The Pass-It-On Christmas

A One-Act Play for Children and Families

By Will Ledesma

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STORY OF THE PLAY

There's wonderful news in the air - the Son of God is born! Follow the adventure of a shepherd boy and his lamb as they cross the countryside telling anyone they can about the birth of the Messiah! But it turns out that not quite everyone shares their excitement about the good news. *Pass-It-On Christmas* is equal parts chaotic comedy and touching storytelling that is sure to become a holiday favorite for all ages. This utterly delightful comedy is perfect for almost any Christmas occasion: small cast, large cast, small stage, no budget, children's audience, Sunday morning service, you name it! Most importantly this show reminds us that everyone can tell someone about the miracle of Immanuel: God is with us!

Approximate running time 35 minutes.

Originally performed by the A. D. Players National Touring Company in December 2008.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

A cast size of 3-12 (or more with extras), virtually every role is gender flexible.

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES ON CASTING:

The Pass-It-On Christmas was originally written for and performed by three versatile actors. I feel that this is the most effective way to stage the show, but it is by no means your only option. The roles are divided among the actors in the script as they were in the original production (Actors A, B, and C). In the original cast, actor A was female while actors B and C were male. This is reflected in the pronoun usage but does not necessarily need to be adhered to. For example, in the second production of the script, both actors A and B were female and only actor C was male. In addition, the roles can be further separated to allow for a bigger cast. Should you desire to include more people, you could divide the narration any way you wish. You could choose to have a separate narrator or two who do not assume additional roles within the story. You may wish to assign each individual character (lamb, shepherd, king, guard, etc.) to a separate actor. With a little creativity, you could easily produce the play with a cast of over twenty actors.

NOTES ON COSTUMES AND PROPS:

This script was written to be toured into different performance spaces. Since the concept of a traveling troupe is written into the story of the play, it is suggested that the costumes be simple. In the original production, each character wore a basic costume that they kept on throughout the entire show. They then removed additional pieces from an onstage road box to assume a new character. For example: the Angels' Song wore a shimmering blue cape; the sheep wore woolen sheep hats, the king wore a crown and a robe. Similarly, the props were simple, and everything fit in the same box as the costume pieces: a staff for the shepherd boy, a recorder for the wind, a bag of objects for the guard, etc. Everything was carefully organized before each show to come out of the box in the proper order and make for quick and simple changes between characters and scenes.

The Pass-It-On Christmas

(AT RISE: LIGHTS up on an empty stage. For twenty seconds, absolutely nothing happens. Then, timidly, A enters from the back of the house carrying a small stepladder.)

A: *(Calling behind her.)* Hey! I think I found the place!

(B enters, carrying a larger ladder.)

B: How can you be sure it's the right place?

A: There's an audience.

B: What?? *(And HE is down the aisle in a flash.)* What, did they start without us?

A: They can't start without us, we're the show!

B: Looks like they did anyway! Hey, hurry up back there!

(C enters from the back of the house, pulling large bag or road box containing all the show's props and costume pieces.)

C: Oh, sure, that's easy for you to say. You're not the one hauling this heavy thing all over the... *(HE sees the audience.)* WHOA! Did they start without us?

A: Sorry about this, folks! I promise I can explain everything! See, we're not usually late like this, but we don't usually perform here. See, we travel around from place to place to do shows, and we had trouble finding this place... I've got a map here, but it's pretty hard to read, and it's not very accurate anyway.

(B takes the stepladder from A.)

A: *(Cont'd.)* Oh, sorry. Anyway, we finally find the place, and THEN we have to find somewhere to park, and then we had trouble finding this room.

B: All right, we're ready!

A: No, you've got the ladders in the wrong places. The little one should be over there…

C: She's right.

(B and C hurry to swap the ladders and barely avoid destroying one another in the chaotic process.)

A: Anyway, I promise this has never happened before! We're usually right on time. Early, even! In fact, next time we come here, we will know RIGHT where to go. And I promise this won't affect the show at all. Well, except for starting a little late, of course. But really, I'm sure all of you have walked in late for something before, a play, or a doctor's visit, or even a church service. This is just like that. Only this time, the play walked in late on you. And that's kind of funny, if you think about it.

(C and B jerk A into starting position.)

A: Oh. I guess we're starting now.

(MUSIC plays and LIGHTS fade up exactly as at the beginning of the show, with the notable difference that there are now actors on the stage. B and C softy sing or hum a reverent Christmas carol in the background. There is an extremely marked difference in the performers' energy, their carriage and their voices. They have gone from haphazard and hurried to polished performance. The show will make several breaks between the "performance" and "real life," and if this shift in energy and personality is not nailed here, it will be ambiguous throughout the rest of the play.)

A: Good evening. Tonight, we bring you a story of Christmas. But there were no grinches or reindeer or snowmen or gift-wrapped video games in *this* Christmas story. No, this story happened long before any of that. It's about a miracle that's so true and so wonderful that those who heard about it just had to pass it on! And it all began…with a star!

C: No!

A: No?

C: No. It *began* with a baby.

A: That's right…a baby boy!

(B hands her a bundle, the "baby," and she and C kneel, creating the traditional manger scene pose.)

B: God's only son.

C: For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son…

A: Jesus.

B: That whoever believes in Him would not die, but have eternal life. *(THEY break the "nativity moment.")* And you all know *that* story, probably by heart.

C: Right. Angels, shepherd, innkeepers, wise men…

A: But that's not our story today. *Our* story actually takes place a long way away from all of that, in another, far-away country. You see, when those angels lit up the night sky the night Christ was born, they left quite an impression!

End of Freeview

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