

Character Plays

This character play has a valuable message. The play depicts a dialog between Dr. Goodword, a faithful counselor, and Mr. Herkimer Hypocrite, who comes to his Spiritual Clinic with a chronic human disorder: hypocrisy. The help that the doctor gives Herkimer comes from the Bible as he guides him toward a more Christlike way of life.¹

The script is short and easy to learn, and with a few simple props and costumes you will be ready to put on a memorable production. Encourage your actors to put feeling into their parts and be sure to have someone behind a camera. Your cast and crew will enjoy watching the play afterward, and so will the rest of the ecclesia. The message never grows old.

The Case of Herkimer Hypocrite

Characters

Announcer, Doctor Goodword, Herkimer Hypocrite, and one or more Bible readers.

Props

The setting is the doctor's office. A desk and three chairs will do. Two chairs are at the doctor's desk and the third is in the outer office. The doctor has a pencil, pad, and Bible on his desk. He wears a white coat, spectacles and a moustache. Herkimer wears a distinguished-looking pullover mask. His suit is wrinkle-free.



The good doctor is sitting behind his desk and Herkimer is sitting in the outer office. Poor Herkimer is riddled with hypocrisy. It's time for the camera(s) to roll.

Script²

Announcer: As we look into the Spiritual Clinic of Doctor Goodword today, we see a fine-looking young man sitting in the outer office. He is neatly dressed and has a pious face. The Doctor calls for him. As the patient enters his office, the saintly old physician looks up and speaks ...

Doctor: Come in, young man.

¹ The original Dr. Goodword character plays go back many years. The source is unknown. Anyone with information about the origin of these plays is asked to contact sundayschool@tidings.com.

² The play script has been edited and familiar Christadelphian terms like ecclesia, CYC, and daily Bible readings have been introduced where appropriate.

Herkimer: *(Very properly)* Thank you, sir.

Doctor: Please sit down.

Herkimer: That's very kind of you, sir.

Doctor: Let me see now. Do I have your name right? Herkimer Hypocrite?

Herkimer: Yes, sir, that's correct.

Doctor: And you live on Phony Road?

Herkimer: Yes, I do. It's over in Fakersville.

Doctor: You may not know it, son, but I've heard about you.

Herkimer: You have? How nice! Good things, I hope.

Doctor: Indeed. People are quite impressed by you.

Herkimer: Wonderful! I put on a good face in public. It's important to impress people, you know.

Doctor: I see. And what are you like when you are not in public?

Herkimer: Oh, then it doesn't matter. No one knows the difference.

Doctor: You take off your mask, is that it?

Herkimer: I do. I don't have to worry what anyone thinks.

Doctor: Tell me, Mr. Hypocrite, what is your spiritual life like?

Herkimer: I'm glad you asked, Doctor. I am a very religious person.

Doctor: Is that so?

Herkimer: Indeed. In fact, I pray at church all the time, and people like my prayers very much.

Doctor: You pray in front of people?

Herkimer: Yes. I've developed a special way of doing it.

Doctor: Is that so? You mean there is more than one way to pray?

Herkimer: *(Almost talking down to the doctor)* Doctor, it takes talent to pray in public. There's nothing better than a fine sounding prayer.

Doctor: And do you address God when you pray?

Herkimer: Of course. Everybody expects that. And the rest has to be pious, too.

Doctor: I see. So the prayer has to sound just right?

Herkimer: It has to sound just right, Doctor. You feel dumb if you mess up.

Doctor: Why should you feel dumb? The Lord understands what you are saying, even if you mess it up.

Herkimer: But what would my audience think?

Doctor: Ah! The important thing is what your audience thinks. Is that it?

Herkimer: It is!

Doctor: I see. Now let me ask you another question, Mr. Hypocrite. Do you go to church regularly?

Herkimer: All the time. I never miss a Sunday. I have to set a good example.

Doctor: For the benefit of your audience again?

Herkimer: That's right. You know, Doctor, they look up to me!

Doctor: And I suppose you're quite charitable, too?

Herkimer: I am! I am nearly always the first one to put money in the collection bag!

Doctor: Do people see you?

Herkimer: I'm sure they do. I sit right up front!

Doctor: *(Opening his Bible to Matthew 6 and handing it to Herkimer)* Mr. Hypocrite, I would like you to read Matthew 6, verse 1 in the Bible.

Herkimer: *(Taking Dr. Goodword's Bible and reading)* "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven."

Doctor: Doesn't that prick your conscience?

Herkimer: Prick *my* conscience? Oh, no, that doesn't bother me. That's talking about hypocrites.

Doctor: Really! It is time we got down to business. I have your case pretty well diagnosed.

Herkimer: But I didn't come here for a diagnosis, Doctor. I came here to tell you ...

Doctor: *(Interrupting)* And I have a cure to recommend.

Herkimer: A cure? You talk as though I'm sick.

Doctor: You are far sicker than you realize, son. Now let me prescribe the remedy.

Herkimer: Remedy!

Doctor: I'm going to introduce you to a friend of mine.

Herkimer: A friend? You're talking nonsense, Doctor!

Doctor: You'll be amazed at what my friend can do. In the first place he can see right through you. The mask you're wearing won't fool him for a minute.

Herkimer: What are you talking about? Who's this friend of yours?

Doctor: His name is Jesus Christ! And once you meet him, Herkimer Hypocrite, you'll begin to see yourself the way you really are.

Herkimer: I don't like where this is going.

Doctor: Good! You need to feel uncomfortable. We all do before we get help.

Herkimer: I need help?

Doctor: Mr. Hypocrite, you are carrying an awful weight. Trying to sound pious ... trying to impress people ... worrying what everybody thinks about you. Jesus can lift this weight right off your shoulders ... if you let him!

Herkimer: *(Removing his mask!)* Whew! It's getting better already. Tell me more!

Doctor: Nothing would make me happier. Take my Bible with you, Herkimer. Read the Sermon on the Mount over and over again. It's in the Gospel of Matthew, chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Herkimer: How will this introduce me to Jesus Christ?

Doctor: The sermon is by Jesus. Let him talk to you! Listen to what he tells you and you will start to be a new man.

Herkimer: So I won't need this mask anymore?

Doctor: You won't need that mask. You won't *want* that mask!

Herkimer: Thank you, Doctor. I am going to go home and read this. I have a feeling that listening to Jesus will make a new person out of me!

Reader: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Reader: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

Reader: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Reader: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Curtain.