

A Paper Bag Pageant
December 7, 2025 at Christ Episcopal Church, Blacksburg, VA

Act I

Stage Manager: Welcome, Friends, to this year's Christmas Pageant! You may have noticed it looks a bit different from what you might expect. [Shrugs] Whether you've chosen to take a bag and play a character or not, I've got GREAT news for you: You have a role anyway! Sneaky, huh?

If you have a bag, please follow along in the script so you don't miss your cues. If you don't have a bag, your lines are on these cards: [*points to Cue Card Carol*] This is Cue Card Carol, aka CCC. She'll give you your lines, like this:

CCC: [*holds up "Ooooo! Aaaaah!" card*]

Stage Manager: [*gestures for crowd to Oooo! and Ahhhh!*] Well done. You've got your lines memorized! So, without further ado, we present the **A Paper Bag Pageant!**

CCC: [*holds up Applause card*]

Narrator: In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. Since Joseph

Joseph: [*pulls out hat, puts it on, and waves*]

Narrator: belonged to David's house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David's city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. He went to be enrolled together with Mary

Mary: [*pulls out blanket, wraps it like a cloak, and waves*]

Donkey: [*take out hat and button, put on hat and press button once*]

Narrator: who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant

Mary: [quickly pulls out pillow and shoves it under cloak]

Narrator: While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby.

Mary: Uh oh!

Joseph: Uh oh what?

Mary: [points to stomach]

Joseph: Uh oh!

Narrator: Joseph and Mary walked all around Bethlehem looking for a place to stay, but everywhere they went, the message was the same:

Innkeeper #1: [pulls out lit lantern, turns off candle by twisting the base] No room here. You should have made reservations in July like everyone else.

Narrator: Joseph was becoming more and more concerned

Joseph: [looks concerned]

Narrator: as Mary was becoming more and more uncomfortable.

Mary: [shifts around in seat a lot]

Narrator: There was one last inn in town, so Joseph and Mary approached and knocked on the door.

Mary: [knocks on an imaginary door]

Doorholder #3: [proudly!] I'm Doorholder #3! It's a classic part! [mimes opening a door and ushering Mary and Joseph in]

Innkeeper #2: Good eve...Uh oh!

Joseph: [nods nervously]

Innkeeper #2: Look, I don't have any rooms left, but I do have a stable out back. Yes, it's full of animals, but at least it's out of the street, and maybe you can use the manger as a crib? Oh, and hay (pun intended), you won't find fresher bacon and eggs anywhere!

Pig & Chicken: [Pull out hats and buttons, and press buttons once]

Mary and Joseph: [look at each other, then look at Innkeeper #1] We'll take it!

Innkeeper #2: [pulls out lantern and lights candle by twisting bulb] Right this way.

Doorholder #3: [proudly!] I'm Doorholder #3! It's a classic part! [mimes opening a door and ushering Mary and Joseph out]

Cow, Sheep, Pig, Chicken, Horse, Donkey, Dog, Cat, and Duck: [pull out hats and buttons if needed, and press buttons a few times to create general animally chaos]

Narrator: She gave birth to her firstborn child,

Mary: [pulls pillow from under cloak and puts it back in bag]

Narrator: a son,

Baby Jesus: [pulls stuffed animal and bottle from bag and waves]

Narrator: wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

CCC: [holds up "Aaaaw!" card]

Stage Manager: End of Act I

CCC: [*holds up Applause card*]

Act II

Stage Manager: Act II.

CCC: [*holds up Meanwhile sign*]

Narrator: Nearby, shepherds

Shepherd #1, Shepherd #2, and Shepherd #3: [*pull sheep from bags and wave*]

Narrator: were living in the fields, guarding their sheep

Sheep: [*presses Sheep button once*]

Narrator: at night. Suddenly, the angel of the Lord

Angel #1: [*pulls out and puts on headband, waves*]

Narrator: stood before them

Angel #1: [*pulls sunglasses from bag and hands them to Shepherd #1, Shepherd #2, and Shepherd #3*] You're gonna need these.

Narrator: and the Lord's glory shone around them,

Angel #1: [*pulls flashlight from bag and turns it on, spinning it in a circle overhead*]

Narrator: and they were terrified.

Shepherd #1, Shepherd #2, and Shepherd #3: [*scream*]

Narrator: But the angel said to them,

Angel #1: Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord.

CCC: [*Hold up “Yaaaay!” sign*]

Angel #1: This is a sign for you:

CCC: [*waves*]

Angel #1: you will find a newborn baby

Baby Jesus: [*waves*]

Angel #1: wrapped snugly and lying in a manger.

Baby Jesus: [*pulls out blanket wraps self up, and goes to sleep*]

CCC: [*Holds up “Awww!” card*]

Narrator: Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly hosts was with the angel

Angel #2, Angel #3, and Angel #4: [*put on headbands, pull out flashlights, turn them on, and wave*]

Narrator: praising God and saying,

Angel #1, Angel #2, Angel #3, and Angel #4: “Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on Earth!”

Narrator: When the angels returned to heaven

Angel #1, Angel #2, Angel #3, and Angel #4: [*turn off flashlights, put them back in bags, and wave*]

Narrator: the shepherds said to each other,

Shepherd #2: WHAT was THAT?!?

Shepherd #3: I think we need to drink less coffee and get more sleep.

Shepherd #2: Right?

Shepherd #1: Y'all! Listen, let's just go check it out and see if this is true, or if we really do just need more sleep, okay?"

Shepherd #2 and Shepherd #3: [look at each other then at Shepherd #1, shrug] Okay.

Narrator: They went quickly to the stable

Cow, Sheep, Chicken, Horse, Donkey, Dog, Cat, and Duck: [press buttons a few times to create general animally chaos]

Doorholder #3: [proudly!] I'm Doorholder #3! It's a classic part! [mimes opening a door and ushering the Shepherds in]

Narrator: and found Mary,

Mary: [waves]

Narrator: and Joseph,

Joseph: [waves]

Narrator: and the baby

Baby Jesus: [cries]

Narrator: lying in the manger.

CCC: [*Hold up “Awww!” card*]

Narrator: When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them.

CCC: [*holds up “Oooo! Aaaaaah!” card*]

Narrator: The shepherds returned home,

Doorholder #3: [*proudly!*] I’m Doorholder #3! It’s a classic part! [*mimes opening a door and ushering the Shepherds out*]

Narrator: glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

Shepherd #1: Glory to God!!

Shepherd #2: Praise to God!!

Shepherd #3: Everything happened, just as we’d been told!!”

Sheep: [*presses Sheep button once*]

Stage Manager: End of Act II

CCC: [*holds up Applause card*]

Act III

Stage Manager: Act III.

CCC: [*holds up Two Years Later card*]

Narrator: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod,

King Herod: [*pulls out and puts on crown and waves*]

Narrator: Magi

Magi #1, Magi #2, Magi #3, and Magi #4 [*pull out and put on necklaces and wave*]

Narrator: came from the east to Jerusalem. They asked,

Magi #1, Magi #2, Magi #3, and Magi #4: Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him.

Narrator: When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him.

CCC: [*hold up "Oh No!" card*]

Narrator: He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked,

King Herod: Where is this [*make finger quotes*] Christ to be born?

Narrator: They said,

Cow, Sheep, Chicken, Horse, Donkey, Dog, Cat, and Duck: In Bethlehem of Judea, just like the prophets said!

Narrator: Then Herod secretly called for the magi

King Herod: Yo! Magi!

Narrator: and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem, saying,

King Herod: Go and search carefully for the child. When you've found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him. *[winks]*

Magi #1, Magi #2, Magi #3, and Magi #4: *[look at each other than at King Herod]* Riiiiight.

Narrator: When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy.

Magi #1, Magi #2, Magi #3, and Magi #4: YAAAAY!!!

Narrator: They entered the house

Doorholder #3: *[proudly!]* I'm Doorholder #3! It's a classic part! *[mimes opening a door and ushering the Magi in]*

Narrator: and saw the child

Baby Jesus: *[waves]*

Narrator: with Mary his mother.

Mary: *[waves]*

Narrator: Falling to their knees, they...

Joseph: Wait, what about me?

Narrator: *[looks through script pages, then at Joseph]* Sorry, Bruh, I don't see you in here.

Joseph: *[Sadly takes off hat and puts it back in bag]*

Narrator: *[clears throat]* Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts.

Magi #1: *[pulls box from bag]* I've brought gold because this little boy is our King!

Mary *[smiles and nods]*

Magi #2: *[pulls box from bag]* I've brought Frankincense because this little boy is our High Priest!

Mary: *[smiles and nods]*

Magi #3: *[pulls box from bag]* I've brought Myrrh because this little boy is our Sacrifice!

Mary: I'm sorry, what?

Magi #3: Oh, um... *[looks at Magi #4]* What did you bring?

Magi #4: *[pulls diapers from bag]*

Narrator: This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. The End.

CCC: *[holds up Applause sign]*

Cow, Sheep, Chicken, Horse, Donkey, Dog, Cat, and Duck: *[press buttons a few times to create general animally chaos]*