

# **The Best Christmas Pageant Ever**

5-Day Family Devotional/Study

2025

## How to complete this study

This study is meant to be completed with your family. The Greatest Christmas Pageant Ever is a wonderful Christmas movie that touches the hearts of all ages. There is so much biblical material covered in this movie with great topics and questions to help you grow in your faith and get closer as a family. The study is designed to take about 10 minutes each day. You can assign someone to be the scribe, someone to be the reader and have everyone participate in the reflection questions.

1. **Watch the movie with your family.** Carve out about 2 hours to watch the movie, get the popcorn going and hop on the couch to watch your new favorite Christmas movie.
2. **For 5 days following watching the movie, complete the questions**, reflecting on the movie and the Christmas story together. This can be completed after you eat dinner or before bed, but the point is to do it as a family.
3. **Complete any challenges** at the end of the study to dive deeper into your faith and spend time as a family.

The following topics will be covered each day:

1. Day 1 – The Christmas Story – Part 1
2. Day 2 – The Christmas Story – Part 2
3. Day 3 – The Christmas Story – Part 3
4. Day 4 – Prayer
5. Day 5 – Jesus is for Everyone

I pray that this will not only give you an opportunity to spend more time together this Christmas season, but it will help you to grow in your faith. It's easy to allow your Christmas season to revolve around presents, parties and decorations more than family and Christ. Let's keep Christ in Christmas, remember the Christmas story, and the purpose of the holiday.

## Christmas Story as found in Luke 2:1-20

We will read Luke 2:1-20 at least three times in this study. The verses are captured here for easy reading and reference.

**Luke 2:1-20 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup> And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup> And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup> And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. <sup>10</sup> And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this will be a sign for you; you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly host praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" <sup>15</sup> When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup> And when they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup> And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> And the shepherd returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

## Day 1 – Christmas Story #1

The Herdman's bully their way into taking all of the main parts of the Christmas pageant; however, they didn't even know the Christmas story. Grace starts out her first rehearsal by telling them the Christmas story, which is pretty comical. Let's familiarize ourselves with the story too.

Read Luke 2:1-20 together as a family, take turns reading. Have someone fill in the blanks below for the first 7 verses.

**Luke 2:1-7 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be \_\_\_\_\_. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup> And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called \_\_\_\_\_, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup> And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a \_\_\_\_\_, because there was no place for them in the \_\_\_\_\_.

The Herdman's were listening to the Christmas story for the first time. There were quite a few questions that they had and things that appalled them! Did anyone else think these things were silly, questionable, down-right wrong?

1. **No room at the Inn** – Imogene was so upset that the Inn-keeper did not have room for Jesus and they put him in a barn.
2. **Sleeps in a manger** – They put baby Jesus in a feeding trough.
3. **Swaddling cloths** – The Herdman's thought Child Protective Services should be called since they swaddled baby Jesus so he couldn't move.

Have these things stuck out to you when you heard the Christmas Story? What are your thoughts about these parts of the Christmas story?

Imogene gets upset that Jesus was in a barn and there was no room at the Inn. The inn-keeper said "No" to the pregnant Mary and Joseph. If only he knew the King of the world was to be born that evening, I wonder if he would have made room? Many times we say

“No” to Jesus too. We put other things in front of him and our faith like our desire for Christmas presents, our preparation of Christmas parties, dinners, decorations, cards, etc. We don’t make room in our lives for Jesus, just like the inn-keeper didn’t make room for him at his birth.

Let this Christmas be different, make a commitment to let Jesus in your heart this Christmas season. Agree to open your heart and mind to remembering the reason we celebrate Christmas, which is Jesus’ birth.

Have each member of your family, that is completing this study, sign their name below as an agreement to open your hearts to Jesus this Christmas. Keep each other accountable for not getting greedy with presents and desires, caught up and stressed over parties, decorations and cards. Instead remember it is all about Jesus and his birth!

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What is one thing you can do this Christmas season to keep Christ in Christmas? Jot down ideas below:

Five Christmas songs were sung in the movie. Each day will include one song for your family to listen to or sing together.

**Christmas Song:** Away in a manger

**Christmas Challenge:** As we talked about above, your challenge this season is to keep Jesus in your heart and make room for him this Christmas season. Hold each other accountable to your signed agreement above.

## Day 2 - Christmas Story #2

Let's continue with the second part of the Christmas story and dive deeper into some of the thoughts and questions the Herdman's had as Grace explained the Christmas story to them.

Read Luke 2:1-20 together as a family, take turns reading. Have someone fill in the blanks below for the last 13 verses.

**Luke 2:8-20 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup> And in the same region there were \_\_\_\_\_ out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And an \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. <sup>10</sup> And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this will be a sign for you; you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly host praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth \_\_\_\_\_ among those with whom he is pleased!" <sup>15</sup> When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup> And when they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup> And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her \_\_\_\_\_. <sup>20</sup> And the shepherd returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

During the dress rehearsal the name of Jesus comes into question. Imogene wants to tell the audience what she named the baby, but Grace explained no one is to speak except for the Gladys. Imogene says she would have named him Bill. How funny to think of Jesus being called Bill! Grace explains that an angel told Joseph what to name the baby. (Matthew 1:20-21) Then Alice explains the baby's name was prophesized in Isaiah 9:6.

Read Isaiah below:

**Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)** – For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Write next to each name what those names mean to you:

- Wonderful Counselor
- Mighty God
- Everlasting Father
- Prince of Peace

Circle the name you need from Jesus this Christmas season.

It's interesting that the town that they live in is called Emmanuel. Grace explains that Emmanuel means God with us. This is another name of Jesus. What has this meant to you in your faith journey? How have you experienced "God with you" in your life?

**Christmas Song:** O Little Town of Bethlehem

**Christmas Challenge:** As you go through the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, think about the name of Jesus that means the most to you this year. Write that name somewhere you will see it. Possibly on a post it on your bathroom mirror or as the background on your phone. When you feel like you are getting anxious, overwhelmed, greedy or distracted, remember that Jesus is your Mighty God, Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace and Emmanuel.

### Day 3 - Christmas Story #3

By the time Grace is done telling the Herdman's about the Christmas story, Imogene realizes there is a lot that they do not know about the story of Jesus. Before we dive too far into this, let's finish up the Christmas story by reading out of the gospel of Matthew.

Read Matthew 2:1-12 together as a family, take turns reading. Have someone fill in the blanks below:

**Matthew 2:1-12 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, \_\_\_\_\_ from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." <sup>3</sup> When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup> "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." <sup>7</sup> Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." <sup>9</sup> After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. <sup>11</sup> And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then opening their treasurers, they offered him gifts, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. <sup>12</sup> And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Again, after this part of the story, the Herdman's had quite a few questions and things that appalled them! Did anyone else think these things were funny, questionable, down-right wrong?

1. **Wisemen bring gold, frankincense, myrrh** – The Herdman's thought these were terrible gifts for Jesus!
2. **Herod wants to kill Jesus** – While the Herdman's wanted to add violence to the pageant, they were not happy that King Herod wanted to kill a little baby Jesus.

Have you ever thought what is frankincense and myrrh? What would a baby want with gold?



- *Gold* – a gift for royalty. Jesus is our king, so a gift of gold is fitting.
- *Frankincense* – perfume or incense used in worship, this symbolizes Jesus’ divinity and deity.
- *Myrrh* – a bitter substance used to embalm bodies. Jesus would die on a cross for our sins and be put in a tomb for 3 days.

Beth’s dad, Bob, takes the family with him to deliver hams to different homes. One stop that he makes is to the Herdman house. When he arrives, all of the kids are so excited to see him and can’t wait to have the ham. Grace, Beth and Charlie witness this reaction from the car and Grace realizes she shouldn’t listen to the other church women, the Herdman’s are a part of the pageant and she will do her best working with them.

That ham was a cherished gift to the Herdman’s. Were you surprised when the three wise men walked down the aisle at the church and put the ham at the foot of the manger as a gift to Jesus? How did this make you feel?

Although ham still isn’t a gift for a baby, it was the most important Christmas gift that the Herdman’s would receive that year. They decided to sacrifice their favorite gift and give it to Jesus.

It reminds me of another story of a woman who gave all that she had.

Read Mark 12:42-44 below:

**Mark 12:42-44 (ESV)** <sup>42</sup> And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. <sup>43</sup> And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. <sup>44</sup> For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

Do you feel convicted to make a change this Christmas season to be more like the Herdman's in their gift giving? What can you do to make a change this Christmas to be more like the Herdman's?

After Grace explains the story to the Herdman's they realize there is a lot they don't know about Jesus and the Christmas story. Imogene has Beth take the Herdman's to the library where they start to read through the bible.

- This is an important concept. When we don't know something, it is important to research it and the bible is a great place to start. Everything should be tested to the bible. The bible is our TRUTH and guide on how to live a Christian life.

Do you have any questions about the bible, Jesus or Christmas that you would like to ask one another? Is there anything that you need to research so you can believe more fully in Jesus and accept him in your heart? Is there anything that is holding you back in your faith that you need to know more about?

**Christmas Song:** We three kings

**Christmas Challenge:** If you have questions about God, take some time to research answers and consult your bible. (A good resource is [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)) Discuss your questions as a family.

## Day 4 - Prayer

Throughout the movie we see Beth pray to God. Her prayers are answered but not always the way she plans. Let's go through each of Beth's prayers and see how God answered them:

- 1) Her first prayer was that the Herdman's would go away or she would be made invisible.

The Herdman's are a family of kids who lie, cheat, steal and are really mean. They are bullies at school and terrors in the community.

- Do you know someone who is either mean, an outcast or not accepted by many people? What is something nice that you can do for them this Christmas season?

- 2) Her second prayer was that the Pageant would go well. The 75<sup>th</sup> Christmas Pageant was a big deal in the town and Beth's mom, Grace, volunteered to run the pageant after Mrs. Armstrong broke both her legs.

- Beth prayed this prayer even before the Herdman's got involved in the pageant. Do you think it was ironic that the Herdman's got involved or part of God's plan? What do you think the town learned through the Herdman's being involved in the pageant?

- 3) Her third prayer was for God to help her mom and save the pageant.

- Throughout the movie we see the Herdman's as trouble-makers, but you can see God working in Imogene. What did you notice about her as the movie progressed?

- 4) Beth's last prayer on Christmas Day was for the pageant not to be what it always has been. As we see by the end of the movie, the pageant wasn't what it always was. Imogene burped baby Jesus, Gladys screams at the shepherds, a ham is given to baby Jesus instead of gold, frankincense and myrrh, but most importantly the Herdman's understood the Christmas story and became a part of the community.

In each prayer, God worked and answered the prayer, but not necessarily the way that Beth wanted. It would have been easier if the Herdman's dropped out of the pageant. The 75<sup>th</sup> Christmas pageant would have been like the 74 before it, but God wanted to open the hearts and minds of the Herdman's and the Emmanuel community.

God often calls us to get out of our comfort zone. Jesus didn't socialize with the typical crowd. He ate with tax collectors and sinners.

- **Mark 2:15-17 (ESV)** <sup>15</sup> *And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.* <sup>16</sup> *And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"* <sup>17</sup> *And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."*

What can you do this Christmas to make it different from the previous Christmases? Is God calling you to reach out to someone and make an invitation to dinner, volunteer to feed the homeless, hand out blessing bags to those who are in need?

**Christmas Song:** What child is this

**Christmas Challenge:** Talk as a family how you are going to make this Christmas more Christ focused. Come up with practical next steps. Assign responsibilities to each person if needed. Continue to hold each other accountable to your agreement from day 1 and check in frequently.

## **Day 5 - Jesus is for Everyone**

The movie ends with grown-up Beth saying “Unto you a child is born”. This is from our reading in Luke. Re-read Luke 2:1-20 one last time as a family. When you get to verse 11 have everyone say it together.

At this point in the study you have now read the Christmas story 3x as a family. Did anything jump out to you in this last reading? Do you feel more comfortable and familiar with the story after reading it so many times?

During the dress rehearsal, verse 11 “unto you a child is born” is read. Grace talks to Imogene and explains that Jesus wasn’t just born for Mary, but for the whole world. Jesus wasn’t just Mary’s child, but the world’s savior. I believe she says this so Imogene knows Jesus is for the Herdman’s.

Beth and Grace have a conversation in the movie and Grace points out that the whole reason of Christmas was that Jesus was born for the Herdman’s as much as for all of us. The church women are missing the point if they turn the Herdman’s away and don’t let them be in the pageant.

Throughout the movie the people of Emmanuel are not accepting of the Herdman’s. The church doesn’t want them to be a part of the pageant, and they make that known.

- In the beginning of the movie, Charlie displayed on his picture when asked what he likes about church that there were no Herdman’s at church.
- While everyone is outside and the fire trucks came to put out the fire, Rebecca, Alice’s mom, blames Imogene for starting the fire and tells the pastor this. It turns out it was the applesauce cake caused the fire, but no one said sorry.
- The people of the church pressure Grace into kicking the Herdman’s out of the pageant. Even the pastor asks Grace if she can assure everyone that it will be okay, which she can’t.

The church is made up of imperfect, sinful humans who mess up and don’t always accept people right away. God brings people together in the church with different giftings and strengths. Everyone should be accepting of outsiders, especially the church. If you have been hurt by people in church before, I am truly sorry. That was not God’s intention. The church should be accepting of everyone, no matter their background, social status, and

unique characteristics. Once the church allowed the Herdman's into the pageant and saw the emotion, sacrifice and unique perspective that they brought to the Christmas story it made the 75<sup>th</sup> Christmas pageant the best one ever!

The emotion that Imogene brought to playing Mary helped to bring the story to life for the church community. She understood the sacrifice that Mary had to go through to bring a baby into this world. She was a first-time parent, with no money, no place to give birth, but God chose her. As Imogene looked down on baby Jesus tears rolled down her cheeks.

Having the Herdman's in the pageant brought a new perspective to the Emmanuel town on the Christmas story. How has this movie affected you? What did you learn and what are you going to take from this movie?

The movie ends with "Unto you a child is born". The child that was born is Jesus. Jesus was born on Christmas day, but that was only the beginning of his journey. He leads 12 disciples, teaches crowds, performs miracles all up until he is put to death on a cross. He dies for our sins and on the third day he rises from the dead, opening the gates of heaven for us so we can spend an eternity with him in heaven. Unto you a child is born is only the beginning, there is so much more to knowing Jesus.

**Christmas Song:** Silent Night

**Christmas Challenge:** How can you take Jesus into your life beyond Christmas. Christmas is but one day, but Jesus and your relationship with him can be forever. What steps can you take to grow in your faith? Do you need to accept Jesus into your life? Do you need to read your bible more to get to know him? Should you try to attend church regularly? Would getting involved at church or with a service project where you can share about Jesus help you grow in your faith? Come up with a couple of ideas how you can grow in your faith this upcoming year, beyond the Christmas season.

## **References**

This study is based on the movie The Best Christmas Pageant Ever. Quotes and material from the movie are included in this study.

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever. Directed by Dallas Jenkins, Lionsgate and Kingdom Story Company, 2024.

Bible verses are referenced from the (ESV) English Standard Version of the bible.

The ESV Bible. (2001). English Standard Version [Online Version]. Crossway.