

A Very

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Mixed-Up Christmas Pageant



By Gwynne Watkins



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A Beat by Beat Play
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A VERY MIXED-UP CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

SETTING

A church. Dress rehearsal for a Christmas pageant.

CAST SIZE

11 to 15+

(including 3 large speaking roles, 8 small speaking roles, and ensemble)

NOTE ON CASTING

Besides the characters of Mary and Joseph, and perhaps Herod, none of the roles in this play are written to be gender-specific.

PROPS

A toy sheep

A pile of Bathrobes/Choir Robes

SONGS

1. O Holy Night
2. Silent Night
3. Go Tell it on the Mountain
4. The First Noel
5. Jingle Bells (Optional Finale)



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CHARACTERS & COSTUMES

Reverend: An adult. High-strung.

Leslie: An adult. Not usually in charge of kids.

Narrator: A kid. Any costume will do. (Role can be expanded to multiple narrators.)

Gabriel: A kid dressed as an angel.

Mary: A kid dressed as a superhero who saves the world (such as: Captain Marvel, Wonder Woman, Superman).

Joseph: A kid dressed as a helper we can count on (such as: a police officer, a firefighter, Sheriff Woody).

Herod: A kid dressed as King Herod, who puts on the mask or costume of a villain (such as: Darth Vader, Kylo Ren, a vampire, the Joker).

Magi: Two or more kids dressed as characters who are scholars, scientists, very wise, and/or royalty (Such as: Harry Potter, Hermione, Gandalf, Yoda, Glinda the Good Witch, mad scientist, princess).

Star: Kid dressed in a sparkly or shiny costume.

Dragon: Kid dressed as a dragon. Can substitute with a unicorn, dinosaur, kangaroo or other unlikely animal.

Animals: Kids wearing animal costumes, including Dragon.

Angels: Kids wearing angel costumes, or wearing halos and wings with their Halloween costumes.

Shepherds: Kids wearing any costume.

Interjecting Kid: Anyone from the three groups above.

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(REVEREND is onstage, nervous. LESLIE enters, holding a toy sheep.)

REVEREND

Good morning, Leslie! Thank you so much for taking over the Christmas pageant at the last minute. I know Kelly is heartbroken that she has to miss the dress rehearsal.

LESLIE

Well, hanging Christmas lights is a dangerous business. I'm happy I could be here.

REVEREND

There's just one little problem.

LESLIE

What's that?

REVEREND

Apparently Kelly had the only key to the costume closet, sooo we don't have costumes for the dress rehearsal.

LESLIE

No costumes?

REVEREND

We just have to work with what we have.

LESLIE

What do we have?

REVEREND

(Trying to be optimistic.)

Mostly wings and halos. And I see we have a sheep!

(Grabs the toy sheep, pets it anxiously.)

REVEREND

Don't worry, we're collecting bathrobes and things for tomorrow. In the meantime, I asked all the kids who aren't angels, to just wear their Halloween costumes.

LESLIE

You did what?

REVEREND

Come on in, kids!

(The kids enter. Gabriel and the angels wear angel costumes. Herod wears no costume. The rest are all wearing an assortment of Halloween costumes.)

LESLIE

Okaaay. So I guess we'll just run through the Christmas pageant, and if we need to make changes along the way, we'll do that.

REVEREND

(Cheerful)

Places everybody!

(Out of earshot)

God help us.

(Reverend steps aside.)

♪ **SONG #1: OH HOLY NIGHT** ♪

(At the end of the song, everyone moves to the sides except for NARRATOR, GABRIEL, and MARY, who take their places onstage. Narrator can wear any costume; Gabriel is dressed as an angel; and Mary is dressed as a superhero like Wonder Woman or Captain Marvel. Narrator enters, standing at a podium, lectern or other fixed spot.)

NARRATOR

Long ago, in the small desert town of Nazareth in the country of Judea, lived a young woman named Mary. One day an angel appeared to Mary. The angel said --

GABRIEL

I can't do this.

(To Leslie)

That is NOT what Mary looks like.

REVEREND

(Trying to help)

Well... in fairness, the Bible doesn't tell us what Mary looks like.

LESLIE

(Improvising)

But... the Bible does tell us who Mary is! Right? So, God chose Mary to give birth to his only son Jesus. Something everyone thought was IMPOSSIBLE. Something that SAVED the world! So in a way, Mary is like a superhero.

(The kids and Reverend stare at her for a beat, then Mary says:)

MARY

Cool!

LESLIE

Yes. Cool. Keep going.

NARRATOR

The angel said to Mary, 'Greetings, highly favored one! The Lord is with you. You shall have a child and shall name him Jesus. He will be great and reign over God's people forever, and his kingdom will have no end.'

MARY

How shall this be since I am not married?

GABRIEL

The Holy Spirit will come to you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, and your baby will be the son of God.

(Mary exits.)

NARRATOR

Now, Mary was engaged to a man named Joseph.

LESLIE

Where is our Joseph?

INTERJECTING KID

He has the flu.

LESLIE

Okay, we need a Joseph.

(A kid dressed as a police officer/ fire fighter/ Woody from Toy Story/ an old west sheriff speaks up:)

JOSEPH

Can I do it?

INTERJECTING KID

He doesn't look like Joseph!

LESLIE

Well, Joseph... is someone who SHOWS UP when Mary NEEDS him, even though it's risky. So are you dressed as someone WE CAN COUNT ON TO HELP, no matter what?

(Joseph nods.)

LESLIE

Great, you're in. Continue.

(Joseph walks onstage.)

NARRATOR

Joseph didn't know what to think when Mary told him about the baby. But then the angel appeared to Joseph and said --

GABRIEL

Do not be afraid to marry Mary, because God has chosen her, and this baby will be the Messiah.

(Gabriel and Joseph exit.)

NARRATOR

Meanwhile, in a very different part of Judea, King Herod received an unexpected visit.

(Herod enters. He has no costume.)

HEROD

I couldn't find a costume.

LESLIE

It's fine.

HEROD

I want a costume!

LESLIE

Okay. Well, King Herod the villain of the Christmas story. He is jealous of Jesus and wants to have all the power, so he does a lot of EVIL things --

REVEREND

But he's still a child of God! So there's probably still GOOD IN HIM... somewhere. Anybody have a costume like that?

*(A kid hands Herod a Darth Vader mask/Kylo Ren mask/ Joker wig.
Herod puts it on.)*

LESLIE

That works. Continue.

NARRATOR

Three Magi had come from the East, following a star in the sky.

(No one comes up.)

LESLIE

Do the Magi also have the flu?

INTERJECTING KID

Nope. Soccer practice.

LESLIE

(Takes a deep breath, then continues.)

The Magi were probably kings, but also scholars, priests, very WISE. They studied the stars like SCIENTISTS. And the Bible doesn't say there were three of them -- just that they gave three gifts. So who's dressed as somebody wise, who maybe studies a lot, and perhaps is from a royal family? Ok --

(She calls on the kids by their costume names: Harry, Hermione, Gandalf, Yoda, Glinda, mad scientist, etc.)

LESLIE

You are the wise men and women.

(The MAGI enter.)

NARRATOR

The magi knew the prophecy: A child born in Judea would become the new King of the Jews. Herod also knew the prophecy, and was very upset. Herod wanted to be the only king!

HEROD

Go and find the child. Then come back here and tell me where he is.

ONE OF THE MAGI

(Vaguely remembers this part of the pageant.)

Uh... why?

HEROD

Because I want to DESTROY him! I mean, WORSHIP him. Worship.

(THE STAR, dressed as something shiny, raises their hand.)

STAR

Is someone going to be the star?

LESLIE

Do you want to be the star?

STAR

Yes, but, I was thinking, I could also give directions. Like the map on a phone. Because I'm showing them the way.

LESLIE

Why not! You're the star. Go shine.

NARRATOR

The Magi continued on their journey.

(Herod walks off upstage. The Magi walk off downstage, trailed by the Star.)

STAR

In forty feet, turn left. Turn left. Turn left.

(Mary and Joseph enter.)

NARRATOR

When Mary was almost ready to have her baby, she and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem. Mary rode on a donkey.

(DRAGON, a kid dressed as a dragon, raises their hand.)

DRAGON

How about they rode on a dragon?

LESLIE

Sure!

(Dragon joins them.)

NARRATOR

When they arrived, there were no rooms at the inn, so Mary and Joseph had to stay in the stable.

LESLIE

Anyone dressed as an animal, get up there.

(The ANIMALS join Mary and Joseph. They sing.)

♪ **SONG #2: SILENT NIGHT** ♪

(Mary, Joseph and the animals exit.)

NARRATOR

Meanwhile, in the nearby hills, there were shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night.

LESLIE

Raise your hand if you're not an angel. You are now a shepherd. Go watch your flock by night.

(The SHEPHERDS, who are the remaining kids, enter.)

NARRATOR

Suddenly, an angel –

REVEREND

Wait!

(The Reverend runs onstage, hands the toy sheep to the shepherds, gives Leslie a thumbs up, then runs off.)

NARRATOR

Suddenly, an angel appeared to them, saying, "Do not be afraid! I bring good news!"

(Gabriel enters.)

GABRIEL

Today in Bethlehem a savior has been born! He is the Messiah. Go and look for a baby in a manger.

NARRATOR

Then a whole host of angels appeared, singing and praising God.

(The ANGELS enter. They sing.)

♪ **SONG #3: GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN** ♪

(After the song, the angels move to the side. The shepherds, Mary, Joseph, and the animals gather onstage.)

NARRATOR

The shepherds hurried into town and found baby Jesus in a manger, just like the angel said.

SHEPHERD

Let us worship him!

(The shepherds bow to Jesus.)

NARRATOR

The star settled over Bethlehem, and a little while later, the Magi arrived from the East.

(The Magi, led by the Star, get onstage. They also bow to Jesus. It's a tableau.)

NARRATOR

And everyone knew that this child was truly the son of God.

(Reverend rushes on, holding bathrobes, choir robes, scarves, whatever people found.)

REVEREND

Wait, stop! Put your Halloween costumes away. I have robes for everyone!

MARY

I don't want to wear a bathrobe. I want to be Mary the superhero!

REVEREND

But a robe is more *authentic*.

LESLIE

I mean... is it?

(Slowly, thinking out loud.)

It's REALLY hard to imagine the first Christmas. No one knew the story yet.

(She gestures to the characters as she speaks.)

LESLIE

Angels appeared to shepherds, kings bowed to peasants, there was a baby in a feeding trough! Everything must have seemed STRANGE and MIXED UP. Maybe as strange as [Harry Potter, Captain Marvel, Darth Vader, and a dragon] performing a Christmas pageant.

REVEREND

(Uncertain.)

Well... Jesus said the Good News is meant for everyone. And God brought all those people together, on that first Christmas, for a reason.

(Gratefully, to Leslie:)

Just like God brought YOU here today!

LESLIE

I really didn't have other plans.

REVEREND

Forget the robes!

(Reverend, ecstatic, throws the robes offstage.)

The joy of Christmas is for all people, no matter who we are! No matter what we look like! God gave us this MIXED-UP WORLD and we REJOICE in it!

(Reverend realizes they've gotten carried away.)

(To kids.)

You can keep going.

(The kids resume their places.)

NARRATOR

The shepherds went and spread the good news across the land.

(Shepherds exit.)

NARRATOR

The Magi were warned in a dream not to trust Herod, so they went back a different way.

STAR

Re-routing... re-routing...

(Magi and Star walk off.)

NARRATOR

As we know, the angels' prophecy came true. Jesus did come as a baby, to save us all. He was fully human, fully God. And every Christmas, we celebrate his first day on Earth, when everything changed forever.

(The kids take their places for the final song.)

♪ **SONG #4: THE FIRST NOEL** ♪

- THE END -

♪ **SONG #5: JINGLE BELLS (Optional Finale)** ♪

Hymns

Song #1: O Holy Night

O Holy Night!
The stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Savior's
birth!
Long lay the world in sin and error
pining
Till he appear'd and the soul felt its
worth.

A thrill of hope
The weary soul rejoices
For yonder breaks
A new and glorious morn!

Fall on your knees
Oh hear the angel voices
Oh night divine
Oh night when Christ was born
Oh night
Oh Holy night
Oh night divine

Song #2: 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
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born
Christ the Savior is born
Christ the Savior is born



Song #3: Go Tell it on the Mountain

Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light

Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born!

The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo! Above the Earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed our Savior's birth

Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born!

Down in a lowly manger
Our humble Christ was born
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn

Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born!

Song #4: The First Noel

The First Noel, the Angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in
fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their
sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so
deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
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.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel!



Song #5: Jingle Bells

Dashing through the snow
In a one-horse open sleigh
O'er the fields we go
Laughing all the way
Bells on bobtails ring
Making spirits bright
What fun it is to ride and sing
A sleighing song tonight, Oh

Jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way
Oh what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh, hey
Jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way
Oh what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh

A day or two ago
I thought I'd take a ride
And soon, Miss Fanny Bright
Was seated by my side,
The horse was lean and lank
Misfortune seemed his lot
He got into a drifted bank
And then we got upsot

Jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way
Oh what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh, hey
Jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way
Oh what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh
A one-horse open sleigh, hey!

