

spartanburg youth! theatre

SCHOOL PERFORMANCES: NOVEMBER 28 & 29, 2018
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AT THE THEATER



Dear Teachers,

We are so excited to present *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* for the schools in Spartanburg and surrounding counties. Enclosed in this Enrichment Guide, you

will find curriculum materials and activities that you can use in your classrooms before and after attending the performance. Please feel free to adapt any of these activities to fit the needs of your students.

Thank you so much for supporting the arts in your classrooms. Please do not hesitate to call or email with any questions or concerns.

Adam Sanders

Director of the Spartanburg Youth Theatre

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CONTACT

Spartanburg Little Theatre: (864) 585-8272

Spartanburg Youth Theatre: (864) 583-4891

The Chapman Cultural Center: (864) 542-ARTS

DO YOU WANT TO BE AN ACTOR ON THE SYT STAGE?

Anyone in grades 3-12 can audition for a
Spartanburg Youth Theatre Production.

Visit our website to find out how: www.spartanburgyouththeatre.com/audition-information



WELCOME TO THE CHAPMAN CULTURAL CENTER

The Chapman Cultural Center brings together Spartanburg's visual and performing arts in a beautiful 85,000 square-foot campus. At the heart of the complex is the 500-seat theater.

Patrons enter the theater through an exterior courtyard plaza, enclosed by the facility's three buildings, through a columned portico, and into the Center's main lobby. Large windows overlooking

the plaza, patterned terrazzo floors, and a pair of open stairways create an elegant setting for large gatherings, as well as community or private events.

Following the tradition of great performance spaces, such as Carnegie Hall, the theater itself is a classic horseshoe-shaped design. The shape creates an intimate theatre experience for patrons sitting on both levels. Each seat

has an excellent view of the stage, and the design of the room allows patrons to see each other from the side parterres and balcony. The architectural design of the theater is defined by the horseshoe geometry with curving parterre, balcony fronts, and a stepped circular ceiling with a detailed stenciled pattern crowned with a stained glass skylight.

chapman  center
Discover. Experience. Celebrate.

THIS BOOKLET

was written and designed by Jana Brunken and Callie Dean.

Contact them by email at jana.brunken@gmail.com to discuss your curriculum development needs.



STAGE POLICIES

- The use of recording equipment and cameras is not permitted during the performance.
- Electronic devices are not permitted.
- Should a student become ill, suffer an injury, or have another problem, please escort him or her out of the theater.
- In the unlikely event of a general emergency, the house lights will come on, and a SYT or Chapman Center employee will come on stage and inform the audience of the problem. Remain in your seats and wait for further instructions.
- Please find your seats prior to going to the restroom.

If you have special needs for any student(s) and did not indicate your needs when you ordered tickets, please call SYT director, Adam Sanders, at (864) 583-4891.

Watching a live performance on a stage is different from viewing a film at a movie theater. Remember, the actors on stage can see and hear you at the same time you can see and hear them.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

- Stay with your group at all times and pay attention to your teachers and chaperones.
- Find your seat in the theater before going to the bathroom or getting a drink of water.
- Make yourself comfortable while keeping movement to a minimum.
- Please do not stand up, walk around, or put your feet on the seat in front of you.
- No chewing gum, eating, or drinking in the theater. No backpacks, cameras, or electronic devices are permitted in the theater.
- Feel free to talk quietly in your seats before the show.
- Show your appreciation by clapping for the actors at the end of the play.
- After the lights come back up, wait for the ushers to escort your group out of the theater.



DID YOU KNOW??

The first actors were from ancient Greece. They wore masks to show their emotions. Today we use comedy and tragedy masks as a symbol for theatre.

THEATRE VOCABULARY

- **Apron** – The area of the stage that extends toward the audience, in front of the main curtain
- **Backstage** – The space behind the acting area, unseen by the audience
- **Balcony** – An upper floor of seats that project out over the main seating area of a theater
- **Character** – The role played by an actor as he or she assumes another’s identity
- **Conflict** – The problem or incident that creates the action and is resolved by the end of the play
- **Costume** – The carefully selected or specially designed clothing worn by the actors
- **Cross** – The actor’s movement from one stage location to another
- **Cue** – The last words or action of an actor immediately preceding the lines or business of another actor
- **Dialogue** – The stage conversation between characters
- **Director** – The person who oversees the entire process of staging a theatrical production
- **Downstage** – The part of the stage closest to the audience. At one time stages were raked, or sloped, with the lower (“down”) part closest to the audience, and the higher (“up”) part further away
- **Ensemble** – A cast of actors working together effectively to present a theatrical performance
- **Plot** – The storyline: beginning (the setting, characters, and problem), middle (how the characters work to solve the problem), and the ending (resolution of the problem)
- **Project** – To speak loudly so the entire audience can hear you
- **Props** – All the stage furnishings, including furniture, that are physically used by the actors
- **Script** – The text of the play, including dialogue and stage directions, all written by the playwright
- **Set** – All of the scenery that makes up the physical environment of the world of the play
- **Stage Left** – The part of the stage to the actor’s left when the actor faces the audience
- **Stage Manager** – The person who supervises the physical production of a play and who is in charge of the stage during the performance
- **Stage Right** – The part of the stage to the actor’s right when the actor faces the audience
- **Strike** – Dismantling the set, costumes, and props at the end of the run of a show
- **Theme** – The central thought, idea, or significance of the action of a play
- **Upstage** – The area of the stage farthest way from the audience and nearest to the back wall

Break a leg!

Although the origin of the saying is unknown, well-wishers typically say “break a leg” to actors to wish them luck before they go on stage to perform. In the theatre, wishing a person “good luck” is actually considered bad luck.



MEET THE AUTHOR/PLAYWRIGHT

Adapted from <https://www.harpercollins.com/author/cr-100500/barbara-robinson/>

Barbara Robinson has written several popular books for children, including *My Brother Louis Measures Worms*, *The Best School Year Ever*, *The Best Halloween Ever*, and the enormously popular bestselling novel *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, first published in 1972, which was made into a classic TV movie and on which this play was based.

The play *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* is produced annually in theaters, schools, and churches all over the world. Ms. Robinson has two daughters and three grandchildren.

***"Because of the Herdmans,
it was a whole new story."
-Beth***



SEND SNAIL MAIL

Students may wish to write letters to the cast of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* with their thoughts and comments on the production.

All correspondence should be sent to:
The Spartanburg Youth Theatre
200 E. Saint John St.
Spartanburg, SC 29306



***"I'd call it... Revenge at Bethlehem."
-Gladys***



PLOT SUMMARY

Adapted from <https://stageagent.com/shows/play/6754/the-best-christmas-pageant-ever>

Beth Bradley's church's Christmas pageant is predictable every year -- the angel choir wears too much lipstick, the shepherds are all in their father's bathrobes, the minister's son is permanently cast in the role of Joseph -- hardly "four-star entertainment." But when seasoned and authoritative pageant director, Mrs. Armstrong, breaks her leg, it is up to Beth's inexperienced mother Grace to step in.

The timing couldn't be worse, as the rambunctious Herdman children, a rough and tough group of siblings from the wrong side of the tracks, descend upon the pageant, lured by the promise of free dessert at Sunday school and determined to win all the lead roles for themselves. The Ladies' Aid Society members are beside

themselves with disapproval, all the shepherds quit because Gladys Herdman "hits too hard," the show is briefly re-titled "Revenge at Bethlehem," and the church catches on fire. But Beth and her community watch in surprise as the same old Christmas story is rejuvenated by the creativity, energy, and unexpected sincerity of a misunderstood young family.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

Before our actors take the stage in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, we would like to thank our season sponsors and community partners. We couldn't put on these performances without them.

Platinum Sponsors

Pediatric Associates-Spartanburg, part of Greenville Health System, offers a full range of healthcare needs for your children. From well-checks to sick visits, our goal is to offer you and your family the most current medical information and care available. For more information (hours, locations, and a complete list of services), visit www.ghschildrens.org/pediatric-associates-spartanburg.php.



Denny's is America's diner. This is where guests have come for over sixty years now to sit back, relax and enjoy delicious, hearty meals 24/7, every day of the year. If you're feeling hungry, we highly recommend that you stop in for a delicious breakfast all day long! For more information, visit www.dennys.com.



The Spartanburg County Public Library is the perfect place to read more about Christmas traditions and to find more great reading adventures! For more information, visit www.infodepot.org/.

Silver Sponsor

Bill English Insurance Agency is a dedicated insurance agent with American National who is ready to help you make well-informed decisions about how to manage your family's risks, no matter what stage of life you are in. For more information, visit mlagents.americannational.com/billenglish-913/ or call 864-578-8656.



Community Partners

Hub City Bookshop
www.hubcity.org/bookshop/about/



Little Caesars Pizza
www.littlecaesars.com/



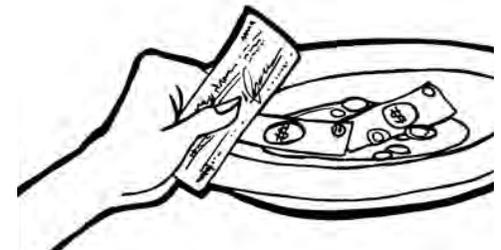
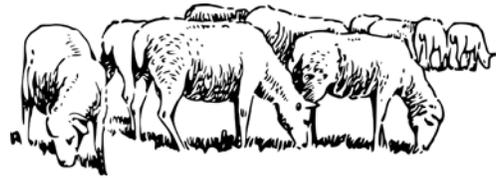
***"Some angel tells me what to call the baby...
I would have named him Bill."
-Imogene***

CLASSROOM CONNECTION

THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER VOCABULARY

- **Bazaar** - a fundraising sale of goods. Another of Mrs. Armstrong's many annual responsibilities that Mother worries over.
- **Collection plate** - a plate that is used in church to collect money for charity or the support of the church. Mrs. Slocum uses this word in fear of the possible schemes the Herdmans might attempt.
- **Decree** - an official order issued by a legal authority. This comes from the reading of the scripture.
- **Disaster** - an event or fact that has unfortunate consequences. How Reverend Hopkins describes the fears of the other church members to Mother, which sparks her resolve.
- **Flock** - a number of domestic animals, especially sheep, goats, or geese, that are kept together. This word is repeated throughout the pageant.
- **Innkeeper** - a person who runs an inn. The children have many questions about the inn and the innkeeper.
- **Multitude** - a large number. This word is repeated throughout the pageant.
- **Pageant** - a public entertainment consisting of a procession of people in elaborate, colorful costumes. In the show, a Christmas pageant is thrown for a loop when the troublesome Herdmans become part of it.
- **Ponder** - think about carefully, before making a decision or reaching a conclusion. Once this word is used in the pageant to describe Mary with her baby, Imogene begins to feel something miraculous and cries.
- **Potluck** - a meal or party to which each of the guests contributes a dish. One of the many things Mrs. Armstrong is in charge of is the potluck supper.
- **Refreshment** - a light snack or drink. When Charlie describes the many desserts and refreshments that he receives at church, the Herdmans are inspired to come to church.
- **Refugee** - a person forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. This word is used during a tender moment between Father and Beth before the pageant begins.
- **Rehearsal** - a practice of a play for later public performance. Because they fear the Herdman siblings, the children list possible reasons they might need to miss rehearsals.
- **Shepherd's crook** - a staff with a hook at one end used by shepherds. Father tells Mother he will help her with this during the pageant.
- **Supermarket** - a large self-service store selling foods and household goods. Imogene says this is a location where you can steal babies.
- **Traction** - the application of a sustained pull on a limb maintain the position of a fractured bone. Charlie hears his father say this word about Mrs. Armstrong's broken leg and uses it incorrectly later.
- **Volunteer** - freely offer to do something; Mrs. Bradley uses this word to encourage the other children to sign up.

flock of sheep



offering plate



LEARNING ACTIVITY #1 - LOOKING AT PERSPECTIVE

ELA Content Standards: RL-8, RL-11

Materials Needed: "A New Narrator" worksheet (page 11)

Instructions:

Before the play:

Read an excerpt from Barbara Robinson's novel *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, on which the play is based.

ASK:

- From what point of view is this novel written? (Answer: first person point of view, which means that the story is told by a character in the story and uses pronouns like I, me, and my. You may want to review point of view with your students at this time: second person point of view uses "You," and third person point of view uses the pronouns he, she, and it to tell the story)
- Who is the narrator of this novel? (Beth)
- What can you tell about the narrator from the way she tells the story?

After watching the play, ASK:

- Who was the narrator of the play? (Beth)
- What is the role of a narrator in a play? How is this role similar to and different from a narrator in a book? (Students may say: The narrator sometimes spoke directly to the audience rather than participating in the story).
- Why do you think the author chose Beth to be the narrator?
- How do you think the story would be different if a different character was the narrator?

As individuals or small groups, have students choose (or assign) another character in the play to analyze. Using "A New Narrator" worksheet (on page 11), they will list character traits of their chosen character and then rewrite one scene from the perspective of that character.

If time permits, give students the chance to present their new narratives as dramatic monologues.

A NEW NARRATOR

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever Enrichment Guide

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Choose a new character to narrate the story of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*.

Which character?

What was your character's goal in the story?

What are some of the major events in your character's story arc?

Did your character experience conflict with any of the other characters?

Did your character have a positive relationships with any of the other characters?

How was your character feeling at the beginning of the story? The middle? The end?

Choose one scene from the play. Retell it from the perspective of your character:

LEARNING ACTIVITY #2 - CHRISTMAS CAROLS

ELA Content Standards: LCS-9, C-5

Materials: stopwatch, lyrics to Christmas carols (optional), colored pencils

Instructions:

1. Say: *"Does anyone know what a carol is?"* (Answer: A carol is a traditional hymn or song that celebrates a holiday like Christmas.)
2. Say: *"How many Christmas carols do you know? Let's brainstorm as many as possible in three minutes!"*
3. Write student's answers on the board.
4. After three minutes are up, ask:
 - *What similarities do you notice between the carols you thought of? What about differences?*
 - *What are some of the themes (major ideas) that these carols are about?*
 - *Are there any other holiday traditions that might be the basis of a new carol?* (Note: Encourage students to think about non-Christmas traditions, as well)

Optional Extension: Carol Lyric Analysis

5. Divide students into groups of 2-3. Give each group the lyrics to one Christmas carol. Give the following instructions:
 - Use a blue colored pencil to underline any rhyming words in the carol.
 - Use a green colored pencil to circle any sensory images (e.g. descriptions of sights, sounds, tastes, feelings, and smells) in your carol.
 - Use a red colored pencil to put a star next to any examples of figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification) in your carol.
 - Use a purple colored pencil to write down three words or less that describes the overall mood.
6. ASK:
 - *What words might you use to describe the overall mood of your poem?*
 - *What specific lyrics in the poem help to create that mood?*
7. Then SAY:
 - *"Your job is to write a new Christmas carol. First, talk with your group members about your favorite holiday traditions [note: does not have to be Christmas]. Then choose one tradition to write lyrics that will go along with the tune "Mary Had a Little Lamb."*
8. Give students about 10 minutes to complete this activity. Encourage students to write multiple verses of their poem and to incorporate a rhyme scheme similar to that of the original song.
9. Once students have finished writing their lyrics, allow them to perform their songs for each other.



Questions for Discussion:

- Have you ever been in a play before? What was it like?
- What would you have done differently if you were suddenly put in charge of the Christmas Pageant?

ALL ABOUT CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever Enrichment Guide

Name:

Date:

Christmas Around the World

England

People select a special log, called the yule log, to burn in their fireplace to celebrate.

Philippines

Filipinos decorate with parols, star-shaped lanterns made of bamboo and paper, to symbolize the star of Bethlehem.

France

Children put their shoes out in hopes that Pere Noel (Father Christmas) will fill them with candy!

Australia

Christmas is in the summertime, so Australians gather on the beaches for festive picnics.



Did you know? Christmas Pageants

- St. Francis of Assisi, an Italian monk, is believed to have staged the first-ever Christmas pageant in 1223. His nativity scene was extremely popular, featuring live animals and a specially commissioned manger/crib.
- In Mexico, a Christmas pageant is called a *pastorela*. These plays typically center around the shepherds' journey to Bethlehem to see baby Jesus.
- The Adelaide Christmas Pageant in New Zealand is actually a parade. It is the second largest parade in the world, after the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade.
- A nativity (from the Latin word *nativus*, meaning "arisen by birth") is an artistic depiction of the birth of Jesus.



Do It Yourself!

Search online for "homemade nativity scenes." Then try to make your own using recycled materials: cardboard boxes, clothespins, toilet paper rolls, etc.!

Yule Log Recipe

This rolled cake recipe is intended to look like a yule log, or buche de Noel -- an important tradition in northern Europe!

Ingredients

- 1 box of devils' food chocolate cake mix (and other ingredients)
- 1 container of whipped vanilla frosting
- 1 container of chocolate frosting



1. Preheat the oven to 375°. Place foil in the bottom of a jelly roll pan (15x10x1 inches); grease and flour the sides.
2. Prepare the mix according to the directions on the box. Pour 3½ cups of batter into the jelly roll pan, and divide the remaining batter into muffin tins.
3. Bake the cake at 375° for 15 minutes. Turn the cake upside down onto a tea towel. While the cake is still hot, roll the cake and towel up. Cool completely on the cooling rack, about one hour.
4. Once the cake has cooled, unroll it carefully and remove the towel. Add a layer of vanilla frosting to the top of the cake, then roll it back up. Then frost the sides and top of the cake with chocolate frosting. Add any additional decorations to make the cake look more like a log.

DECK THE HALLS WORD SEARCH

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever Enrichment Guide

Name:

Date:

Instructions: Find the names of the characters in the word search.

B
J E X
S U T I D
I B O H N E G
P A M G D A V I D
A O L E J
E X D G L U A
O L I L U E A D Y
H A M N I C R N E V I
E E S H O I E
B R I H O Y T S M
C E O C I B S A L E A
O L V D L R I T R A L P H
E C A L E R O I D
A R R U E I M C S A H
H G L A D Y S E I A X T A
S T I Y J E I L R A H C E B H
B O L
D N P
P E H



KEY

Imogene
Ollie
Claude
Leroy
Ralph
Gladys
Alice
Beth
Charlie
David
Elmer
Beverly
Doris
Hobie
Juanita
Maxine
Shirley

ANGEL ARITHMETIC

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever Enrichment Guide

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Solve each arithmetic problem. Find your answer in the key at the top, and notice the letter underneath it. Write this letter in the box under each problem to decode a quote from the play.

Key	1	2	14	20	10	15	48	12	6	18	21	36	64	5	8	0	42	9	3	16	7	27	30	24	4	11
Code	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

1. $\begin{array}{r} 4 \\ + 8 \\ \hline \end{array}$	2. $\begin{array}{r} 6 \\ + 4 \\ \hline \end{array}$	3. $\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ + 1 \\ \hline \end{array}$

4. $\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ + 5 \\ \hline \end{array}$	5. $\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ + 4 \\ \hline \end{array}$	6. $\begin{array}{r} 8 \\ + 8 \\ \hline \end{array}$	7. $\begin{array}{r} 7 \\ + 2 \\ \hline \end{array}$

8. $\begin{array}{r} 8 \\ - 4 \\ \hline \end{array}$	9. $\begin{array}{r} 12 \\ - 3 \\ \hline \end{array}$	10. $\begin{array}{r} 13 \\ - 6 \\ \hline \end{array}$

11. $\begin{array}{r} 10 \\ - 9 \\ \hline \end{array}$



12. $\begin{array}{r} 7 \\ \times 2 \\ \hline \end{array}$	13. $\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ \times 4 \\ \hline \end{array}$	14. $\begin{array}{r} 6 \\ \times 1 \\ \hline \end{array}$	15. $\begin{array}{r} 6 \\ \times 6 \\ \hline \end{array}$	16. $\begin{array}{r} 4 \\ \times 5 \\ \hline \end{array}$

17. $\begin{array}{r} 42 \\ \div 7 \\ \hline \end{array}$	18. $\begin{array}{r} 24 \\ \div 8 \\ \hline \end{array}$

19. $\begin{array}{r} 18 \\ \div 9 \\ \hline \end{array}$	20. $\begin{array}{r} 27 \\ \div 3 \\ \hline \end{array}$	21. $\begin{array}{r} 7 \\ \div 2 \\ \hline \end{array}$	22. $\begin{array}{r} 25 \\ \div 5 \\ \hline \end{array}$

DECK THE HALLS WORD SEARCH

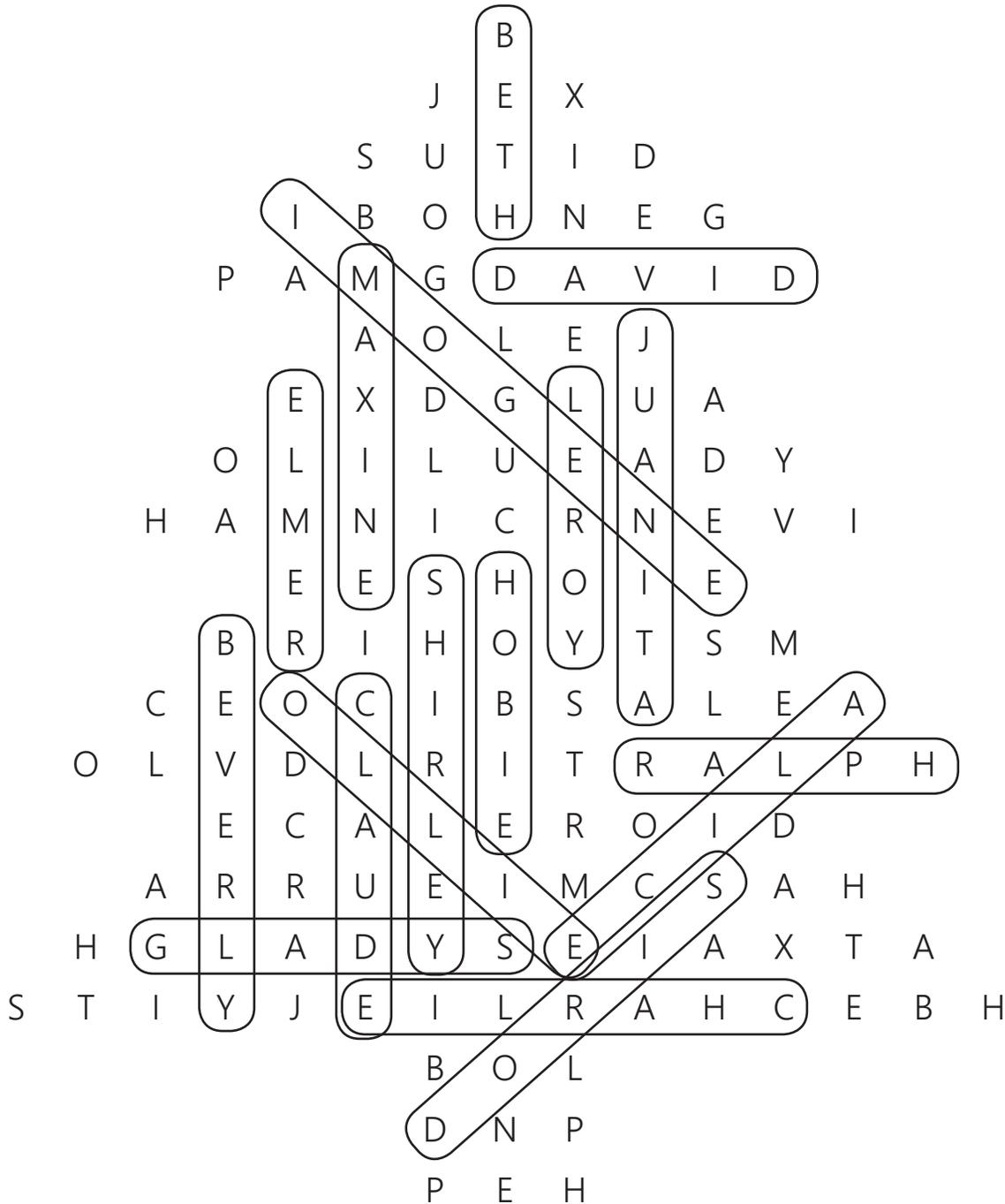
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever Enrichment Guide

Name:

KEY

Date:

Instructions: Find the names of the characters in the word search.



KEY

- Imogene
- Ollie
- Claude
- Leroy
- Ralph
- Gladys
- Alice
- Beth
- Charlie
- David
- Elmer
- Beverly
- Doris
- Hobie
- Juanita
- Maxine
- Shirley

ANGEL ARITHMETIC

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever Enrichment Guide

Name: **KEY**
Date:

Instructions: Solve each arithmetic problem. Find your answer in the key at the top, and notice the letter underneath it. Write this letter in the box under each problem to decode a quote from the play.

Key	1	2	14	20	10	15	48	12	6	18	21	36	64	5	9	8	42	0	3	16	7	27	30	24	4	11
Code	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

1. $\begin{array}{r} 4 \\ + 8 \\ \hline 12 \end{array}$	2. $\begin{array}{r} 6 \\ + 4 \\ \hline 10 \end{array}$	3. $\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ + 1 \\ \hline 4 \end{array}$
H	E	Y

4. $\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ + 5 \\ \hline 7 \end{array}$	5. $\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ + 4 \\ \hline 5 \end{array}$	6. $\begin{array}{r} 8 \\ + 8 \\ \hline 16 \end{array}$	7. $\begin{array}{r} 7 \\ + 2 \\ \hline 9 \end{array}$
U	N	T	O

8. $\begin{array}{r} 8 \\ - 4 \\ \hline 4 \end{array}$	9. $\begin{array}{r} 12 \\ - 3 \\ \hline 9 \end{array}$	10. $\begin{array}{r} 13 \\ - 6 \\ \hline 7 \end{array}$
Y	O	U

11. $\begin{array}{r} 10 \\ - 9 \\ \hline 1 \end{array}$
A



12. $\begin{array}{r} 7 \\ \times 2 \\ \hline 14 \end{array}$	13. $\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ \times 4 \\ \hline 12 \end{array}$	14. $\begin{array}{r} 6 \\ \times 1 \\ \hline 6 \end{array}$	15. $\begin{array}{r} 6 \\ \times 6 \\ \hline 36 \end{array}$	16. $\begin{array}{r} 4 \\ \times 5 \\ \hline 20 \end{array}$
C	H	I	L	D

17. $\begin{array}{r} 42 \\ \div 7 \\ \hline 6 \end{array}$	18. $\begin{array}{r} 24 \\ \div 8 \\ \hline 3 \end{array}$
I	S

19. $\begin{array}{r} 18 \\ \div 9 \\ \hline 2 \end{array}$	20. $\begin{array}{r} 27 \\ \div 3 \\ \hline 9 \end{array}$	21. $\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ \div 0 \\ \hline 0 \end{array}$	22. $\begin{array}{r} 25 \\ \div 5 \\ \hline 5 \end{array}$
B	O	R	N