

Kids' Audition Passages

Due to *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* being a play, we are providing longer bits of dialogue for Auditioners to show off their acting chops. Auditioners may choose any of the below passages (regardless of gender) to prepare. It does not have to be memorized, but they will be asked to share it independently at their audition.

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.

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.

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!

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 Mary 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!

IMOGENE: My God! They didn't have room for Jesus? Didn't Mary know [who he was]? (Pointing to Ralph who is playing Joseph) Didn't he know? What was the matter with Joseph, that he didn't tell them? Her pregnancy and everything...[and] you mean they tied him up and put him in a feedbox? Where was Child Welfare?

BETH: (Referring to the pageant) It did seem real, as if it might have happened just that way. We all thought the pageant was about Jesus, but that was only part of it. It was about a new baby, and his mother and father who were in a whole lot of trouble – no money, no place to go, no doctor, nobody they knew. And then, arriving from the East – like my uncle from New Jersey – some rich friends. Because of the Herdmans, it was a whole new story – Imogene, burping the baby, and the Wise Men bringing such a sensible present. After all, they couldn't eat frankincense! And even Gladys – "He's in the barn. Go see him"...so the shepherds didn't have to stumble around all over the countryside. But I guess it wasn't like that for Imogene. For her, the Christmas pageant turned out to be all wonder and mystery, as if she just caught on to what Christmas was all about.

Adult Audition Monologues

Please Come with Any ONE of the Below Sides Memorized

MOTHER: Well, let me tell you...Helen Armstrong is not the only woman alive who can run a Christmas pageant! I made up my mind to just 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... (to Father)...And you're going to help me!

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.

FATHER: 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?

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.

Audition Sides

Please take the time to read over the following sides attached below that will be provided at auditions. Auditioners will be asked to “cold read” some of the sides in which they will be given sides by the audition panel and given a few minutes (about 5) to read over the scene and present it with their scene partners unmemorized. They are provided below to ensure auditioners understand the context of the play as well as giving those who struggle with quick reading some time to review. Not all actors will read from all sides on audition day.

Charlie/Father/Mother

pgs 2-3

Charlie: I don't care what everybody else said, that's what they really thought. All that other stuff is okay but the main good thing about church is that the Herdmans aren't there, ever.

Father: That's not a very Christian sentiment, it seems to me.

Mother: It's a very practical sentiment. Charlie was black and blue all last year because he had to sit next to Leroy Herdman in school.

Father: Is he the worst one? Leroy?

Charlie: They're all the worst one.

Beth: Ralph's the biggest, so if Ralph gets you...

Charlie: That doesn't make any difference. Gladys isn't big, but she's fast, and she's mean, and she bites.

Father: I'm sorry I asked. Just stay away from all of them.

Charlie: That's what I said. Stay away from them. Go to church.

Mother: I'm glad to hear you feel that way.

Charlie: (*suspicious*) Why?

Mother: No arguments this year about the Christmas pageant.

Charlie: I don't want to be a shepherd again!

Mother: Tell Mrs. Armstrong you want to be a Wise Man.

Charlie: I don't want to be *in* it!

Mother: Everybody's in it. Think how I'd feel sitting there on Christmas Eve, if my own children weren't in the pageant. Think how your father would feel.

(There is a moment of silence, as everyone looks at **Father**, knowing exactly how he feels on this subject.)

You'd feel terrible, wouldn't you, Bob?

Father: Well...actually, I didn't plan to go. (as **Mother** starts to protest)

You know how crowded it always is, they can use my seat. I'll just stay home, put on my bathrobe, relax... There's never anything different about the Christmas pageant.

Mother: There's going to be something different this year.

Father: What?

Mother: Charlie's going to wear your bathrobe.

Father: You just thought that up, Grace!

Beth: (to **Charlie**) Why don't you be Joseph? Elmer Hopkins'll pay you a dollar to be Joseph, (to **Father**) Elmer's sick of being Joseph all the time just because his father's the minister. Nobody wants to be Joseph.

Charlie: Nobody wants to be *in* it!

Father: (to **Beth**) What are you going to be this year?

Beth: I'm always in the angel choir.

Father: Well, why can't Charlie be in the angel choir?

Charlie: Because I can't sing!

Father: From what I've heard in the past, that's not a serious drawback. *Away In A Manger* always sounds to me like a closetful of mice.

Beth/Alice/Maxine/Gladys

pgs 32-33

Alice: Look at them, aren't they awful! What's she doing with the baby? Oh! ...I don't think it's very nice to burp the baby Jesus, as if he had colic.

Beth: Well, he could have had colic, just like any other baby.

Alice: I don't care. It looks awful. And *they* look awful.

Beth: So what? They just came a long way and now they don't have any place to sleep, and they've got a new baby to worry about.

Alice: Who, Ralph and Imogene?

Beth: No. Mary and Joseph.

Maxine: 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... (*no Gladys*) ...An Angel of the Lord appeared to them... (*still no Gladys*) The glory of the Lord shone round about and they were sore afraid *when the Angel of the Lord* appeared to them and said, Be not...

Gladys: Hey! ... Hey! ... Unto you a child is born! ...It's Jesus, and he's in the barn... Go see him! Go on, he's over there... Go on!

Maxine: (*though flustered, recovers*) And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host, saying Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men.

Charlie/Leroy

pgs 8-9

Charlie: Hey, Leroy, you give me back my lunch!

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

Charlie: (looks inside) You stole my dessert again!

Leroy: How do you know?

Charlie: Because it isn't here.

Leroy: What was it?

Charlie: Two Twinkies.

Leroy: That's right. That's what it was. (*starts to leave*)

Charlie: Hey, Leroy! You think it's so great to steal my dessert every 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.

Leroy: (*interested in this*) Oh, yeah? What kind of dessert?

Charlie: All kinds. Chocolate cake and candy bars and cookies...and Twinkies and Big Wheels. We get refreshments all the time, all we want.

Leroy: You're a liar.

Charlie: And ice cream, and doughnuts and cupcakes and...

Leroy: Who gives it to you?

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

Leroy: Why? Is he crazy?

Charlie: No...I think he's rich.

Leroy: (*pause*)...Sunday school, huh?

Mrs. McCarthy/Mrs. Slocum/Mrs. Armstrong

pgs 14-15

Mrs. McCarthy: Jane? ... Edna McCarthy. Did you hear about the... Well, it must be Grace's fault somehow! How else would the six of them end up in a Christmas pageant, when they ought to be in jail!

Mrs. Slocum: Vera? ...Irma Slocum. I just heard that Imogene Herdman is going to be Mary in the Christmas pageant, and I... Is that a fact? All six of them? Vera, I live next door to that outfit and I'd rather live next door to a zoo. Has Grace gone crazy?

Mrs. Armstrong: Where did they come from? Who let them in? Imogene Herdman! ..What kind of a child is that, to be Mary the Mother of Jesus? Where was Reverend Hopkins, I'd like to know... He was what? ...Visiting shut-in! Well, I'm shut-in, and he wasn't visiting me!

Mrs. McCarthy: I said, why don't you let them hand out programs at the door? Grace said we never have programs for the pageant, but I said...

Mrs. Slocum: ...Better nail down the church and lock up the silver service and hide the collection plates before they clean them out...

Mrs. Armstrong: What was the matter with Grace? Couldn't she have sent them away? Tell them to go home? Oh, I feel responsible... If I'd been up and around this never would have happened!

Hobie/David/Elmer/Mother

pgs 12-13

Mother: It's the Angel of the Lord, who brought the good news to the shepherds.

(flurry of raised hands)

There, we do have some volunteers after all! Yes, Hobie, would you like to be a Wise Man?

Hobie: No, I just wanted to say I can't be a shepherd. We're going to Philadelphia.

Mother: Why didn't you say so before?

Hobie: I just remembered.

David: My mother doesn't want me to be a shepherd.

Mother: Why not?

David: I don't know. She just said, don't be a shepherd.

Charlie: I'm not going to be a shepherd!

Mother: *(reverting from pageant director to exasperated parent)* Oh, yes, you are!

...What's the matter with all of you?

Elmer: I don't want to be a shepherd... Gladys Herdman hits too hard!

Mother: Why, Gladys isn't going to hit anybody! The Angel of the Lord just visits the shepherds in the fields and tells them Jesus is born.

Elmer: And hits them!

Mother: Elmer, that's ridiculous, and I don't want to hear another word about it, from anyone. No shepherds may quit...or get sick. Now that's all for today, boys and girls, and you can go (pause) But I expect to see everyone here on Wednesday at 6:30

Mother/Imogene/Alice/Shirley/Juanita/Doris

pgs 23-24

Mother: Well, I don't think...

Imogene: I'll get us a baby.

Mother: How can you do that?

Imogene: There's always two or three babies in carriages outside the supermarket. I'll get one of them.

Mother: Imogene! You can't just walk off with somebody's baby! ...I guess we'll forget about a baby. We'll just use the doll.

Imogene: Yeh, That's better, anyway... A doll can't bite you.

Mother: And, Imogene...you know Mary didn't wear earrings.

Imogene: I have to wear these. I got my ears pierced and if I don't keep something in them, they'll grow together.

Mother: Well, they won't grow together in an hour and a half. What did the doctor tell you to do?

Imogene: What doctor?

Mother: Well, who pierced your ears?

Imogene: Gladys.

Alice: (to Beth) She probably did it with an ice pick. I'll bet Imogene's ears turn black and fall off.

Mother: Well, we'll find something smaller... Now, is that your costume? Is that what you're going to wear? *(to the whole group)* You're all supposed to have your costumes on today.

Shirley: I can't find my halo.

Juanita: My wings got all bent.

Doris: Janet's got my robe.

Shirley: My mother doesn't have any white sheets. Can I wear a sheet with balloons on it?

Rev Hopkins/Mother

pgs 28-29

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.

Mother: That was Hobie Clark talking about underwear. And they didn't set fire to anything. The only fire was in the kitchen, where the applesauce cake burned up.

Rev Hopkins: Well, 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?

Mother: I'll bet that was Helen Armstrong's idea.

Rev Hopkins: We could blame it on the fires...makes a good excuse.

Mother: I'll bet that was Edna McCarthy's idea.

Rev Hopkins: Everyone seems to think it's going to be a...a...

Mother: Disaster? (*Obviously, that's the word he had in mind.*) Well, they're wrong! ...It's going to be the best pageant we ever had!

Rev Hopkins: But, Grace... I don't think anyone will come to see it!

Mother/Elmer/Alice/Maxine/Beth

pgs 9-10

Mother: Come on, Beth...Charlie, you and David *come*. 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?

Elmer: That's what she always says, but she never says what it means.

Mother: Don't you know what it means?

Maxine: I know what it means. It means that the short kids have to be in the front row of the angel choir or else nobody can see them.

Mother: Well...not exactly. It really means that the litest baby angel is just as important as Mary.

Alice: (*full of herself*) I don't think anyone is as important as Mary.

Beth: Well, naturally that's what *you* think, Alice. I think Jesus is more important.

Maxine: I still think it means short kids have to be in the front row.

Mother: Girls, girls! ...*Everyone's* important... Mary, Jesus, *and* the short kids. Now, is everyone here? Beverly, will you just step out in the hall and see if anyone else is coming?

(Mother is setting up the scene)

Mother: The inn is back here, offstage...and the shepherds come in and gather around the manger...

Leroy: Where'd all the shepherds come from, anyway?

Claude: What's an inn?

Elmer: It's like a motel where people go to spend the night.

Claude: What people? Jesus?

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

Ralph: Why?

Elmer: To pay their taxes.

Ollie: At a motel?!

Imogene: Shut up, Ollie! Everybody shut up! I want to hear her. *(to **Mother**)* Begin at the beginning.

Mother: The beginning...?

Imogene: The beginning of the play. What happens first?

Mother: Imogene, this is the Christmas story from the Bible... Haven't you ever heard the Christmas story from the Bible? *(Pause, as she realizes that they have not.)* ...Well, that's what this Christmas pageant is, so I'd beter read it to you.

Beth: I don't believe that, do you? That they never heard the Christmas story?

Alice: Why not? They don't even know what a Bible is, and they never went to church in their whole life. All your dumb brother told them we got refreshments. Now we have to waste all this time for nothing