



Here Comes Christmas!



An Advent Pageant Activity Book



Here Comes Christmas!

Here comes Advent! . . . Here Comes Christmas!

Christmas is such an amazing time that the Church gives us a whole month to get ready for it! Advent is the name of that month when we get ready for Christmas. We get ready when we spend more time with each other. We get ready when we spend more with God. We get ready when we make time for joy! Many parishes make time for joy, for each other and for God by making a pageant. What's a pageant? A parish pageant is a special kind of play that tells the story of Christmas. We use Advent to get ready for this play to share with families and friends.

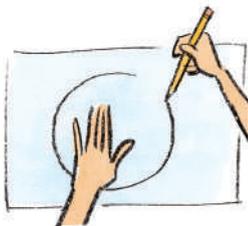
In this Advent book, you'll find all kinds of games, puzzles, and brain teasers as you put together a pageant for Christmas! You'll read about the first pageant we know from history, and find plenty of ideas from the Bible to get ready for Christmas. When we want you to find a specific verse, we hope you have a copy of the *New American Bible* on hand. If not, ask a parent to go to this website: www.usccb.org/bible/ (Note to parents: From that link, you can find any book or verse of the *New American Bible*!)

In Advent, we get ready because something wonderful is coming. Christmas! Here come the Holy Family and their friends and the animals that filled the stable. Here come the shepherds and wise men and angels. Here come saints and cookies! Here comes a pageant filled with all the joy we can find!

Pageant at home!

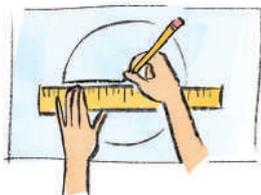
You can use paper puppets to put on your own pageant with your family or friends. Here's an easy way to make cone figure puppets of each character in the story.

1



Find a small plate or lid from the kitchen. Use the lid to trace a circle onto a piece of paper.

2



Use a ruler to find the center of the circle. Draw a straight line from the edge of the circle to the center.

3



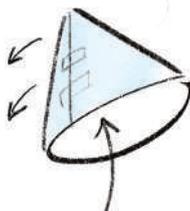
Turn the circle a few inches and draw another straight line. Now you have a triangle on the circle.

4

Cut out the triangle.



5



Shape the rest of the circle into a cone. Use pieces of tape on the inside to hold the cone together.

6



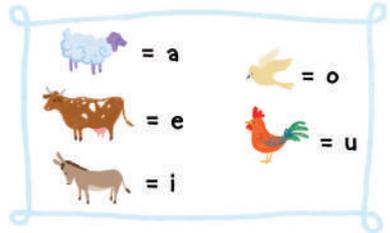
Now you can decorate each cone with markers, crayons, yarn, paper scraps, or anything you like to make the figures for your pageant! You can make anything from Jesus mother Mary to the star over the stable.

Here comes Saint Francis!

This saint loved to be poor because he wanted to live just as Jesus lived. He had as many animal friends as he did people friends! One Christmas he brought together some of the animals and people he loved to act out the birth of Jesus. Some say this was the first Christmas creche *and* the first Christmas pageant or play.

Activity:

Use the animal friends of Saint Francis to break the code below. Did this verse from the gospel help Saint Francis choose to be poor? Look at Luke 6:20



Bl ss d r y

wh r p r, f r

th k ngd m f

h v n s y rs.



Saint Francis used real animals in his play. Do you have a pet? Invite them to your play, too. You can give them a treat to enjoy while you put on your play.

Here comes comes the Bible!

We also call the Bible the “scriptures” or the “word of God.” This is the book that tells us all the stories we need to make our Christmas pageant! But first we need to know how to find our way around in the Bible.

Activity:

You can use these steps to find any verse in the Bible. Try to find the verse above:
2 Timothy 3:16.



1. Can you find the Table of Contents? Write its page number here: _____.
2. Now look at the Table of Contents. Can you find the book of 2 Timothy? Is it in the Old Testament or New Testament? Write its page number here: _____.
3. Now go to that page to find the book of 2 Timothy. (Remember which Testament it is in!) Can you find 2 Timothy 3? That's *chapter* 3. See if you can find the big numbers 1, 2, and 3 in 2 Timothy. Write the page number for chapter 3 here: _____.
4. See the small numbers after the big number 3? Find the number 16. That's verse 16. Write its page number here:
_____.

This is how you can find every verse we use!

There are two stories about Jesus being born in the Bible. One story is in Matthew 1. The other story is in Luke 1 & Luke 2. Read them with your family. How are they alike? How are they different? How will you tell the story?



Here come the prophets!

In the Bible, prophets aren't people with crystal balls who make up stories about the future. That's just for fun! The prophets of the Bible lived so closely to God that they knew what God wanted God's People to hear.

Activity:

The children below are carrying signs for the pageant with words from the prophet Zechariah. The signs are all mixed up! Can you put them in order to find out what the prophet said about the days to come? You'll find help in Zechariah 9:9.



S

_____ ,

_____ !

_____ :

_____ .



Make a paper-cone puppet of a prophet.

Here comes the prophet Isaiah!

We read his words every Advent to hear what God promised. Isaiah said that God would come to us in amazing ways!

Activity:

Below is one of our favorite promises from Isaiah—can you solve the clues to read what it says? You'll find the words in Isaiah 11:6.

Then the  shall be
a guest of the 
and the  shall lie
down with the young 
The  and the young 
shall browse together,
with a little  to guide them.

Make a paper-cone puppet of a lamb for the stable.



Solution: Then the [wolf] shall be a guest of the [lamb], and the [leopard] shall lie down with the young [goat]. The [calf] and the young [lion] shall browse together, with a little [child] to guide them.

Here comes the prophet John the Baptist!

Most prophets lived hundreds of years before Jesus, but John and Jesus were babies at the same time. Mary, the mother of Jesus, went to visit Elizabeth, the mother of John. Their babies were still inside them. Then Elizabeth told Mary an amazing thing: baby John moved with joy when Mary came with baby Jesus! Read the story in Luke 1:39-45.

Activity:

Imagine a newspaper written about this baby prophet. Can you tell the story in your own words or drawing?



Elizabeth says to Mary, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." What prayer uses these same words? Could you use this prayer in your pageant?

Here comes John's father, Zechariah!

When Mary and Elizabeth brought Jesus and John together, Zechariah was not there. He had not been able to talk for months. But when his son John was born, Zechariah could talk again. And he sang out loud! Like the prophet Isaiah, he sang about the days to come.

Activity:

You can read part of his song below—but you need to find the letters that are missing on the musical notes coming from Zechariah's mouth! Look at Luke 1:76 for clues.



“An ___ you, ___ hild, will be ___ all ___
proph ___ t o ___ th ___ Most High, ___ or
you will go b ___ or ___ th ___ Lor ___
to pr ___ par ___ his ways.”



What songs can you sing in your play? Do you have a favorite Christmas carol?

Here come the children—the stars of our show.

They will act out the parts. They will sing all the songs. They will tell the story of Jesus' birth.

Activity:

As you can guess, Jesus loved children! Some people around Jesus didn't think children were important at all. They tried to keep the children away. Read what Jesus said to them in Matthew 19:14. Can you finish the cartoon below in your own words?





Make a paper cone puppet of a child who will come to see baby Jesus in the stable.

Here come the families!

They can't wait to see the stars—their children—put on their play. Baby Jesus was the star of the first Christmas. His family gave him the love and care he needed. Each of us need love and care, too, so God gives us families.

Activity:

You've already met three of Jesus' family—and soon you'll meet two more. Can you unscramble their names? (We're not sure whether aunt, uncle, or cousin are exactly right, but all these were members of Jesus' family.)

AUNT: bEzialhet E _____
(Check your guess in Luke 1:57)

UNCLE: hahaZicer _____
(Check your guess in Luke 1:13)

COUSIN: hnoJ eth ttiBpsa _____
(Check your guess in Matthew 3:1)

FATHER: opsehJ _____
(Check your guess in Matthew 1:24)

MOTHER: rayM _____
(Check your guess in Luke 1:30)



Make paper cone puppets of your family! OR ask your family to make a paper cone audience.



Here come the cookies!

Many of us love to bake cookies for Christmas. You might find cookies at a parish Christmas pageant for everyone to share after the play.

Activity:

Can you finish the Christmas cookie recipe below? You'll have to find some of the directions in the Bible!

1. Soften two _____ of butter in a big bowl. *Ezekiel 37:20* (1 cup or 8 ounces.)
2. Mash up the butter with one _____ of light brown sugar. *Psalm 23:5*
3. Separate one _____. (That means put the yellow yolk in one dish and the stringy clear part in another.) *Job 39:14*
4. Add the yolk and 2 cups _____ to the bowl. *Matthew 13:33*
5. Add 1 teaspoon vanilla and a pinch of _____ to the bowl. *Matthew 5:13*



6. Mix it all up until it's smooth. (That's hard work! Ask your family for help.)
7. Pat it into a cookie sheet.
8. Beat the egg white and brush it on the top.
9. Mix together $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon _____. Sprinkle over the top of the dough. *Exodus 30:23*
10. Sprinkle $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sliced _____ over the top. *Numbers 17:23*
11. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes.
12. Let cool in the pan for 5 minutes, then cut into diamonds.
13. Let cool all the way down then remove from the pan.



Pageant
at
home!

Make these cookies at Christmas, to eat after your play.

Here comes the journey!

When it's almost time for Jesus to be born, Mary and Joseph travel to the town of Bethlehem. When the parish pageant is ready to start, it might begin with a procession or parade of all the children in the play.

Activity:

Can you help the children below find their way to the middle?



Where will you put on your paper cone puppet pageant? Is there room for a parade at the start?



Here comes Bethlehem!

Joseph and Mary traveled to the ancient town of Bethlehem. The name *Bethlehem* is a Hebrew word meaning "house of bread." Jesus will be born here. Jesus will talk about bread and use bread many times in his life and work.



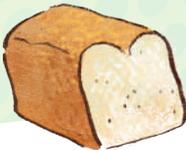
Activity:

Can you figure out 3 of those times below? You'll have to **unscramble the verses in red**—or look up the verses for help.

At the very beginning, the devil tempted Jesus to stop fasting and praying, and turn stones into bread. Jesus answered this:

**alone does that of forth word from One bread mouth
by not live but God every comes the**

Matthew 4:4



At the last meal Jesus shared with his friends, he did this:

took to blessing it bread the broke them it gave and He said

Mark 14:22



Jesus even called himself bread—but an amazing kind of bread.

the of life am bread I John 6:48

Bethlehem is where your pageant will take place. What can you use to make your stage look like a small, ancient town?



Solution: 1. One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God. 2. He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. 3. I am the bread of life.

Here comes Joseph—and a good dream!

When Mary told Joseph that she would bear a child, he did not understand. This was not the time he and Mary had planned! Joseph went to sleep sad and worried.

Then God sent a wonderful dream to Joseph. In his dream, an angel came and told him he did not have to be troubled any more. God had sent the child to Mary. God promised that this child would save all God's people! When Joseph woke, he was happy. He took good care of Mary and Mary's child for his whole life.

Activity:

Imagine God sent a wonderful dream to you. What do you wish God would promise you? Write or draw your dream in the space below.



Here comes Mary—our holy Mother!

God sent an angel to Mary, too. God asked Mary to help save all people, and our blessed mother said, "Yes!"

Activity:

Can you solve the rebus—that's a picture puzzle—below to find the angel's words to Mary? Look at Luke 1:31-32 for help!

 +hold,  will conceive

 your womb &  a

 &  shall name him Jesus.

He will  gr+  & will

  +ed 

of the Most High.

pageant
at
home!

Make a paper cone puppet of Mary.

Solution: Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High.

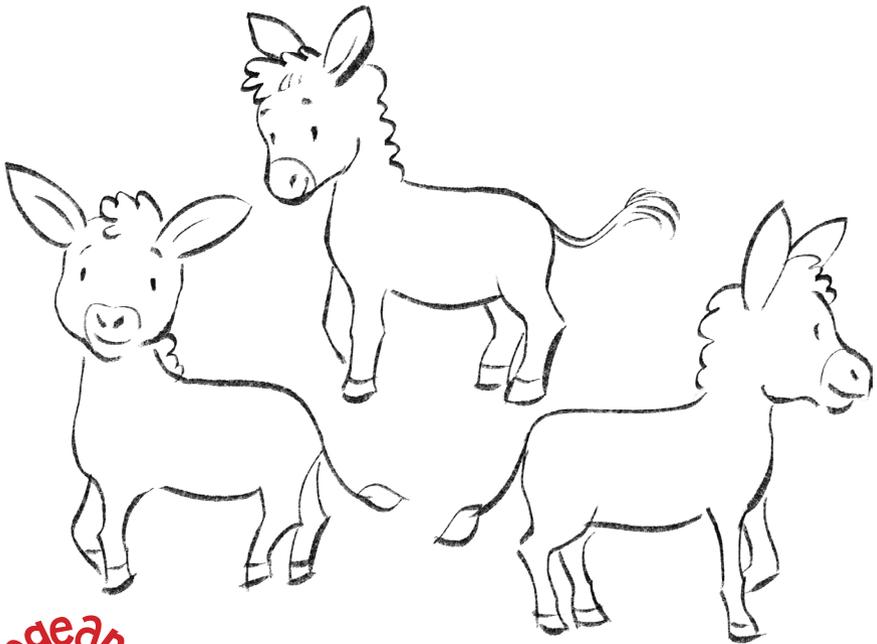
Here comes the donkey!

We don't know if Joseph and Mary used a donkey, but you see one in almost every Christmas pageant. That's because donkeys helped carry people and luggage in Jesus' day. There were no planes to take, so Joseph and Mary had to walk for days to reach the town of Bethlehem. A donkey would be a big help!

When Jesus grows up, a donkey helps him again. A donkey carries Jesus into the holy city of Jerusalem to do his great work.

Activity:

We can help others, too. We can even carry Jesus to others! On the donkeys below, can you draw or write ways you can help others at home? At school? At play?



Make a paper cone puppet of a donkey.

Here comes the stable!

A stable is where people keep and care for animals. The Bible doesn't say that Joseph and Mary traveled to a stable, but we think they did because there was no room for them in the inn. God made room for the holy family, and we can, too!

In Mexico and in parts of the United States, people remember this part of the story with a game called *Las Posadas*. The word *posada* means "inn." People take the parts of Mary and Joseph. They travel from house to house until one family welcomes them in.

Activity:

Look at the pictures below. How do these people welcome Jesus? Remember that Jesus teaches us, "Whatever you do for others in need, you do for me." (Matthew 25:40)



How can you show the stable in your puppet pageant? You might use brown paper bags to decorate a large cardboard box as a stable.



Here comes the dove!

In the stable, there might have been birds near the roof, cooing and singing to the Holy Family. There are many doves in the Bible. We first read about a dove when Noah sees a dove flying toward him with an olive branch. Noah knows the dove is bringing a message of peace.

Activity:

Jesus brought us a message of peace from God. You can find his message by unscrambling the letters on each leaf of the olive branch in the dove's mouth. Look up John 14:27 to find the words!





Make a paper cone puppet of a dove.

Solution: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.

Here comes the manger!

The manger is where people placed food for their animals to eat. In many Christmas pageants, the manger is filled with straw. In Austria, Catholic families play an Advent game. They start with an empty basket. Each day of Advent, they fill the basket with straw—one handful for each act of kindness they do.

Activity:

Look at the straws below. Circle each one you do this week to fill the “manger” of the week with kindness!



What will you use for a manger? It will need to be big enough to hold baby Jesus.



Here comes the baby!

All this traveling and getting ready was to welcome the most wonderful guest of all: baby Jesus. Then and now, we were so grateful for baby Jesus that we gave him many names. The names tell us about who he is and what he does!

Activity:

In each name, there is one letter missing. Can you find the missing letter in each name? Next to the name, we tell you what the name means. The names tell us more about Jesus!

— m m a n u — l

God is with us.

M e — — i a h

God's anointed (or chosen) one.

J e — u —

Yahweh (or God) is salvation.



Make a paper cone puppet of baby Jesus.

Here come the swaddling clothes!

What does it mean to wrap a baby in swaddling clothes? New-born babies need to be kept warm. In our own day, a hospital has a small bed all warmed up for a new baby. In the days of Jesus, mothers and fathers wound layers of cloth around their babies to keep them warm and comforted.

Activity:

Did that way of showing love stay with Jesus his whole life? We don't know. But we do know he cared about clothing others. "Unwind" the verse in this puzzle to find out what Jesus said we do if we keep others warm. Circle every other letter to find the words of the verse. You can check your answer in Matthew 25:36. (We only used 3 words from that verse.)



In a parish pageant, children wear costumes. Look at all the puppets you've made so far. Do you want to add any paper or fabric scraps to finish their costumes? You might want a robe for Mary or swaddling clothes for baby Jesus!

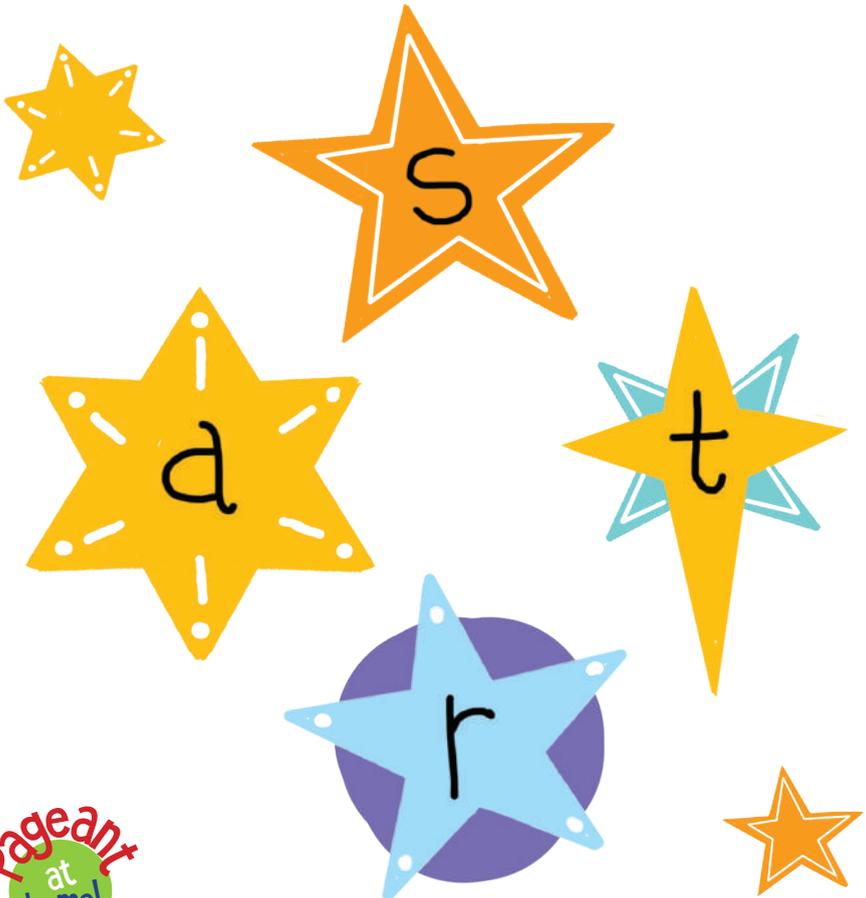


Here comes the star!

Scripture tells us that people traveled from far away just to see baby Jesus, the great gift from God. An amazing star shone over the place where baby Jesus slept. People followed the star to find Jesus.

Activity:

You can use these stars to find the missing letters in this verse that announces Jesus' birth. Check your answer in Luke 2:6-7.



Make a paper cone figure of the Star of Bethlehem.

...We saw his star and have
come to worship him.
Matthew 2:2

December 20 (continued)



he time come fo
he o have he
child, nd he g ve
bi h o he
fi bo n on.

It's time to figure out the words you want each of your characters to say. Get out your puppets. Can you tell the story so far with the puppets you have? You can use any of the words you've found in this booklet, too!



Solution: The time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son.

Here come the shepherds!

Shepherds lived away from town, out in lonely fields where they slept with their sheep. They watched over their sheep. They took care of them if they were sick. If one of them was lost, they would look for the sheep until they found it. And it was to these shepherds that God sent angels to announce the best gift of all: the birth of Jesus, our Savior.

When Jesus grew up, he called himself a shepherd, too, though he didn't take care of animals in lonely fields. He took care of God's people. He came to look for all people and bring them close to God.

Activity:

Think of ways you can take care of others, too. Can you be a shepherd like Jesus? Write your ideas in the spaces on the next page. We started you off with one idea.



...I have everything I need.
Psalm 23:1

December 21 (continued)

S _____

H _____

E _____

P _____

Help a younger child with homework.

E _____

R _____

D _____



Make a paper cone puppet of a shepherd.

Here come the angels!

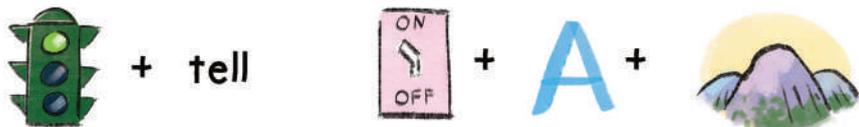
The angels sang out God's message to the shepherds in their fields. "Glory to God in the highest," they sang. "And peace to God's People on earth!"

Activity:

We love this part of the story so much that we sing songs about it at Christmas every year. Gather your family together and ask them to sing. How many of these carols do you and your family know? Oops! Most of their names are missing! Can you figure them out?







_____ it _____ the _____.



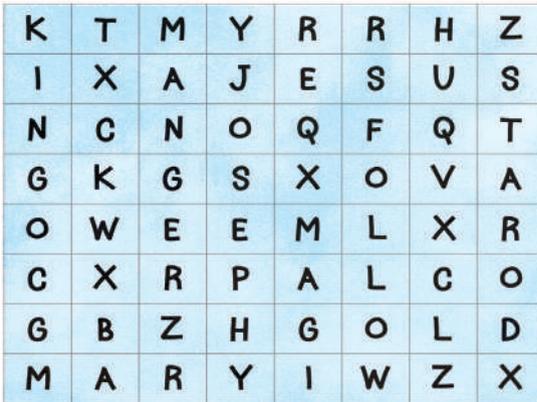
Sing carols with your family, pick at least two: one to start the pageant and one to end it. After that, make a paper cone puppet of an angel.

Here come the wise men!

As we tell their story, we will put in upper case letters words that you can find in the Word Search below.

Activity:

The wise men were also called the MAGI, or great ones. They saw a great STAR in the sky. "Let us FOLLOW the star," they said. "Then we will see a great KING." They followed the star. It led them to where JOSEPH and MARY were. It led them to where JESUS was. We don't know if he was still in the MANGER! The magi brought gifts. They brought gifts of frankincense and MYRRH, that smelled like pine tree and good earth. They bought a gift of GOLD, fit for a king. They worshiped Jesus, then traveled home to their own lands.



Make paper cone puppets of the wise men with their gifts.



Here come Simeon and Anna!

Anna lived at the Temple day and night, waiting for the good news of God's gifts to God's People. When Mary and Joseph brought baby Jesus to the Temple, Anna told all the people there that God would save them through this holy child. Then the priest Simeon took the baby in his arms, blessed him, and spoke a prophecy that the Church uses to this day as a prayer at bed-time. "My eyes have seen your salvation!"

Activity:

Imagine you are there! What words could you have heard Anna say? Imagine Simeon hands the baby to you! What words will you say to baby Jesus?



Lights, camera, action! Tomorrow we will celebrate Christmas. Tomorrow you can show your pageant. Can you practice with all your puppets?

Here comes Christmas!

It's so exciting to wait for this good and joyful day! On the very first Christmas, the skies filled with angels, who called out, "We bring you GOOD news of GREAT joy!"

Good news! The very word *gospel* means good news. So when we read in Mark 1:1 that he will tell the "Gospel of Jesus Christ," he means the Good News about Jesus Christ! Talk this over with your family: Why is the story of Jesus Good News for us? For our whole world?



Activity:

Read the good news the angels sing in the picture on page 32. Then add your good news about Jesus to their messages.

Invite your family to the pageant you have made. Tell the good news about the birth of Jesus in your own words. Invite your family to sing the songs you choose. And Merry Christmas! May you know great joy today and always.



December 25 (continued)

Jesus said, "I am with you always." Matthew 28:20

