A Rehearsal-Free Christmas Pageant
The "To-do" list

Note: This information is repeated on the www.rfour.org/ christmas_pageant.html page

OVERVIEW

The rehearsal-free Christmas Pageant is designed to take place during a worship service. It requires no rehearsals and no learning of lines. It invites participation from children, youth and adults alike, tells the story of Jesus' birth and even involves dressing-up in costumes!

How it works

As members of the congregation arrive for worship, they are greeted with tables of costumes from which, with the help of enthusiastic volunteers, they will choose what character in the story they would like to dress up as. There will be costumes for angels, shepherds, various barn animals (cows, donkeys, sheep) and townspeople. Once the worship service begins, a narration based on the Luke telling of Jesus' birth is read/shared with the congregation. At various breaks in the narration, while the congregation sings a corresponding song, folks with certain costumes will go to the front of the sanctuary and help create a live nativity scene.

What you need to make it happen

1. People

- You need a "**master of ceremonies**" (M.C.) who informs the congregation of what is happening.
- You need one or two **scripture readers** (this is something youth can do, but adults can do it, too)
- Optional: You *may* need a **narrator**. This CAN be the M.C. or it can be someone different.
- You need a **"Mary"** (usually a child or youth) and a costume to go with it – there are no speaking parts, by the way, for Mary
- You need a **"Joseph"** (usually a child or youth) and a costume to go with it – there are not speaking parts, by the way, for Joseph
- You need a **doll ("baby Jesus"),** some swaddling clothes, and a manager to put baby Jesus in – needless to say, there are no speaking parts for baby Jesus…
- You need a "**go it alone" angel** with a costume, including a pole/staff with a large "star" attached at the top of it.

- You need at least **4 people with engaging personalities who like to dress people up in costumes**. These four people will help the congregation get into their costumes before worship starts (preferably right when they enter the door of the church building)

2. You will need costumes for the congregation

*This is where most of the **preparation time** comes in.* If this is your first year of doing, plan to get a group of folks together in **early October** or so to start making these costumes. Remember, numbers-wise, you're going to want to have costumes for at least 75% of your worship service attendance.

You will need a total of 6 generic-type costumes (the bolded words are the 6 types of costumes you will need)

- **Angels** (suggested costume: white robe-like material, maybe some wings, most likely a halo)
- **Shepherds** (suggested costume: burlap-like robe, a belt, maybe a sash, maybe a shawl/headband/bandana, definitely a shepherd's crook/staff)
- Animals:
  - **Sheep** (suggested costume: Some sort of wooly white fleece to go over a person's shoulders)
  - **Cows** (suggested costume: Some sort of black and white patterned material – like a cow – to go over a person's shoulders and maybe a tail)
  - **Donkeys/Horses** (suggested costume: Donkey ears and a tail!)
- **Townspeople** (suggested costume: same thing as the shepherds without the staff, and maybe no head coverings)

3. You will need music and lyrics for the songs you choose to sing

This requirement is not any different than any other worship service, but I didn't want to leave it off the list. Here are the songs I've typically used for the narrated part of the worship service:

Songs
- Here I Am (verses 1 and 3)
- Little Town of Bethlehem (verses 1 & 2)
- Away in a Manger (verses 1 and 2)
- Hark the Herald Angels
- Come, All Ye Faithful
- Do you hear what I hear? (verses 1 & 2)

- Go Tell It on the Mountain
- Joy to the World

4. Finally, you will need a script for everyone to follow

Go to www.rfour.org/ christmas_pageant.html and download the narration script, located in the "Quick Links" box after the first paragraph of text. Also available is an example bulletin and song lyrics.