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School Service**

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Read, Think, Illustrate, and Present

Students often gain a richer understanding of a story if they are given the chance to think about and illustrate it. Divide your class into groups of four. Have each team sit in a circle; then choose one member of each team to be the facilitator.

Facilitator: The facilitator will read the first four pages of chapter three; each member will take turns reading four pages, moving around the circle in a clockwise direction.

Timer: The person on the facilitator's left will be the timer. The timer will allow enough time for the reading, and twenty minutes to create the illustrations. (You may vary times to the needs of your class.)

Materials:

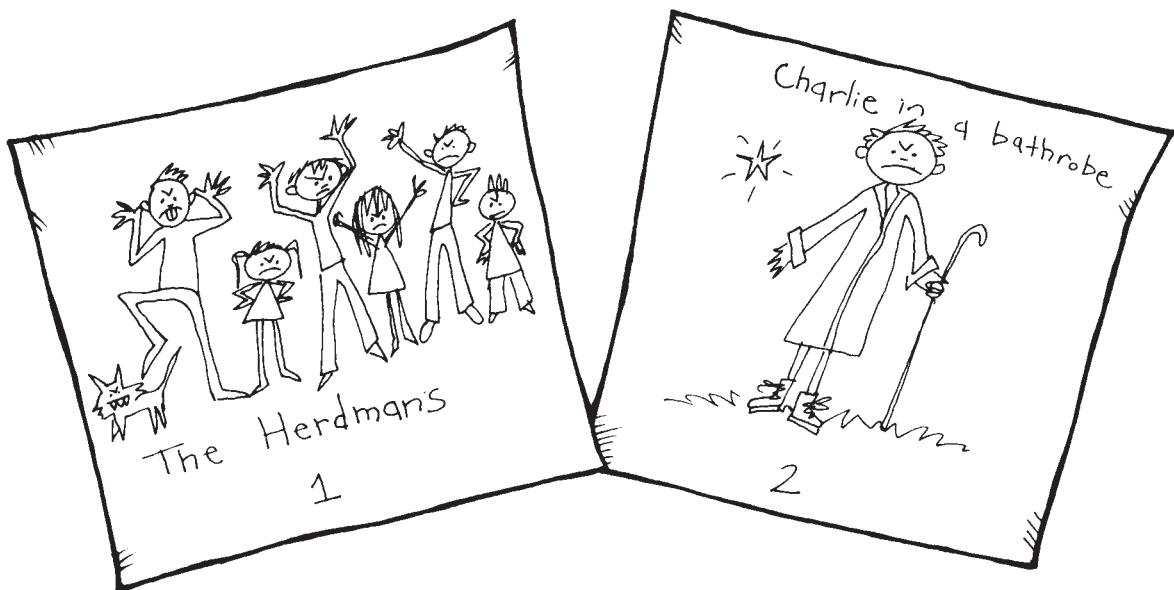
- Multiple copies of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* (one per student)
- Markers and crayons
- Large (8" x 12"/ 20 x 30 cm) white construction paper (one for each student)

Directions:

1. Take turns reading chapter three, as explained above.
2. Create an illustration for the section of the chapter that the team members read, numbering the bottom of the paper with a 1, 2, 3, or 4, showing the part of the chapter they read (the first, second, third, or fourth part).
3. Share team illustrations with the whole class.

Note to the Teacher:

If your class doesn't divide evenly by four, you can step in to take over one of the readings, or have a couple of students double up on the readings (they can then choose which section to illustrate). You may wish to have the children display their illustrations around the classroom. Have the class discuss their various interpretations of the chapter.



Now Playing: Reader's Theater!

Reader's Theater is a style of performance presented by players dressed as characters from a book. The players first select a passage from the book to reenact. Then they write a script, practice performing, choose costumes, and recreate the scene for their audience.

Materials:

- One large trunk filled with a collection of costumes
- One popcorn popper and popcorn
- Tickets to the theater

Directions:

1. Divide your students into teams of four or five players.
2. Have the teams choose a scene from *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. (A quick way to get started with this technique is to duplicate the desired passages directly from the book, and have the students highlight their parts).
3. Choose costumes from the theater trunk and practice, practice, practice!
4. When your team is ready to present, give each member of the audience a ticket to the performance. Have a "ticket taker" stand by the classroom door and collect the tickets as the audience enters. Assign someone the task of popcorn maker. Have him/her make popcorn and pass it out before the performance.

Possible Scenes:

- ★ Claude brings the Herdman cat to school. (Chapter 1)
- ★ Imogene tells Mother that she wants to be Mary. (Chapter 3)
- ★ The first pageant rehearsal. (Chapter 4)
- ★ Mrs. McCarthy calls the fire department. (Chapter 6)
- ★ The pageant. (Chapter 7)

Tips for Acting:

- ✓ Speak loudly and clearly.
- ✓ Practice your lines so that you can say them without a script.
- ✓ Use expression and emotion; pretend that you really are that character.
- ✓ Have fun!

