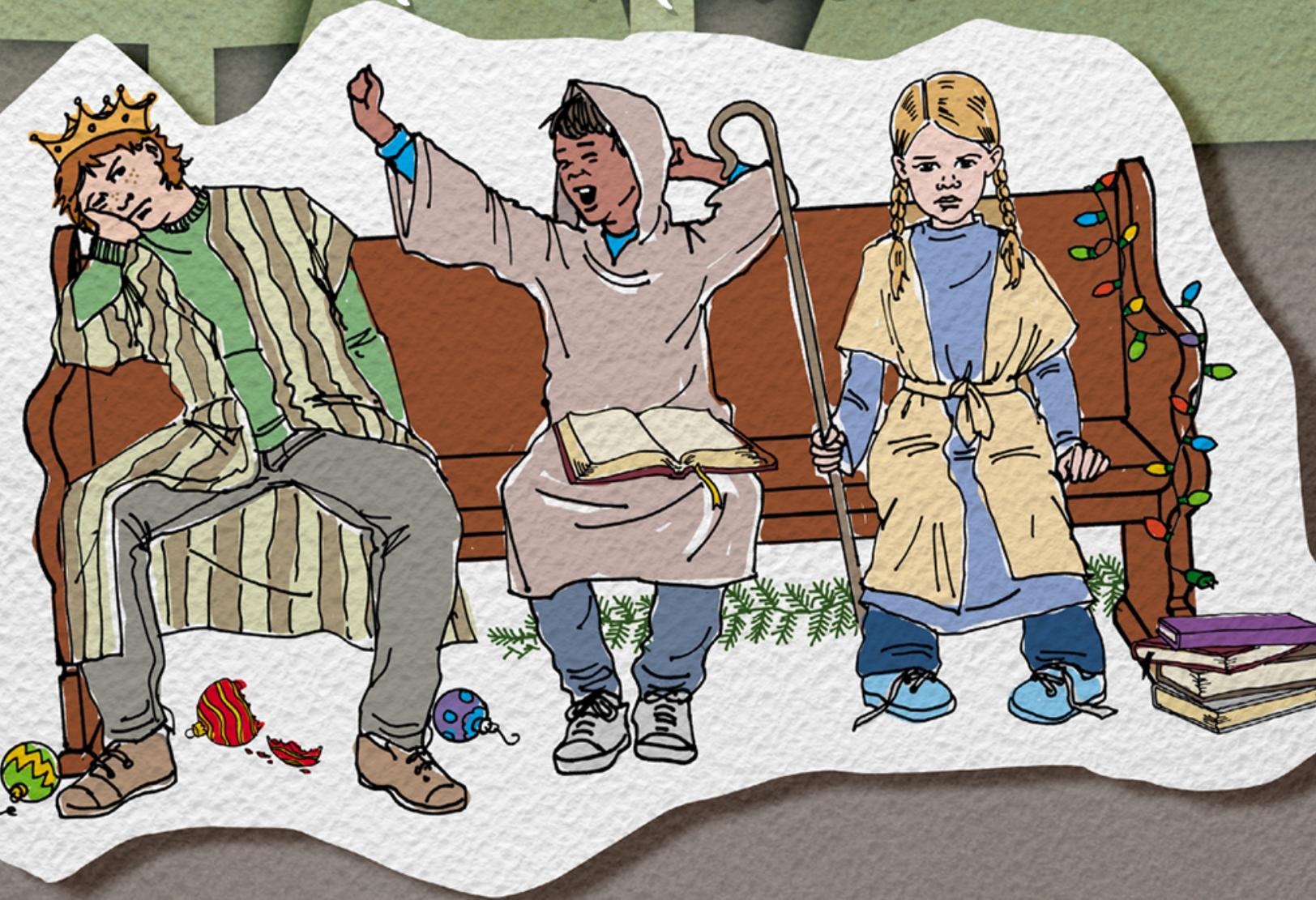


THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER: *The Musical*



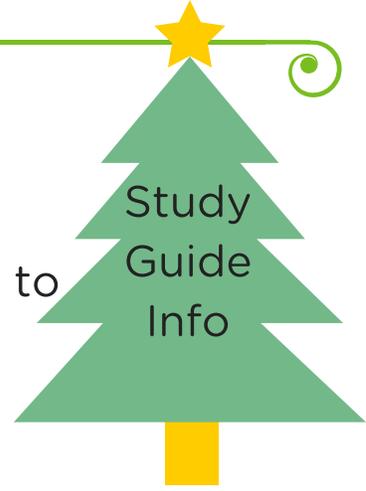
Study Guide
December 13-23, 2018



Columbus Children's
THEATRE

Why A Study Guide?

Welcome to The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical! Within our study guide you will find helpful tips to prepare your students to experience and talk about the performance. Use this guide to:



- Introduce students to theatre etiquette
- Introduce students to the roles of a theatrical production
- Share insider knowledge about the world of the show
- Explore themes of The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical
- Further discuss the show after seeing a performance
- Connect The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical to your classroom curriculum across a number of subject areas
- Dive into further readings to learn even more!

For more information about Columbus Children's Theatre and how we inspire, enrich and empower the imaginations of children and their families through live theatre and theatre education, visit our website at www.columbuschildrenstheatre.org

About The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical

The beloved Christmas tale is back like you've never seen it before with The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical! While keeping a similar Christmas charm, now with a little more singing, we re-meet the abrasive Herdman children as they shake up the whole congregation when they get cast as the stars in the church's Christmas pageant. Featuring beloved classic Christmas chorales, as well as a few new songs, watch and listen as the Herdmans, and whole congregation, cooperate and come together to give back and find the true meaning of Christmas.

Theatre Etiquette

Theatre etiquette is a simple set of rules to help audience members fully enjoy the show, and for actors and the backstage crew to safely perform their work for you! Here are some important elements of theatre etiquette at CCT:

- Arrive on time
- For the safety of the actors and the audience, please stay seated for the performance
- Visit the restroom before the performance begins
- The use of electronic devices (other than access devices), is strictly prohibited
- Please do not talk to your neighbor during the performance
- If you like something that you see, you may clap or laugh - it shows the actors that you like what they are doing!



Suggested Reading

The Best School Year Ever
by Barbara Robinson
Grades 3-5



How To Have The Best Christmas Ever (The Christmas Book) by Juliana Foster
Grades 4-7

Chicken Soup for the Soul Christmas Treasury for Kids:
A Story a Day from December 1st through Christmas for
Kids and Their Families
by Jack Canfield, Irene Dunlap,
Patty Hansen, and Mark Victor Hanse
Grades 6-8

Theatre Location:
Lincoln Theatre
769 E. Long Street
Columbus 43203

Who is Involved in a Theatrical Production?

Performances at Columbus Children's Theatre are the result of groups of people working together. Many people know and understand what an actor is - the person on the stage telling the story. But did you know that there are more people working hard "behind-the-scenes" to make the performance happen? Below are just a few of those people.

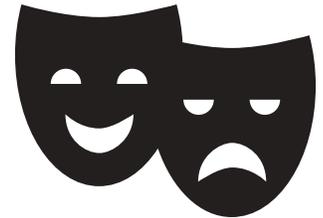


The Director

- Responsible for the overall concept of the show - they guide a vision to create a world on stage in which the show may exist.
- Works with the actors to help them interpret their characters and move on stage.
- Works closely with designers in planning the sounds, lights, scenery, costumes, props - basically, everything you see on the stage.

The Choreographer

- Directs the dances onstage.
- Design dance moves that help tell the story of a musical
- Teaches the dances to the actors.



The Designers

- Work with the director and with each other to create the look of the lights, scenery, costumes, make-up, sound and special effects. They make the world on stage come to life.

The Stage Manager

- Organizes every aspect of the production - schedules, resources and communications.
- In charge of making everything run smoothly from rehearsal to performance.
- Guarantees the same great performance every single time, whether you attend a show during the school day, or with your family in the evening or on the weekend.

The Crew

- There are a lot of different crew people. Some help build the scenery, costumes, and props you see on the stage, and some are working backstage during the show helping actors change costumes, moving pieces of scenery on and off, or operating the lights and sound.

The Cast

- The Cast is what we call all of the actors who are on stage performing the characters in front of the audience.

The Audience

- This is where you come in! The show you see would not exist without you. The hard work everyone puts in to create a show is all meant to share a story with you.

The Characters

As described in The Best Christmas Pageant Ever: The Musical script given to all actors, directors, and designers:



The Herdman Kids

Ralph - the oldest and coolest. He's the enforcer, 13.

Imogene - leader of the Herdmans. She's loud, bossy, and crafty, 12.

Leroy - Ralph's backup. Very confident in the muscle department, 11.

Claude - scrappy and smart, 10.

Ollie - a bit of a naive urchin who follows the older boys' leads, 9.

Gladys - little but fierce. Nothing scares Gladys, 8.

The Bradleys

Grace - sweet, good-humored, slightly frazzled mom, 35-40ish.

Bob - easygoing dad, wry sense of humor, 35-40ish.

Charlie - typical kid brother, says what he thinks, 10.

Beth - Charlie's older and wiser sister. She's honest and kind, 11.



Church People

Helen Armstrong - organized steamroller. She's always in charge, 40-50ish.

Revered Hopkins - occasionally befuddled, always well-meaning, 40-50ish.

Church Ladies

Luanne - sassy, tells it like it is, 35-40ish.

Betty - sweet, southerner, calls everyone "honey", 30-40ish.

Connie - direct, no-nonsense type, 30-40ish.



Kids

Alice Wendleken - know-it-all. She thinks she's perfect, 11.

Elmer Hopkins - preacher's kid, which means he needs to behave and be nice, 10.

Teddy Shoemaker - wimpy kid with glasses, asks too many questions, 9.

Ivy Reed - Beth's earnest friend who is sometimes a goody-goody, 11.

Various kids to play angels and shepherds in the pageant and possibly other kids in the lunchroom.

Themes

Misunderstanding

The fire that happened at the church was blamed on the Herdmans because they had been known to be naughty and mischievous, but it turned out that the Church Ladies' cakes burned, causing a fire. Because of a misunderstanding, the Herdmans were kicked out of the pageant, until the truth was discovered.

Forgiveness

Some of the kids and parents were angry with Grace for allowing the Herdmans to be a part of the Christmas pageant and some were upset with the Herdmans because they thought they started the fire. The most important part of the story revolves around how these issues are resolved with forgiveness; they move forward and focus on what Christmas is really about.

Judgement

The Herdmans were harshly judged by the other kids at church, as well as kids at their school. They were assumed to be “problem kids”, so they were not given many opportunities to show the world that they could be different. When we spend too much time judging people, we don't give ourselves time to get to know them and understand them.



What's Next

Use these questions to spark conversation on the way back from the theatre, in your classroom the next day, or as writing prompts for students' journals!



- The church Christmas pageant is a tradition for the Bradley family, and many other families in the community. What are some holiday traditions your family or your school participate in every year? If you could create a new holiday tradition for your family or school, what would it be, and why?
- The holiday season is a time for giving to others. Many times during the Christmas season we are encouraged to give of our time or talents to those who are less fortunate than we are. This holiday season, what are ways you can selflessly give of your time or talents to others in need?
- Beth and Charlie Bradley are not excited about being a part of the Christmas pageant this year because it is always exactly the same, every single year. What were the differences in this year's pageant that made it anything but the same as usual?
- The Christmas pageant did not go as originally planned, but everyone agreed that it was the best pageant ever. Has something you planned ever not gone as expected? How did this make you feel? What positive twists came from this event not going as planned?



Class Activities

Extinguish a Fire!

Materials:

Baking soda

Vinegar

Ziplock bag

Activity:

1. Place students with a partner, and give each pair one Ziplock bag.
2. Have students put two big spoonfuls of baking soda in a plastic Ziplock bag.
3. Students should seal their bag nearly closed, leaving only a small opening.
4. Have students pour about half a cup of vinegar into the bag. Right afterwards, they should quickly seal the bag closed and gently shake the mixture.
5. Have students observe what happens to the mixture in their bag. Explain to them that they have just made a gas known as carbon dioxide.
6. While observing the newly created gas in their Ziplock bags, ask students if they can explain why carbon dioxide foam would make a good fire extinguisher?
 - a. Carbon dioxide is good for putting out fires because it displaces air (oxygen) and, therefore, the fire then cannot breathe. With the “woosh” of a CO₂ extinguisher comes a cold white cloud of carbon dioxide that rushes out of the nozzle and covers the target area like a fog. It pushes air (and the oxygen the fire needs to continue to burn) out of the way. Presto! No more fire!
7. Test these mini-fire extinguishers by lighting a small candle, shaking the vinegar and baking soda mixture again vigorously, and then pouring the mixture onto the flame. Have students watch carefully and note what happens to the flame when it comes into contact with the carbon dioxide gas.



A Community of Givers - Service Fair

1. Ask students to name some community-wide activities that they think sound exciting, like a canned food drive, a clothing drive, or a bake sale.

2. Read aloud about successful service projects designed by children (listed below). Also let the students explore websites and books for more inspiring projects by children who are making a difference.

a. Alex's Lemonade Stand <http://www.alexlemonade.org/> (one child's story of raising over a million dollars for cancer research) September 1, 2007

b. Lewis, Barbara A. *The Kid's Guide to Social Action*. Free Spirit Publishing, 1998. ISBN: 1575420384

c. Trevor's Campaign for the Homeless.

<http://www.volunteersolutions.org/volunteerway/org/217084.html> (tells story of one boy's efforts that evolve into something big) August 31, 2007

3. After sharing these stories, ask students if they feel any of these young people are heroes, and if so, what makes them heroes? How do you think these young people succeeded in making the project work? If you could make any service project you could dream of into a success, what would it be and why?

4. Have students research and brainstorm a list of nonprofit organizations in their community. Write this list of nonprofits on the board, and briefly describe how they serve the community (ie: education, medical aid, food, shelter, clothing, culture, other community needs, etc.).

5. Inform students that the class is going to create and participate in a service fair for the school community, in which many different nonprofit organizations are represented and explained. The fair can take place right in the classroom during the school day or another location or time. Set the date and time for the fair well in advance and assign students to design a flier to send home, place around the school, and display in the community inviting people to the fair. Be sure to invite families, school personnel, and community members.

6. Place students into pairs or small groups. Each group will pick a charity/issue and find a way to support it and represent it creatively and factually at the charity fair.

7. After the fair, have the students write letters to their charities that explain where the money or gifts are coming from. Deliver the donations as soon as possible.



See you
at the
Theatre!