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The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!

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**Cole-Belin Education
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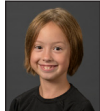
Getting to Know You:

The Cast of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*

The cast of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* was asked, "If you were a Herdman, what would you bring as your gift for the baby Jesus? Why?"



Tammy Armstrong (*Mrs. Clausing*) I'd bring some of Imogene's cigars because my mom always said dad was busy smoking cigars with his buddies when each of us was born.



Vivian Armstrong (*Baby Angel*) I would give them blankets because they probably don't have any and would be cold.



Avery Beavers (*Dana*) I would give the baby Jesus a pair of fluffy Christmas socks because babies' feet get cold.



Frances Beavers (*Mrs. McCarthy*) I would bring a fire extinguisher for baby Jesus, because fires (accidental, of course) happen pretty regularly in my family.



Lucy Daniels (*Mrs. Slocum*) I would bring him a Hannukah dreidel, so he'd have something fun to play with!



Erin Davison-Rippey (*Grace*) I would bring a really big boom box so they could play lullabies and drown out the sound of the animals.



Fiona Davison-Rippey (*Shirley*) I would bring a crib because baby Jesus shouldn't have to sleep in a feed bag or a dresser drawer.



Henry Davison-Rippey (*Ensemble*) If I were a Herdman, I would bring diapers because even baby Jesus had accidents.



Lisa Day (*Mrs. Clark*) I would bring a birdfeeder and some birdseed so the baby Jesus could do some birdwatching while he was in the manger.



Calvin Goerend (*Ollie*) I'd bring the dresser drawer Gladys slept in when she was a baby because it would be a little better than the manger.



Bennett Hardin (*Elmer*) I would bring baby Jesus a pair of baby snow pants so he can stay warm and protected from snowballs thrown by the Herdmans.



Perah Healey (*Ensemble*) I would bring twinkies because babies love dessert and that's what got the Herdmans to the Christmas pageant to begin with.



Mary Heilman (*Beverly*) My siblings and I would go to the grocery store and steal a meal for him because nobody should have to go hungry.



Lindsey Hollinger (*Maxine*) I'd bring a warm blanket and a box of snacks, because even baby Jesus deserves comfort and a little something to snack on after a long night in a stable.



Ari Kamerman (*Imogene*) I would bring the gifts the Herdmans got from the child welfare because they are much better than the gifts the wise men brought.



Porter Knox (*Ensemble*) I'd bring baby Jesus our half-feral cat. He's scrappy enough to scare anyone (including Herod!) but soft and loyal, keeping Jesus warm and safe.



Bennett Liker (*Claude*) A cradle to put him in so he doesn't sleep in a barn.



Emersyn Magill (*Alice*) I'd bring a box of Twinkies—because they last forever and Jesus is gonna need snacks.



Ammon Martin (*Ralph*) I'd give him one of my siblings as a servant. Or maybe a bodyguard.



Todd Moeller (*Ensemble*) I would bring a baby blanket to keep the baby Jesus warm since he is a refugee and may be cold.



Sean Murphy (*Leroy*) Two dogs: one to protect him from Herod and one to comfort him.



Lillian Noble (*Doris*) I would bring diapers, because they are probably a lot easier than swaddling clothes.



Daniel Pickett (*Bob*) If I were a Herdman, I would bring baby Jesus a flyswatter. The poor kid was born in a barn!



Grace Pickett (*Ensemble*) I would bring him an iron to use on his wadded up clothes.



Adeline Pollman (*Ensemble*) I would bring my old baby blanket to swaddle baby Jesus in because he was born in a manger, which must've been uncomfortable.



Ava Pourian (*Hobie*) I would bring blankets and pillows because they are traveling a lot.



Mya Ream (*Juanita*) I would bring one of my stuffies for baby Jesus to snuggle with to make him feel safe.



Cecilia Schmidt (*Gladys*) I'd bring milk to Jesus so that Mary and Joseph could have a break from him crying.



Annelise Swartzendruber (*Baby Angel*) I would bring the baby Jesus a TV so he could watch *The Simpsons*!



Amanda Throckmorton (*Mrs. Armstrong*) I would bring the baby Jesus earmuffs so they could sleep over all the noise!



Ian Williams (*Rev. Hopkins*) I would bring them a turkey, because turkey is good!



Zoey Williams-Decklover (*Beth*) I'd get baby Jesus a mixtape of '90s alt rock because it's important to his education.



Benjamin Wortman (*Charlie*) I'd bring all the dessert stolen from Charlie's lunchbox over the past two weeks!



About the Author

Barbara Robinson
(1927-2013)

Barbara Robinson was born and raised in Portsmouth, Ohio, and had no brothers or sisters. Her father died when she was three. Robinson's mother, a schoolteacher in Portsmouth for 49 years, got her interested in books, and she began writing very early. Robinson attended Allegheny College where she received a bachelor's degree in theatre. In addition to her children's books, Robinson wrote many short stories in publications such as *McCall's*, *Redbook*, and *Ladies' Home Journal*, and has some poetry books.

Robinson lived in Berwyn, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Philadelphia. She died July 9, 2013, at her home in Berwyn. She was 85 and had cancer. Robinson had two daughters with her husband John F. Robinson: Carolyn and Marjorie; and three grandchildren: Tomas, Marcos, and Lucas.

Who Said It?

See how many of the following phrases you remember from the show by answering with who said the phrase.

1. "Mrs. Armstrong directs the pageant, she runs the potluck supper, she's chairman of the Bazaar...I think Helen Armstrong would preach the sermon if anyone would let her."
2. "Our Christmas pageant isn't exactly what you'd call four-star entertainment. Mrs. Armstrong breaking her leg was the only unexpected thing that ever happened to it."
3. "Hey, Leroy! You think it's so great to steal my desserts every day and you know what? I don't care if you steal my dessert. I'll even give you my dessert. I get all the dessert I want in Sunday school."
4. "Herdmans will do anything. You just watch, they'll do something terrible and ruin the whole pageant...and it's all your mother's fault!"
5. "That's bogus! What kind of a present is oil? We get better presents from the welfare!"
6. "Why didn't they let Mary name her own baby? What did the angel do, just walk up and say, 'Name him Jesus?'"
7. "I know what the angel said. She said... 'His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.'"
8. "Well, the good news is that every kid is here, AND they all remembered their costumes. Even the Herdmans."
9. "Hello Reverend, sorry I'm late. But I wouldn't want to miss this for the world!"
10. "Can you believe what she did? That was awful!! Look at her now! She's burping the baby as if he had colic. Jesus wouldn't have had colic."
11. "Hey! Hey! Unto you a child is born! It's Jesus, and he's in the barn...go see him! Go on, he's over there...GO ON!"



ANSWERS: 1) Mother/Mrs. Bradley, 2) Beth Bradley, 3) Charlie Bradley, 4) Alice, 5) Imogene Herdman, 6) Imogene Herdman, 7) Alice, 8) Mother/Mrs. Bradley, 9) Mrs. Armstrong, 10) Alice, 11) Gladys Herdman

Word Scramble

All over the world, different countries have their own Christmas traditions. Unscramble the name of each country or continent to learn a little about how they celebrate.

In _____ Father Christmas or Santa Claus delivers presents to children from a horse and cart. **[I A N D I]**

Christmas cake called "Panettone" is eaten in _____ at Christmas dinner. **[I A T Y L]**

On the west coast of _____ most homes have an oil palm for a Christmas tree, which is decorated with bells. **[R A F A C I]**

On Christmas Eve or Christmas night in _____ the children carry out special programs that go on for hours and consist of songs and dramatic performances. **[P A N J A]**

In _____ Babushka is a traditional Christmas figure who distributes presents to children. The word "Babushka" is translated to English as grandmother! **[U S R I S A]**

ANSWERS India, Italy, Africa, Japan, Russia

Holidays Around the World

Holidays are special days that we celebrate in special ways called traditions. Traditions are customs and practices that are handed down one generation to the next. People celebrate holidays in many different ways. Think of a holiday that you celebrate. What do you do to celebrate?

Choose a holiday from the list below and research the reason for celebration, country or culture of origin, and the various traditions involved with the holiday. What are some similarities and differences when you compare this holiday with a holiday you celebrate?

Tet (Vietnamese New Year)

Yule (Pagan)

Fiesta of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Mexican)

Hanukkah (Jewish)

Christmas Day (Christian)

Boxing Day (Australian, Canadian, English, Irish)

Las Posadas (Mexican)

Dongzhi Festival (Chinese)

Newtonmas (Atheist)

Pancha Ganapati (Hindu)

Krampusnacht/St. Nicholas Day (European)

St. Lucia Day (Swedish)

Bodhi Day (Buddhist)

Three Kings Day/Epiphany (Christian)

Kwanzaa (African American)

Omisoka (Japanese)

Saturnalia (Pagan)

Yalda (Zoroastrian)

If You Liked This, Try These!

If you enjoyed reading or watching *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* by Barbara Robinson, try these other book recommendations.

The Best School Year Ever

by Barbara Robinson

The six horrible Herdmans – the worst kids in the history of the world – cause mayhem throughout the school year.

My Brother Louis Measures Worms: And Other Louis Stories

by Barbara Robinson

Young Mary Elizabeth relates the humorous misadventures of her brother Louis and the other wacky members of her unpredictable, very odd family.

Soup

by Robert Newton Peck

The adventures and misadventures of two boys growing up in a small Vermont town.

Red Ranger Came Calling: A Guaranteed True Christmas Story

by Berkeley Breathed

In 1939, while spending Christmas with a well-meaning aunt, a young boy who does not believe in Santa Claus has an unusual experience that changes his thinking.

Everyone Else's Parents Said Yes

by Paula Danziger

Matthew cannot resist the temptation to play practical jokes on his older sister and all the girls in his class at school, so by his big eleventh birthday party they have all declared war on him.

Talk about the play with your family!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Do you think the Herdman children were truly “bad”?

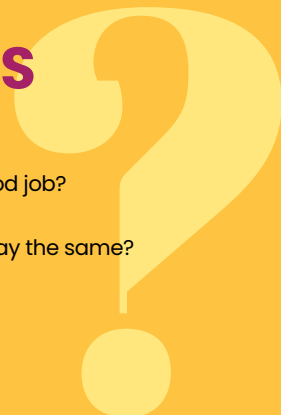
Mrs. Bradley didn't want to direct the pageant. Did she do a good job?

Was letting the Herdmans be in the play a good idea?

What happens when traditions change? Should they always stay the same?

What was your favorite part of the play?

Who was your favorite character?



CAROL CREATION

In *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, there are various Christmas carols used in the play. One of the more well-known Christmas carols is “The Twelve Days of Christmas.” In this activity, you are going to write your own version of this carol. Here is the original text and an example of a customized version side by side.

“The Twelve Days of Christmas”

by Frederic Austin

On the 1st day of Christmas my true love
sent to me a Partridge in a Pear Tree.

On the 2nd day of Christmas my true
love sent to me Two Turtle Doves and a
Partridge in a Pear Tree.

On the 3rd day of Christmas my true love
sent to me Three French Hens, Two Turtle
Doves and a Partridge in a Pear Tree.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

The Twelve Days of Christmas (customized example)

On the 5th day of Christmas my true love
gave to me Five onion rings! Four frito
pies Three tacos Two cherry pies and a
basket for all of these things!

7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

SEE THE GOOD

The Herdmans seem to be the meanest kids in town, but are they really so bad? Christmas is the perfect time to think about the good in people – the good in ALL people.

Come up with a compliment (an expression of something good or praiseworthy) for each Herdman.

Ralph: _____

Imogene: _____

Leroy: _____

Claude: _____

Ollie: _____

Gladys: _____

Now, think up a compliment for someone who is special to you. As a gift, share the good things you thought of them with that person!

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AUTOGRAPHS