Cedar Street Theatre’s

A Christmas Carol
Dear Educator,

As you make plans for your students to attend an upcoming presentation of the Arts for Youth program at the Lancaster Performing Arts Center, we invite you to prepare your students by using this guide to assure that from beginning to end their experience is both memorable and educationally enriching. The material in this guide is for you, the teacher, and will assist you in preparing your students before the day of the event, and extend the educational value beyond the walls of the theatre when the show is over. We provide activity and/or discussion ideas, and other resources that will help prepare your students to better understand and enjoy what they are about to see, and to help them connect what they see on stage to their studies. We also encourage you to discuss important aspects of the artistic experience, including audience and theatre etiquette.

We hope that your students find their imagination comes alive as lights shine, curtains open, and applause rings through the Lancaster Performing Arts Center. As importantly, we hope that this Curriculum Guide helps you to bring the arts alive in your classroom!

Thank you for joining with us to make a difference in the lives of our Antelope Valley youth.

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Suggested Common Core State Standards easily applied in your classroom:

K K.RL.3: With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story; RL.10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry. 3. RL.5: Refer to parts of dramas, using terms such as scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections. 4.RL.3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a drama, drawing on specific details (e.g., a character's words or actions). 7. RL.7: Compare/contrast a written story to its staged version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound). 11-12.RL.7: Analyze multiple interpretations of a story or drama (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel) or poetry); evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

LESSON PLAN IDEA #1: Students read Dickens' original book prior to attending LPAC. Discuss, compare, and contrast the book with this live production.

LESSON PLAN IDEA #2: Students produce and perform a condensed version of the play.

LESSON PLAN IDEA #3: Compare this live production with film productions of the story. 7. RL.7, 11-12.RL.7 (Engage in further discussions: 7.RL.5, 9-10.RL.3, 11-12.RL.3)

LESSON PLAN IDEA #4: Students compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters within the same story, and between versions. Students write their own version. Students act out their version. (K.RL.9)

LESSON PLAN IDEA #4: Students study, produce, rehearse, and perform a condensed version of the play. (7.RL.4)
Theatre Etiquette

• Please arrive on time.  
  *Plan for possible travel and parking delays; arrive a minimum of 30 minutes prior to show time.*

• Students: Leave recording devices of any kind at home or in your backpack at school.  
  *Video or audio recording and photography, including camera phones, are often prohibited by law and may disrupt the performance. They are not permitted and are considered very rude to the performers and to those around you.*

• Teachers: Turn off or silence all personal electronics.  
  *Beeps, clicks, tones, buzzes and light pollution emanated by personal electronics such as watches, Bluetooth devices, cell phones, etc. interrupt the performance and spoil the theatre experience.*

• Observe the instructions of the ushers.  
  *The ushers are present to offer assistance, ensure rules are observed and provide guidance in the case of an emergency. Please show them consideration. You will be asked to exit to the right of the theatre at the end of the performance.*

• Be Respectful.  
  *While entering and exiting the theatre: Please enter quietly. Once seated: Do not talk. Keep your feet on the ground and put your hands in your lap or fold your arms.*

• Abstain from eating or drinking inside the theatre.  
  *Crackling wrappers and beverage containers in the auditorium are unwelcome. Food, candy, gum and drinks should never be brought inside the theatre.*

• Avoid talking, waving and shouting during the performance.  
  *Laughing and applauding are encouraged at appropriate times. Shouting to actors/friends is disrespectful to others. Save personal conversation for after the show. If you must speak, please whisper very quietly.*

• Please avoid exiting the auditorium during the performance.  
  *Teachers, please arrive early enough to escort students to the restroom prior to the start of the show. If you must leave during the show, please wait for an appropriate break in the performance.*

• Do not get onto the stage or place items on the edge of the stage.  
  *To ensure the safety and security of performers and audiences, this behavior is strictly prohibited unless expressly permitted by a performer or staff member.*

• Dispose of garbage in proper receptacles.  
  *Help preserve a pleasant environment by depositing all debris in appropriate receptacles.*

• Extend common courtesy and respect to your fellow audience members.  
  *Civility creates a comfortable and welcoming theatre experience for all.*

• Bring very small children only to age-appropriate performances.  
  *Small children easily become restless at programs intended for older children, and may cause distractions.*
About the Show

The Performance

A Christmas Carol

Written by Charles Dickens

A Christmas Carol is the classic tale about the old miser, Ebenezer Scrooge. Scrooge pays his clerk Bob Cratchit only fifteen shillings a week, is rude to his nephew and refuses to take part in the Christmas spirit. Soon, the Ghosts of his former business partner (Jacob Marley), Christmas Past, Present and Future all pay visits to Scrooge. They teach him to value Christmas and to be a better person overall. After the ghosts leave, Scrooge is a changed man. This production is co-produced with the Lancaster Performing Arts Center.

About Cedar Street Theatre

Cedar Street Theatre, Inc. (CST) is a non-profit community theatre group that has showcased local talent and provided entertainment for the entire family for over 30 years. Each season, the group produces at least two musicals and two comedy/dramas. The group also produces a festival of one act plays to encourage the development of new directors and technical staff. These one acts have ranged from radio hours, harkening back to the golden age of radio, to children’s monologues to original works, and are presented free to the public. The membership is composed primarily of a volunteer board of directors, local talent, season subscribers, sponsors, patrons, and of course, our audiences. Cedar Street Theatre, Inc. is funded by ticket sales, program advertisements, grants and sponsorships; and funded in part by the Lancaster Performing Arts Center Foundation. The LPAC Foundation, in partnership with the community, has awarded Community Performing Arts Grants annually to deserving organizations for their involvement in the performing arts. LPAC Foundation donors are valued partners in the Foundation’s efforts to support the arts in our community. Over the years, some of Cedar Street Theatre’s performers and stage crew have gone on to work on Broadway and in other professional venues.

For more information about CST, please visit: www.cedarstreettheatre.com
**PRE-PERFORMANCE**

**Before You Go**

**PREPARE** your students for the live theatre experience, especially if it is their First time attending, by reviewing our Theatre Etiquette guide on page 3 of this Study Guide. This is an exciting experience for students, from the bus ride to the theatre! Help them make it extra special by educating them about appropriate behavior in a theatre setting, which is much different from a movie theater!

**ASK** students to recall the story by telling it in their own words. Have they recounted the traditional story or an adaptation? Discuss the fact that the show they will see is an interpretation of the original tale, and that there are many versions, interpretations, or adaptations of all tales.

**DETERMINE** if students have seen the story performed before. Was it on film, on stage, at school, in professional theatre, or on TV? If they saw it on stage, what art form was it in? On stage as a Play? On stage as a Ballet? Or maybe even on stage as an ice skating production. Have they read the book? Discuss any recollections in terms of similarities and differences. Do the different art forms affect their impressions? If so, try to make them aware of their varying reactions.

**SET** a part of the classroom aside for the students to create their own pirate ship. Ask students to bring in various books, photos, CD’s, toys or dolls, puppets, pictures they have drawn, etc. for perusing at their leisure. Be sure there are pens and pencils and paper available for them to write their own versions.

**EXPLAIN** to students that they are about to see a live, on-stage production of an adapted version of "A Christmas Carol".

**ENCOURAGE** your students to relax and get into the spirit of the play once they are in the theatre. Tell them to use their imaginations freely and to respond appropriately, but openly to the actors on the stage.
About the Story: Who Is Mr. Fezziwig and Ebenezer Scrooge?

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* was first published in 1843 as a novella. The illustrations in the first edition were by John Leech. The story met with instant success, selling six thousand copies within a week. Originally written as a *potboiler* to enable Dickens to pay off a debt, the tale has become one of the most popular and enduring Christmas stories of all time.

Mr. Fezziwig is a character from the novella *A Christmas Carol* created by Charles Dickens to provide contrast with Ebenezer Scrooge's attitudes towards business ethics. Fezziwig, who apprenticed Scrooge is everything that Scrooge is not [1] and is portrayed as a happy, foppish man with a large Welsh wig. In stave 2 of *A Christmas Carol*, the Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge to revisit his youthful days in Fezziwig's world located at the cusp of the Industrial Revolution. Dickens used Fezziwig to represent a set of communal values and a way of life which was quickly being swept away in the economic turmoil of the early nineteenth century.

**Career (And Life) Lessons from Ebenezer Scrooge**

In reviewing the life of Mr. Scrooge, there are three important lessons to learn for your own careers, so you don’t end up alone and miserable, even if you are rich.

**Make Your Employees And Co-Workers Happy**

"He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil." 

From Bob Cratchit's perspective, Ebenezer Scrooge was a miserable boss before his reformation. Even at the height of winter, Cratchit had to make do with one piece of coal to keep him warm. As a reward for his hard work on the holidays, Scrooge – begrudgingly – granted him the day off for Christmas. But not without calling Cratchit a thief for the holiday. Even so, Cratchit was grateful for it, even toasting Scrooge in the privacy of his own home at Christmas dinner.

By contrast, when Scrooge is visited by the Ghost of Christmas Past, he is brought back to his first position, as apprentice to Fezziwig. There, he recalls a Christmas in which Fezziwig treated his employees and friends to a grand Christmas, filled with dancing, feasting and merriment. Watching the scene, Scrooge becomes lost in the past and the joy he felt in those moments. To that scene, the Ghost of Christmas Past bemusedly notes that this was just a small thing. When Scrooge protests, the Spirit says, "He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?"

To which Scrooge replies, "Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count 'em up: what then? The happiness he gives is quite as great as if it cost a fortune."

At work, especially if we’re a manager, but even if we’re not, we have the ability to make those around us happy or miserable. And the cost of doing either, as counted in money, often differs very little. But what a world of difference it makes in our lives and careers. Look at it this way – given the chance, would Bob Cratchit leave Scrooge for another job before his reformation? In a heartbeat; without looking back! But, would he come back after Scrooge's reformation? When Scrooge opened his heart and let the Cratchit family in? Not on your life.

Generosity and loyalty are rewarded in the long run, and they make a career and a job worth having.

"His wealth is of no use to him. He don’t do any good with it. He don’t make himself comfortable with it.”
Illustrate Your Own Version of *A Christmas Carol*

**Potboiler**: book or film of low quality; a book, film, or other work that is produced quickly to make money and has little literary or artistic quality.

**Scrooge**: Miser; Somebody who hoards money—somebody who hates spending money and lives as though he or she were poor; ungenerous or selfish person—somebody regarded as ungenerous, greedy, or selfish

**Carol**: joyful hymn— a joyful religious song or hymn, especially a Christian song celebrating Christmas; Song, Hymn, chant; to sing hymns that celebrate Christmas, especially as a group going from house to house; sing something joyously— to sing or call out something in a joyful and lively way

**Novella**: short novel; a fictional prose work that is longer than a short story but shorter than a novel

**Illustration**: picture that complements text; a drawing, picture, photograph, or diagram that accompanies and complements a printed, spoken, or electronic text

**Career**: long-term or lifelong job; a job or occupation regarded as a long-term or lifelong activity
Questions for Discussion

Ask your students to express their thoughts and feelings as they recall the story of this production’s adaptation, and the original story. Here are some suggestions for conversation and activities.

1. What was the setting of this production? Study History and Geography by using the internet and your school Library to research the history of the location. Practice using maps by locating important places in that location.
2. What was the main plot?
3. What were some of the ways you used your own imagination to understand the plot?
4. Discuss some of the contrasts used in the play. Consider characters, ideas, places, and times.
5. Have you heard of other films, stories, or plays that deal with Christmas? Have you seen different versions of this story on film?
6. How many characters in this show were fictional? What is the difference between fiction and non-fiction?

Interdisciplinary Activities

Language Arts

Writing Assignments:
- Students write a daring adventure with the Ghost of Christmas past, using context clues so it can be easily read. Students make up their own type of ghosts with titles and character descriptions.
- Students play a character in the show while other students interview them and write articles about them.

Vocabulary:
- Use a dictionary to look up words from the show. Try to use them in sentences.

Art

As a class or an individual, students draw a Town Map detailing where all the characters lived. As a group or individually, students use their maps to retell the story in their own words.

Word Games

- Students find as many words as they can using the letters in:
  EBEN

- Unscramble these words:
  COITSARHMCSARL (Christmas Carol)  HOTSG (Ghost)
  ZFIIZGWE (Fezziwig)  RIEMS (Miser)
Interdisciplinary Activities, continued

Time Travel:

Students write about a special journey through time of their own life, their parents, or some other character they like. Students then get into groups to share why they chose the character, and to share their different journeys through time. If it is appropriate, students could even bring props and costumes from home to show to the class.

Fan Letter:

Write a letter to your favorite actor in the show. Express how you feel about the character and the show.

Write a Review:

Compose your own review. Use the words below for some ideas.

- Actors, Cast, Characters, Choreography, Costumes, Lighting, Makeup, Music, Plot, Set, Set Designer,
- Stage Assistants, Singing, Special Effects, Theatre, Adaptation, Production, Piece, Accompanist
Study guide created by: Lancaster Performing Arts Center Staff

Other Resources:
www.cedarstreettheatre.com
www.wikipedia.org
www.dictionary.com
www.atafy.org

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