

River Church's "Virtual" Christmas Pageant

We took Anne Camp's idea (posted above) and ran with it:

First a bit of background. We are a new church development that is currently meeting in a movie theater complex (our church is being built and may be done by Easter this year!). So we have limited time to use our limited space on Sunday mornings, but wanted to have some sort of pageant during a worship service before Christmas.

Setup: So one Sunday afternoon we invited all interested children to come to the church office (the temporary office is in a farm house, so the outdoor locations were attractive). We put the kids in costumes and arranged them in tableaux to fit the script that follows. Anyone who wanted to be Mary, Gabriel, etc. could. They just wore the "Mary costume" or the "Gabriel costume" in one of the shots.

Costumes: were simple Bible time costumes (tunics), with cotton ball/posterboard ears for the sheep (and black face-paint noses) and extra-large white t-shirts and garland halos for the angel choir.

Involving everyone: In order to involve children that could not make it to the official photo shoot, the next Sunday we took more pictures before Sunday school of individual angels, shepherds and sheep, some of which were made into group shots and some left separate.

PowerPoint: Someone who knows more about digital pictures than I do added backgrounds to the ones taken in the movie theater and made some other adjustments (we used both "traditional" photos that were scanned in and digital pictures).

Performance: On the Sunday of the performance, four youth read the script that follows and the children stood at the front of the theater and sang the Christmas songs that they had been practicing during Sunday School all month while the pictures were projected (PowerPoint or something) on the movie screen behind them.

To see the pictures we used, visit:

sorry -- they took the pictures off the web to keep the site current...

you will need to read the following script and descriptions and imagine the tableau-type scenes.

The script: *(with brief descriptions of accompanying pictures in italics -- note that some of my planned shots did not turn out well enough to be shown on a big screen, so there are some sort-of obvious scenes that are "missing" -- like Mary riding the donkey. feel free to add in what you want.)*

Our Virtual Christmas Pageant at River Community Church

READER 4: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.

#1: dark, or something symbolic like a candle or sunrise
[Advent candles lit]

READER 1: In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

#2: Mary cooking in oven

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

#3: angel and Mary: Mary looks surprised

READER 2: Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

READER 1: But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

#5: Angel alone.

READER 2: "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

#7: Mary with angel; she looks puzzled

READER 1: The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

#8: angel

READER 2: "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said."

#10: Mary, looking prayerful and contemplative.

READER 4: Then the angel left her.

[brief pause for transition music]

READER 3: In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

#13: Official reading proclamation scroll. People listening.

And everyone went to his own town to register.

#14: Walking people

READER 4: So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

READER 2:: While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.

#16: Mary holds baby.

She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

#17: Mary places baby in manger; Joseph watches.

SING: "Away in a Manger"

#18a, 18b, 18c...: shepherds and sheep

READER 3: And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

#19: Shepherds and sheep

READER 4: An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

#20: Shepherds, sheep and 1 angel.

READER 1: But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy

that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

READER 3: Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

#24: crowd of angels

ALL READERS: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

#25: Smiling, singing angel faces

SING: "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

#26a, 26b, 26c...: individual angels

READER 3: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

#27: Shepherds stand and point.

READER 4: So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

#28: shepherds and sheep, looking in door.

READER 2: But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

#31: Mary and Joseph smiling fondly at baby.

READER 4: The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

#32: Shepherds smiling and singing.

READER 1: For to us a child is born,

READER 2: to us a son is given,

READER 3: and the government will be on his shoulders.

READER 4: And he will be called

READER 1: Wonderful Counselor,

READER 2: Mighty God,

READER 3: Everlasting Father,

READER 4: Prince of Peace.

#33: Mary, Joseph, and shepherds tableau.

SING: "Joy to the World"