Herdman Children Dialogue

Ralph – oldest boy (12 – 13) – ragged, scroungy, slouching manner, touch of adolescent cool
Imogene – oldest girl – loud, bossy, sneaky and crafty
Leroy –(10 -11)– tough, sure of himself
Claude – (9-10) - tough, combative
Ollie – (8-9) – looking for trouble, Claude's usual partner in crime
Gladys (7-8) – small, wiry, feisty

Leroy: (secretly) Hey Ralph, guess what Charlie told me last week.
Ralph: (very bored) What?
Leroy: (excitedly) If we go to Sunday school today at Charlie's church, we can get free desserts!
Ralph: Are you sure about that? I don't believe you, Imogene would know.
Ralph (to Imogene): Hey, Imogene….Do you know if we go to the Charlie's church do we get free desserts!
Imogene: Yup, that's true, everybody knows that.
Claude: Yeah, but the food is probably yucky.
Leroy: No, last week Charlie said they had jelly donuts!
Ollie: Well then lets go, what are we waiting for!!
Ralph: Okay, but where is Gladys?
Imogene: (Looking around) Hey Gladys! Get over here, we got something to tell you.
Gladys: (Obstinately) Don't tell me what to do – I can do what I want!
Ollie: Immy you should be nice to Gladys.
Imogene: (turning to Ollie) – I'm not talking to you! And don't call Immy!!!!
Leroy: Immy, Immy….
Claude and Ollie: (together, in a teasing manner) Immy… Immy…..
Ralph: Oh knock it off!! Hey Gladys, do you want to go get some desserts?
Gladys: Maybe , where do we get them from?
Leroy: Charlies' church, but we gotta go to Sunday School first.
Gladys: I'm not going to Sunday School, that's dumb, I get enough school!
Claude: Maybe we could just grab the goodies and run.
Ollie: Yeah, just like we did at the picnic in the park.
Imogene: I say we go, give it a try. Might be something good.
Claude: I hope they have chocolate chips cookies.
Ollie: Or maybe brownies with frosting?
Gladys: (to Ralph) Well, I will go only if Ralph gives me 3 of those steely marbles of his.
Ralph: I'm not giving you nothin'.
Imogene: Fine, then stay home, nobody wants you to come anyway. Just remember, we're not sharing anything we get with you.
Ollie: (to Gladys) Make sure you lock the door behind us, so the boogy man doesn't get you!
Claude: (to Gladys to scare her) Wooooooooooooooo, he's gonna get you.
Gladys: I'm not scared of no boogy man – I'll scare him away like this: (to her brothers and sisters)
SHAAZAAAAAAAAAMMMMMMMM

All kids assume a "Herdman" pose to show the personality of their character.

Alice and Maxine Dialogue

Alice – (10 – 12) Prim proper, pain in the neck Ivy – (10 – 12) Beth's best friend

Alice *and Maxine are in a very conspiratorial discussion about the Herdmans.*

Alice: Did you hear what the Herdman's did now? Somebody sent five dozen doughnuts for the firemen and the Herdman's ate them all, and what they couldn't eat they stuffed in their pockets and down the front of their shirts!

Maxine: And I heard they wrote this really really dirty word on the back of Naomi Waddells' favorite turtle, so now Noami can't take it to the YMCA pet show…. Her mother won't let her!

Alice: What was the word? *(Ivy whispers the word in her ear.)*
Alice: *(horrified)* Oh-----h----h

Maxine: And that's not all. They did it with fluorescent paint, so it glows in the dark, when you can't see the turtle, you can see the word!!

Alice: And they put a whole bunch of tadpoles in the school drinking fountain, and Miss Barnes swallowed two or three by mistake. Somebody yelled, "Mildred, stop. Your drinking tadpoles!"….. but it was too late!

Maxine: Did she get sick?

Alice: Not right away.

Maxine *and* ***Alice*** *give each other a horrified look.*

Beth and Charlie Dialogue

Beth – (10 – 12) the narrator, strong voice and presence
Charlie – (8 – 10) Beth's pesky brother, causes trouble for Beth

Beth is talking to the audience to set up the story. Charlie comes onto the scene, singing.

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 they 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! *(pause to let the impact of what she says sink in*) There were six of them – Ralph, Imogene, Leroy, Claude, Ollie and Gladys. They went through the Woodrow Wilson school like those South American fish that strip your bones clean. They went 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……..

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.

Beth: That's my little brother, Charlie. That's what he said when the Sunday school teacher asked him what was his favorite thing about church. Charlie said, "No Herdmans". That made the teacher mad because all the other kids said nice things about God and Jesus and good feelings. But Charlie told the real truth – No Herdmans!

Charlie: (to the audience) 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!! The rest of the kids are just so afraid of them, that they don't say anything about them to anybody. Cause if you say you don't like something they do, then they come after you….. they take your lunch, or steal your money, or throw mud balls at you when you are walking to school. Nobody likes them and don't to be anywhere near them. So that's why church is good – cause we don't have to deal with them!! No Herdmans in church!!

Mr. and Mrs. Bradley Dialogue

Mr. Bob Bradley (father) – (30 – 50) solid family man, busy with his job and work
Mrs. Grace Bradley (mother) – (30 – 50) stay at home mom, her kids are her life

Grace: (entering from the kitchen with a coffee cup) Bob, you are going to the Christmas pageant this year aren't you?

Bob: (hesitating) Well, I don't know…….

Grace: You know, Mrs. Armstrong works very hard to give everyone a lovely experience and you should be there to support your children.

Bob: Is that George Armstrong's wife?

Grace: Yes, and she has done it the same way every year.

Bob: Well, she may be to run it from the hospital this year, because I saw George at the drug store this afternoon and he told me that his wife broke her leg this morning ….. She'll be in traction in the hospital for two weeks and laid up in a wheel chair until the first of the year.

Grace: The first of the year!! ….. Why they'll have to cancel Christmas!

Bob: She's in charge of Christmas?

Grace: Well, she's in charge of the Christmas pageant and she's in charge of the bazaar and …. I feel sorry for Helen, but who's going to do all those things?

Bob: Oh don't worry, the church ladies will figure it out…….

Telephone Ladies Dialogue

(All ladies or using a telephone. They have just been informed that Mrs. Martha Armstong cannot do the Christmas pageant as she is in the hospital with a broken leg.)

The Church Ladies are in their 40's – 70's. Gossipy types who cannot wait to tell each other the latest "news".

(Luanne calling Betty)

Luanne: Hi Betty. Guess who just called and gave me some bad news.

Betty I can't even imagine who…

Luanne: Helen Armstrong!! And she is in the hospital with a broken leg, so somebody has to take over the church bazaar and pageant!

Betty: Well…… I can take over the bazaar, Luanne, if you'll do the potluck supper. I don't know what in the world we'll do about the pageant though ……(thinking) unless, how about Grace or Connie?

Luanne: Why, that's a super idea! I'll call Mrs. Armstrong and suggest she call Grace and you call Connie.

Betty Bye now.

Luanne: (Redials and stays on her phone and pretends to talk to Mrs. Armstrong)

(another phone call from Betty to Connie)

Betty: Hi Connie. I have some bad news! Helen is in the hospital and can't do any of the church activities or the pageant this Christmas.

Connie: Oh my, what is going to happen to the pageant and the bazaar and the supper?

Betty: Well, I can do the bazaar and Luanne will do the potluck supper, but we need somebody to handle the pageant.

Connie: Well, I'm not capable of handling all those kids…. And all those baby angels…. No thank you? How about Bertha or Grace?

Betty: Can you call Luanne and see if she has talked to Helen. And I will call Dorothy.

Connie: Sure, let's get the word out

Betty: Bye now. (She re-dials and pretends to talk to Dorothy)

(another phone call from Connie to Luanne)

Connie: Hi Luanne, I just heard the terrible news. Have you talked to Helen yet?

Luanne: Yes, I just got off the phone with her and she is going to talk to Grace about doing the pageant.

Connie: That's good, so I think we have it all covered for now?

Luanne: I hope so, and if Helen cannot talk Grace into doing the pageant, I don't think we will be able to have one this year. Nobody wants to deal with all those kids!

Connie: Exactly! Well, let's hope it all works out. Bye for now!

Mrs. Armstrong Monologue

Mrs. Armstrong is managerial type woman in voice and manner. 40 – 70 years old

Mrs. Armstong: (Talking on the telephone) I going tell you again, Grace, how important it is to give everyone a chance. Here's what I do……. (pause) ….. I always start with Mary and I tell them we must choose our Mary carefully because Mary was the mother of Jesus…….(pause) ….. And then I tell them about Joseph, that was God's choice to be Jesus' father. That how I explain that. (suddenly realizes that she doesn't have to explain about Joseph anymore) Frankly I don't every spend much time on Joseph because it's always Elmer Hopkins, and he knows all about Mary and Joseph being the pastors' son, you know…….. (pause) ….. However, I do explain about the wise men and the shepherd and how important they are. And I tell them, there are no small parts, only small actors. And also, remind the angle choir not to stare at the audience, and don't let them wear earrings and things like that. And no clunky shoes or high heels. I just hope you don't get too many baby angels, Grace, because they are your biggest problem.

Reverend Hopkins Dialogue

Reverend Hopkins can be of any age – worries about his flock and wants to make everyone happy.

(Gladys has been smoking in the church bathroom, and one of the church ladies has called the fire department thinking that there is a fire in the bathroom because of all the smoke. Reverend Hopkins is talking to Grace about the situation, as it occurred at play practice.)

Reverend Hopkins: Grace, I've been on the telephone all day, and I can't make head 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 so 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?

S**tudents/Kids Dialogue**

(Spotlight on the STUDENTS who are gathered in a group.)

Ivy: My favorite thing about Sunday school is the good feeling I get when I go there.

Joy: My favorite thing about Sunday school is the treats we get at the end of the morning.

Teddy: I like the treats too – but my favorite thing is all the stories that we get to read about.

Ivy: I like that too – and I really like playing Mary in the pageant every year.

Elmer: I don't like being Joseph, but I really like singing all the songs about Christmas.

Joy: And seeing all our friends!

Alice: I would like to be Mary this year for the Christmas pageant.

Teddy: I don't want to be Joseph, so Elmer you can do that again!

Elmer : I think it might be your turn Teddy!

Alice; Well, you really don't have anything to say about that because Mrs. Armstrong always pick Elmer!

Teddy: I kinda wish that we would not have to do the pageant again, just go and enjoy the treats at Christmas.

Charlie: Well do you want to know my favorite part of Sunday school?

All in Unison: What Charliie?

Charlie: The best thing about Sunday school is there are no Herdmans there.

(STUDENTS gasp and look at each other, shocked that Charlie would say that.)

Ivy: What did you say?

Charlie: I said ……. "No Herdmans."