAN 2:** **For in the east we have seen his star. . .**
12 **WISE MAN 3:** **And we are come to worship him.**
13 **CLASS #5:** **When Herod the king had heard these things,**
14 **he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.**
15 **And he enquired of the Wise Men what time the**
16 **star appeared.**
17 **HEROD:** **Go then to Bethlehem and search diligently for**
18 **the young child; and when ye have found him,**
19 **bring me word again that I may come and wor-**
20 **ship him also.**
21 **CLASS #5:** **When they had heard the king, they departed;**
22 **and lo, the star went before them, till it came**
23 **and stood over where the young child was.**
24 *(An Angel with a star on a silvered pole leads the*
25 *Wise Men to center tableau. If possible, each Wise*
26 *Man will sing his own stanza, Class #5 singing open-*
27 *ing and closing stanzas and refrain during carol "We*
28 *Three Kings" as Wise Men come slowly down aisle.)*
29 **CLASS #5:** **CAROL**
30 **"We Three Kings"**
31 **We three kings of Orient are,**
32 **Bearing gifts we traverse afar,**
33 **Field and fountain, moor and mountain,**
34 **Following yonder star.**
35 **O star of wonder, star of night,**



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