

From our Churches

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Christmas Pageant 2008

Scene 1 Where are you going for Christmas?

Hillary Hey Katrina, I see you've got a suitcase packed there. Are you getting ready for a big Christmas trip?

Katrina No, I just got back from a trip to Cuba, so I don't think that our family is going to go anywhere for Christmas.

Hillary So you're not going anywhere for the holidays? I was hoping to go to Jamaica this year but it looks like we'll have to settle for Mexico.

Three wise men enter the scene

Wise man 1 It's amazing how a couple of thousand years can change how you think about things.

WM 2 That's for sure. When we first saw the star that eventually led us to Bethlehem, we had to decide on whether to take a life changing trip or not. It wasn't just about another exotic holiday in a warm place.

WW3 The trips that people take for Christmas holidays seem to be all about themselves and they still call them Christmas holidays. Remind me what that word Christmas means again?

WM1 We're still trying to figure that out. But for these people it has something to do with trips and presents.

WM2 They're celebrating the anniversary of the birth of Jesus. If you remember, traveling and giving gifts was exactly what we did.

WM3 But our traveling wasn't exactly a pleasure trip. These people have no idea what it feels like to ride a camel for weeks on end.

WM1 No they don't and we went for a purpose beyond ourselves. We went to discover the meaning of a message from God.

MUSIC

Mary & Joseph enter

Mary Those girls look about the same age that I was when Jesus was born. My "trips" to that point in my life had included occasional visits to Jerusalem to

sacrifice animals at the temple. It was pretty disgusting actually, but we usually saw lots of cousins and stuff when we traveled for those special occasions.

Joseph With the Roman occupation you were almost sure to be bothered by soldiers and if they weren't around the bandits were often out. The times were uncertain and there were a lot of risks.

Mary The wise men mentioned camels. Riding on a donkey when you're pregnant and ready to give birth was just a bad idea.

Joseph Our travels were to fulfill a prophecy. It doesn't seem like that's the motivation for people's travel these days.

MUSIC

Wise men, Mary and Joseph exit

Scene 2 Family is central at Christmas

Hillary I'm really excited because my aunt and uncle and cousins from [insert town/city] are coming to spend Christmas with us.

Katrina That's great. Some of my cousins who live in the city will be around but the rest of our family lives far away so we won't see them.

Hillary I know that family can be annoying and complicated sometimes, but celebrating Christmas together is one of the best things in the whole world.

Katrina That's for sure. We go to the Christmas Eve service at church. After that we go on a super lame "Christmas Lights Tour" of the city. We have a "family sleepover" on Christmas Eve when we read "Twas the Night before Christmas," we open our stockings first, we have cheese fondue for Christmas dinner...

Hillary Those sound like awesome traditions. Especially that "lights tour" - not. We do stuff like that too and that's what makes Christmas feel really special.

Characters freeze

Shepherds enter

Shepherd 1 Family was important to us back in first century Palestine too.

Shep 2 When we were out in the fields watching the sheep, we were together with brothers, cousins and uncles.

Shep 3 My dad was out there too!

Shep 4 That's right. We had rituals and traditions of what we did together in those days as well.

Shep 5 When Jesus was born, though, it wasn't at all about "tradition". That was something entirely new.

Shep 1 I don't go a single day without thinking about the angels that appeared to announce the Messiah's coming.

Shep 2 I know what you mean. The feeling of running from the fields to the place where the baby was born was so amazing.

Shep 3 The baby was new and small!

Shep 1 We knew that God had come into the world

Shep 2 We knew that "tradition" had changed.

Mary and Joseph enter with wise men

Mary It was actually really hard being with family that year. I was pregnant and everybody thought the father was Joseph and he wasn't – and he didn't know what to believe - not that I blamed him. It was confusing for all of us.

Joseph But family soon became really important to us. Your cousin Elizabeth was like a mother to you. It was really exciting to have our first child even if it was a bit strange to have God as a member of the family.

WM 1 We left our families behind to go on our expedition.

WM 2 Those we left behind didn't always understand nor were they too impressed.

WM3 Sometimes tradition needs to be broken and renewed in order for God to be seen in a new way.

Characters freeze

MUSIC

All except Katrina and Hillary exit

Scene 3 Music IS Christmas

Katrina hums "Jingle Bells"

Hillary There are some songs at Christmas that I find annoying, but generally I really love Christmas music.

Katrina It's kind of what sets this time apart from other seasons, isn't it?

Hillary White Christmas, Away in a Manger, Angels we have Heard on High, even the "Friedens-whatever" song all make the sound of Christmas special and wonderful.

Angels enter

Angels God sent the angel choir
From heaven above to earth
God sent us to sing for Jesus
To announce the Messiah's birth

We sang with joy and praises
We sang of peace and glory
God's love is for all people
That is the Christmas music story

The shepherds fell on their faces
For they were stunned with fear
We sang to them "don't be afraid"
God's son is born quite near!

Shepherds enter

Shep 1 Were you actually stunned with fear?

Shep 2 Not as much as you, but we were all scared

Shep 3 The music was beautiful!

Shep 1 That's the part I remember best - the heavenly choir!

Shep 2 I've never heard music like that before or since.
Shep 1 It sounds as though music is still one of the important ways that people celebrate the coming of Jesus. That's really great.

MUSIC

All except Hillary and Katrina exit

Scene 4 Food & Drink at Christmas

Hillary So your family has cheese fondue for Christmas dinner? We always have turkey, stuffing, gravy - you know, the works.
Katrina There are so many amazing foods that we eat at Christmas. Peppernuts and Nanaimo bars are two of my favourites.
Hillary Personally I love fruitcake, but lots of people think that's weird. I don't get what's so great about egg nog, though.

Characters freeze

Wise men and Shepherds enter

WM1 Christmas food?
Shep 1 Some of that stuff sounds good, but why do they call it Christmas food?
Shep 2 Maybe that's part of how they make this time of year special.
Shep 3 It all sounds delicious!
WM 2 I guess they've been celebrating the Messiah's arrival for a long time. What will they think of next? Decorating their houses and churches with trees and lights?
WM3 That would just be weird, wouldn't it?

MUSIC

Scene 5 Gifts at Christmas

Katrina I guess by going somewhere "ordinary" like Mexico your family should at least be able to afford good presents. Maybe you'll get that new cell phone with the wide screen TV built in.
Hillary Yeah, either that or the IPOD with enough memory to hold every song ever written.
Katrina One of those would be awesome. Are you buying presents for everyone in your family?
Hillary For sure. It's fun having something wrapped under the tree for everybody. How about you?
Katrina Our family is getting big so we've started to pick names. I picked one of my sisters, but I still don't know what to make for her. I like the idea of traveling and giving presents for Christmas but sometimes it feels like a real hassle.
Hillary Presents are really exciting and fun, but it sure is easy to get obsessed with that part of things.

Characters freeze

WM3 People say that the Christmas season isn't about presents and stuff, but I'm not sure I believe them.

WM2 And when I brought myrrh for Jesus, I would never have thought of wrapping it in pretty paper.

WM3 That's because you're a man. Those gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh were costly but they were also symbolic. A widescreen TV in a cell phone? They were joking, right?

WM1 If we had known how much excess spending, how much worrying and how much jealousy and resentment Christmas presents were going to cause, I'm not sure that we would have started the tradition.

WM2 Everyone seems to love getting and giving gifts, but so many of them lose perspective.

WM3 They say they give gifts to each other because God gave us a gift in God's son, but it seems like God and Jesus get forgotten in the mix.

Scene 6 What's Missing?

Katrina There is so much going on at Christmas.

Hillary Parties, family stuff, church events, shopping, food, choir practices, caroling, wrapping, baking...

Katrina It kind of wears me out just thinking of it.

Hillary It feels like there's so much ...expectation

Katrina Exactly. It's all supposed to be wonderful and perfect and so people keep trying harder and harder and adding more and more. Yet it doesn't seem to work.

Hillary There's so much that is wonderful about Christmas, but sometimes it just feels like...too much.

Characters freeze.

Mary and Joseph enter

Mary We didn't actually have "Christmas," did we? There was no Christmas - there was only Jesus.

Joseph We celebrated the birth of a baby and started to live into the reality of "God with us" - Emmanuel

Wise men enter

WM3 We were looking for the Messiah - God's presence on earth, not a new tradition.

Shepherds enter

Shep 1 We heard the announcement from the angels. We went looking for the good news of great joy for all people.

Angels enter

Angel 1 Without the Messiah we wouldn't have been sent. "Christmas" was good news. "Christmas" was Jesus coming - the promise of God's Kingdom.

MUSIC

All except Hillary and Katrina exit

Katrina Do you get the feeling that people have been listening in to our conversations about Christmas?
Hillary Definitely. And I think they might have some different ideas about what Christmas means.
Katrina I'm not sure what all needs to change, but I feel like I've been reminded about something really important.
Hillary That the coming of Jesus is central to Christmas?
Katrina Exactly. *(Gives Hillary a hug.)* Merry Christmas
Hillary Merry Christmas to you too.

Hillary and Katrina put a manger with a baby in it at the centre of the stage near the front. All of the actors enter and kneel around the manger. Lights focus on the manger in the front and on the cross at the back of the choir loft. Some quiet meditative music plays for a minute before moving to the final musical numbers.

*MUSIC
DISMISSAL*