



THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER

Based on “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever” by Barbara Robinson

Classroom Guide Grade 2 — Grade 3

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How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* is designed for Texas students in Grades 2 and 3. It offers activities to help you integrate a performance of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* into English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, social studies, music, art, and theatre curricula.

All activities in this guide are linked to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) content standards.

For students outside Texas, this guide's ELA and math activities also are linked to Common Core standards. At the back of this guide, you will find a list of the guide activities and their related Texas and Common Core standards.

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1: Discussion Questions

Before the Performance

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever is a stage play. What is a stage play?

- How is a play similar to a TV show or movie?
- How is it different?

Who performs the parts (roles) in a play?

- What kinds of skills do you think performers need to have to perform in plays?
- Who else works on plays? (Remember: you may not see them on stage!)

The play is based on a story called *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*.

- Have you read *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* as a class or by yourself?
 - Based on what you read, what do you think may happen in the play?

During the Performance

When you watch a play, you are a member of the audience. What kinds of things should you do as an audience member? Examples:

- Pay attention
- Laugh when something funny happens
- Clap if you enjoy something

What kinds of things should you *not* do as an audience member? Examples:

- Talk to your neighbor
- Use a cell phone during the performance
- Yell at the actors (unless they ask you to!)

After the Performance

What did you think of the play?

- If you read *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* beforehand, how was the play similar to the book?
- How was it different?

Describe the performers in the play.

- What did they do to make their characters special (different from the other characters)?
- How did they use their bodies to play their characters (using voice, movement, etc.)?
- Did you see anyone else who worked on the play besides the performers on stage?

Describe the characters' costumes.

- What did each character's costume tell you about that character?
- Did any of the performers change costumes?
 - If so, why do you think they needed to change costumes?

Describe the set of the play.

- Did it have a lot of locations?
- Did it look like a place you've been to before?
- How did different lighting change how the set looked for different scenes?

Did the play have music in it?

- If so, was it only in the background, or did it help tell the story?
- What instruments did you hear in the music?

If you were going to direct *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* how would your production be different than the play you saw by Magik?

2: Magik Must-Reads

For each of our main stage productions at The Magik Theatre, we choose a theme related to the show. Then we create a list of Magik Must-Reads on that theme.

The reading theme for *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* is Don't Judge a Book.

The Magik Must-Reads (Grade 2 — Grade 3) are:

Don't Laugh At Me by Steven Seskin

Miss Spider's Tea Party by David Kirk

What Do You Do With a Problem? by Kobi Yamada

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer by Rick Bunsen

Read them as a class or let students choose two or more to read. Then use these questions for discussion or book reports:

Theme

How did the theme of Don't Judge a Book show in each book? Explain.

Setting

Describe the settings of each book.

- What details can you remember?
- Were the settings similar to a place you know or a place you've visited?

How were the settings similar to each other? How were they different?

How were the settings related to the theme of Don't Judge a Book? Explain.

Characters

Who were the main characters of each book?

Did any characters show up in more than one book?

Were the characters of one book similar another book's characters in any other ways?

Plot

What did the main characters of the books want most?

Did anyone or anything stand between the main characters and their goals?

Did the main characters get what they wanted? How?

How were the plots of the books similar? How were they different?

3: Write Your Own Story

In *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, everyone in the pageant judges the Herman children before they are given a chance. Write a story about a character who is judged too quickly but soon proves everyone wrong. Make sure that you answer these questions when you are writing your story:

- Who is your main character?
- What does your main character want?
- What is the obstacle your character is facing?
- Who are the other characters?
- How will your character solve the problem?
- What did your main character learn?

TITLE: _____

4: Word Problems

- 1) There are six Herdman children, all of which are in the pageant. If three of them didn't show up to rehearsal, how many did show up?

- 2) There are ten children in the angel choir. If half of them are standing on stage left, how many are standing on stage right?

- 3) Mrs. McCarthy and her team make 20 applesauce cakes. If the Herman children steal 7 of them, how many do they have left?

- 4) After Mrs. McCarthy calls the fire department about the smoke in the bathroom, two firemen show up to the church to search for and put out the fire. By the end of the night there are three times as many firemen there. How many firemen showed up, total?

- 5) There are 42 burning candles on stage. Half of them are red and half of them are green. If a breeze blows out 12 candles, how many candles are still burning? If half of the candles that blew out are red and half are green, how many of each color are left burning?

5: Ice and Salt

Though it didn't snow in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, the holiday season in many places is known for being at one of the frostiest times of year. But how long does it take all of that ice to melt? As a class, conduct an experiment to see how fast ice can melt and how long it can stay frozen.

Materials

- Ice cubes frozen and ready
- Salt
- Trays/Paper Plates to use for each student
- A stopwatch

Procedure

- 1) Write out your hypothesis. What do you think will happen to the ice cube that has salt on it, compared to the ice cube without it?
- 2) Put two same-sized ice cubes on a paper plate/tray and take a stopwatch from your teacher.
- 3) Take a small amount of salt and place it on top of one ice cube.
- 4) Once this is set, time which ice cube melts first. Note how long it took for each ice cube to melt in minutes/seconds.

Hypothesis:

Ice Cube Description	The time it took to melt

Follow-Up Questions

- 1) Was your hypothesis correct?
- 2) What do you think made one ice cube melt more quickly than the other?
- 3) What else could make an ice cube melt more quickly?

6: Traditions

The pageant in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* happened every year, making it a holiday tradition. But it's not the only tradition to happen during the holiday season. From trees to tamales to lighting a menorah, all traditions have an origin story. Now it's your turn to explore the origins of traditions!

Procedure

- 1) As a class, discuss some holiday traditions. What do you eat? What do you do? How do you decorate? What do you wear? All of these are important questions that can be helpful when examining traditions.
- 2) Once you have found some traditions, split up into smaller groups to research the origins of those traditions. One tradition per group.
- 3) Then come back together to share what you've found!

Example

The Christmas Tree (facts from socialstudiesforkids.com)

- The tradition of the Christmas tree goes all the way back to the ancient Celts. These people, who lived in England and Gaul (France), used evergreen trees to celebrate the Winter Solstice, which usually came at the end of December.
- The Celts would put these trees up in their homes and decorate the trees with colored paper, toys, and food. Candles were sometimes used as well.
- As these people moved to other countries, they took this tradition with them. People began to use other things to decorate their trees, such as cotton (for snow), candy, popcorn, and glass ornaments.
- When electric lights became available near the beginning of the 20th Century, people used these lights on their Christmas trees as well.



Follow-Up Questions

- 1) Did any of the traditions have anything in common?
- 2) How do the traditions you examined compare to how you celebrate the holidays?
- 3) Do you have any traditions that are just within your family?

7: Paper Plate Angels

There were several types angels in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, from the young children to Gladys! While the children in the play wore sheets to be angels, angel art can be made with many materials! Now you get to create your own paper plate angel.

Materials

- Paper Plate
- Scissors
- Gold glitter
- Paper
- Gold sparkly pipe cleaner
- Tape/Glue
- Sharpie/Pink Crayon

Procedure

- 1) Cut a deep triangle out of a white paper plate.
- 2) Glue or tape the triangle to the bottom of the paper plate, as pictured in the photo to the right.
- 3) Put lines of glue all around the plate and shake gold glitter on it. Then turn the plate to get off any excess glitter.
- 4) Cut out a circle to make the angel's head, then use other construction paper to add hair and the hands. Glue these on.
- 5) Next, draw a face onto the head, drawing eyes and a mouth.
- 6) Bend a gold pipe cleaner to look like a halo (a circle with a line coming down from it) and tape it to the back of the head.
- 7) Add some rosy pink cheeks and you're done! Now you have your very own Gladys Herman approved angel!



Activity borrowed from craftymorning.com

8: Caroling

In the pageant in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, the choir sings several songs about Christmas. Now it's your turn! As a class, rehearse a carol. Then you can perform it for another class! Below is one song option, but you can choose whichever carol you'd like!

Sheet music from pianolessons4children.com.

The sheet music is written on a single treble clef staff in common time (C). The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics written below the notes. Chords are indicated by letters above the staff. The music is divided into measures, with measure numbers 6, 12, 17, 22, 27, and 30 marked at the beginning of their respective lines.

Chords: C, F, G7, D7, G, C.

Lyrics:

Da shing through the snow, in a one horse o - pen sleigh, O'er the fields we
 go, lau ghing all the way, Bells on bob-tail ring, ma king spi rits
 bright, what fun it is to ride and sing a slei ghing song to - night! Oh!
 Jin - gle bells, jin - gle bells, jin - gle all the way, Oh! What fun it
 is to ride in a one - horse o - pen sleigh - Jin-gle bells, jin-gle bells,
 jin - gle all the way. Oh! What fun it
 is to ride in a one - horse o - pen sleigh.

TEXAS

Grade 2

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
1	Fine Arts 117.10.b.5
2	ELA 110.13.b.5
3	ELA 110.13.b.17-18
4	Math 111.14.b.3-4
5	Science 112.13.a.4.C; 112.13.b. 1-4; 112.13.b.9.A; 112.13.b.10.B
6	Soc Studies 113.13.b.2A-C; 113.13.b.18.A-E; 113.13.b.19 A-B; 113.13.b.20A-B
7	Fine Arts 117.8.b.1-2, 4
8	Fine Arts 117.9.b.1-2, 4

Grade 3

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
1	Fine Arts 117.13.b.5
2	ELA 110.14.b.4
3	ELA 110.14.b.17-18
4	Math 111.15.b.3-4
5	Science 112.14.a.4.C; 112.14.b.1-4; 112.14.b.9.A; 112.14.b.10.A-B
6	Soc Studies 113.14.b.5.C-D; 113.14.b.17 A-F; 113.14.b.18. A-C
7	Fine Arts 117.11.b.1-2, 4
8	Fine Arts 117.12.b.1-2, 4

COMMON CORE

Grade 2

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
2	ELA L.2.1, 5-6
3	ELA W.2.3
5	Math 2.OA.1

Grade 3

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
2	ELA L.3.1, 5-6
3	ELA W.3.3
5	Math 3.OA.3, 7