

Christmas During COVID

(How to make an amazing pageant with resources you already have.)

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Overview

Identify:

- Parameters
- Assets
- Community Story

Thinking About Writing:

- Writing from the Ending
- Writing from a Situation

PARAMETERS

(What shapes your pageant?)

ASSETS

(What do you have at your disposal?)

COMMUNITY STORY

(What traditions do you have that can shape your pageant?)

WRITING FROM THE END

EXAMPLE OF PAGEANT WRITTEN FROM THE ENDING

“Gluten Free Jesus” (2018)

Angel 1: Can you believe it's been 21 years?

Angel 2: Oh my, has it really?

1: Yea, 21 years since that night in Bethlehem, when we were part of a story that will be remembered forever!

2: Yea, the night they woke us up in the middle of the night to stand over a field, smell cows, and then try to explain incarnation to some stupid shepherds.

1: Hush your self! We were chosen by God to announce the earthly birth of his son, Jesus!

2: AND to discover that manure smelled like! My nose isn't built for that! I need more, ...more... more heavenly smells, like clouds, and sunshine and robes; not sheep, cows, and manure.

1: Really? We were there for the single most important event in human history and all you remember are the smells?

2: Well... it was bad.

1: O.K. it was, but that is not the point. Next week is Jesus' 21st birthday, and Mary & Joseph are trying to put together a huge party. They really want everyone who was there at his birth to be part of the celebration.

2: That sounds like Mary & Joseph. Do you remember his 13th birthday? They really meant to throw a huge part then, but forces being what they are, a monster showed up, and tried to ruin the whole party.

1: What was that monster's name?

2: I don't know if he ever said, everyone just called him "The Hormone Monster" and he had a crazy low voice like this.

1: Oh yea, he did talk like this

2: Ha, Ha, Ha

1: Anyway, baring any monsters showing up, how can we help Mary & Joseph prepare for this party?

2: I have no idea

1: I overheard them talking the other day, and they've invited the inn keeper, and the shepherds,

but they didn't know how to contact the wisemen.

2: The wisemen?

1: Yes. The Wisemen.

2: Anyone but the wisemen! Don't you remember that one of them brought that present, that led to the huge fiasco at Jesus birth?

1: Yes. The one that we are still not allowed to talk about. I know, but it's important to Mary that they are there, so we need to make sure they are.

opens with Balthazar reading a book/planner

Balthazar: Can you believe it's been 21 years since that great star?

Melichior: Really? 21 years already?

B: Indeed. What a wonderful night. The coming of the Messiah in such a poetic fashion, the High King of all, born in a lowly manger

M: An amazing evening... until Gaspar offered his *cought**cough* "gift."

B: Ugh, yes, Who in their right mind would take that to a baby...

M: ...and especially a baby allergic to...

— Gaspar walks in—

B: [cutting off M] Oh, hey Gaspar, how are you?

Gaspar: I'm good, How are you?

M: We're fine. What bring you around today?

G: Did you know it's been 21 years since we saw that little baby?

B: Why, yes. Yes it has been.

G: What happened to that little baby? I bet he's gotten bigger. I mean, he's probably a big little baby by now.

M: Ugh...

———Angels Enter———

1: Speaking of which.

2: That baby is having a birthday soon, and we want you to come. Well.... we want Balthazar and Melchior to come, you can take the night off Gaspar.

1: Be nice.

2: Ok, you can come, just don't bring a gift, at least not that gift, or better yet, let Balthazar pick your gift

M: Wonderful idea.

B: Angels, where will this party be?

1: At the family home in Nazareth.

2: With all the "wonderful" smells there in...

B: Delightful. We will gladly attend.

G: Maybe at 21 Jesus would finally appreciate...

M: NO! Never. Don't even say it out loud.

B: Angel, thank you for your message. Will we see you there?

1: Yes. see you there.

——— Angels exit ———

M: Wait... do you realize what this means?

B: what?

M: we have a chance to right Gaspar's wrong!

G: My what?

M: Quiet you!

B: Say more...

M: If we take good presents, i mean great presents, I mean the best most thoughtful presents every taken anywhere, maybe, just maybe, the historians will remember the present we took to his 21st birthday, and forget

G: (interrupting with pride) MY....

M + B: QUIET YOU!

B: Melichor, that's just crazy enough to work! But what do we take Jesus?

M: That the question, what do you take the mid who God a brilliant star on his birth?

G: I know what I could bring.

M: You're not going to say what I think you are, are you? "That which shall not be named?"

B: Especially after last time?

Um... Um... I could bring. Nevermind.

B: We better think on this.

A1: I know what you're asking yourself, what could Gaspar have brought to the birth of Jesus that was so ill received, so allergy inducing, so inappropriate, that Balthazar and Melchior would

come up with this scheme to hopefully change the history books, replacing what they had brought at the nativity, for what they'll bring to his 21st birthday?

A2: (interrupting) Well, we can't tell you, because, you know, it's been forbidden. It's been decreed from on high that no one is allowed to say the name of "that which shall not be named."

1: But we can show you. So let's take a trip back in time to that holy night in Bethlehem, when two young angels got to be part of the greatest story ever told.

2: Though the wisemen's gifts have been censored for those present, and because... well, like we just said, it's been forbidden.

Act 2 - Nativity

A1: Look at how young we look!

A2: I can't believe I was wearing my belt to the left, that's such "year 0" fashion! And ugh.... I didn't realize time travel would be so.... potent.

A3: (a younger version of A1 reads the Luke nativity account, with smaller children acting it out in the chancel behind them)

A4: (a younger version of A2 reads Wisemen text from Matthew, with smaller children acting it out behind them. The wise men come bearing back gift boxes with white question marks (or "censored") written on the side.)

1: And that's when it all started to go down hill, when Gaspar opened his gift and....

2: SSSHHHHhhhh!!!! FORBIDDEN!

1: Speaking of which, i wonder how their gift search is going.

2: Yes! we should leave and check in on them because it's the right thing to do, and not because the smell of the donkey is seeping into my robe.

Act 3

(Begins with Balthazar and Melichor watching Gaspar as he runs on and off stage offering ridiculous gift ideas)

Gaspar: What about this? (dog leash)

Melichor: No pets

G: This? (power drill)

Balthazar: What is that even?

G: How about this? (hugh cross)

M: Too soon... way too soon.

B: Gaspar, we appreciate what you are doing here, but we think we have this covered.

M: Right, there are three of us, so we are going to take three gifts, unlike your 'all for one' gift idea last time. Seriously, who would rather receive one gift than three?

B: And each gift will have symbolic meaning, pointing to a bigger picture of who Jesus is

G: Was my original gift really that bad?

{awkward silence}

M + B: YES!

M: We are right now know as the guys you brought... I can't even say it.

-----angels walk in-----

A1 How are you guys doing?

A2: Yea, you got any great gift ideas yet?

B: Indeed we do! We have three!

M: And they are so amazing that they're all people will be talking about for years to come.

G: And I might... just by myself, make some...

A1, A2, B, + M: NO!!

2: What's with this guy? Didn't he learn last time?

1: So Balthazar, what do you have in mind?

B: Ok, Melichor is going to take gold, because Jesus is the King of kings, and kings like gold.

2: Gold is soooo... pretty.

B: I'm going to take Myrrh, and yes I know that myrrh is typically the scent used to prepare dead bodies for funerals, but I just thought that Jesus would appreciate the opportunity to smell a little better on his special day.

2: And I would appreciate that over the normal Nazareth odors as well.

1: Really? Go on, what about Gaspar?

M: We are sending him with frankincense.

1: Ahh... the traditional insect of worship, praise, and thanksgiving.

B: Because it's important to honor Jesus on his birthday.

M: And after "that which shall not be named" we figure Gaspar needs to do a little extra praying and worshipping.

1: Good point

G: I thought we should get him his very own wine press... so, you know, he could make wine his own wine. Wouldn't that be a great party trick?

2: Really? How are you a wise man?

1: Great job Balthazar, I hope your little plan works.

Transition —> Jesus 21's Birthday party (Gaspar is off stage)

ALL: (Happy Birthday is sung)

Jesus: What a wonderful, and festive day! Thank you all so much for being part of this celebration, and for these exceptionally thoughtful presents, especially Balthazar, Melichori, and Gaspar, my 3 wise friends. The insight, wisdom, and care shown in these gifts will undoubtedly be remembered for all of eternity!

M: YES! (speaking to Balthazar) it worked

B: Indeed it did, no one will ever remember Gaspar's previous error in Bethlehem.

M: Speaking of Gaspar, where is he? He was just right here.

B: I don't know, but as long as he's not here, I'm not worried.

G: (coming in off stage right/library) Jesus! Jesus! I brought you something! (Gaspar runs front and center carrying one of the black censored boxes from act 2)

2: You have to be kidding me!

1: I can't believe this is happening!

B: Not again!

M: Somebody stop him!

G: I wanted to bring you something special, something that I brought you on the day you were born.

[Jesus opens the box and removes a small bag.. looks in it]

J: Are these apple fritters?

2: But Gaspar! Jesus is Gluten free!!!
ALL: (laughter)

WRITING FROM A SITUATION

EXAMPLE OF PAGEANT WRITTEN FROM SITUATION

Ice Storm Story (2011)

{The pageant begins with a clear chancel area. The house lights will be off, with only the chancel light illuminated.}

Welcome & Opening Comments.

{The kids/choir process up the center and gather in the chancel}

SONG – Emmanuel Will Come

*{Choir/Kids exit through left & right chancel doors at conclusion of song.
House lights will come on to indicate a shift in focus.
Four middle school youth come to the front of the chancel (baptismal side), two are seated stage right and the other two are standing in a more central with Wii remotes playing. As the opening dialogue commences, Matty and Luke's video game controls the majority of their attention}*

John: *{looking out window}* What's going on outside?

Mark: Is that ice? That's one heck of a storm

Luke: Who cares about the storm are you watching THIS!!!

Matty: Do you mean are they watching me dominate you Luke?

Lk: No way Matty, watch this *{exaggerated motion}*

Jh: No, really you guys it's coming down out there and it looks bad....

{An old man figure walks in from the door behind them over hearing John's comment}

Jh: ...it's like some kind of ice, rain, slush mess getting all over everything.

Dad: You're right John, the weather report says it's going to be one nasty storm.

Jh: How bad do you think it will be? Should I call my parents to come pick me up?

Dad: Well, I wouldn't ask them to come out in the middle of it of this John....

{Matty & Luke erupt in excitement completely entrenched in their game with no awareness of what's happening around them}

Dad: ...the news said the storm will be nasty but brief, so why don't you just wait for it to blow over before you call your folks, it shouldn't be all that long. I mean *{pause}* the worst thing that could happen is that the power might go out.

{on cue with the word "out" the chancel lights drop}

{Luke & Matty simultaneously turn to the man}

Matty & Luke: DAD!!!!

Dad: What? It's not like "I" did this.

Lk: So what are we supposed to do?

Dad: You know, people lived for years before electricity

Lk: Sure..... they did.

Dad: No, really before the internet, bookfacing, wii, and whatever else you kids are doing, people actually lived entire lives without dying from boredom.

Mk: Then what did they do?

Dad: Well, back in the day, and I mean before my time

Lk: *{interrupting}* sure.....

Dad: *{continuing with disregard for previous comment}* ...people used to read and share stores.

Mk: With all due respect, Mr. Bugenhagen, I find it hard to believe that people read in the time before electricity, I mean logically if there was no electricity what powered their e-readers?

Dad: *{shaking head in disbelief}* Really Mark? I... nevermind. Why don't you kids try to come up with a story? It'd be a way to pass the time as we're waiting for the power to come back on.

Jh: About what?

Dad: How about this, Christmas is right around the corner, if you kids can sit in this room and come up with the entire Christmas story before the power comes back on, I'll have a surprise for you.

Jh: You're on

Mk: I'm in Mr. Bugenhagen

Mt & Lk: Alright Dad.

{Dad leaves the via right chancel door}

Mk: Ok, so the Christmas story, what do you know about it?

{Chancel lights cue up, kids enter in through left and right chancel doors.}

SONG – Star Carol

{At conclusion of song choir/kids part down the center with ½ moving to the left side of the chancel and ½ moving to the right side.}

Jh: Ok, well... didn't it start, "in the beginning" or something?

Mk: No John, I'm pretty sure your thinking about Star Wars.

Mt: Well... what about a boring list? Isn't the Bible filled with boring lists of names? Maybe the Christmas story starts with a long, boring list of names.

Lk: They wouldn't bore people with a list on name of Christmas Matty. No, what's... the... beginning... *{scratches head}*

Isn't it something about a census or something? So that Mary and Joseph have to go back to Bethlehem?

{Choir/kids sing from stage right/stage left}

SONG – "Bethlehem Night"

Mk: Oh yea, Mary & Joseph.
{*"Mary & Joseph" come center*}

Jh: Isn't there a star?
{*"Star" comes center looking smiley and excited.*}

Lk: Yes, but not yet.
{*"Star" looks confused, then returns to sidelines. Mary & Joseph watch*}

Jh: Oh.

Mk: So we have Mary & Joseph.

Mt: Isn't there something about an angel?

Lk: That's right! An angel appeared to Mary & Joseph.
{*Angel comes center*}

Lk: But it doesn't stop there, it also appeared to... to....

Mt: Shepherds?
{*Shepherds comes center*}

Lk: That's right, Matty! Shepherds! Now what did that angel say?

SONG – Hosanna To The King of Kings

Jh: But what about the star?
{*Star comes center.*}

Mk: Why would there be a star if Mary and Joseph are already in Bethlehem?
{*Star sits down, again.*}

Mt: I don't think the star was for them, wasn't it for someone else?
{*Star again comes center.*}

Mk: Noah?

Lk: Wrong story Mark.

Mk: Sorry. Was it for John?

Jh: Why would I need a star?

Mk: Not you! The other John, the Baptist one.

Mt: Wasn't it for the Wisemen? Because they brought gifts right?
{*Wisemen come center*}

Lk: Oh yea, the star must have been for people like the Wisemen and the shepherds, so they could find the baby Jesus.

Jh: Wisemen and shepherds Were there two stars?
{*second Star comes forward*}

Mt: No, there weren't two stars.
{*one Star sits down*}

Mt: There was one star big enough for a lot of people to see.

Mk: But seriously, why not just use GPS to get there?

Lk: Because Mark, there was no power to charge them.

Mt: Something like that *{rolling eyes}*. So the star was like a GPS of sorts, and an announcement to tell the world that Jesus was born, and where to find him!

SONG -- Sparkling Star

Jh: So there was Mary & Joseph, shepherds, Wisemen, an angel, a star and the baby Jesus. Then what?

Mt: Well, I think the way it happened was that the angel told Mary she was going to be pregnant with the Son of God, and then the star got the word out to the Wisemen and Shepherds who came to see the birth or join the party or something.

Mk: Wow I wonder what that was like?

SONG – This is My Father’s World

{At conclusion of song all lights go out. After brief pause lights come back on to the kids surprise}

Lk: Hey Look the lights are back on.

Mk: Awesome, where’s your Dad at?

Lk & Mt: DAD!!!

{Dad enters form right chancel door}

Dad: So what do you kids have for me?

Jh: “Ahem” *{clears voice}* IN THE BEGINNIG...!!!

Mt, Mk, LK: JOHN!

Jh: Oh yea, sorry.

Lk: Well Dad, Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem because there was a census or something, and an angel told Mary that she was pregnant with Jesus...

Mt: Right! And then a star went up to tell shepherds, Wisemen, and the world that Jesus, the son of God, was being born because it was a big deal!

Mk, Jh: YEA! *{emphatically}*

Dad: Wow, sounds like you kids have done it!

Mk: So how about that surprise?

Dad: How about this, ice cream for everybody!

SONG – Song for the Generations
