

The Christmas Pageant That Got Away With It

By
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STORY OF THE PLAY

With the holiday season approaching, Pastor Jack Taylor finds himself overcommitted, unable to take his own advice about not doing so much this year. When parishioner Beulah takes the pastor's sermon of slowing down to heart and quits the children's Christmas pageant, Pastor Taylor jumps on the opportunity to let Pam, an inexperienced teen who loves TV crime shows, be in charge. The Pastor doesn't have the time to supervise her, so she and the kids create a new Christmas pageant called "Bethlehem CSI." Now the long-loved Nativity scene is a crime scene! Pam takes the children to the police station for a rehearsal, accidentally holding a religious activity on government property, landing Pastor Jack in jail. Forced to slow down, Pastor Jack can finally follow his own advice: "Take time this holiday season to find those moments that will make a difference in your life or allow you to make a difference in someone else's life. When we reach out to each other – that's what makes Christmas special." Opportunities to cast multiple children. About an hour.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 m, 2 w, 1 teen girl, 10-19+ children)

PASTOR JACK TAYLOR: (m.) Good and decent, but over-worked and too busy. Mid-40s or older.

MILDRED TAYLOR: (f.) Pastor Taylor's wife.

BEULAH CLONCH: (f.) Church member in her 60s. Trying, negative, complains about her health. Double cast as Wife in Scene 1.

GIRBY CLONCH: (m.) Beulah's brother. Good man, but lands in jail every now and then. Double cast as Father in Scene 1.

PAM FENTRESS: (f.) Loves crime shows and hopes to become a detective. Cares about the church and Pastor Taylor. In her late teens.

OFFICER MONTGOMERY: (m.) By-the-book police officer, but tries to be reasonable. Double cast as Husband in Scene 1.

CHILDREN: (flex.) To cast many children, have the following children speak only in the main play and sing in the chorus for the Christmas Pageant within the play. However, any combination that works for your production is fine.

TRACY

KELLY

CHRIS

ALEX/ALEXIS

ANDY/ANDREA

BAILLIE

BLAIR

CAREY

GEORGE/GEORGIE

JORDAN

Bethlehem CSI. (The Christmas Pageant within the play.)

PIANIST is needed to play the carols, no lines within play.

MAID (girl.)

OFFICER MAXIMUS (boy.)

OCTAVIA (flex.)

CLETUS (flex.)

BOB (boy.)

LAB TECHNICIAN 1 and 2 (flex.)

SHEPHERDS (2+) (flex.)

WISE MAN (boy.)

SCENE BREAKDOWN

Prologue: The hectic time before Christmas.

Scene 1: The next day – Monday, outside of the Pastor's study.

Scene 2: The Sunday after Thanksgiving during the service in the sanctuary.

Scene 3: Later that same afternoon in the Pastor's study.

Scene 4: A little later that same afternoon in the rehearsal hall.

Scene 5: The Sunday before Christmas, late afternoon in the pastor's study.

Scene 6: Later that same day in a large conference room at the police station.

Scene 7: A little later in a jail cell.

PROPS

Bag of cookies, police whistle, cell phone and other electronic calendar devices, note pad with list of witnesses on it.

For Bethlehem CSI: cleaning equipment/supplies for maid, two pairs of rubber gloves, equipment cases for lab technicians, piece of cloth for swaddling clothes, bag to put cloth in, tongs and other handheld lab equipment, large white feather, Gideon Bible.

Prologue

(AT RISE: A montage of characters, mainly children, rush across stage, saying their lines and exiting quickly as the next actor enters. The goal is to create the sense of hurriedness that is experienced during Christmas.)

CHILD 1: *(Entering quickly.)* Mom! I need 40 cupcakes for our school holiday party.

MOTHER: *(Offstage.)* When?

CHILD 1: Today. *(Exits.)*

CHILD 2: *(Entering quickly.)* Come on, Mom! There's only 30 shopping days left. *(Exits.)*

(A HUSBAND and WIFE enter from opposite sides of the stage and meet in the middle facing each other. They are holding their electronic calendars.)

WIFE: Churchwomen's Christmas luncheon Monday.

HUSBAND: Christian Businessmen's holiday breakfast Tuesday.

HUSBAND & WIFE: Wednesday night choir practice.

WIFE: Mobile Meals Christmas delivery and church decorating Thursday afternoon.

HUSBAND: Picking up the Christmas tree, two wreaths and a plastic Santa after work on Friday.

WIFE: Bobby has play practice at church Saturday and Sunday.

HUSBAND: Where is Bobby?

(BOTH consult their calendars and come to a realization.)

WIFE: Do you think the pastor's locked the door by now?

(BOTH exit.)

CHILD 3: *(Entering quickly.)* They're having a service just to decorate the church? What does the pastor do during the day? *(Exits.)*

CHILD 4: *(Entering quickly.)* Mom, Dad, I gotta bring a special Christmas offering to church this morning. How do you wrap a hamster? *(Exits.)*

CHILD 5: *(Entering with several other children.)* I haven't told my parents yet, but I invited both my grandmas to spend Christmas with us and they said yes! Score!

FATHER: *(Enters talking on a cell phone to his son.)* I'm glad you're home early. Hurry and do your homework, then you can help me decorate the house. Before I get there, go up in the attic and bring down the outdoor lights, the plastic reindeer, snowman, and the blow up Santa—What? No, I know you can hear me. You are not going through a tunnel. Stop it! You better get yourself up in that attic. We are going to have a merry Christmas this year or so help me... *(Exits as he's still speaking.)* And we're going to church this year too...

(The next VOICES are offstage.)

DAD: Let's go, time for church.

MOTHER: Come on children. Let's get ready to go to church.

CHILD 6: We gotta go to church again? How many birthday parties does Jesus get?

(LIGHTS fade; SPOTLIGHT rises on PASTOR JACK TAYLOR at the pulpit. It is the Sunday before Thanksgiving.)

PASTOR TAYLOR: Happy Sunday to you. I'd like to give you some "preacherly" advice now that Christmas is just around the corner: slow down. It's so easy to get caught up in the activities of Christmas, secular and religious, that we miss the true spirit of the holiday. Take time this holiday season to find those moments that will make a difference in your life or allow you to make a difference in someone else's life. When we reach out to each other – that's what makes Christmas special. So, slow down. Don't do so much this year. Learn to enjoy Christmas by learning to say no. You can't spell "Noel" without the word "No."

End of Freeview

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