

Audition Information Packet: *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*

Playhouse 2000 & P2K Youth Theater

Fall 2025

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Please note: This packet is written specifically for interested YOUTH participants and their parents, however adult auditionees may find the information here to be useful as well.

About the Play

"In this hilarious Christmas classic, a couple struggling to put on a church Christmas pageant is faced with casting the Herdman kids – probably the most inventively awful kids in history. You won't believe the mayhem – and the fun – when the Herdmans collide head-on with the story of Christmas! This delightful show is adapted from the bestselling book and has become a holiday staple for groups across the United States. The crowd-pleasing comedy features plenty of great roles for children and adults, a few favorite Christmas Carols, and lots of laughs."

About Our Production

For this holiday production the P2K Youth Theater program will be combining forces with the regular Playhouse 2000 mainstage season to present *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* by Barbara Robinson with a mixed cast of youth and adults, as is called for in the script.

The cast will consist of approximately 17-25 children/youth and 8-10 adults). Auditions for the youth roles are open to ages 8 to 18; teens who are 16 and older *may* be considered for the adult characters as well as the youth characters. The rehearsal period will span 8 weeks with rehearsals beginning the week of October 13. Performances will take place in the VK Garage Theater on weekends from December 5 – 21, 2025. (See the rehearsal calendar for more details.) The production will be directed by Emily Olson, the Director of Youth Programming at Playhouse 2000.

Audition Dates

Dates: **Monday, October 6 from 6:30-8:00 PM and Tuesday, October 7 from 6:30-8:00 PM.**

Auditionees are welcome to attend both audition days but are not required to do so. Auditions will be held in the Werlein Studio Annex located behind the Cailloux Theater. Parents of

children who are auditioning are welcome to attend, but are not required to, however **audition forms for anyone under the age of 18 must be signed by a parent/guardian before the audition.** To minimize distractions and save space (there will be limited seating!), we ask that siblings, friends, or others that are not participating in the audition do not attend.

It is unlikely, but if a callback audition is deemed necessary it will be held on Wednesday, October 8. Those invited to attend will be notified. You can expect the cast list to be posted on or before Friday, October 10.

How to Prepare for Auditions

Actors **do not need to prepare any material ahead of time**, although we highly recommend that auditionees familiarize themselves with the story and characters, and read through the audition sides (pages from the script) on our set. Parents may wish to help younger children with this. It is not required, but there will be full copies of the script available at the Playhouse 2000 office to check out for a limited time (2 days) to read prior to the auditions, if you wish.

Actors should wear comfortable clothes and shoes that will not inhibit their movement. It is recommended to bring a water bottle. If possible, **please bring a completed audition form, the conflict calendar, and the parent permission form (if applicable) to the auditions.** Otherwise, please arrive at the audition a few minutes early and be prepared to complete the forms there.

Please note that this production is not a musical. There is some group singing of Christmas carols in the script, but singing will not be part of the audition process.

What to Expect at Auditions

Auditionees will be grouped randomly and given audition sides (pages of the script) to read. The groups will be given a few minutes to read through them together, then the groups will perform their readings for the director(s). We will repeat the process with new groups and scenes as many times as our allotted time will allow. Actors may also be given the opportunity to choose one of the monologues from this packet to perform at the audition, if time permits. This does not need to be memorized.

How is Casting Determined?

As the director, my responsibility is to the production. I will cast the actors that I think will be best for the production based on what I observe at the auditions and regardless of age, grade level, or previous performance experience.

This play is a hilarious family comedy with a lot of heart! We need dynamic performers with a good feel for comedy and excellent comedic timing but who can also bring layers of sincerity and earnestness to the roles. I am looking for actors who can immerse themselves in portraying a character – physically, vocally, and emotionally – and who can make interesting and intelligent character choices that help tell the story. Having a loud and clear voice with excellent diction and enunciation is also very important.

I want actors who are creative, willing to take risks and try different things, and who can work well in an ensemble. This involves being kind, supportive, and working well with others throughout the rehearsal process. I need students who are hard-working, dedicated, responsible, and passionate artists.

Double Casting

It is *possible* that one or more of the larger children's roles will be double cast. This means that two children may share the same role(s) and alternate who performs the role for performances. If this is determined to be the best choice for our production, it will be communicated clearly on the cast list. We do not plan to double cast any of the adult roles.

Rehearsal Schedule

Rehearsals will be held Monday through Friday from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM from October 13 through October 30. Then, beginning on November 3 rehearsals may extend 30 more minutes from 6:30 to 8:30 PM for the remainder of the rehearsal period.

"Tech week" will be Sunday, November 30 through Thursday, Dec. 4. The time for rehearsal on Sunday, 11/30 is TBA. Rehearsals on Mon. through Thurs. will be from 6:30 to 9:00 PM (at the latest for the youth). Tech week is often a long, exhausting week for everyone, but it is a vital part of the process of putting on a successful show. We strive to be respectful of everyone's time, and especially mindful of late hours for children.

We will **not** be able to accept anyone into the cast who is unable to attend ALL rehearsals during the final (full) two weeks of rehearsals and all 10 performances on the following "non-negotiable" dates:

The week before Thanksgiving:

- Monday, Nov. 17 – Full Run Through
- Tuesday, Nov. 18 – Full Run Through
- Wednesday, Nov. 19 – Full Run Through
- Thursday, Nov. 20 – Full Run Through

- Friday, Nov. 21 – Full Run Through

Tech Week (the week after Thanksgiving):

- Sunday, November 30 – Tech Rehearsal, Time: TBA (Note: This is the Sunday after Thanksgiving.)
- Monday, Dec. 1 – Tech Rehearsal
- Tuesday, Dec. 2 – Tech/Dress Rehearsal
- Wednesday, Dec. 3 – Tech/Dress Rehearsal
- Thursday, Dec. 4 – Final Dress Rehearsal @7:30 PM (Cast will be called earlier.)

Performances:

- Friday, December 5 – Play Performance @7:30 PM
- Saturday, December 6 – Play Performance @ 7:30 PM
- Sunday, December 7 – Play Performance @ 2:30 PM
- Friday, December 12 – Play Performance @7:30 PM
- Saturday, December 13 – Play Performance @ 7:30 PM
- Sunday, December 14 – Play Performance @ 2:30 PM
- Thursday, December 18 - Play Performance @ 7:00 PM (Note: This is a PRIVATE event and has a different day and start time than other performances.)
- Friday, December 19 – Play Performance @7:30 PM
- Saturday, December 20 – Play Performances @ 7:30 PM
- Sunday, December 21 – Play Performance @ 2:30 PM

Who is “Called” to Rehearsal?

After the show is cast, a detailed rehearsal schedule will be created based on the cast’s conflict calendars. The schedule will indicate which characters are needed on which days. **Not all characters will be “called” (scheduled) for rehearsal every day, especially in the first few weeks of the process.**

Schedule Conflicts (Conflict Calendar)

Please **write ALL known or potential schedule conflicts on the conflict calendar** in your audition packet. This should include, but is not limited to vacations, medical or dental appointments, extracurricular activities, sports practices and games, etc. **Be honest!** I can work with most conflicts if I know about them up front. **Missing rehearsals due to conflicts that were not listed on the audition form may result in your dismissal from the show.**

Please understand that if you are chosen to be a part of the cast for *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, you are accepted with the conflicts you have listed on your audition forms. If you have any conflicts that arise after you have accepted a role, our previously scheduled rehearsals should take precedence. **A play production is a major time commitment. Please do not audition unless you know you are willing and able to put in the time and energy required.**

Rehearsal Attendance

If cast, students are expected to arrive on time and prepared for every scheduled rehearsal for which they are called. Failure to attend rehearsal or excessive tardiness will result in removal from the production.

In the case of illness or other emergency, the student or their parent/guardian should contact the director as soon as they know a rehearsal will be missed.

Any absence that is not an emergency and was not listed on the audition form is considered an unexcused absence. Two or more unexcused absences may result in your removal from the play. Chronic absences, even in the case of illness, will result in removal from the play as it will jeopardize the quality of the production and the experience of the rest of the cast and crew.

No Tuition

Typically there is a tuition fee associated with our P2K Youth Theater productions, however, because this show is also a Playhouse 2000 Main Stage production, there will be NO tuition fee for this production.

P2K Youth Theater Rehearsal Policies and Expectations

- Arrive on time and prepared for all rehearsals for which you are called.
- Bring your script and a pencil to every rehearsal (even after you are off book) and use it to write your blocking and other notes during rehearsal.
- Respectfully follow any directions given to you from the directors and other leaders.
- Do your actor homework! Memorize your lines and blocking by the assigned dates, and complete other tasks as assigned.
- Use rehearsal time wisely.
- Bring a water bottle with you to rehearsal. Stay hydrated and energized!
- Food (including candy) and drink (other than water) is not permitted at rehearsal except at specific designated times. Chewing gum during rehearsal is not permitted.
- Wear comfortable and appropriate clothing for the day's activities, including shoes with closed toes to rehearsal.
- Treat everyone with kindness and respect. Bullying in any form is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- If you see something, say something! We all have the right to a safe and productive rehearsal environment-- tell the director or other adult leader if you witness any bullying or other unsafe behaviors.
- Don't direct your fellow actors! Keep comments to yourself. If you have a brilliant idea, share it with the director and let her pass the information along, if she chooses.
- Stay in the rehearsal area during rehearsal.
- Be respectful, courteous, and kind to all cast, crew, leaders, volunteers, and guests.
- Do not touch, use, or move any set pieces, props, or costume pieces unless you are specifically directed to do so.
- Do not engage in horseplay or other unsafe behaviors.
- Cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted. If you must bring an electronic device, it must remain silent and put away during the entire rehearsal.
- Take proper care of your costumes and props by hanging them up and putting them away after each use.
- Do not make any major alterations to your physical appearance without permission from the director.
- Keep the rehearsal and stage area clean and organized and help the stage manager(s) pick up the rehearsal area when rehearsals are over.
- Rehearsals are closed. Guests are not typically allowed to sit in rehearsals. Exceptions may be made in special cases with prior permission from the director.
- Any recording or photographing during rehearsal is forbidden unless given express permission by the director.
- Be enthusiastic and positive when talking about the show with friends, relatives, and fans!
- Strike is mandatory for all cast and crew members.
- Have fun!

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Please note: All roles are open to actors of any ethnicity. The age range and gender listed are for the character, not necessarily the actor portraying them. Roles are listed in order of appearance in the script (within the category of “children” and “adults”) and not necessarily by the size of the role.

THE CHILDREN

BETH BRADLEY – (female, age 10-11) A lead role who narrates the show; must have a strong voice and great stage presence; able to show an array of emotions. Sister to Charlie and daughter to Grace & Bob. Beth is a great role for an experienced young actress as she must set the tone and drive the entire show through her storyline. She’s an average kid, but with more insight than many.

CHARLIE BRADLEY – (male, age 8-9) Younger brother to Beth, and son of Grace & Bob; typical “little brother” character, but an all-around good kid. Must have good comedic timing and a strong voice. An average kid just trying to avoid getting beat up by a Herdman.

RALPH HERDMAN – (male, age 12-13) Ragged, scroungy, slouching manner, with a touch of adolescent cool. The oldest member of the Herdman clan of young ruffian siblings who are considered “the worst kids in the history of the world.” Definitely the perpetrator of minor crimes. Plays Joseph in the pageant.

IMOGENE HERDMAN – (female, age 11-12) Loud, bossy, and crafty. The second oldest member and leader of the Herdman clan of young ruffian siblings who are considered “the worst kids in the history of the world.” One tough cookie. Imogene shows an array of emotions from sassy to sadness in this play. This is an important role and takes a strong young actress to portray her. Plays Mary in the pageant.

LEROY HERDMAN – (male, age 10-11) Tough, sure of himself. The third member of the Herdman clan of young ruffian siblings who are considered “the worst kids in the history of the world.” Regularly steals Charlie’s lunch.

CLAUDE HERDMAN – (male, age 9-10) Tough, combative. The fourth member of the Herdman clan of young ruffian siblings who are considered “the worst kids in the history of the world.”

OLLIE HERDMAN – (male, age 8-9) Looking for trouble. Claude’s usual partner in crime. The fifth member of the Herdman clan of young ruffian siblings who are considered “the worst kids in the history of the world.”

GLADYS HERDMAN – (female, age 7-8) Small, wiry, feisty. The sixth and youngest member of the Herdman clan of young ruffian siblings who are considered “the worst kids in the history of the world.”

ALICE WENDLEKEN – (female, age 10-11) Prim, proper, and a pain in the neck. She is one of Beth’s Sunday School classmates. A goody two shoes and very prissy.

MAXINE – (female, Age 10-11) The narrator of the Christmas Pageant within the play. She is one of Beth's Sunday School classmates. Must have a loud, clear speaking voice.

ELMER HOPKINS – (male, age 12-13) The minister's son. He is a little nerdy, but still sweet. Friends with Charlie Bradley and NOT a fan of the Herdmans.

Other Roles:

- **HOBIE** (male, age 9-10)
- **DAVID** (male, age 8-9)
- **BEVERLY** (female, age 7-8)
- **SHIRLEY** (female, age 5-6)
- **JUANITA** (female, age 5-6)
- **DORIS** (female, age 9-10)
- **Angel choir members, Baby angels, shepherds, etc.**

THE ADULTS

GRACE BRADLEY (MOTHER) – (female, age 35-ish) A leading role. When the usual director ends up in the hospital, Grace steps up to direct the annual Christmas pageant. Mother to Beth and Charlie and wife to Bob. Must be comfortable leading the pageant within the play, which includes directing a large group of children on stage. She exudes warmth, humor, compassion, grit, and determination.

BOB BRADLEY (FATHER) – (male, age 35-ish) A solid family man. Husband to Grace and father to Beth and Charlie. Must have good comedic timing and be able to present witty dialogue smoothly. He is not a fan of the pageant, but he is a big fan of his wife and supports her in her efforts.

MRS. HELEN ARMSTRONG – (female, 50-ish) Large (personality) and in charge. Imperious. Managerial in voice and manner. The usual director of the Christmas Pageant (and almost everything else) who is sidelined by an untimely broken leg. Has trouble letting go and relinquishing control. A bossy know-it-all.

MRS. IRMA SLOCUM – (female, any age) A church lady. A pleasant, motherly woman, but not a fan of the Herdmans.

MRS. EDNA MCCARTHY – (female, middle 40s) A church lady. A younger, less imperious version of Mrs. Armstrong.

REVEREND HOPKINS – (male, middle to late 40s) The minister of the church. Father of Elmer.

Other Small Roles:

- **MRS. CLARK** – (female, any age) A church lady. Mother of Hobie.
- **MRS. CLAUSING** – (female, any age) A church lady.
- **FIREMEN** (at least 2)

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever
Playhouse 2000 Audition Form (YOUTH)

Name: _____ Age: _____ Height: _____

Parent Contact Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Please indicate any previous performance experience below. (If none, that's ok!)

Production Title	Your Role	Year	Company/School

Please list any special skills or experience you have (music, dance, languages, tumbling, etc.):

Is there anything regarding your casting that you wish the directors to know or take into consideration? _____

CONFLICT CALENDAR: Rehearsals and performances for this production will occur from Oct. 13 through Dec. 21. Please read the packet carefully. Please write in **ALL** known conflicts with these dates and times on the attached calendar. Be very specific!

**** Initial here to confirm that you have filled out and attached the conflict calendar.** _____

CONTRACT: I have read and understand the audition packet, including the rehearsal policies and expectations. I agree to adhere to all Playhouse 2000 and P2K Youth Theater policies and expectations. I understand the discipline and level of commitment of time and energy that is required to be a part of this production and am willing and able to commit to it I understand that participating in these auditions does not guarantee that I will receive a part. I am interested in being a part of this production and will accept any role offered to me.

Youth's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever – Parent Permission Form

IMPORTANT NOTE: Any auditionees under 18 must bring this signed parent permission form to the audition or have a parent with them to sign it there. They will not be considered for any role without parental permission.

I give my child, _____, permission to audition for and accept a role in Playhouse 2000's production of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, if a role is offered.

I understand that participating in these auditions does not guarantee that my child will receive a part.

I have read and understand the audition information packet, including the rehearsal policies and expectations. I agree to support my child in adhering to these expectations.

If my child is cast in the production, I give permission for his/her photo and/or name to appear in promotional materials for the play, including but not limited to the Playhouse 2000 website, social media platforms, local news outlets, posters, programs, etc.

I have reviewed the proposed rehearsal schedule and conflict calendar and affirm that the information regarding my child's scheduling conflicts is accurate and complete.

I understand the discipline and level of commitment of time and energy required to be a part of this production and will support my child's commitment to it.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Parent Contact Information:

Phone Number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Preferred method of contact (circle one): Call Text E-mail

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever – Oct. 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
<div> Please indicate ALL scheduling conflicts that you have with ANY of the rehearsals on this calendar. Please be thorough and honest. If you need to arrive late, write what time you can arrive, for example: "arrive at 7:00" Or, if you need to leave early, write the time that you need to leave, for example: "leave at 7:30." If you cannot attend rehearsal at all on a specific day, just put a clear "X" over that day. There is a space for notes on page 3. </div>						
5	6 AUDITIONS	7 AUDITIONS	8	9	10	11
12	13 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:00 pm	14 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:00 pm	15 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:00 pm	16 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:00 pm	17 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:00 pm	18
19	20 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:00 pm	21 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:00 pm	22 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:00 pm	23 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:00 pm	24 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:00 pm	25

Continued. →

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever – Oct./Nov. 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:00 pm	28 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:00 pm	29 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:00 pm	30 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:00 pm	31 NO REHEARSAL [Halloween]	1 NOVEMBER
2	3 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	4 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	5 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	6 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	7 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	8
9	10 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	11 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	12 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	13 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	14 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	15
16	17 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	18 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	19 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	20 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	21 Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	22
23	24 Potential Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	25 Potential Rehearsal 6:30 – 8:30 pm	26 NO REHEARSAL	27 NO REHEARSAL [Thanksgiving]	28 NO REHEARSAL	29

Continued. →

This week of rehearsals is mandatory for all cast members.

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever – Dec. 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 Tech Rehearsal Time: TBA	1 Tech/Dress Rehearsal 6:00 – 9:00 pm	2 Tech/Dress Rehearsal 6:00 – 9:00 pm	3 Tech/Dress Rehearsal 6:00 – 9:00 pm	4 Final Dress Rehearsal 6:00 – 9:00 pm	5 Performance #1 7:30 PM [Call time: 6:30 PM]	6 Performance #2 7:30 PM [Call time: 6:30 PM]
7 Performance #3 2:30 PM [Call time: 1:30 PM]	8	9	10	11 Potential Pickup Rehearsal Time: TBA	12 Performance #4 7:30 PM [Call time: 6:30 PM]	13 Performance #5 7:30 PM [Call time: 6:30 PM]
14 Performance #6 2:30 PM [Call time: 1:30 PM]	15	16	17 Potential Pickup Rehearsal Time: TBA	18 Performance #7 [Private Event] 7:00 PM [Call time: 6:00 PM]	19 Performance #8 7:30 PM [Call time: 6:30 PM]	20 Performance #9 7:30 PM [Call time: 6:30 PM]
21 Performance #10 2:30 PM [Call time: 1:30 PM]	22	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas	26	27
CAST PARTY	<div> <p>Feel free to use this space to provide any additional explanation or information, if needed:</p> </div>					
28	29					