

Interview with Kimberly Gosselin
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The Hill Cumorah Legacy Project

Recorded over Zoom
Interviewee: Kimberly Gosselin
Interviewers: Dylan Sandberg, Kensey Shida
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Edited using Panopto

Transcript

[00:00]

Dylan Sandberg: Hi, my name is Dylan, my partner's Kensey, and we're interviewing Kim today. Kim, don't you mind—wouldn't you mind just telling us your age, your occupation, and where you're from, or—to start it off?

Kimberly Gosselin: I don't mind telling you that.

[laughter]

Kimberly Gosselin: I like how you said *that* first. Yeah, my name is Kim. My occupation right now is I am a school secretary in an elementary school. I'm 54 years old, and—where I'm from, you said?

Dylan Sandberg: Yeah, where you're from.

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: I'm originally from Honeoye, New York, which is one of the Finger Lakes, which is near Canandaigua, which is near Palmyra.

Dylan Sandberg: That's cool. Are you close to Niagara Falls?

Kimberly Gosselin: Pardon?

Dylan Sandberg: Are you close to Niagara Falls?

Kimberly Gosselin: It's about two and a half hours away, if you—well, you guys are in Rochester.

Dylan Sandberg: Yeah.

[Kensey laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah. I'm like an hour and a half from Rochester.

Possibly Kensey Shida: Oh.

Kimberly Gosselin: And—so I'm closer to Albany than you. Right now, I'm in Syracuse, and as far as Honeoye, [it] is only about 45 minutes south of RIT, so... My parents still live [indistinct].

Dylan Sandberg: Nice. Kensey?

Kensey Shida: Ah, yes, so I guess we'll start with the first question. So, who in the—so, in terms of the Pageant, who in the religious scenes of the Pageant resonates with you most, or had the most impact on you, or you relate to—if there's any certain figures or figures that relate to you, we'd like to ask you more about that, if that's OK with you.

Kimberly Gosselin: Oh, yeah. You can ask me anything. I like to talk, so I apologize ahead of time if I get too wordy or what have you.

Kensey Shida: Yeah, it's no problem.

Kimberly Gosselin: You want to know what characters in Pageant that I relate to—

Kensey Shida: Yeah, that's correct.

Kimberly Gosselin: And that I liked, or what have you?

Kensey Shida: Uh, maybe characters that you either relate to or had an impact on you, I guess—

Kimberly Gosselin: Okay.

Kensey Shida: Would be the more correct way of [putting it].

Kimberly Gosselin: Well, have you guys seen Pageant?

Dylan: No.

Kensey Shida: No, we have not...

Kimberly Gosselin: He did not, like, even show you a video? 'Cause there's a video of it.

Dylan Sandberg: We've seen, like, costumes and stuff...

Kensey Shida: Oh, yeah, yeah. We've seen, like—we haven't seen the entire thing, entirely, but I guess we've seen images and many—just through the [photos?]
—through photographs and stuff, and lecture, yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: Well, the one, obviously, that has the most impact on me is Christ, and I was very fortunate that I got to talk with him and work with him, not only when he was in costume and playing the role, but also outside of that role. He was a great kid. He—one of the things that is neat in the Pageant is there's a scene where there's a lot of children. And at the time—I don't know if you know this about Pageant, but we all go as volunteers, you know, and we all pay, you know, to—if we take meals there or what have you, so it's not like we're paid. We're all volunteers. We come there. Like my family: We stayed in an Airbnb while we were there, so we paid, obviously, to stay there. And so, when you go, you usually have a job there. You're put into a cast team, and some of the cast teams are comprised of just children, so basically they're broken up by age. So, I was fortunate enough to be one of the workers with the Primary kids, and those—I was with the kids that were like ages four through seven, and since Christ worked with those that—the actor—he wasn't an actor, though; he was just a person—the person that played Christ worked with those children. He often would come into the Primary tent and just hang out with them, so that was really neat, to be able to see his interactions with the kids. And also, I got to interact with him, not just on the stage, but outside of that.

And one thing that just got me all the time was, if he was walking through the field or through the tent areas or whatever, and the kids would see him, they would run out of the Primary tent and run right to him. He was like a magnet for 'em. And it is really interesting because I feel that that was probably what would happen if Christ himself was here, that he would be a magnet for people and especially for children, so that was really neat to see. So, that had a big impact on me.

Some of the other characters [00:05:00] that had a really big impact on me: In one of the scenes, there is an evil king named Noah, and he has lots of priests, and they're all just horrid people. They actually burn the prophet [Abinadi] at the stake and everything like that. So, they're—they're—

[unclear noise; possibly someone saying "Cool"]

Kimberly Gosselin: Oh, it's cool! You should see.

[Kim gestures outward with her hands, like an explosion]

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: But anyway, so they play, and they have to be mean to him, you know, and say, you know, "You're wrong; this is wrong; put him to death; burn him," you know, and that type of stuff, which is [the] opposite, obviously, of what the people themselves feel, the character[s] they're playing. So, every night before they went on stage, I would see them—there's probably 10 or so of them—and they would gather in a circle, and they're backstage. It's very dark back there. They have lights to try to help us to find our way in. But they would be backstage in a dark area, and they would pray together before they went up onto stage, and not so much like, "Help me do a good job," or anything. It wasn't like *that*. It was more just to help them to be able to portray the hatred that they were supposed to be portraying towards the

Prophet. And it's *weird*. You wouldn't think so, but it's strange when you take on the role of, like, "Boo! Hiss!"—you know, throwing stones at them—you know, "Go back to where you came from! We don't believe you!"—it's strange to say that, when you are a person of faith, to then be talking, even though it's just a play. It's strange. So, it was really impactful to me to see the men that were there, praying before they went on to play those roles. It's really neat.

Dylan Sandberg: Are those fake stones [indistinct]?

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah!

[Kensey laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: [screen freezes; indistinct words] It's so funny. There's one scene where this guy is up on a ledge, and he's saying, "Repent, repent. The day [of judgment]'s coming, the day's coming," and people are throwing arrows at him because, in the Book of Mormon, this guy—his name is Samuel the Lamanite—the people do, they shoot arrows at him. The big thing is, no one can hit him because the Lord—he [Samuel] hasn't delivered his message yet, and so the Lord protects him. So, these guys are throwing spears and big rocks and things at him, and the directors are constantly saying, "*Don't hit him.*"

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: And they would tell 'em, "Look at this point" or "look at this point," because if you look right at 'em, you're going to end up hitting them. And sometimes you would kind of have to dodge a little to make sure he didn't get hit.

[Dylan laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: But yeah, that was kind of cool.

Kensey Shida: If you don't mind me going back, just backtracking a little bit: Would you say that you working with more younger-age people, more so, made you think about these kind of

things when you were talking with children or when you were talking on the topic of talking about how Christ, obviously, how—obviously Christ as a character is a very important figure. But would you say that it was even amplified by the fact that, because of your occupation, or would you say that didn't really play too much of a role? I was just curious.

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah, no, that's a great question.

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: I would say *no*, because I actually have had the opportunity to be in a Pageant twice. [holds up two fingers]

Kensey Shida: Oh.

Kimberly Gosselin: So, I was in Pageant once before I was married—

Kensey Shida: Mhm.

Kimberly Gosselin: And I was single, and I was in the cast team of just single adults. I was 32 or so at the time, so I was in with a group of them. I wasn't working with the Primary children at that time, and it was the same exact thing that I would see. And I would see the kids just drawn to him. And one of the most interesting things that happened to me, that first time I served in a Pageant, was the fact that when the—before Pageant starts, we all go out in our outfits and stuff, and we welcome the people as they're coming. And so, I was out in the crowd, and there was this little girl with her father, whatever. She's just a little tiny, blond thing. She was super cute. And I just remember she walked up to me, and she had a penny, and she said, "Would you please give this to Jesus? It's from me."

[Kensey nods]

Kimberly Gosselin: And I mean, that just...

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: You know what I'm saying? The kids are just all drawn. It's very interesting to watch. It's very interesting to watch.

Dylan Sandberg: Going off of that—

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah.

Dylan Sandberg: Are there stories that you've seen at the Pageants that made you want to feel like you have to be a part of it, that made you join the religion?

Kimberly Gosselin: Well, do you want the backstory? I'll [00:10:00] give you the backstory because it's, like, the best story of my life. So, I didn't—I wasn't born and raised in the Church. I'm a *convert*. So, I was—at the time, I was working in an elementary school. I haven't always been a secretary; I used to be a teacher, so I taught computer skills. This is back in the '90s, before you guys even really—

[Dylan and Kensey, who were likely born circa 2000, laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: So, this was back in the '90s, in the late '90s, and I was teaching computer skills to kids that were in kindergarten through fourth grade, and I was part of the library media center. And so, the library was at one end, and I was at the other end. And there were a couple of missionaries. Do you know about missionaries?

[Dylan nods]

Kensey Shida: Something like that.

Kimberly Gosselin: Missionaries from the Church?

Kensey Shida: Oh, yes, yes.

Kimberly Gosselin: Okay. So, there were a couple of missionaries that did their service in that library. So, one of the things that missionaries do is they go out and serve in the community, so their service assignment was to serve in this library. Obviously, they weren't allowed to talk

about Christ; they weren't allowed to proselate [sic] or anything like that; but they just were there to serve. So—and they would rotate out, you know? They would only be there for, you know, six weeks or whatever the time, and then the new one would come, and this and that. So, as I was in the media center, working, I just saw them come, you know, and I saw them serve. And at the time, the librarian had an aide, and—again, remember, this is in the '90s; that was when they actually had, like, index cards to put in a card catalog—and all these really difficult, time-consuming, petty little things they did, and the things that the library aide didn't want to do, that she didn't like to do, she always left for the missionaries. So, I always felt bad for 'em because they're doing all these crummy little things.

So, one day, I remember just saying to them, I'm like, "Oh, what's she got you doing today?" And they were like, "Oh, we're happy to serve! We'll do whatever," you know. And they were *sincere*! I mean, it wasn't just—and they're *18 years old*! So, here are these 18-year-old *kids* that are just, like, "We're happy to do whatever; we're happy to serve," and you could tell that about them. So, I would talk to them a little bit and [sic] here and there, "Where are you from?" Yada yada, that type of stuff. And it broke down a lot of the myths, if you will, about members of the Church that—I always thought that the boys *had* to serve a mission, like, if you're a member of the Church, and you have to serve a mission. And I learned that they don't, that it's a choice; they can choose; and actually, it's something that they *want* to do, and that they have to save up money and pay for. They and their families have to *pay* for them to go out on a mission. So, a lot of kids had been—you know, they would tell me about, oh, all the paper routes they did, and how they saved money to come out on their mission, and things like that, and that just is very impressive. And I could tell that they had it together, you know? They

looked like they had a purpose. They acted like they had—and again, they’re 18 years old. And at the time, I was 30 and, like, clueless.

So, that really, you know, impressed me, and they did that for two years while I was there, and at the end of the second year, in June, when it came time for the teachers to go on summer break, one of them said to me, “Have you ever gone to the Pageant?” And I said, “No.” I heard about it, I know, but I’d never been, even though I lived pretty close. And they said, “Well, if you go to the very first night of Pageant, then you can see all these—the missionaries”—all the ones that I was always asking, “How’s this one? How’s that one?” You know? And I’m like, “Cool. That’s awesome,” you know? So, I definitely planned to go because I wanted to see all these kids that I had been interacting with.

So, I went to the Pageant, and, again, Pageant is an outdoor thing. It starts about 9:00–9:30-ish, when it gets dark in July, so that’s late in the evening. So, I went about three o’clock because, as you can tell, I like to talk—

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: And I had a lot of friends that I planned on seeing there, so I went early so I’d have time to chat when I get there. And I was greeted by somebody in costume, you know, and they handed me the little card, you know, the information about the Church and that type of stuff, and I was looking for the missionaries, looking for the missionaries, and you pretty much can tell who they are because they’re boys in suits and white shirts and ties, and they have the tag on them, you know, and there’s girls, too. And so, I was looking, and finally I said to one of the cast members that was walking around, I said, “Where are all the missionaries? And they’re like, “There aren’t [missionaries]. They’re not here.” And I said, “Well,”—I said, “I thought this was missionary night,” and they’re like, “Oh, no, that was *last* night.”

Kensey Shida: Oh.

Kimberly Gosselin: And I'm like, "Oh, you're *kidding* me!" You know.

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: So, here it is, [looks at watch] like [00:15:00] 3:30, and it's not going to start till 9:30, and I just traveled a distance and don't have anything to do. [looks side to side furtively] So, I'm like

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kensey Shida: Oh, no!

Kimberly Gosselin: [shrugs] Might as well stay for the show, you know what I'm saying?

Kensey Shida: Yeah, absolutely, yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: So, yeah, I'm looking at the little card they give me, and it says you can get a Book of Mormon, you know, blah blah blah, free Book of Mormon.

Kensey Shida: Mhmm.

Kimberly Gosselin: I'm like, "Oh, cool, I don't have anything to do. I like to read. Might as well *read* for six hours or so."

[Kensey laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: So, I went up to the little kiosk, you know, and I had the card, and—mind you, I'm not stupid enough to fill out, like, my phone number and everything, because you don't want to give these people all that information, you know?

[Dylan nods; Kensey laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: So, I just go up with my little card, and I fully expected the girl that was standing there to reach down, you know, and, like, [gesturing toward the camera] "Here's your book!" But instead, she took my card, and she's like, "*Oh!* Great. Well, we'll have *two*

missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ [of Latter-day Saints] come to your house and give you your Book of Mormon.” And I’m like, “Oh, *crud*.”

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: You know, like, “I knew this was too good to be true.” And then, so, I’m like, “OK, thanks!” And I turn and start walk away. And she’s like, “Wait, wait! You forgot to put your phone number.” And I’m like, [pretends to smack herself on the forehead; groans] “Uh, *did I?*”

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: Oh, [unclear; then speaks as the clerk] “I got a pen!” And I was just like, *ugh*, because, you know, they’re so nice—

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: And I knew the missionaries were nice, so it wasn’t like I didn’t want them to come to my house or anything. So, anyway, they ended up coming to the house, and I won’t tell you all that part. [gestures to the side]

Kensey Shida: Yeah, let’s...

Kimberly Gosselin: You know, it—though it’s a super-good story, but that’s about missionaries, not about Pageant.

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: So, that’s how they came, and I learned about the Book of Mormon, which, by the way, is *not* a novel. It’s a book of scripture, much like the Bible would be, so, um, not as exciting of reading as I had imagined, but it’s not bad. And so, yeah, that’s how I became a convert to the Church. It was all through Pageant.

And then, of course, I had a great desire to be *in* Pageant, like I said, before I got married, and then, just seeing what an awesome thing it was, and seeing families there with their children and such, I was just—I really wanted that [Zoom freezes] for my kids, and the huge testimony builder, to see that and be a part of that, just really is a very special experience that, you know, I wanted my kids to have. So, that’s why we went again the second time, as a family.

Kensey Shida: Absolutely, yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: And we were fortunate enough to be in the very last one. We went in 2019, and it was set to close in 2020, and we were there, and what seems interesting is that they had the *cameras* there, and they had never recorded Pageant. There was no... But there was a gentleman there, and they were like, “Yeah, we’re going to record it.”¹ And they told the cast—we had assigned things, you know? And they were like, “Yeah, you know, just in case we ever want to use it for posterity purposes or whatever. We’re going to actually record it.” And they had—the following year, they were—I don’t know if they were going to record or not, but we were all like, “Cool,” you know, “if they ever make a movie, we’re going to be in it.” And then, lo and behold, 2020 hit, Pageant didn’t happen, and it shut down for good.

Kensey Shida: Mhmm.

Kimberly Gosselin: So, quite interesting that they were able to film it at that time.

Dylan Sandberg: And that was because of COVID [guest guess?]

Kimberly Gosselin: Pardon?

[Dylan says something indistinctly]

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah. No, they didn’t do it in 2020 because of COVID, and then they just decided not to do it ever again.

¹ The gentleman in question is videographer Matt Barr.

Kensey Shida: Mmm.

Kimberly Gosselin: So, we were in the *last*, the *last* Pageant.

Dylan Sandberg and Kensey Shida: Wow.

Kimberly Gosselin: That's pretty cool.

[Dylan is inaudible]

Kensey Shida: It is pretty cool, but also, you know, it's unfortunate, you know?

Kimberly Gosselin: It was. It was sad, and we—I felt *really* bad for all the people that had been accepted to be a part of the cast, because you know there's over 800 people that go, you know? It's *huge*. [gestures widely with her hands] You really *gotta* watch it. It's on YouTube. Just [search for] Hill Cumorah Pageant. Just watch a little. The pageantry is fantastic. The filming of it is a little tough because, you know, it's way back or whatever.

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: But it's on this [gesturing] huge hill. It's fantastic. And I felt bad for the people that had been accepted to do it and then weren't able to because, yeah, they missed out on that opportunity.

Dylan Sandberg: Oh.

Kensey Shida: Yeah. Um, I guess, well, we can go on to—is there—so, in the Pageant, obviously, they go over some of the stories from the Book of Mormon. Is [sic] there any specific ones that that you really enjoy?

Kimberly Gosselin: Yes.

Kensey Shida: Because I guess, like—or, it doesn't have to be, like—obviously, there are many stories, and so—

Kimberly Gosselin: Mhmm.

Kensey Shida: I guess, the ones that either spoke to you most or that you enjoyed, or—it doesn't have to be—well, you know, it's just any one that you enjoy or—it doesn't even have to be ones that you enjoy, but ones that really touched you, or, you know, there's...

Kimberly Gosselin: When you go to Pageant, like I said, you're in a cast team.

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: And you also are expected, like I said to—and I shouldn't say *expected*, because it's really rude—

[Kensey laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: But you're part of this crew, and part of what you do is you go out and talk to people as they're [00:20:00] *coming* to Pageant—

Kensey Shida: Mhmm.

Kimberly Gosselin: You know, all the people who come at three o'clock, like I did. And so, they give us all a Book of Mormon.

[Kim holds up a copy of the Book Mormon]

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: They give everybody their own. And this is mine that I saved from Pageant. And you can see I have tabs in there—

Kensey Shida: Mhmm.

Kimberly Gosselin: Because [pointing at the camera] they asked the same exact question you asked.

[Kensey laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: Pick your favorite stories so that, if someone asks you, you know, “What’s what part should I be watching for? What’s your favorite part?” then you’re prepared. So, I’m prepared.

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: One of my favorite scenes, just because it’s so cool and—is when the family [of Lehi] travels from the Middle East to the Americas, so they build a boat and then they travel on the boat. And as the story goes, the family’s there, the father, Lehi, and the mother, Sariah, and then their kids. And I don’t know if you know this, but [holding up two fingers on each hand] there’s basically two good sons and two bad sons. So, Nephi and Sam are the good sons, and Laman and Lemuel are the baddies, if you will. So, they’re on this boat, and Laman and Lemuel start to be, you know, jerks or whatever, if you will.

[Dylan laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: They start to be boisterous.

Kensey Shida: Trouble. Troublesome. [laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah, well, you know what I mean? Just being... I imagine it as—and this is me, this is Kim saying that, okay?

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: This is not what is in the Book of Mormon. But I always imagine it as, like, they’re getting drunk and whatever on the ship, you know, “We’re just going to be *loud* and *jerky* and say, you know, rude crude jokes,” or whatever. And this storm comes up, and they end up tying Nephi, the good brother, who is, by the way, younger than them, and you know how, like, the older brothers back in those days were always supposed to be the rulers over the family, you know, the ones that would inherit. But they actually—Nephi was kind of better than them—

[Kensey laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: And so, because he was.

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: I mean, these—Laman and Lemuel and Nephi and Sam, they all saw an angel—like, an angel came to them and talked to them, and Laman and Lemuel are still like, “Wah, wah, wah”—

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: You know? And you’re like, “Seriously? You just saw an angel and you can’t get on board? Whatever.” You know, so—but they end up tying Nephi to the mast of the ship for, like, days in—as the storm is raging, okay? And so, then, finally, all the families are like, saying to Laman and Lemuel, “Please, untie him! Please, untie him, or we’re going to drown!” So, onstage, you see them building the ship, and they raise up the mast and, you know, and they’re all happy, and then you see them all start to be jerks, and they tie Nephi to the mast. And then they start—there’s *water*. They—the kids have water cannons, and—I hope you get to interview someone that’s on the tech—was on the tech team, the young men there did that—and so, the water cannons are spraying up, you know, and it looks like a storm, and the wind’s blowing, and the sail’s blowing, so it’s *super-cool* to watch. And then they’re like, “Oh, please, untie Nephi,” you know? And so, they untie Nephi, and he prays to Heavenly Father and, you know, it calms the storm.

But what’s *so cool* as all that’s happening is there’s a point where it looks like lightning comes, and it [claps hands] tears the sail. I still don’t know how they do it, but this—the sail actually *tears* and, like, comes down, and it’s *so cool* to—just to watch that. But in the dress rehearsals, what was neat is to watch them, how they raised the mast up and how it all worked,

and the kids doing it—and some of the kids that were on the tech team? They dressed in costumes because they had to go up for those scenes to help hoist the sail up and help be... It's just super, super-cool. So, that's [holds up one finger] one scene that I really, really liked.

And then, another scene that was cool is some of the battle scenes they have, because they outfit these kids with fake swords and different weapons of war, if you will. And they *teach them* how to do battle scenes. So, they have a partner, and they practice for a week before Pageant starts, before you go onstage, and they [waving arms like a sword] practice how to do battle scenes. So, you have all these kids, and some of them get really acrobatic, you know, like, they would swing at them and [unclear]. You know? It's just—it's cool to watch because, wherever you look, there's someone fighting someone, and they're all doing it in a different style, and that's really neat to watch.

And then, the other one that I really like—there's a lot of 'em—

[Kensey laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: But the other one that is the *best* is when Christ [gestures downward] comes to the Nephites. So, what happens is, first of all, there's this big destruction scene, and [00:25:00] my youngest daughter got to be in the destruction scene because she was 13 at the time. And they said right at the beginning—which I was like, “This is weird”—but when they choose the cast members, they're like, “Yeah, parents, we kill all your 13-year-olds here.”

[Dylan and Kensey laugh uproariously]

Kimberly Gosselin: And I was like, *hmm* [cocks eyebrow], you know, that's kind of a rude joke.

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: And I was like, [sarcastically] “Oh, that guy is really funny.” But they do! All the 13-year-olds get to be in the destruction scene, and they all die.

[More uproarious laughter by the interviewers]

Kimberly Gosselin: So—and they *love it* because, in the destruction scene, they have big pillars and stuff, you know, that look like stone, but they’re foam, and they *come down*, and the kids are crushed under it, and there’s, like, this big—pyrotechnics and earthquakes, and the kids—aw, it’s cool! There—they even—there’s one kid—my daughter didn’t get to do this, but—she hangs on the side of the stage, and she’s, like, holding on, holding on, and then she *falls* [slams hand down], you know what I mean? And it’s so—obviously there’s a, you know, mat, a crash mat, down there.

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: But—so, that is spectacular. And when all that destruction is over, and all the loud booming, everything, the whole place goes pitch black, and everybody’s quiet, and everybody’s in place, and it’s just super-duper quiet. And then, all of a sudden, the spotlight shows on Christ, and we’re on a hill, and—but he’s on, like—well, the *first* time I was there, he was [sic] actually came down on a wire, kind of like Tinker Bell at Disney World, but the second time, he was on this big pillar, and he gets raised up there during all that. He has this cloak that’s black, total black, so he has it, and as soon as that spotlight goes, he flips off the cloak, and he’s all in white, and there’s a spotlight, and it literally looks like he’s *hanging* in the middle of the air. It is just *fantastic*. And then he *lowers*—like, he comes down to the people, and—I’m getting goosebumps just talking about it—

[Dyland and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: Because night after night after night [of doing?] that, it—every time, it just—just... It’s the best. That’s like the culminating scene of the whole thing. You’ve gotta watch it!

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: It's so good [best guess]. I mean, you know, it's not like watching *movie* movies, but it's really cool.

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: And, of course, in person, it's even more spectacular, as you're sitting there. But there are stories about people that have been traveling down the road and don't know that that's happening, and they see Christ. You know what I mean? All of a sudden, they see, and they're like, "Argh!" You know? Like—'cause they don't know it's just a play, but they've been... Yeah, it *is* awesome! And there's stories, too, about how the thunderstorms have come in in and then split and gone around [the Hill Cumorah] so that it doesn't rain on Pageant. [cocks eyebrow]

Kensey Shida: Oh, wow.

Kimberly Gosselin: You know [best guess]. It's cool. So, that is absolutely one of my favorite scenes, super-cool.

Dylan Sandberg: Sounds like there was—

Kimberly Gosselin: And I was *in* that one, too—ha!—

[Kensey laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: The second time—I *was*! There's this—so, yes, if you see it, you can look for me—

[Kensey laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: Because I'm front and center. Because, when he comes down and he heals some people, and different stuff like that, and then he goes, and there's children, and I got to be the "mother" of this beautiful little girl. Her name was Penelope. And I had her, and Christ looks,

and she runs [gestures toward the camera] to him, and he picks her up and lifts her up, you know, and holds her and talks to her, and this and that, and hhe puts her down, and I'm going like this [waving someone over]—like, you know, “Come back!”

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: [holds hand up; laughs] Terrible, terrible acting, you know [indistinct]. But, yeah, so, like, you can actually see me because it's difficult to tell people unless they have a role like that, because there's 800 hundred people on the stage.

Kensey Shida: Absolutely. Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: Very cool.

Dylan Sandberg: Sounds like there's so much going on. How big is the stage? [says something indistinctly]

Kimberly Gosselin: Huge! Huge. There's, like, eight different stages, it's all level, and it comes all down the Hill, and it—like I said, there's all these different levels to it, and so, when we would practice—because practice isn't very long—you—we—you show up there on Friday—they—and they choose your roles right there, then and there, for that.

Kensey Shida: Wow.

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah. They have all these people. But what they—it's pretty rigorous, too, because any of—all the girls and young women and women, they put you out in this huge field, and they teach you a dance, and then you start dancing to the music, so everybody's doing the same dance, and as they're doing that, the choreographers are coming around, the different directors are coming around, and they're like, [pointing] “You, you—” and they give you a card, and they gave me a card. The guy said to me, he said, “Do you like children?” I said, “Yes, actually,” you know, “I'm a teacher.” He's like, “Okay, here.” [mimes handing over a card] And

that's how I got to be the mother of this little girl. And so, yeah, once everybody has a card, then, [00:30:00] then they're done, and they do the same thing with a man, you know, and it's just amazing that they choose these roles for the people. And it's—a lot of it, especially when they're, like, choosing Christ and Joseph Smith and some of the others, a lot of it is just by the spirit. They get a feeling that this is a person that should be doing that. And it's pretty neat.

So, you're there, and then Saturday, you start to practice a little. Sunday, we don't do anything because it's the Sabbath day, so we rest, so a lot of times we just read through the scriptures, and that's, like, one of the times when you can pick out your favorite stories and different stuff like that, and then you start on Monday with rehearsals, and Thursday is dress rehearsal.

Dylan Sandberg: Wow.

Kimberly Gosselin: So, you don't have a lot of time to practice. So, when you're on the stage, there are different levels, so when we were practicing the scene of Christ['s] descension, that—you had battle scenes going on over here, and you had the different—you know—the ship mast was coming up, you know, in a different part, so—and you would have some of the boys in the battlefield out on the—in the grass, in the field, doing this. The stage is just huge, and there's no railings on it now, so just these little lights on the floor, so [that] you would see so you wouldn't the edge.

[Dylan and Kensey nod, impressed]

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah!

Kensey Shida: Wow, that's—

Kimberly Gosselin: In the dark! And you had to change scenes.

Kensey Shida: Oh, yeah, absolutely.

Kimberly Gosselin: It's *so cool!* And the boys would be underneath. One of the things that we had to do—because all of the study shelter and the area where everybody kind of hung out, the main area, was on—it would be, like, stage right. [gestures to her right] So, it was over on this side. And for my scene with that little girl, I had to come in [gestures leftward] from the left. So, what we had to do is, while it was going on, and I think there was a battle scene or—something was going on. I don't know. Yeah. There was a little battle scene of some sort going on. We had to—with our kid, like—and some of the women had a couple of kids or whatever—so you either had one kid in one hand or two kids in the hand, and you *crouched down really* low and—down as low as you can go—and they would signal when, and you would go *under the stage*, and the boys would be there with flashlights to help you find—[moves hand in a zigzag motion] weave your way to the other side of the stage and then come out on the other side and crouch down and go up. So, the boys are under there, doing things. They could—spraying the water cannons or setting off the fire and all that kind of stuff. But it was so neat because you had to be *absolutely* quiet, and we have little kids, you know? And it could be scary because it's dark. They're not with their parents, you know what I mean? I mean, you've worked with them, and you've done stuff with them, so that, you know, you build a little bit of a relationship, but... Just the boys under there with their flashlights every night, to show you how to get where you had to go, it was just... Oh, I miss it. It just—I can't tell you the bonds that you build. *Everybody, everybody* is there for the same purpose, to put on this production, to spread the gospel, to just show the joy in Christ, and everybody just works together.

The work crew—I really hope someone's interviewing someone from the work crew 'cause that's a whole different perspective. Those boys come in. They come—they're actually there for, like, a whole month, because they come a couple of weeks early and they set up the

whole stage, and they learn how to do all the lighting. Some of those kids—and I would not want to be one of them—climb these towers, like, seriously, seriously tall towers, and they do the spotlights from *way* up above. And man, if it's windy, [waves side to side] they just go back and forth, and—I could not be that guy climbing, you know?

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: You know what I mean? They climb the ladders, like you see on the sides of windmills or whatever—climb up into this little... It's amazing. *Amazing*. So, it's just cool. Look, and you make such good friends, and you just—'cause you spend a lot of time with them, and the hours are *very rigorous*. Like, you're there by seven in the morning, and you don't leave until ten-, eleven o'clock at night, depending on when your scene is done, and then you're *back* there again the next day, doing the same thing. Out in the heat, or if it rains, it doesn't matter. You are practicing your scene. You're doing what you got to do.

Kensey Shida: Yeah, I was—

Kimberly Gosselin: And they tell ya in the beginning, "Bring good shoes."

Kensey Shida: Yeah, I was going to ask—I was just about to ask you about... It's crazy to me that they would set up all those effects in just a week, you know? But, I mean, it definitely takes a month in advance for—

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah.

Kensey Shida: So, it—that was interesting, very much interesting to hear.

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah. Well, they get it all together in just two weeks.

Kensey Shida: Yeah, it's—

Kimberly Gosselin: Those boys that are there? They are—they have a whole separate thing. They have, you know, [00:35:00] older people that are over them, and they're technicians and

stuff like that. And they [the work crew boys] serve the role at church because, on Sundays, we still went. You're still expected to be there, and we would hold our Church services in the study shelter, and those boys would be the ones that would bless and pass sacrament. So, there you are, in the summer, and *those boys* that are the work crew, that work so hard all during the week, they're there in their *suits and ties*, sitting in front of the study shelter, and they do the sacrament for you just *sweating*. You know what I mean? Think about it. You're sitting there in the summer and outside, in a suit and tie, and just sweating. But they just serve, and they love it, and I really hope somebody is interviewing one of them because that is a *unique perspective*, for sure.

Dylan Sandberg: Sounds like a big commitment.

Kimberly Gosselin: It is. But you want to know what? They all have to put in their applications, and there's hundreds of applications for just, like, 20, 20 parts, you know [what] I mean? 20 people get to serve, and it's a huge honor to be chosen, to be able to go and serve and do it. And again, they're volunteers. They take a month out of their—you know, their time out of their summer vacation. They have to pay to go and the whole nine yards. So, it's super-cool.

Dylan Sandberg: Like you were saying before, you meet so many new people. I'm sure it's, like, just like a different bond with them than you have with your normal friends at home, right?

Kimberly Gosselin: [nodding] It *is*. It *is*. And one of the things that was really neat for my girls, like I said, they were—so, my daughter Lucy was in a cast team of 13-year-olds, and until they get to be 14, then everybody in the cast team is girls only or boys only, okay? And in the Primary, the little kids are all mixed up, okay? But as soon as you hit 12, then the 12-year-old girls, 12-year-old boys, you know, and that type of thing. But, as soon as they get older, then they're in cast teams usually with boys *and* girls. So, what was super neat—because we live up here, and the majority—well, I guess it's true—majority of the members of the Church are in

Utah and Idaho, California, are out west—so my kids—you know, there’s members here, but both my girls were the only kids in their high school that were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. So, where—when we go to church [in the Rochester area], the kids that are here are from six or seven different schools around, where[as] in Utah, pretty much the kids that are in your church are the ones that are on your block. You know? So, it’s very, very different. So, they got to meet *tons* of kids from *all* over the place, and it was just *such* a great thing for them to be able to meet people of their own age that are from all over.

My oldest daughter, she—[winds an imaginary clock back with her finger] of course, 2019 is the summer that we did this, then we hit COVID, and she was a senior. And so, she’s trying to look at colleges, which you can’t, because—well, you guys probably know, you know what I mean? There were no college campus tours. And she really wanted to go to BYU, which is out in Utah. So, you know what she did? Her Pageant friend from Arizona, her one from California, one from Pennsylvania, one from—you know what I mean?—they all got together and did a virtual tour themselves, you know, of BYU. They were the tour, and the kids that were on her tour were her *Pageant* friends, and she—they’re the—she has friends from *all* over the place that were Pageant friends. One of the friends—I think their family was from California—their son is going to school down somewhere in New York City, and so when they drove across, they came and stopped by and had ice cream with us—

Kensey Shida: [laughing] Wow.

Kimberly Gosselin: I mean, on their way to drop their kid off at college. I mean, you just—it’s *phenomenal*, just so many people that you meet, and people that you meet in the cast. But then, the other thing is the people that you meet in the *audience*, because people knew that Pageant was going to be closing. We were there, like I said in 2019. A lot of different places, they’re—

they got together groups of kids from the Church, and they bused up just to see Pageant because it was going to be ending. So you would see buses come in from Florida, buses come in from wherever, and it was these youth groups, and they commonly all had on the same T-shirt, you know. So, you'd see these huge groups, and you'd be like, "Where did you come from?" And they're like, "Oh, we just spent 36 hours on the bus," you know what I mean, "driving here," whatever. And they come to see Pageant. They'd [00:40:00] all sit together. And I got to see the missionary that I worked with—he wasn't the one that baptized me—but one of the missionaries that, when I first joined the Church... I was just *walking*, and he had no idea that I was there. I was walking, and I *saw him*. And I just—I couldn't speak. I started tearing up, and he's like, "You don't remember me." I'm like, "Yes, I *do* remember you, Andrew," you know?

[Both Dylan and Kensey smile]

Kensey Shida: Mmm.

Kimberly Gosselin: So—and he lives in Utah, and *he* happened to be there.

I met this one lady. I don't know; I can't remember her name; I have a journal, but I didn't bring it with me of my time because it was just... She was from the Philippines. She had grown up, and she had heard missionaries talk about the Hill Cumorah Pageant, and they were there and taught her family and baptized them, and they became members of the Church. She had heard them talk about it, and it was something that she wanted to do before she died. So, she came, all the way from the Philippines, [taps desk for emphasis] *there* to Pageant, [taps desk again] just to see it. I mean, it—because she knew it was going to close next year; good thing she came off [and?] didn't wait—but it's just *amazing*, just *amazing*, the people that come, and the *reasons* why they come and what draws them there. It's awesome. It's awesome.

Kensey Shida: Wow. Yeah, that is a lot to take in. [laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: I know.

Kensey Shida: Absolutely, yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: I'm sorry.

Kensey Shida: No, no, no, abso—no, no, no, it's fine; it's fine; it's totally fine. But, uh...

Kimberly Gosselin: In a lot of ways, it's like a big reunion. When I joined the Church, I was living in the Rochester area. I actually went to the Geneseo ward, so you guys probably know where Geneseo is.

[Dylan nods]

Kensey Shida: Yes, yeah, yep.

Kimberly Gosselin: So, that's where I was. And then, when I married, I moved with my husband down to Poughkeepsie, which is outside New York City.

Kensey Shida: Hmm.

Kimberly Gosselin: So, we went to church there, and then he got a different job, and we moved up in Watertown. You know where that is? North of Syracuse, way up, like eight miles from the Canadian border in New York. So, we've been in different wards, and at Pageant, I saw people that I knew from Poughkeepsie, people I knew from Geneseo, people I knew from Watertown. Just *so cool*. It's like—just is like a big reunion. You just—there was nothing *like* it. Just *nothing* like it. And the women in the costume shops, I hope somebody is interviewing them. All the work that they do, it's phenomenal. Just phenomenal. And like I said, everybody just works together, you know? I mean, in the Primary tent, we had people's kids so that they could go and do what they needed to do, they could play their roles and do their things. And another big part of Pageant is everybody—not the Primary kids, but [everybody], all the cast teams, so, all the youth cast teams, all the adult cast teams, they go out, and they do community service

somewhere. So, they'd go out and paint, you know, public bathrooms. They'd go and weed, you know, the library gardens. They'd go—so, my youngest daughter went into a museum and dusted and cleaned and such in the museum. I can't remember where my older daughter... Oh! My older daughter went and did some thing—I want to say—she just she talked about traffic cones, so she must have been putting up them.

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: She had a blast. And yeah, we didn't see a lot of the girls because they were in—I mean, *imagine* being with all these kids from all over that have the same beliefs that you do. And, *oh*, they just had a [blast?]*—they played volleyball; they were doing this; they went swimming, you know? They—you know, they—it was like summer camp for two weeks, you know. It was great. We tried to get them to eat dinner and lunch and stuff with us, but...*

Dylan Sandberg: No chance.

Kimberly Gosselin: No. They were always with their friends.

[Dylan laughs]

Kensey Shida: Would you say, compared—I guess it's kind of a follow up question, but—would you say—compared to someone who probably hasn't experienced Pageant, obviously—would you say—is there, like, any—what would be something that you feel that you [experienced]*—that you—that might—that the Pageant amplifies your—how you experience things in the Church? So, I guess the—I guess, let me rephrase the question because it's kind of phrased poorly. But... After experiencing Pageant, would you say—compared to someone who hasn't experienced Pageant, is there something that you feel that that people who haven't experienced the Pageant are [00:45:00] missing compared to you? Or, do you feel that there is—maybe not so much, like, an advantage or—but, like—or something that they might be missing out, or*

something that you feel that Pageant [experiences]—amplifies or helps you experience your—or helped experience your faith or your—

Kimberly Gosselin: Mhmm.

Kensey Shida: Feelings and—feelings about the Church. And I just wanted to ask—touch on that, if that’s okay.

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah. As a member, you mean?

Kensey Shida: Yeah, as a member. Yeah, yes.

Kimberly Gosselin: As a member of the Church over people that haven’t done Pageant?

Kensey Shida: Yes.

Kimberly Gosselin: Well, first of all, I would say that it’s a huge testimony-building thing, you know, as far as that goes because—again, it’s super-*hard* to explain, but in the world—in—even, like, in the school that I work in, and I can only speak of my own experience, but not everybody is always *helpful* to one another. Okay? There’s a lot of— [pauses] You know, it’s *business*, you know what I mean? It’s anywhere you work. If you guys have ever worked anywhere, not everybody gets a lot, you know what I mean? You’re all there to work and do whatever, but there’s this—there’s a lot of, you know, politics and whatever, if you want, that go on in a workplace, so there’s not the *harmony* that was at Pageant. I—*literally*—*honest* to Pete, there’s no one there that doesn’t like somebody else. [It] isn’t like, “Oh, she got the good costume, and I didn’t get the good costume.” You know?

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: Or anything like that. Or, “She got to play that role. Why didn’t they ask me to play that role?” *None* of that. [Zoom freezing] *None* of that. Everybody is just so [Zoom

freezing] head [best guess] there. Everybody *wants* to help. That's the other thing. They—do you really—they—I don't know the number of *chairs*—

[Kensey laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: That are put out for Pageant. You know who puts the chairs out? The *cast* members. You know who *washes* [tapping desk for emphasis] *every single one* of those chairs? The cast members. You know who put all those chairs away, [tapping desk for emphasis] late at night, at the end of Pageant? *Us*. You know—I mean, and does anybody gripe? *Nope*. You got young kids out there that are trying to carry as many chairs as they can, because they're stored in tractor trailer truck boxes, you know—so, bringing them all out, putting them all back. You got kids racing: “Oh, can I carry more than you can carry?” You've got *little* kids with their parent, you know, holding on to it, and they're got [sic]—you know, they're running. You don't *find* that. What you—what *I* in my experience, in my job or whatever, something like that happens: “Oh my gosh. Hang on. I think I need to go, you know, rearrange my sock drawer,” or, you know—

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: I'm *serious*! You guys got to know people like that, too. Like, if there's a hard job to be done, then someone's always like, “Oh, I got to go bathroom,” you know, and skipping out or whatever. *Not* at Pageant. Everybody *jumps in* and *helps* if there's something that needs to be done, and everybody is happy doing it, and you make a game of it, and you have fun doing it. And then, you're like, “Oh my gosh,” you know, “just moving 4,000 chairs was the most fun I had.”

[Kensey laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: That—so, that’s something that’s there. Members—other members of the Church—probably if they haven’t been, haven’t experienced that kind of unity and harmony. Spiritually speaking, the spiritual aspect of it is also great, too. Like I said, it’s a huge testimony builder. You get to see and take part in some of those roles [best guess]. You learn a little bit more about them. That’s great. But you know that there’s people that do missions in our Church, missionaries, and I would say a pageant is kind of like doing a mission. I joined the Church too late to do a mission as a youth. I *can* if I want to—My husband and I can. We can do one when we get older, if we want to. But—so, a lot of missionaries, people that have been missionaries, I think have had spiritual experience[s] like Pageant times 100 on theirs, you know. So, I—

Kensey Shida: Would you say—

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah, I was happy to do it—

Kensey Shida: Would you say—

Kimberly Gosselin: Because it was like a missionary experience for me.

Kensey Shida: Mhmm. So, I guess you would say that it built a sense—a higher sense of compassion, if that makes sense?

Kimberly Gosselin: Oh, *absolutely*.

Kensey Shida: If that makes—if it—if I were to keep it, like, a little bit more compact, I think,

[00:50:00] I would just, like—

Kimberly Gosselin: And that—

Kensey Shida: Obviously, it’s more than just compassion, obviously, but I just wanted—

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah.

Kensey Shida: Uh, yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: Compassion. And the other thing, too, that is hard to explain, but—like I said, in that scene when Christ came down, and you see it, there’s just this sense of awe, and *obviously* I know that it was not Christ that was coming down, but you can kind of put yourself in the mindset of “What if I *was* there?” You know? And you just kind of get choked up when you think about what it was like. Because you see him come. You see—like, there’s one lady; she brings a child to him, and he heals... You—and just—*I don’t know*, just putting yourself in a place like that, in that head space, it really just *humbles* you, hugely, you know, makes you think, “What *would* you do?” You know, people are always like, “What will you do when Christ comes?” You know, some people are like, “Oh, I would run to him,” or this or that. *I’m* not so sure of me personally.

[Kensey and Dylan laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: Because I think I would—*I think*—and hopefully when this happens, maybe I’ll be further on my journey in life than I am now, but—I would—I don’t know if I’d want to catch his eye because I don’t know if I’m worthy enough. You know what I mean? I don’t know if I’d want to, [growing emotional] because I would be more humbled, I think, and have a tendency to think of what I could have done *better*, to be deserving of... you know, his attention.

Kensey Shida: It’s so cool that the reenactment is so powerful and just how it affects, like, how you see your spirituality, obviously, on the way it thinks. But... Um... [says something indistinctly]

Kimberly Gosselin: It’s *huge*. It’s huge.

Dylan Sandberg: It sounds like there’s all these positive moments in the Pageant. Are [sic] there anything that you took from it that you use in your everyday life, like—?

Kimberly Gosselin: Oh, *yeah*. All the time. You know, they build in a habit of scripture study and prayer. I can't tell you how many times a day we pray, you know, when you're at Pageant. Like, if you were traveling on the bus: When you get on the bus, you pray when you get on the bus; you pray before you get off the bus, you know, like, if you're doing the community service, or whatever type of stuff like that; pray when you get back on the bus. Just the habits of—and those are the *little* things, you know? Those are the little things that keep the members strong in their faith and strong in their—[pauses; shrugs; speaks quietly] in their faith, and I'm trying to think there... I'm trying to find a word—just staying within the Church because, you know, there are always members and people that, for whatever reason, get disillusioned, or this or that, or there's some sort of something—they get offended or what have you, and people that leave the Church and fall away. But it's the small things, this—little habits like saying your prayers, reading your scriptures...

A huge thing that *I* use daily in my life is, like I said, I kept a journal when I was there because I didn't—I wanted to remember my experiences. And I keep a journal now because, again, I want to remember my spiritual experiences. If I'm ever having a bad day, if I'm ever having doubts or anything like that, I can go back and read these experiences and relive them, as I did then. [taps table for emphasis] And it just strengthens your faith and your testimony in Jesus Christ, and in your testimony in being a member, and in—we call it, you know, staying on the covenant path. So, when you're baptized, you make a covenant with Heavenly Father to always remember Jesus Christ into—by always remembering him, meaning if you think and remember Christ in your daily activities, you're not going to be cruel to somebody. You know, you're going to be helpful to people; you're going to be kind to people; and things like that. And it—so, it helps you to stay on the covenant path because you're in the scriptures; you're reading the

words of God; you're praying, so you're communicating with Heavenly Father. And it's those little things, those little habits, that Pageant helps you to [00:55:00] either start or maintain or teach that—you take that away, and it's huge.

Kensey Shida: I think in terms of questions, let me... So, we actually have a doc that we prepared for—to—if we have some time [best guess]—

Kimberly Gosselin: Oh yeah, absolutely. Well, I hope so.

Kensey Shida: Yeah [laughs], we've been—that I have, actually, on—off to the side to kind of refer back to, but yeah...

Kimberly Gosselin: Is it that you—did you [guys]—two guys come up with it on your own, or was it something your class had to do, or...?

Kensey Shida: We had some sort—we had somewhat of a guideline, but a lot of questions, we made on our own, and obviously some of the questions were on the spot. But, um, yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: Can I ask you a couple of questions?

Dylan Sandberg: Sure.

Kensey Shida: Um, yeah. That'd be fine, yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: So, the professor that you're doing this for, again—

Kensey Shida: Yeah, mmmm.

Kimberly Gosselin: Does he have any connection to the Church?

Dylan Sandberg: I don't believe so, but I think he follows like—he follows it, like he understands it.

Kimberly Gosselin: Oh.

Dylan Sandberg: He brings a bunch of people into class that tell us about their religion, like what you're doing right now. Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: Okay. So, how did he get to want to do—be part of this project?

[Dylan says something indistinctly]

Kensey Shida: So, I think in general—so the class that we’re doing this for is for Digital History.

Kimberly Gosselin: Ooh.

Kensey Shida: And so, a lot of the work that is done in the class—or a lot of the material that is taught—is for preserving things, preserving a lot of very—things—preserving things digitally—so, a lot—or—preserving things digitally or online, which is becoming a more and more, obviously, a very important matter because the online world—as technology is obviously expanding. And so, I think one of the ideas, hopefully, that we can reenact is that we can save things like the Hill Cumorah Pageant, or any—or maybe events that might be similar to the Hill Cumorah Pageant—in a digital format, so that we can—we’re able to look back and kind of—maybe not get the full experience, obviously, like you have, but to somewhat, in a sense, reenact that digital experience, which would be really, really nice to have, because we would have an archive, almost, that is very much—not so much indefinite, but it is able—we’re able to maintain it. And as long as we preserve that digital media, we are able to kind of have it in digital history.

[Kim nods]

Kensey Shida: And so, I think that’s part of what the goal of this project is, to an extent, obviously. Yeah, but...

Kimberly Gosselin: I just wondered why he chose *this topic* because, you know, I mean, like, right there, there’s the Strong Museum [of Play] with the [children]—all the children... Are you guys—where are you guys from?

Kensey Shida: So, *I'm* originally from—I was raised in Massachusetts, so I'm actually—I'm from North Andover, which is around—which is like—it's, like, 30 or 40 minutes from the Boston area, but I'm going to university here [in Rochester]. It's my third year, fourth year here, so...

Kimberly Gosselin: Oh, that's cool. What about you, Dylan?

Dylan Sandberg: I'm from Staten Island. It's like 20 minutes away from the City, from—

Kimberly Gosselin: Say again?

Dylan Sandberg: Staten Island?

Kimberly Gosselin: Oh! Cool.

[Dylan laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: So—yeah, so you don't—well, you might know Rochester, but I mean, there's other things in Rochester that I'm sure that they're, you know, doing. I'm just wondering, how come Hill Cumorah?

Kensey Shida: Um...

Kimberly Gosselin: You know? I'm not saying it's not *worthy*.

[Kensey and Dylan laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: And I'm just wondering, who thought of that, you know? And that's why I asked if your professor had some connection with the Church because, otherwise, how would he even think to do Hill Cumorah?

Kensey Shida: Mmm.

Dylan Sandberg: I'm not 100-percent sure [best guess].

Kensey Shida: Yeah. I don't think either of us are 100-percent. Certainly, yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah, that's OK, you don't have to have answers. You said you got to see some of the costumes. Did you see, like, actual costumes or pictures?

[Dylan says something indistinctly]

Kensey Shida: Uh, it was—

Dylan Sandberg: What's his name, Kensey?

Kensey Shida: Uh—

Dylan Sandberg: Jerry Argetsinger, or something like that?

Kensey Shida: I know exactly you're talking about, but I'm trying to remember.

Dylan Sandberg: From that Pageant, I believe.

Kimberly Gosselin: What was this name?

Dylan Sandberg: I'll pull up his name on the class [website]. [pause] It's loading. [pause]

[01:00:00] Jerry Argetsinger, A-r-g-e-t, singer, s-i-n-g-e-r.

Kimberly Gosselin: You know, a lot of the people that did the costumes and the choreography and the battle choreography and stuff, those were people from all over the United States.

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: They weren't necessarily people here. But—so—I'm sorry; I missed the whole part. Did you actually see the costumes in person, or did you...?

[Dylan and Kensey both nod in the affirmative; Dylan says something indistinctly]

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah? Did you...? They were like drapery material. The one I had, like, literally looks like somebody's drapes they pulled out of...

[Kensey and Dylan laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: Some old lady's house. I had, like, the tassel-y thing. [indistinct]

[Kensey and Dylan laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: It was crazy. But yeah, yeah, those are cool. You know, because I live locally, and I'm only like an hour and a half from the Hill, I did have opportunity to take part—and, actually, it was because my daughter's connection with one of her Hill Cumorah Pageant friends, who is local at—in Palmyra—the kid *texted* her one Sunday *during Church*, saying, “They're looking for people who want to come help tear down Hill Cumorah,” you know, “and there's only three spots left”—type of deal, you know: “If you want to, quick—sign up!” you know? So, that's how we got to sign up, and we went and helped them clean out, and—it was *sad*, man. It was sad to—

Dylan Sandberg: I can imagine.

Kimberly Gosselin: Throw stuff away. But they said—they'd already taken care of the costumes and such, but they said that they had put some aside for the Smithsonian. They said the Smithsonian didn't *want* them. They had contacted them and asked, and they said no, but they figure at some point they're going to be like, “Hey, maybe we do.” So, they put some aside to give 'em when they smarten up to the fact that they really want 'em, that it would be cool to have, you know? Someday. But, yeah.

Kensey Shida: I think—yeah, I think it's always interesting when people hold onto artifacts, and obviously things like these are very impactful to people—

Kimberly Gosselin: [nodding] Mhmm.

Kensey Shida: And people—you know, they dismiss them, obviously—

Kimberly Gosselin: They do, yeah [best guess].

Kensey Shida: And then, who knows?

[Kim nods]

Kensey Shida: Down the line, people—it's obviously a very, like—you know? So...

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah. It's a piece of history!

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: So, I was a little, like, put out that they didn't want 'em.

Kensey Shida: [laughs] Yeah, obviously. [laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: No, I know. I mean, whatever, although—*really*? They just don't realize how valuable they'll be someday, you know—

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: 'Cause it's a huge—it's just a piece of history. You know?

Kensey Shida: I think—yeah, I think a lot of this project aims to—it's [in the?] very nice because it's sorted on a digital medium. We're able to—regardless of *who* it might be important to or, like—we're able to somewhat, *somewhat* preserve it. Obviously, a lot of it, unfortunately, is monetized, and people obviously take advantage of digital storage space and history to—for their own gains, obviously, but it's very nice that, at least, we have an accessible medium to kind of store all this and...

Kimberly Gosselin: Well, I think it's great.

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: And I'm super glad that I was able to be a part of it. I was so—I was *stoked* when you guys asked, when I got the request if I wanted to be a part of it. I was like, *yes*!
[Kensey and Dylan laugh]

Kensey Shida: Sorry about the delay. There was a lot of miscommunication—

Kimberly Gosselin: Don't worry!

Kensey Shida: With emails and everything, and everything got late, and... [laughs] So, yeah, sorry to [unclear]...

Kimberly Gosselin: I'm just sorry for you because I'm sure you're on a deadline as to having to edit and put all this stuff together.

Kensey Shida: Yeah, obviously, yeah, but don't worry about it.

[Dylan says something indistinctly]

Kensey Shida: That's no problem. Yeah, it's just some communication with emails and just—it got delayed. [laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: I think you guys should have texted me.

Kensey Shida: I think there was a problem. I think what was happening was Dylan was sending emails, but I wasn't receiving them, but *you* were receiving them, so then—and a lot of things got mixed up, but in the end, I'm glad we figured it out and we got to hold this interview. And it was a great time having the interview, and I really got to learn a lot, and hopefully we can make this a really good project.

[01:05:00]

Kimberly Gosselin: [tapping table for emphasis] You got to watch it, just watch a little bit.

[Kensey laughs]

Dylan Sandberg: I think I'm going to.

Kimberly Gosselin: Seriously. Like, the boat scene is pretty much in the beginning, you know what I mean, and the destruction scene and Christ coming down is pretty much at the end, you know what I mean? So, you don't have to watch the whole thing because—

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah, or whatever, but [01:05:00] watch some of the battle scenes and stuff, just to see, because it's all choreographed and just—it's just amazing. And if I can find it, I'll try to email you, they did some—a little montage thing of the kids dancing—

Kensey Shida: Mmm.

Kimberly Gosselin: In the—and all that kind of stuff, to be chosen because the different parts and stuff. It’s just really cool, you know, and yeah, if I can find it, I’ll send it to you because it’s just fun to watch, you know? [snaps fingers] It’s just like a little...

[Note: The video Kimberly referenced was shared with Dylan and Kensey via Google Drive, but we were unable to identify the necessary rights to feature it on the project website. The video shows youth cast members from the Pageant rehearsing dances, stunts, and fight choreography. It is scored to a cover version of the song “Everything is Awesome” from The LEGO Movie.]

Kensey Shida: It’s just like a compilation of, yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah, just fun, just fun stuff.

Kensey Shida: Yeah. I think it would also—

Kimberly Gosselin: I just think it would help *you*—

[Kensey laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: To have that background.

Kensey Shida: Mhmm.

Kimberly Gosselin: I’m surprised. I mean, he should have just totally should have just shown Pageant in one of your class periods, you know—

[Kensey laughs]

Kimberly Gosselin: Just like your teachers used to do when you were in grade school, when it was, like, the Friday before vacation—’cause, by the way, this is the Friday before the vacation. We’re on spring break next week.

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: And you know when they reel [sic] out the movie, so you'd watch it for the last hour of class before you—you know—on a Friday. So, yeah, you totally should have pulled out *Pageant*!

Kensey Shida: I think a lot of it, it's just that we're trying to—you know, there's a lot of material to cover, obviously, and so I think it's just that they're trying to cram curricular...

Kimberly Gosselin: Has your whole thing *been* about *Pageant*, or is your whole thing about digital history?

Kensey Shida: It's mainly about digital history, I would say—

[Kimberly nods]

Kensey Shida: But there is, like, somewhat of an emphasis on *Pageant* because it is one of our main projects—

[Kimberly says something indistinctly]

Kensey Shida: That we have been kind of doing throughout the semester. But, yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: Well, I told you guys I like to talk. Sorry.

[Kensey and Dylan laugh]

Kensey Shida: No, no problem. It was—it was very...

Kimberly Gosselin: And if you have any follow up questions or anything like that—I'm not saying we'd Zoom again, but I mean, if you have any questions or whatever—

Kensey Shida: Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: You know, email me and be like [using onomatopoeia] *duh-duh-duh-duh* or something.

Kensey Shida: Yeah, obviously.

Kimberly Gosselin: And I really will try to find those bits and pieces and send them to you because they're just fun to watch.

Kensey Shida: Yeah, okay. That sounds great. Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: But maybe—yeah—I'm not very *technical*.

[Dylan and Kensey laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: Otherwise, I would totally try to cut out the scene where I am so you could totally see me—

Kensey Shida: Mhmm.

Kimberly Gosselin: Because I was like a cameo appearance, just like... There's this guy in white that's over here, but the focus should really be on me.

[laughter]



Screenshot from Matt Barr's 2019 film of the Hill Cumorah Pageant. Kimberly Gosselin is the woman next to the thumb of Christ. All rights to the film are held by Intellectual Reserve.

Kensey Shida: Yeah, but I'm really glad we got to do this interview.

Kimberly Gosselin: Yeah, me, too.

Kensey Shida: I actually really learned a lot, and it was very interesting to see your perspective—

Kimberly Gosselin: Good.

Kensey Shida: And, you know... Yeah.

Kimberly Gosselin: I appreciate it.

Kensey Shida: Absolutely. Thank you for your time.

Dylan Sandberg: Thank you.

Kimberly Gosselin: You're welcome, and good luck to you. I hope both of you get A's.

[Kensey and Dylan laugh]

Kimberly Gosselin: Tell your professor, if I have anything to say about it, that you should, because you guys did a great job.

Kensey Shida: Okay. Thank you very much. Yeah, if we have any questions, we'll send you follow-up emails and see, and go from there. Thank you.

Kimberly Gosselin: Awesome. Bye, guys.

Dylan Sandberg and Kensey Shida: Bye.

Dublin Core Metadata for the Interview

Title

Interview with Kimberly Gosselin, Friday, April 8, 2022

Subject

Hill Cumorah Pageant, Latter-day Saints, Conversion, Book of Mormon

Description

In this interview, Kimberly gave us insight on what the Hill Cumorah Pageant was like, who would go to the Pageant, and how the Pageant worked from the volunteers' perspective. Kimberly told us her story of how she converted to the Mormon religion, how it has helped her in many ways throughout her life, and what the Pageant is. She also told us her favorite story from the Book of Mormon that was shown in the Pageant. Kimberly showed us that the Pageant was more than just the show they would have on the grand stage, but rather an event that brought people together and created close friendships.

Creator

Kimberly Gosselin, Dylan Sandberg, and Kensey Shida

Source

The Hill Cumorah Legacy Project

Date

Friday, April 8, 2022

Contributor

Dylan Sandberg and Kensey Shida

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Format

MP4 (video), MP3 (audio), PDF (transcript)

Language

English

Identifier

- Kim_Gosselin_Interview_cut.mp4
- Sandberg_Shida_KimberlyGosselinInterview_04-12-2022.mp3
- Sandberg_Shida_KimberlyGosselinTranscript_04-12-2022_Edited.pdf