



PRESENTED BY THE  
NEBRASKA THEATRE  
CARAVAN

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Dear Teachers,

Thank you so much for bringing your class to see Nebraska Theatre Caravan's production of *A Christmas Carol*. We hope you all enjoy it!

We believe that experiencing theater live is necessary for children to thrive, and it's the initiative taken by teachers like you that gives so many children the chance to see a live production that they otherwise may never have the opportunity to see!

We have provided this study guide to help you extend your theater experience into the classroom. In addition to the information and activities in the beginning of the study guide, supplementary materials are included at the end with additional activities and more detailed information about the theater.

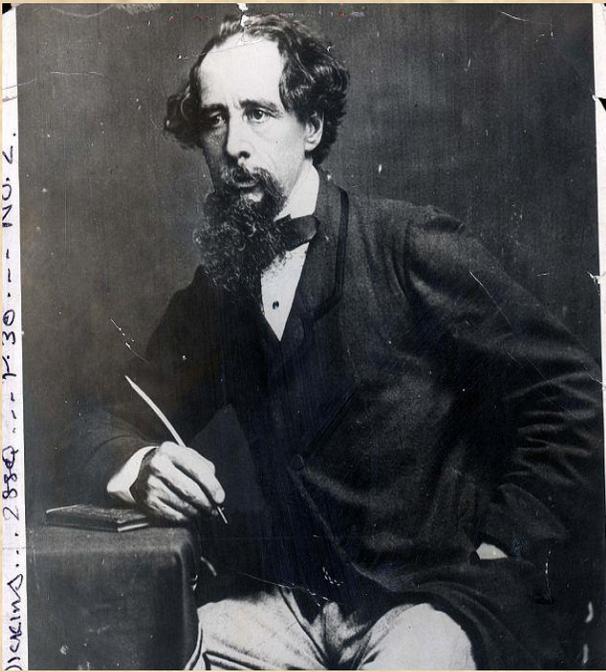
We hope you find some of our suggestions fun, educational, and flexible to suit the needs of your class.

Thank you again and we look forward to seeing you at the show! Sincerely,

EKU Center for the Arts Staff

**EKU**  
**CENTER**  
FOR THE  
**ARTS**

# CHARLES DICKENS' VIEWS ON SOCIETY AND CHRISTMAS



A Native of London, England, Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* in 1843 at the height of his career. He was a proud, successful writer whose novels brought tears to the eyes of devoted readers all over the world.

At 31, Dickens had worked his way from the humble, often brutal experiences of a poverty-stricken childhood to the drawing rooms of London's literary set. Although, he was the head of a costly household, and he felt hounded by the necessity to earn money.

One of his greatest wishes as a writer was to expose the suffering and hopelessness of the poor working class in England during the Industrial Revolution. Written in just a month's time, *A Christmas Carol* contains Dickens' philosophy about the brotherhood of man and the necessity of good will in human conduct.

The characters and story of *A Christmas Carol* represent the problems that existed in England at the time. Scrooge represents the middle-class society that was more interested in wealth and profit than brotherhood and equality. The Cratchit Family represents the poor working class.

Scrooge mistreats Bob Cratchit in the same fashion that Dickens saw the middle-class society treating the working class. Perhaps Dickens chose Christmastime as the timeframe for his story because he truly believed in the power of Christmas to unite fellow men.

Some of his thoughts on Christmas were included in his *Sketched by Boz*, written in 1836:

“Who can be insensible to the outpourings of good feeling, and the honest interchange of affectionate attachment which abound at this season of the year? A Christmas family-party! We know nothing in nature more delightful! There seems a magic in the very name of Christmas. Petty jealousies and discords are forgotten; social feelings are awakened in bosoms in which they have long been strangers. Father and son, or brother and sister, ‘who have met and passed with averted gaze or a look of cold recognition for months before, proffer and return to the cordial embrace and bury their past animosities in their present happiness. Kindly hearts that have yearned towards each other but have been withheld by false notions of pride and self-dignity are again reunited, and all is kindness and benevolence! Would that Christmas lasted the whole year through (as it ought) and that the prejudices and passions which deform our better nature were never called into action among those who they should ever be strangers.”



# SHOW SYNOPSIS

By Charles Dickens

## ACT ONE

### **Scene 1 –Christmas Eve on the streets of London, England, just outside the Counting House of Scrooge and Marley, 1885.**

A wintry Christmas Eve is full of excitement as Londoners, both high born and low, prepare for the Christmas Holiday. One of them is Fred, the kind, well-educated nephew of Ebenezer Scrooge, who has come once again to visit his estranged uncle and invite him to Christmas dinner. Although Fred is determined to extend this invitation each year to his uncle, he is always refused and rudely dismissed by the ill-tempered and bitter man.

While on the street, Fred purchases some gifts for Scrooge, first from the vendor Jake, who sells a variety of fruits and vegetables, soup and wassail\*.

**JAKE:** Why lad? Why do you do it? Coming down here every Christmas to be tossed out on your ear by that old skinflint -your Uncle Scrooge. And him without a kind word for anyone, let alone you sir.

Nell is another vendor on the street, who, like Jake, owes her living to Scrooge, whose high rent fees leave her little on which to live. Jake points out that even though Scrooge's partner Marley has been dead for seven years, his name is still painted on the Counting House doorway.

**NELL:** Some say Scrooge is so busy counting his money he's not had the time to notice that his old partner Marley's been dead and gone –dead and gone.

*\*NOTE: "Wassail" was originally a word that meant to greet or salute someone -- groups would go out wassailing on cold evenings, and when they approached a door would be offered a mug of warm cider or ale. Jake's wassail is made with ale or alcohol.*

**Scene 2 -Inside the cold, confined Counting House\* of Scrooge and Marley, late afternoon of the same day.**

Ebenezer Scrooge, a grumpy, heartless miser, who is as cold and sharp as the weather outside, sits at his desk counting money. His clerk,\* Bob Cratchit, sits at his desk and tries desperately to keep warm in an office where coal is used sparingly.

Fred enters with a lively “Merry Christmas, Uncle,” and his greeting is returned by Scrooge with a dismissive “Bah! Humbug!”

**FRED:** Christmas a humbug, Uncle? You don’t mean that I’m sure.

**SCROOGE:** I do. If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with Merry Christmas on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart.

Scrooge grudgingly accepts Fred’s gifts of soup and a red knit scarf but he cruelly refuses the dinner invitation.

**FRED:** I’m sorry with all my heart to find you so resolute. But I’ll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So a Merry Christmas, Uncle!

**SCROOGE:** Bah Humbug!

As Fred leaves, some children enter the Counting House\*, infuriating Scrooge with their playful attempts to get some coins. Scrooge kicks them out, just as two businessmen enter the Counting House, requesting charitable donations for the poor and destitute, “who suffer greatly at the present time.” Scrooge refuses to part with any of his money, saying, “I help to support the prisons and workhouses...those who are badly off must go there.”

At the end of the long, dreary day, Bob Cratchit happily gets his meager pay and takes his leave of the Counting House, thrilled to not have to return until the day after Christmas.

*\*NOTE: A counting house was where business accounting took place, loans were created and money was kept, as in a bank. In England, the word “clerk” is pronounced “klark,” and rhymes with bark. A clerk is an employee in the legal or banking business.*

### **Scene 3 –The streets of London, early evening.**

Bob Cratchit leaves the Counting House, surprised to find that four of his children (Peter, Belinda, Francis and his small crippled son, Tiny Tim) have come to walk him home for Christmas Eve. With his few precious coins, Bob encourages the children to buy a goose and other treats for their Christmas dinner and to purchase a present for their mother.

Bob and the children start off to their house in Camden Town as the people on the streets wish one another a glad Christmas and head homeward. As Scrooge locks the Counting House door, he hears a mournful voice call his name and sees a ghostly apparition on the door sign: the face of Jacob Marley! Just as suddenly, the apparition is gone. Dismissing the ghostly image with a, “Humbug,” Scrooge makes his way home through the empty streets.

### **Scene 4 –Later that night in Scrooge’s vast bedchamber, once quite splendid, but now neglected and in decay.**

Scrooge sits in his nightshirt in the chilly bedroom, eating the soup he received from his nephew. He is interrupted by a mysterious and spontaneous ringing of bells that grow incessantly louder and then are silenced as quickly as they began. Confused, he dismisses the noise and prepares for bed. As the clock chimes 12:00 midnight, sounds of heavy chains, wind and agonized cries spring from everywhere as smoke from the fireplace permeates the room.

Out of the wild screams and billowing smoke now stands what appears to be the ghost of Scrooge’s former business partner Jacob Marley in the burning fireplace, wearing his familiar coat and boots, but wrapped and burdened with heavy chains, locks and a cashbox lashed to his chest.

**MARLEY:** Man of the worldly mind do you believe in me or not?

**SCROOGE:** I do. I must. But why do spirits walk the earth and why do they come to me?

**MARLEY:** I am doomed to wander through the world. Oh, woe is me! And I must witness what I cannot share but might have shared in life and turned to happiness.

Marley explains to Scrooge that he created his burden of chains during his lifetime and that Scrooge should be aware of the heavy, strong coil he has crafted for himself.

**MARLEY:** Why did I walk through the crowds of my fellow beings with my eyes turned down? Why? Hear me, Scrooge. My time is nearly gone.

Marley advises that Scrooge has a chance and hope of escaping a similar fate, where he is doomed to wander, burdened by his selfish choices in life. He predicts that Scrooge will be haunted by three spirits during the next three nights. Scrooge asks if they all might visit on the same night so that he can have it over and done. Marley ignores the request and tells him to remember what has passed between them and then, with a rumble of the earth, he disappears into the ominous smoke. Initially terrified by the event, Scrooge eventually dismisses it all as a dream and goes back to bed.

### **Scene 5 –Later the same night in the bedchamber as the clock strikes 1:00 a.m.**

Suddenly with the clock strike, the windows of Scrooge’s bedchamber fly open and wind blows snow into the room. With a tinkling of bells, a beautiful woman from an earlier time, dressed elegantly in red and winter white, enters miraculously from the window.

Scrooge awakes and, trembling, asks, “Are you the spirit, Madam, whose coming was foretold to me?”

**PAST:** I am.

**SCROOGE:** Who and what are you?

**PAST:** I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

**SCROOGE:** Long past?

**PAST:** No, your past, Ebenezer Scrooge –your past.

Suddenly the Ghost enchants the bed causing it to spin and fly, magically transporting Scrooge out of his bedchamber and into his own past. The bed lands in the place where he was born, and later where he attended school. He sees once again his little sister Fan, alive and beautiful, singing a Christmas carol with her brother, once again a young schoolboy.

Later, Fan would marry and die in childbirth, but her son, Scrooge’s nephew Fred, would live and prosper. Scrooge is quite moved to see his sister alive again and,

finding himself uncomfortable with the feeling, wants nothing but to go back home. Before he can insist on it, the bed ferries him to a new location.

Scrooge now finds himself in a place of business, the Fezziwig Warehouse, where he was apprenticed as a young man. He witnesses once again the kind, fun-loving Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig as they host a Christmas party for their employees and friends, filled with food, ale, gifts and merriment.

Scrooge sees Belle Fezziwig during the spirited dance, and sees his young, handsome self as her partner. He is dumbstruck by her beauty and youth—and powerfully recalls the love he felt for her. The music is infectious and Scrooge gets quite carried away with the music, dance and celebration.

**PAST:** Come now, Ebenezer. Contain yourself, sir. What old Fezziwig has done seems a small matter, a trifle, to make all these silly folk so full of gratitude.

**SCROOGE:** A small matter?

**PAST:** He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money, three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?

**SCROOGE:** The money is of no consequence, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy, to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or atoil. The happiness he gives is quite as great as if it cost a fortune.

At the end of the evening the Fezziwigs and their guests sing a tender Christmas song and say goodnight to one another. Just as the guests are leaving, Scrooge sees his younger self propose marriage to Belle and she joyfully accepts his ring.

Feeling tortured by his memories, Scrooge demands to return home. The ghost insists on showing him one more event from the past. In spite of his objections, Scrooge sees himself one year later, obsessively working late into the night at the warehouse. Belle enters and tells him, “Dear Ebby, your business has quite consumed you.”

Scrooge answers her by insisting that he will be a good man of business. Belle tries to make him see that he is changed, that he worships his gold coins in a way that surpasses his own affection for her. He dismisses their early relationship, explaining, “I was a boy,” condemning his former, loving behavior towards her as immature and foolish.

**BELLE:** Perhaps your coins can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do. Now I release you, with a full heart, for the love of the man you once were.

Just before Belle leaves his office, she drops the engagement ring into the weight scales on the desk. She has with great sadness ended the engagement.

The Ghost of Christmas Past returns Ebenezer to his own bed, saying, “I told you these are but shadows of the things that have been. They are what they are, Ebenezer. The Past cannot be changed.” And then she is gone.

Scrooge examines his now very ordinary room, looking for any signs of the visiting ghosts –but he finds nothing. Emotionally exhausted, he climbs into his bed and closes the bed curtains with a dismissive, “Bah! Humbug!”

## ACT TWO

**Scene 1 –In Scrooge’s bed chamber, the same night, as the clock strikes two.**

Scrooge, unable to sleep, stands staring at the clock as it strikes the two o’clock hour, when suddenly he is aware of great boisterous laughter, golden light and a great bounty of food, delicacies and greenery. Appearing before him is a giant, joyful man who introduces himself as The Ghost of Christmas Present and who shares with him the “milk of human kindness” from a pitcher that never runs dry.

**SCROOGE:** Spirit. Conduct me where you will. If you ought to teach me, let me profit by it.

**PRESENT:** Touch my robe.

**Scene 2 –The humble home of Scrooge’s clerk Bob Cratchit, his wife and five children.**

As Scrooge touches the ghost’s garment, he is quickly spirited away to the home of his long-time clerk Bob Cratchit, a place he has never been before. The family is poor, but a great faith and love pervade the household as they excitedly prepare their meager feast and welcome home their eldest daughter from her apprenticeship at a milliner’s\* shop.

*NOTE: Milliner –A person who designs, makes, or sells hats for women*

**BOB CRATCHIT:** A Merry Christmas to us all my dears. God bless us.

**TINY TIM:** God bless us everyone!

Scrooge asks the ghost if the crippled boy Tiny Tim, whose great capacity for love has surprisingly touched him, will live. The ghost responds, “If these shadows remain unaltered by the future, the child will die.”

Scrooge witnesses the loving family propose a toast to “Mister Scrooge –the founder of our feast,” in spite of the hardships he causes them to endure. The shadows fade as Scrooge is ferried off to witness yet another present-day Christmas celebration.

### **Scene 3 –The beautiful home of Scrooge’s nephew Fred and his wife Millie.**

Now the ghost brings Scrooge to the home of his nephew, Fred, where he and his wife Millie host a festive holiday party where guests dance the polka and play lively games such as “Blind Man’s Bluff” and “Yes and No.” Scrooge is overwhelmed by the generosity and amiability of both his nephew and niece.

**FRED:** To Uncle Scrooge – Bless him.

**MILLIE:** A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to him – wherever he is.

**FRED:** He wouldn’t take it from me but may he have it nevertheless. Uncle Scrooge!

The guests all assemble for one last song and say goodnight. Scrooge is fascinated and emotional, unaware that the hearty ghost has now become an old man and is starting to disappear.

**SCROOGE:** No, come back! There are more games...Spirit –Spirit of Christmas Present –Where are you? Dear Spirit, don’t leave me.

**PRESENT:** The Present is fast fading Scrooge. Seize it. Love it. Care for your fellows, Scrooge; for the Present is fading now and soon gone.

### **Scene 4 –As the clock chimes three, Scrooge now finds himself in a disorienting fog as an ominous Phantom appears.**

Suddenly aware of a dark, silent presence, Scrooge addresses the final ghost.

**SCROOGE:** Ghost of the Future, I fear you more than any specter I have yet seen. Will you not speak to me? Lead on then, dread specter –lead on.

As the ghost points out into the void, the fog clears to reveal three men warming themselves around a small fire. They are discussing the death of some clearly disliked, unfortunate man with disrespectful sarcasm. One of them says, “It’s likely to be a very cheap funeral for upon my life, I don’t know of anybody to go to it.”

Scrooge is confused by their conversation, but before he has a chance to think, the spirit reveals another dark place, though somewhat familiar, a place very like his own bedroom.

**Scene 5 –A bed much like Scrooge’s own, appears out of the darkness. A man lies in the bed, seemingly dead.**

Two charwomen\* examine the room and prepare to brazenly steal anything they think might bring a good price, in spite of their superstitious discomfort in the presence of the dead man. One of them justifies their cause, saying, “If he wanted to keep ‘em after he was dead, why wasn’t he more natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he’d have had someone to look after him when he was struck with death, instead of lying, gasping out his last, alone, by himself.”

They pack up the bed covers, bed curtains and curtain rings –when suddenly they are thrilled to discover a money purse, still strung around the corpse’s neck. They take the purse and split the money between them with great glee, saying, “He frightened everyone away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead!.” As they fade from sight, Scrooge addresses the ghost.

**SCROOGE:** Spirit, the case of this unhappy man might be my own. This is a dreadful place. Let us go. Let me see some tenderness connected with death.

*\*NOTE: Charwoman -a woman hired to do general cleaning, especially in an office or large house.*

## **Scene 6 –The Cratchit house appears out of the gloom.**

Mrs. Cratchit and her four elder children quietly work by the fire, sewing and reading. There is an underlying sadness as they wait for Bob Cratchit to return home. Finally Bob arrives later than expected, explaining that he stopped to visit Tiny Tim's grave along the way. "I took some flowers –primroses. Tim used to love the colors so." The family tries valiantly to be brave for one another in their grief for this young boy taken much too soon.

**BOB:** But however and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we'll none of us forget poor Tiny Tim shall we? Or this first parting there was among us.

Scrooge approaches the fragile family, attempting to embrace them as they vanish into the darkness. He asks the Phantom who the unfortunate man was that he saw lying dead and alone in the bed. In response, he hears a great powerful noise -a wailing that screams the name that is now visible, clearly etched on a revealed tombstone: "Ebenezer Scrooge." Scrooge falls onto the tombstone and weeps.

**SCROOGE:** No –No! I may yet change these dread shadows! I shall honor Christmas in my heart and keep it all the year round. I shall live in the Past, the Present and the Future....Spirit! Hear me! I am not the man I was...

## **Scene 7 –Early morning, Scrooge's own bedchamber.**

Scrooge is awakened by the sound of ringing church bells and streams of morning light. Slowly he realizes that he is back in his own bed and that the bed curtains have not been torn down.

**SCROOGE:** The room is my own. Best and happiest of all, the time before me is my own to make amends. Jacob Marley and the Christmas Time be praised for this!

Scrooge dives into his suit of clothes and runs out into the street, delighted by the ringing church bells. A young boy passes with his sled and Scrooge calls to him, "What's today my fine fellow?" The boy tells him with a perplexed glance that it's Christmas Day. Scrooge realizes that the ghosts have all visited in one night and that he now has all of Christmas Day to "make amends."

He continues joyfully into the streets, surprises people with his new-found generosity and buys a number of gifts for Bob Cratchit's family. He approaches the street vendors Jake and Nell and, in with an open-hearted gesture, he releases all their past debts! Jake is shocked with disbelief.

**JAKE:** Mr. Scrooge! Perhaps a bit of a lie down, sir! Until you've recovered yourself.

**SCROOGE:** That's it Jake! Yes, my man, I have recovered myself. Merry Christmas!

Scrooge greets everyone on the street with generous good will, including the same two businessmen who had come to the Counting House the day before with their charitable request. Scrooge pledges a significant contribution to the dumbfounded gentlemen, explaining that there are a great many back payments included in the sum. Scrooge then sees his nephew and niece in the marketplace. He first approaches Fred with trepidation awkwardly wishing the two of them a Merry Christmas. He then takes Millie's hand and humbly and sincerely asks Fred's forgiveness for all his past, foolish behavior.

His answer comes in a heartfelt, emphatic embrace from Fred and an affectionate invitation from Millie to come to Christmas dinner. Scrooge accepts with glee, looking forward to a rousing game of Blind Man's Bluff. However, he insists that first he deliver a collection of gifts to his clerk's family.

Scrooge, Fred, Millie and everyone present follow Scrooge to the home of an unsuspecting Bob Cratchit, who is just beginning to celebrate Christmas with his family.

At the sound of carolers, the eldest daughter Martha Cratchit opens the door to a rush of well-wishers led by Scrooge, bearing a turkey, sugar cakes and gifts for all. To the Cratchit family's great surprise, Scrooge takes Bob's hand and sincerely asks his forgiveness. He then requests permission from Mrs. Cratchit to have a doctor examine Tiny Tim, adding, "the bill will come to me." The Cratchits are overwhelmed and overjoyed.

**TINY TIM:** Mr. Scrooge, Mr. Scrooge, won't you stay for dinner? We have a goose you know.

**SCROOGE:** No, my fine lad, I must have dinner with my family. But I wish you a Merry Christmas, Tim, with all my heart. God bless you, lad.

**TINY TIM:** God bless us, Everyone!

## **FINAL NOTE:**

At the end of Charles Dickens' 1846 original novella, he writes:

“Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world. Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh, and little heeded them; for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset; and knowing that such as these would be blind anyway, he thought it quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, as have the malady in less attractive forms. His own heart laughed: and that was quite enough for him.

He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God Bless Us, Every One!”

# BEFORE YOU SEE *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*

## Classroom Activities

### Activity #1: Understand the Story

- Read the synopsis on page 6 - 16
- Discuss students' reactions to the story and the characters

### Questions for Class Discussion

1. What year was *A Christmas Carol* published?
2. Who is the main character of this story? Who are some of the other characters?
3. What are two unique facts about *A Christmas Carol*?
4. How do you think Charles Dickens' life impacted this writing of the story?
5. What are some words to describe Scrooge at the beginning of the story? Explain.
6. What was Ebenezer Scrooge's business and what was the most important thing in the world to him?
7. Why wouldn't Scrooge permit a fire in the counting house?
8. Jacob Marley's ghost left Scrooge with a lesson and a prediction. What was the lesson and what was the prediction?
9. Who are the three spirits that visited Scrooge?
10. Why didn't Scrooge marry the lady he knew from the past?
11. What did the Ghost of Christmas Present tell Scrooge about whether Tiny Tim would live or die?

12. What two things did the Ghost of Christmas to Come show Scrooge that upset and frightened him?
13. After he was returned to his home and to his own time, Scrooge did three good deeds. What were they?
14. What do you think is meant when a person describes another person as a “Scrooge”? Have you ever known or heard about someone being described as a “Scrooge”? Who?
15. What physical things began to happen to Scrooge when he became very frightened? Have you ever experienced the same symptoms? What frightened you and how did you feel?
16. Did Scrooge change at the end of the story? Explain.
17. Scrooge promised he would keep Christmas in his heart throughout the year. How do you think people can keep Christmas in their heart even when it isn't Christmas?

## Activity #2: Prepare for the Play

Nebraska Theatre Caravan's production of *A Christmas Carol* is an **adaptation**. That means the company had to read and view all the different versions of *A Christmas Carol* to come with a way to bring the story alive on stage!

### Questions for Class Discussion:

1. Define "adaptation" with your class.
2. Many versions of *A Christmas Carol* have been released. Each version had to adapt the story when they created their version. Feel free to mention the 1983 *Mickey's Christmas Carol* and the 1951 *Disney's A Christmas Carol* released in 2009.
3. Ask your class to identify some fairy tales that they know (Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, Rapunzel). Find a story that your class is the most familiar with and discuss all the adaptations of that story.
  - a. How many of you have a movie, play, ballet, or cartoon of this story?
  - b. How many have read the book?
  - c. What is different about these adaptations? What is similar?
  - d. Do you know which adaptation came first?
4. Have you ever read the book and then went to see the movie? What was different? Which version did you prefer?
5. What do you imagine the play will be like? What will it look and sound like?
6. How do you think watching the play will be different from reading the book?

# AFTER YOU SEE *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*

## **Activity #1: Respond to the Play**

- Review the performance and ask students to describe with as much detail as possible what they remember. What were the costumes like? What was the scenery like? What kind of music was used?
- Ask the students to help make a list of different things that happened in the performance. Write these down on the board.

## **Questions for Class Discussion**

1. Who is the main character in the story? How do you know that?
2. Did you have to use your imagination when you watched this play? Explain.
3. What happened in the story that was surprising? Exciting? Funny? Scary?
4. How was the play different than the story you read in class (if you read the story prior to seeing the play)? How was it the same?
5. Did the music help tell the story? How?
6. How did the actors show how they were feeling and what they were doing without words? (see Activity Two for more)
7. If the story kept on going, what do you think would happen?

## Activity #2: Discover Theater in the Classroom

In *A Christmas Carol*, the actors could communicate ideas and feelings without using words. Discuss with the students how the actors let the audience know what was happening, even when they weren't using their voices.

Use the following activities to explore the possibilities of communicating without speaking:

- 1. Invisible Object:** Imagine you are holding a very heavy bowling ball. Pass it around the circle without speaking and without dropping it! Think about how you should stand to hold a heavy object, what your muscles feel like, how slowly you have to move. Give prompts like, "Be ready for it! It's heavy. Make sure your neighbor has it before you let it go!" When it's gone all the way around, try passing around a very light feather, a hot potato, a live frog. "Don't let it get away!" Don't say what it is you are passing, have the students guess based on how you handle the imaginary object.
- 2. Without Words:** Ask students to think of actions or gestures they use to communicate. For example, can they think of ways to act surprised using only their face? Can they say something without using any words? Without speaking, try saying:

Hello!

Yes! / No!

I'm sleepy

I'm scared

I'm going to sneeze

It's over there

I love you

I don't know

I'm hungry

Go away! / Come here!

That's funny!

Where are you?

My stomach hurts

### **3. Tableau**

Now try to communicate a larger idea as a group. Still without talking, your students will have to create a tableau, or a frozen picture, of a place or activity of your choosing. They should try to do different things from each other. For example, if the activity is recess, not everyone should be playing kickball. You should see people frozen in mid-run, sitting, and laughing together, throwing a ball, etc. Try the following:

- a. At recess
- b. A cold night in 1800's London
- c. Having a picnic
- d. Getting ready for school
- e. Everyone is going wassailing

### **4. How Do You Move?**

Make a space in the classroom for the students to move freely. Tell the students they are standing on a towel on a very hot beach and to get to the ocean they must walk through the scalding hot sand. Ouch! How do they move across the space? Here are some other suggestions for environments to move through:

- a. A sidewalk covered with chewed bubble gum
- b. A frozen pond
- c. A very steep hill
- d. A pond scattered with stepping stones
- e. The surface of the moon
- f. A giant bowl of Jell-O

### **5. To Conclude**

Ask the students to list the ways they saw one another communicate without using word, but using facial expressions, movement, and gestures.

# ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

## Exploring Imagination:

1. Have you ever used your imagination to solve a problem or find your way out of a difficult situation?
2. Have you ever used your imagination to make something ordinary become exciting? (Like pretending the jungle gym was a rocketship?)

## Activities:

### 1. Simple Shape:

Draw a simple shape on the board (such as a triangle) and ask the students to look closely. If we use our imaginations, what can this simple shape become? Does it resemble anything (a mountain, a rooftop, a hat)? Have students come up to the board and add details to the shape to create some of those images. Repeat activity with different shapes.

### 2. Group Draw:

Place students in small groups and give each student a piece of paper and a different color writing utensil. Ask the students to start drawing a tree. After a short time (15-20 seconds) ask everyone to put their markers down and pass their paper to the left. Each student should end up with another student's tree. Ask them to pick up their markers and add on to the drawing of the tree. Repeat until everyone gets their original tree back.

3. Take your class for a walk through the school or outside. Ask them to imagine they are \_\_\_\_\_ and let that change the way they walk:
  - a. Walking on a cold night in London
  - b. One of the ghosts that visited Scrooge
  - c. Wassailing in the streets
  - d. Scrooge himself
  - e. A child during an 1800s Christmas

## **Art Activities**

To approach these activities, illustrations of period clothing and London streets might be useful to generate ideas.

### **Costume Design:**

Talk about the importance of the costume designer in every theatrical production. Costume design usually begins with a drawing or rendering of what each character will look like at each moment of the play. Ask the students to design their own costumes for Scrooge, Tiny Tim, The Ghosts, and Bob Cratchit.

### **Set Design:**

Discuss the time and location for *A Christmas Carol*. Ask students to be designers for their own production of the play and to draw a location for one of the scenes. Students might choose from the following: Scrooge's Counting House, Bob Cratchit's House, Scrooge's Bedchamber, Fezziwig's Party, Scrooge's gravesite, or an exterior London scene.

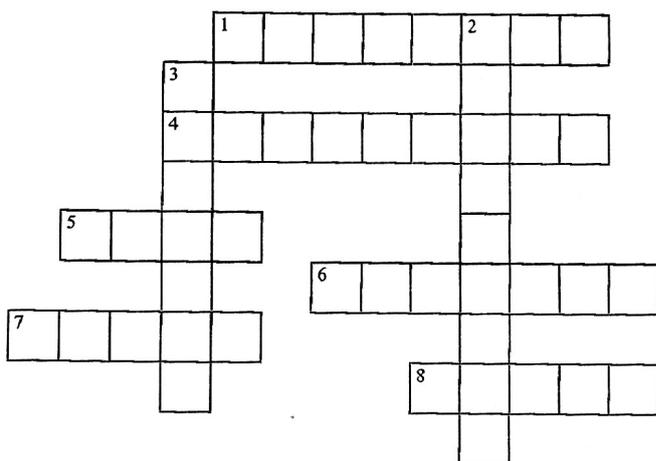
## **Other Activities**

1. Try this exercise based on the idea of visiting the Past, Present, and Future. Have students pair off into Scrooge and Ghost pairs. One student leads the other, who is blindfolded, around the classroom, through the school building, outdoors, etc, leading and taking them through various barriers in their way. At the end of this "trust" exercise, have the two students change places and return. Following this exercise, discuss trust and ask students to share their feelings about the experience.
2. Write a review or critique of the play. Be sure to include personal responses to the plot, the characters, and the theatrical presentation.

The next activities are vocabulary worksheets. The first is an easier level, the second is a more advanced version. Please use as you see fit.

# VOCABULARY

Use the vocabulary words to fill in the crossword puzzle. Each word will be used once. Clues are listed below the puzzle.



## ACROSS

- 1 Something pleasing to eat that is considered rare or luxurious
- 4 To transfer from one place to another
- 5 The will or principle or determining cause by which things in general are believed to come to be as they are or events to happen as they do
- 6 To shake involuntarily
- 7 A mean grasping person, especially one who is extremely stingy with money
- 8 A long, usually plain, close-fitting jacket with a high collar

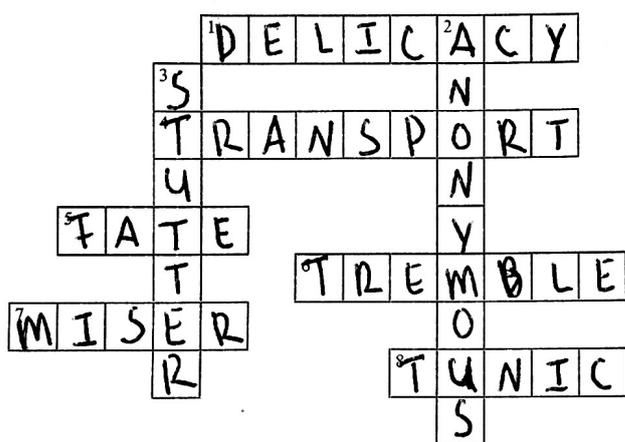
## DOWN

- 2 Not named or identified
- 3 To speak with involuntary disruption or blocking of speech

miser  
anonymous  
tremble  
fate  
tunic  
transport  
delicacy  
stutter

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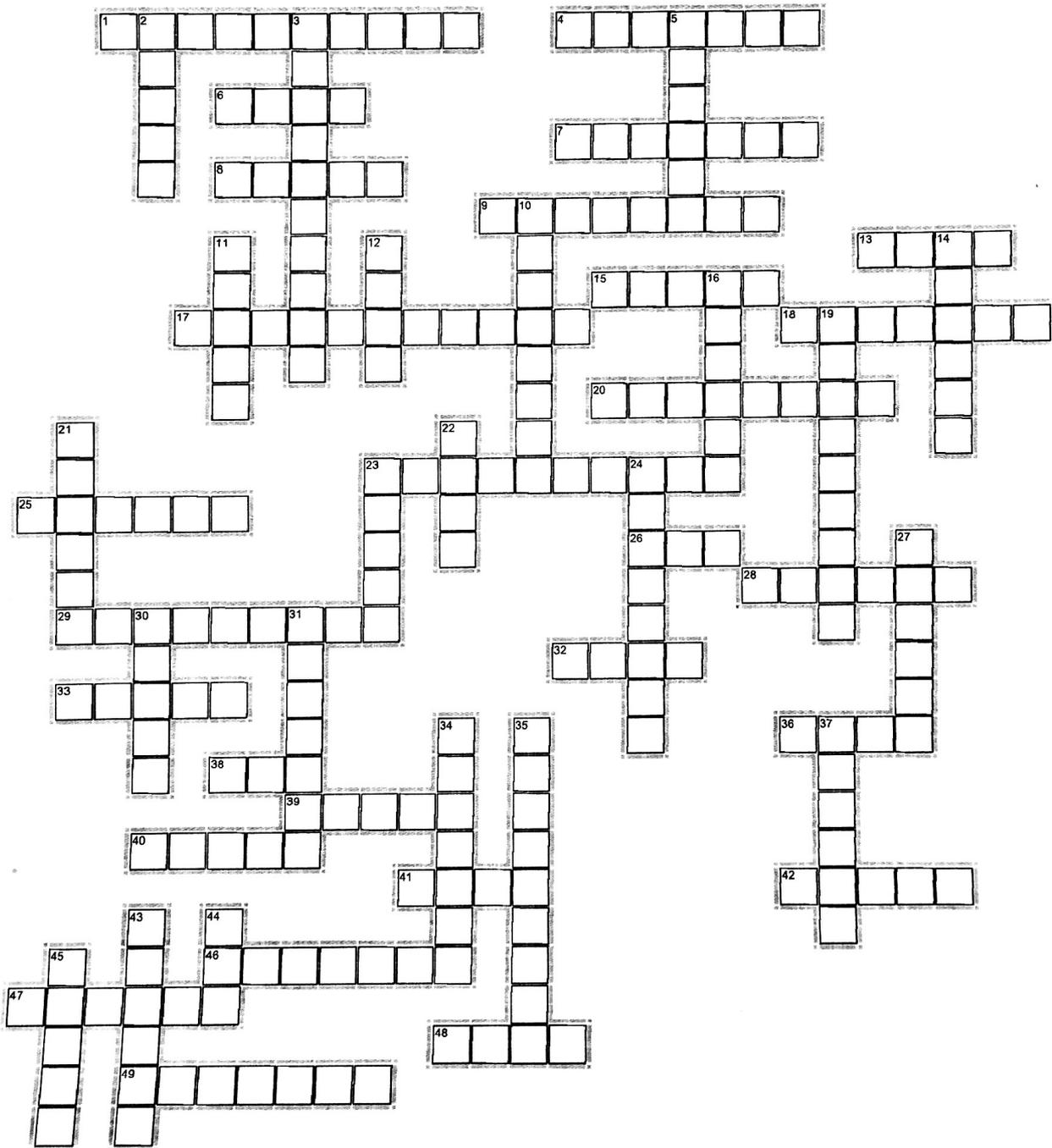
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# A Christmas Carol

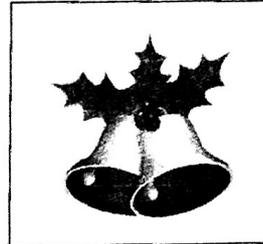
## Stave 2: Prereading Vocabulary Crossword

**Directions:** Use this crossword to become familiar with some of the challenging words from *A Christmas Carol* before you read Stave 2.



## Across

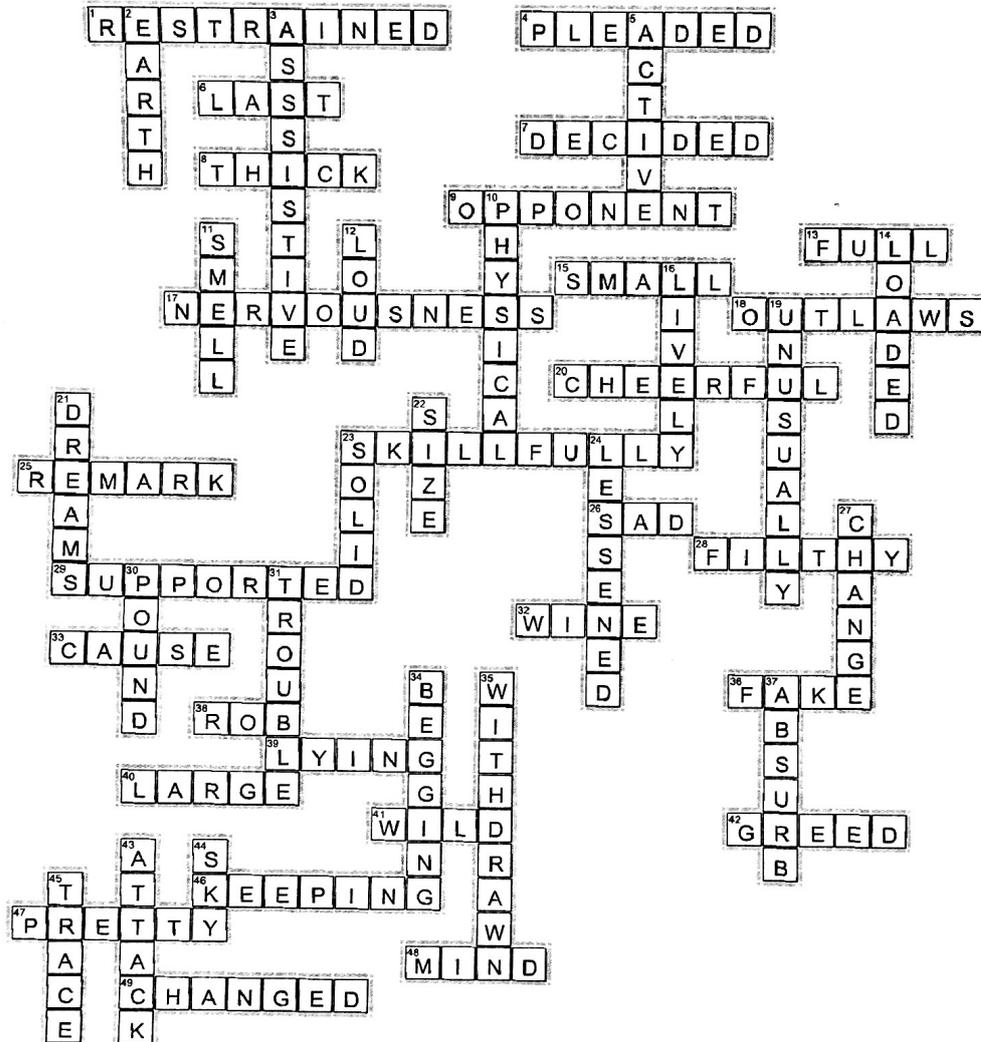
1. Pinioned
4. Remonstrated
6. Latter
7. Resolved
8. Dense
9. Adversary
13. Fraught
15. Dwarfish
17. Agitation
18. Brigands
20. Jovial
23. Deftly
25. Utterance
26. Despondent
28. Sordid
29. Corroborated
32. Negus
33. Render: \_\_\_ to be
36. Fictitious
38. Despoil
39. Recumbent: \_\_\_ down
40. Capacious
41. Tumultuous
42. Avarice
46. Retentive: in \_\_\_
47. Comely
48. Engrosses: occupies one's \_\_\_
49. Fluctuated



## Down

2. Terrestrial: having to do with the \_\_\_
3. Conducive
5. Latent: present but not \_\_\_
10. Agility: \_\_\_ ability
11. Savor
12. Boisterous
14. Laden
16. Jocund
19. Singularly
21. Aspirations
22. Stature
23. Opaque
24. Subsided
27. Transition
30. Pommel
31. Strife
34. Supplication: the act of \_\_\_
35. Receded
37. Preposterous
43. Onslaught
44. Celestial: having to do with the \_\_\_
45. Vestige
44. Agitated: in \_\_\_

# Key



EclipseCrossword.com



# A Very Victorian Christmas

A Christmas Carol is widely credited with the popularization of Victorian festive traditions, many of which are recognizable in the way the season is celebrated today.

## FOOD and DRINK

Turkey became the bird of choice for Christmas dinner at the end of the nineteenth century, but before then, beef and goose were preferred. Queen Victoria and her family were known to dine on roast swan!

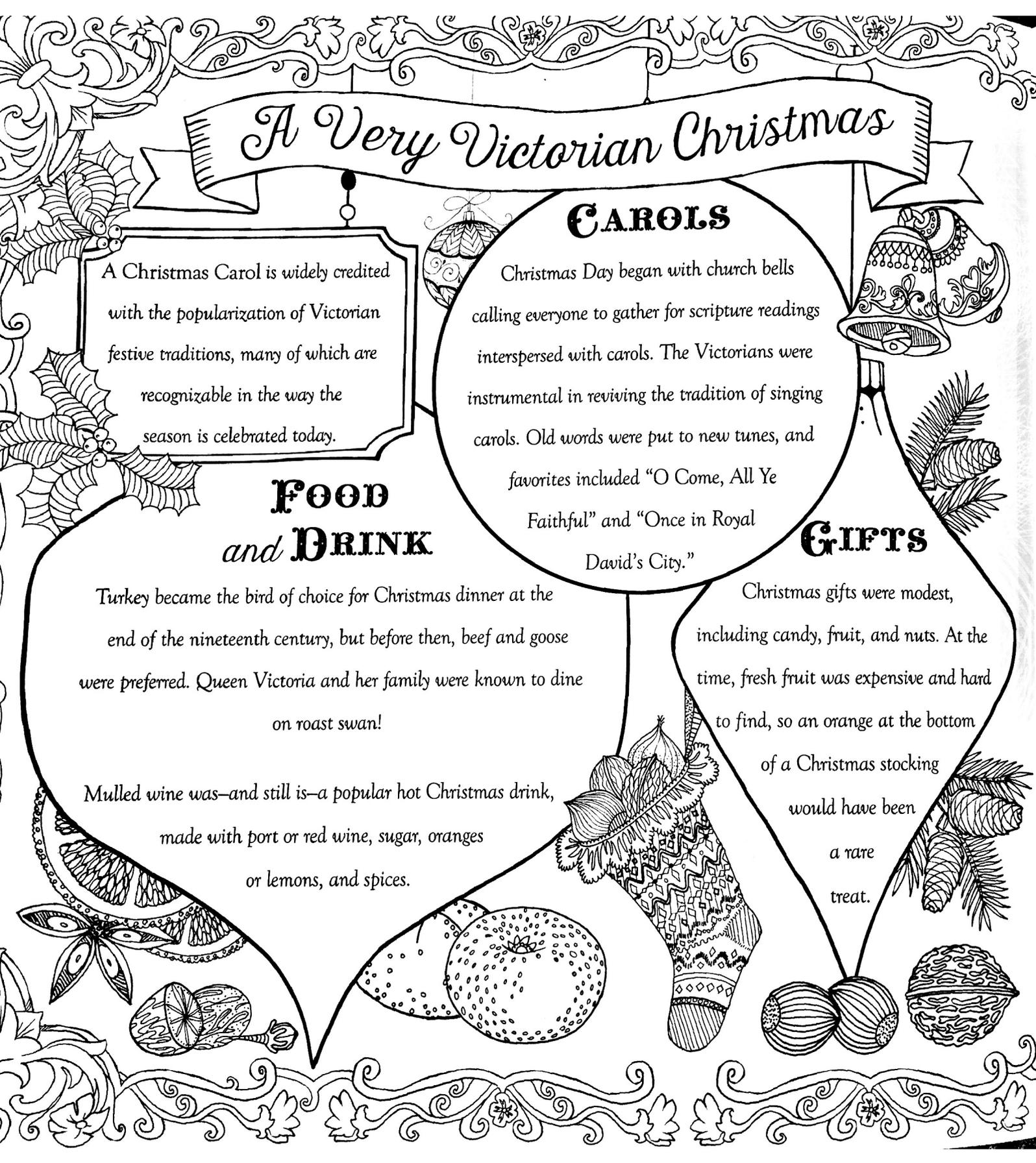
Mulled wine was—and still is—a popular hot Christmas drink, made with port or red wine, sugar, oranges or lemons, and spices.

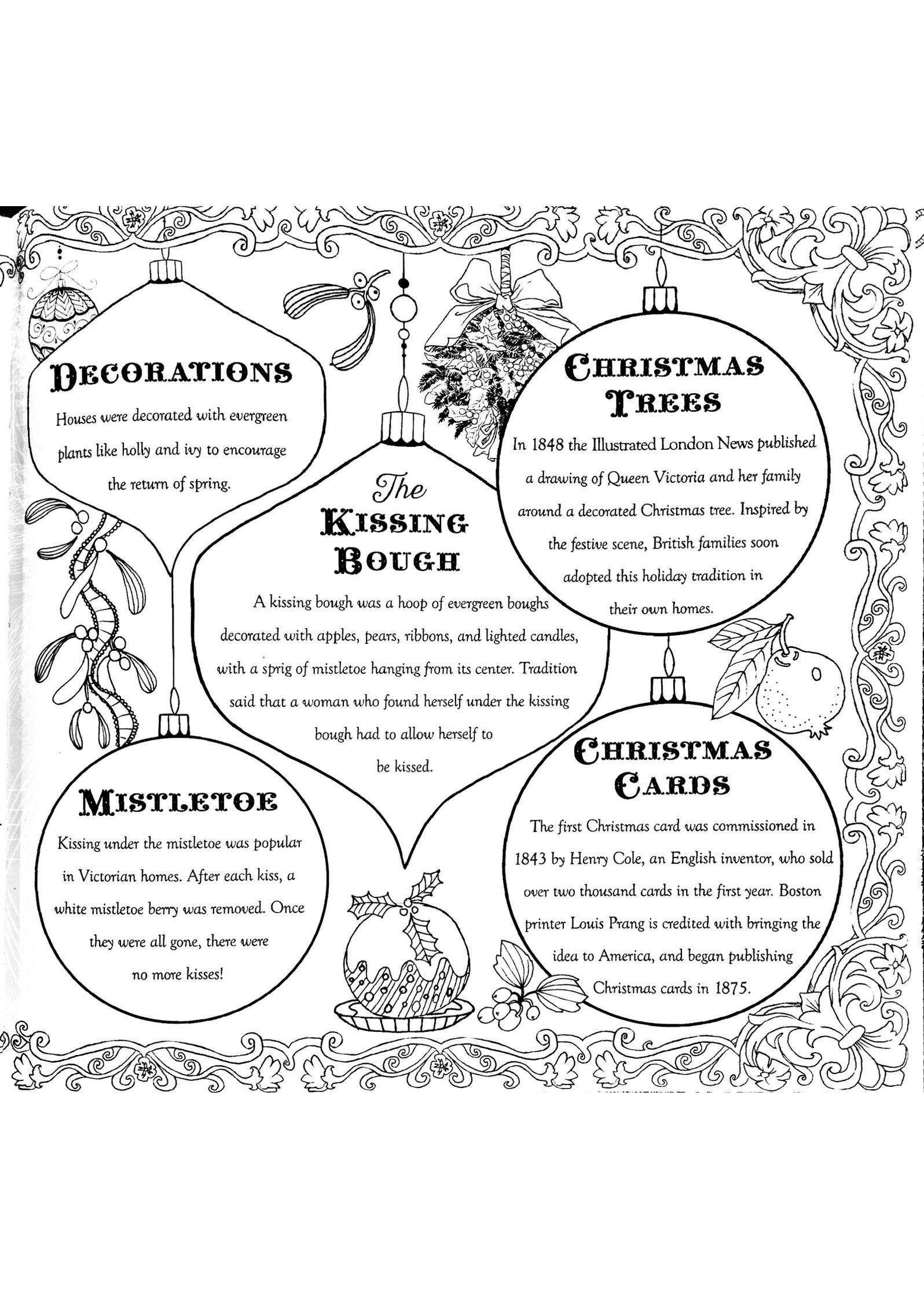
## CAROLS

Christmas Day began with church bells calling everyone to gather for scripture readings interspersed with carols. The Victorians were instrumental in reviving the tradition of singing carols. Old words were put to new tunes, and favorites included “O Come, All Ye Faithful” and “Once in Royal David’s City.”

## GIFTS

Christmas gifts were modest, including candy, fruit, and nuts. At the time, fresh fruit was expensive and hard to find, so an orange at the bottom of a Christmas stocking would have been a rare treat.





## DECORATIONS

Houses were decorated with evergreen plants like holly and ivy to encourage the return of spring.

## The KISSING BOUGH

A kissing bough was a hoop of evergreen boughs decorated with apples, pears, ribbons, and lighted candles, with a sprig of mistletoe hanging from its center. Tradition said that a woman who found herself under the kissing bough had to allow herself to be kissed.

## MISTLETOE

Kissing under the mistletoe was popular in Victorian homes. After each kiss, a white mistletoe berry was removed. Once they were all gone, there were no more kisses!

## CHRISTMAS TREES

In 1848 the Illustrated London News published a drawing of Queen Victoria and her family around a decorated Christmas tree. Inspired by the festive scene, British families soon adopted this holiday tradition in their own homes.

## CHRISTMAS CARDS

The first Christmas card was commissioned in 1843 by Henry Cole, an English inventor, who sold over two thousand cards in the first year. Boston printer Louis Prang is credited with bringing the idea to America, and began publishing Christmas cards in 1875.

# THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN A PLAY

## **Music and Mood:**

The composer has an important job in setting the mood or atmosphere of a play by the music he creates.

1. Have you ever seen a scary movie or been to a haunted house? Describe the music you heard. How did the music help make the movie/experience scary?
2. Have you ever been to a circus and heard happy, carnival music? What if you heard that music when you were at school? What would you think was happening? If you were a composer, what kind of music would you write for the scene in which Marley's ghost first visits Scrooge?
3. What was the mood of the music at the end of the play?

To illustrate the role of music in storytelling, try the following activities:

1. Ask your students to recall a personal experience (for example, a family vacation or the first day of school). Ask one student to tell his/her story to the class. After he/she is finished, have the same student retell the same story. This time, play a dynamic track of music (preferably instrumental) to underscore the story. Ask the class how this music affected the story. When you attend the performance, encourage your students to pay attention to the music, and remember how the music can create different moods within the play
2. Get the entire class up and away from their desks. Play a piece of music and ask everyone to move or dance how the music makes them feel. Does it make you want to sneak? Look for something? Skip? Does it make you feel sleepy? Angry? Scared? After a minute or so, play a different piece of music with a vastly different mood. Switch at least one more time.

# THE THEATER AND ITS JOBS

## Introduction to Theater:

Theater didn't develop overnight; it evolved slowly out of the practice of ritual. Primitive man developed certain rituals to appease the elements or to make things happen that he didn't understand (for example, to make crops grow or to have success in hunting). In Ancient Greece, similar rituals began in honor of Dionysus, the god of fertility, and would include choral singing and dancing. These rituals were so popular, that people began to choreograph, or plan out, the dances more carefully. The songs became more sophisticated, and eventually the rituals included actors speaking in dialogue with one another and with the chorus. Soon, writers wrote full scripts to be performed; entire festivals were organized in honor of Dionysus, and theater as we know it was born.

What makes a theatrical experience? Actors on a "stage" (which might be anything from a huge amphitheater to the front of a classroom) portray characters and tell stories through their movement and speech. But it's still not a theatrical experience until one more very important element is added. It's the presence of an audience—watching, participating, imagining—that makes it truly theater. Theater is the coming together of people—the audience and the actors—to think about, speak of, and experience the big ideas that connect us to our inner and outer worlds

## Jobs Within the Theater:

1. What kind of jobs do you imagine people have at the theater? Can you name five different kinds of theater jobs?
2. When your class comes to the theater, look around to see what kinds of jobs people are doing. You will see someone in the **box office**, **ushers in the lobby**, and **actors on stage**. There are also people doing many jobs you don't see: the **stage manager** who calls the cues for the show; the **lighting technician** who runs the lights; the **director** who directed the actors in rehearsal; the **costume designer**; the people who publicize the show, answer the phones, and sell the tickets.

# EXPERIENCING THEATER LIVE

## **Preparing to See the Play:**

Audience members play an important role—it isn't a theater performance until the audience shows up! When there is a "great house" (an outstanding audience) it makes the show even better, because the artists feel a live connection with everyone who is engaged in the performance. The most important quality of a good audience member is the ability to be engrossed with what's happening on stage. Sometimes it's important to be quiet, but other times, it's acceptable to laugh, clap, or make noise!

Parents and teachers—we welcome children's spontaneous reactions, enthusiasm and laughter! An engaged, excited child behaves in relation to what's happening on stage. Although there are some simple guidelines that contribute to the best experience for the audience, we prefer that children are free to engage in the show spontaneously; it is our intent that they will be swept up in the magic of live theater and we believe that their behavior will be completely appropriate to that experience.

## **A Few Simple Guidelines:**

**Attention:** Theater is a shared experience. The performers focus their attention and energy on stage to share the play with the audience. The audience focuses their energy and attention on the play's action, supporting the performers so they can do their best work. Being attentive engages you in the performance and shows respect for the actors and the audience around you.

**Quiet:** Before the play begins there will likely be a pre-show announcement asking everyone to turn off cell phones, notice emergency exits, and refrain from unnecessary noise that might disturb their neighbors. The Theater is a very "live" space. This means that sound carries very well, usually all over the auditorium. Laughing and clapping are part of a live theater experience. But inappropriate sounds—whispering, rustling papers, or speaking—can be heard by other audience members and by the performers. This can distract everyone and spoil a performance. Please do not make any unnecessary noise that would distract the people sitting around you.

**Turn it Off:** The lights go down in the audience and up on the stage at the beginning of the play. If cell phones are still on, they light up the audience and are distracting to everyone. There is no video recording or photos allowed from the audience, so please, turn off all devices!

**Appreciation:** Applause is the best way for an audience in a theater to share its enthusiasm and to appreciate the performers. At the end of the program, it's customary to continue clapping until the curtain drops or the lights on stage go dark. During the curtain call, the performers bow to show their appreciation to the audience. If you really enjoyed the performance, you might even thank the artists with a standing ovation!



# REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Nebraska Theater Company Website

<http://www.christmascarolontour.com/>

Novel Study

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/A-Christmas-Carol-Unit-Complete-Novel-Study-2870227>

Study Booklet

<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/a-christmas-carol-work-booklet-11329481>

Word Puzzle

<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/a-christmas-carol-stave-2-50-word-prereading-crossword-great-preparation-11360358>

Enchantment Theater Company

<http://enchantmenttheatre.org/>