



# the best Christmas pageant ever

## SHOW DATES:

- Friday, Dec 1 (7:30)
- Saturday Dec 2 (7:30)
- Sunday Dec 3 (2:00)
- Thursday Dec 7 (7:30)
- Friday Dec 8 (7:30)
- Saturday Dec 9 (7:30)
- Sunday Dec 10 (2:00)

## REHEARSALS: \*\*\*Bring all conflicts to auditions\*\*\*\*

Expect to be called to rehearsal 3 or 4 days each week starting in October.

Children will be released no later than 9pm whenever possible.

No rehearsals during Thanksgiving (Nov 22 - 25)

## ROLES: (ages are approximate)

### Leading Roles:

- Mother/ Grace Bradley (adult) - warm, friendly, a bit nervous/overwhelmed PTO mom type
- Beth Bradley (10-12) - narrator, strong voice and presence
- Imogene Herdman (11-13) - loud, bossy, sneaky, tough

### Supporting Roles:

- Father/Bob Bradley (adult) - solid family man
- Mrs. Armstrong (adult) - opinionated, bossy church matron
- Mrs. McCarthy (adult) - younger, less imperious version of Mrs. Armstrong
- Sunday School Kids:
  - Alice (10-12) prim, proper "teachers pet" type
  - Charlie (8-10) - Beth's little brother, nice boy but a little cheeky
- Herdman Kids:
  - Ralph (12-14) - ragged, slouching cool-kid
  - Leroy (10-12) - tough, sure of himself
  - Claude (9-11) - tough, ready for a fight
  - Ollie (8-10) - tough, Claude's "partner in crime"
  - Gladys (7-9) - small, wiry, feisty

### Ensemble Roles:

- 4-8 Sunday School Kids, each with at least a few lines

**Please come to auditions ready to recite one of the options listed, and to read any role in the scenes.**

## Script Readings - Kids

### Script Reading #1: (any three kids)

**ONE:** What's an Inn?

**TWO:** It's like a motel, where people go to spend the night

**ONE:** What people? Jesus?

**THREE:** Oh, honestly! Jesus wasn't even born yet. Mary and Joseph went there.

**TWO:** Why?

**THREE:** I don't believe this - haven't you ever heard the Christmas story from the bible? "And Joseph went up from Galilee with Mary his wife, being great with child...."

**ONE:** Pregnant! She was Pregnant!

**THREE:** "...and since there was no room for them at the inn, she brought forth her son and laid him in the manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes"

**TWO:** They tied up Jesus in wadded up clothes?

**THREE:** "...and there came Wise Men from the East, bearing gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh..."

**ONE:** What's that?

**TWO:** Spices and Oil

**ONE:** Oil? What kind of a present is oil? We get better presents from the welfare!

**TWO:** Were they the welfare? The Wise Men?

### Script Reading #2: (any two kids)

**ONE:** Hey, you give me back my lunch!

**TWO:** Sure, kid here. (hands him a lunch bag)

**ONE:** You stole my dessert again!

**TWO:** How do you know?

**ONE:** Because it isn't here.

**TWO:** What was it?

**ONE:** Two Twinkies.

**TWO:** That's right. That's what it was. (Starts to leave)

**ONE:** Hey!! You think it's so great to steal my dessert every day and you know what? I don't care if you steal my dessert. I'll even give you my dessert. I get all the dessert I want in Sunday school.

**TWO:** (Interested in this) Oh, yeah? What kind of dessert?

**ONE:** All kinds. Chocolate cake and candy bars and cookies . . . We get refreshments all the time; all we want.

**TWO:** You're a liar.

**ONE:** . . . and ice cream, and doughnuts, and cupcakes and . . .

**TWO:** Who gives it to you?

**ONE:** (momentarily stumped) Uh . . . the minister.

**TWO:** Why? Is he crazy?

**ONE:** No . . . I think he's rich.

**TWO:** (Pause) . . . Sunday school, huh?

## RECITATION OPTIONS (Kids)

### ANY CHILD:

(Reciting in the pageant) And in that region there were shepherds in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them...*(Gladys doesn't appear, trying again)*...An angel of the Lord appeared to them...*(Gladys still doesn't appear, continues worried)*...The glory of the Lord shone around about and they were sore afraid...*(trying to give Gladys her cue)*...WHEN THE ANGEL OF THE LORD appeared to them and said, Be not...*(Gladys appears suddenly yelling her line, continuing flustered)*...and suddenly there was a multitude of heavenly host, saying Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men.

### CHARLIE:

*(Singing)* "Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, because there are no Herdmans there. And Jesus loves us, as they say, because he keeps them miles away." I don't care what everybody else said, that's what they really thought. All that other stuff is okay but the main good stuff about church is that the Herdmans aren't there, ever...That's what I said...stay away from them. Go to church.

### GLADYS:

*(As the Angel of the Lord appearing to the Shepherds in the Pageant)* Hey!...Hey!.. Unto you a child is born!...It's Jesus, and he's in a barn...Go see him! *(Shepherd hesitate)* Go on, he's over there!

### BETH:

The Herdmans were the worst kids in the whole history of the world. They lied and stole and smoked cigars, even the girls, and talked dirty and cussed their teachers and took the name of the Lord in vain and set fire to Fred Shoemaker's old broken down tool house. There were six of them – Ralph, Imogene, Leroy, Claude, Ollie and Gladys – and they went through Woodrow Wilson School like those South American fish that strip your bones clean. They were around town the same way – stealing things and tearing things up and whamming kids....so it was hard to get away from them. There was only one safe place...

### ALICE:

I didn't dare raise my hand. Imogene would have killed me! She said, "I'm going to be Mary in this play, and if you open your mouth or raise your hand, you'll wish you didn't." And I said, "I'm always Mart in the Christmas pageant." And she said, "go ahead then, and next spring when the pussywillows come out I'll stick a pussywillow so far down your ear that nobody can reach it...and it'll sprout there and grow and grow, and you'll spend the rest of your life with a pussywillow bush growing out of your ear!" And she would too! Herdmans will do anything. You just watch, they'll do something terrible and ruin the whole pageant...and it's all your mother's fault!

### RALPH:

Somebody ought to fix the innkeeper...Gladys, you wipe out the innkeeper! I'll go after Ol' Herod! [Or] send the angel after him. She could just point her electric finger and turn him into a pile of ashes.

## Script Readings - Adults

### Script Reading #3 (male & female adults)

**MOTHER:** (mimicking Mrs. A)...if I'd been up and around, this never would have happened! (herself) well, let me tell you...

**FATHER:** don't tell me, I'm on your side....the car's over there.

**MOTHER:** Helen Armstrong is not the only woman alive who can run a Christmas pageant! I made up my mind just to do the best I could under the circumstances, but now I'm going to make this the best Christmas pageant ever, and I'm going to do it with the Herdmans! After all, they raised their hands and nobody else did, and I don't care....

**FATHER:** Good for you, Grace....the car's over there...

**MOTHER:** ...and you're going to help me!

**FATHER:** (stopped by this) Does that mean...

**MOTHER:** you have to go!

### Script Reading #4 (two women)

**McCARTHY:** Could you believe that was Imogene Herdman? And all the rest of them? Irma, this was the best Christmas pageant we ever had, and I'm not sure why, but I think it was them! Could that be?

**SLOCUM:** Oh, I always get weepy about the pageant. I guess it's the children and the carols and all...But you're right, this was the best one...and it should have been the worst.

**McCARTHY:** There was just something...different

**SLOCUM:** Well the angel of the Lord was different!

**McCARTHY:** Yes, but you know, I liked that! Had lots of spirit. Sometimes you can't even hear the angel of the Lord. I must find Grace, and tell her...

**SLOCUM:** I just wish now that I'd let her have Eugene to be the baby Jesus.

## Recitation Options - ADULTS

### REV. HOPKINS:

I've been on the telephone all day, and I can't make heads or tails of it. Some people say they set fire to the ladies' room. Some people say they set fire to the kitchen. Vera Wendleken says all they do is talk about sex and underwear...The whole church is in an uproar. I don't know...Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me", but I'm not sure he meant the Herdmans...Grace, don't you think we should cancel the pageant? We could blame it on the fire...makes a good excuse.

### FATHER:

(to Beth, who just complained that the Herdmans look like refugees) Well...that's what they were...Mary and Joseph. They were refugees, in a way. They were a long way from home, didn't have any place to stay, didn't know anybody. They were probably cold and hungry and tired...and messy. (To Mother) I think you worry too much. Now...I'm going to push baby angels onstage, and I'm going to hand out shepherd's crooks and then push them onstage...When do I do all that? (flips through script) Let's see....Baby angels...shepherds....Wise Men...It doesn't say where the fire engines come in. (reaction from wife about this tease) Just kidding!

### MOTHER:

(speaking to about a dozen fidgety children) Come on, everyone!. Now, this won't take very long if you all settle down...Today we're going to decide who will play the main roles in our Christmas pageant, but of course everyone will have an important part to play. You know what Mrs. Armstrong always tells you - there are no small parts, only small actors. Isn't that what Mrs. Armstrong always says? EVERYONE is important...Mary, Jesus, *and* the short kids. Now, I want you to think about Mary...We all know what kind of person Mary was. She was quiet and gentle and kind, and the girl who plays Mary should try to be that kind of person. Who would like to volunteer for that part?

.....did you have a question, Imogene? [note - Imogene is a "rough" and "mean" kid]

### MRS ARMSTRONG:

(Talking on the phone) I'll tell you again, Grace, how important it is to give everyone a chance. Here's what I do - I always start with Mary and I tell them we must choose our Mary carefully because Mary was the mother of Jesus...Yes, and then I tell them about Joseph, that he was God's choice to be Jesus' father. That's how I explain that. Frankly, I don't ever spend much time on Joseph because it's always Elmer Hopkins, and he knows all about Mary and Joseph...but I do explain about the Wise Men and the shepherds and how important they are. And I tell them, there are no small parts, only small actors. Remind the angel choir not to stare at the audience, and don't let them wear earrings and things like that. And don't let them wear clunky shoes or high heels. I just hope you don't have too many baby angels, Grace, because they'll be your biggest problem.