

Heaton plays a mom who could use a holiday.



## The Middle

ABC, Wednesdays, 8 p.m. ET/PT | ★★★★★

### COMEDY

In its second season, Patricia Heaton's family sitcom seems to have found its natural resting point, like a bubble in a carpenter's level, midway between the scrappily eccentric *Raising Hope* and the fizzy, shiny *Modern Family*. The Hecks of Orson, Ind., are rushed along on a daily

tide of jobs, errands and chores. The show has a very sure grip on how these minor events, accompanied by small satisfactions, play out in a household of two middle-aged parents, two teenage kids and one inscrutable 9-year-old. And Heaton hits just the right note: exhausted braying and maternal warmth.