

A DICKENS TALE

Study Guide

Always Free

Bright Star Touring Theatre

Based on A
CHRISTMAS CAROL
by Charles Dickens
By Bright Star
Touring Theatre

ABOUT THE SHOW!

Charles Dickens was the most popular novelist in Victorian England, and one of the most popular of all time! Born in Landport, England on February 7, 1812, Dickens loved to read from an early age. However, when he was young he had to help support his family in the absence of his father. In fact, when Charles was 12, he spent 10 hours a day pasting labels onto bottles of shoe polish!

Dickens dreamed of becoming a writer. After a number of failed jobs, he published his first short story in 1833 in London's Monthly Magazine. This soon led to The Pickwick Papers, his first novel, which was published in installments over a period of 20 months. He was extremely successful as a novelist, and wrote 20 books over the course of his life! A Christmas Carol was published in 1843. This tale of greed and transformation follows Ebenezer Scrooge as he is visited by three ghosts who show him the consequences of his miserly ways, which causes him to make immediate drastic and positive changes to his life.

In the Bright Star production of A Dickens Tale, our actors portray old Scrooge, bumbling Bob Cratchit, the three ghostly visitors, and a handful of other delightful characters to bring to life this timeless text. And we're not the first, nor will we be the last to adapt A Christmas Carol for performance. In fact, Dickens himself performed one of the earliest public showings of the tale, reading as if he were various characters from the book. Much an actor himself, Dickens actively worked to create stories entertaining enough for the theatre. For generations, this tale of human greed and transformation has seen countless renditions its genuine lesson of human goodness has kept it one of literature's most beloved classics.



"No space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused."

-Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol

Emotions in the Show

- **GREED:** *Definition- Intense and selfish desire for something, especially wealth, power, or food.*

Scrooge exemplifies greed in many ways throughout the story. Not letting Cratchit off work for the holidays, not giving his money to the poor and not being thankful for anything in his life.

- **KINDNESS:** *Definition- The quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.*

Kindness is finally shown by Ebenezer Scrooge at the end of the story when he finally lets Cratchit off for Christmas and brings his family a goose for dinner.

- **FEAR:** *Definition- An unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat.*

Ebenezer Scrooge feels the emotion of fear when he is visited by the first ghost, his old partner, Jacob Marley and sees the condition he is in.

- **GRATITUDE:** *Definition- the quality of being thankful.*

Despite the hardships Tiny Tim has faced he is always grateful and is a big turning point in Scrooge's life.





Cast of Characters:

- **Beggar Woman** - Stock Character - She is exactly what we would expect from a typical townspeople. She helps set the stage for the play at the very beginning. She gives us exposition, which is the background information about the setting and the story we are about to hear.
- **Ebenezer Scrooge** - The Protagonist - also known as the main character of this story, we see many different parts of Scrooge's life. At the beginning of the play, Scrooge is a greedy old man who dislikes Christmas. However, by the end of the story, Scrooge learns the true meaning of Christmas and vows to keep it always.
- **Bob Cratchit** - Static Character - someone who does not change over time. Bob has always been a kind man and a hard worker for his employer Scrooge. We always get a peek into Bob's family and home life where we see that he is also a wonderful Father to Tiny Tim.
- **Jacob Marley** - Minor Character - Scrooge's old business partner and the first



ghost Scrooge meets during this story. He warns and try to prepare Scrooge for his adventure with the ghosts. If Scrooge does not change his ways, he may end up like Jacob Marley, stuck with the chains of his greed and obsession with money.

- **The Ghost of Christmas Past** - Flat Character - Most recognized for their one character trait. She is noted by her sweet personality. She guides Scrooge through his childhood years with love and care.
- **The Ghost of Christmas Present** - Flat Character - Noted for her jolly presence, she is the character who brings to life the beauty and joy that comes with the Christmas season, especially that wonderful feeling on Christmas morning!
- **The Ghost of Christmas Future** - Flat Character - Noted for her frightening presence, she is the character that scares Scrooge by showing him how lonely he could end up if he doesn't change his mean and greedy ways.
- **Tiny Tim** - Symbolic Character - He lives everyday with the joy and spirit of Christmas in his heart. He is ultimately what helps Scrooge choose to change his ways from greedy to giving and hateful to loving.

“I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the past, the present, and the future. The spirits of all three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach.”

-Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: CHAIN, CHAIN, CHAIN

In the story of *A Christmas Carol*, we see the ghost of Jacob Marley, Scrooge's former work partner. Marley is covered in chains holding the books of his old accounts, showing the greed he passed on with. What are some characteristics, both positive and negative, that people can become attached to? Draw a picture of a person carrying their chain of characteristics and explain what it means to you.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: KEEP CHRISTMAS ALL YEAR LONG!!!

Ebenezer Scrooge learns by the end of the story all the wonderful ideals that the Christmas season teaches, such as; giving, peace, joy, love, caring, kindness, etc. As a class, make a poster filled with all the things you love about Christmas. You should include pictures and words with definitions. Then make a pledge as a class to keep those ideals all year long!

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: WHO THE DICKENS IN CHARLES DICKENS?

If you had the chance to interview Charles Dickens, what would you say to him? Make a list of questions that you would like to ask him about this story? Other books he's written? England?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: THE LIFE OF EBENEZER SCROOGE

Ebenezer Scrooge gets a unique look at what his life looks like to others. We see his childhood with the ghost of Christmas Past. We see what his co-workers and neighbors think of him with the ghost of Christmas Present. Finally we get a look at his possible death if he should not change his ways with the ghost of Christmas Future. Can you create a timeline of Scrooge's life? Try and include all the characters you saw today!

FUN FACTS ABOUT THEATRE!

After a play is over and everyone goes home, there is always a light left on backstage. It's called a ghost light!

The oldest play that is still around was written by an Ancient Greek named Aeschylus. It's almost 2500 years old!

The longest performance on stage was over 23 hours long! It happened in New Jersey in 2010.

William Shakespeare is a famous play writer. He wrote 37 plays and is still quoted by many people. There are 157 million google pages that mention him--the most of any famous person ever!

In theatre, it's considered bad luck to tell an actor, "Good luck" before a performance. Instead, you're supposed to say, "Break a Leg!"

This play will be seen by audiences all across the country in theaters, museums, libraries, community events and schools!

"There are many things which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited."

-Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol



"There is nothing in the world more irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor"

-Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol



A Dickens Tale

Word Search

S G W T H C H A R L E S G T W
 P A I U A D L Y R Q E S U I Q
 K M M O B O I E Z T N T B H O
 A H D T R Y Z C Q F G I M C R
 H O M A S E E C K V L N U T V
 J N C L N I P L M E A Y H A C
 T D D E B V R S R L N H C R K
 C A B S T S O H G A D S K C X
 W E H K L Y S K C Y M Y K H X
 F I S I J C Z M X E A J S T V
 N M Q O R H O L L Y G W G Z U
 C G F O S R K N X E Y G X W H
 F O O E S V J T I H P O T P Q
 E G A H X Q O M U G J O B L U
 E N G T V N A I R O T C I V W

BAH	ENGLAND	TINY
CAROL	GHOSTS	TOP
CHARLES	HAT	VICTORIAN
CHRISTMAS	HOLLY	
COAT	HUMBUG	
CRATCHIT	MARLEY	
DICKENS	SCROOGE	
EBENEZER	TIM	

YOU CAN DO THIS TOO!

Where to start: All of our actors started out playing and telling stories when they were young -then they decided to study acting in school. Now they are pros! Here are some ways you can start doing theatre right away!

In School!

Does your school have plays or musical performances? This is a great place to start.

In Your Community! Many towns have community theaters or local acting groups. See if you can try out!

Start Something! If your school doesn't have a drama club or a theatre club, talk to your favorite teacher about how you might be able to start one.

At Home! Get together with friends, cousins, brothers and sisters and make your own play. You can make up

plays based on your favorite books and stories. Invite family and friends to see your performance.

Try new things and do your best at them!

There are lots of jobs in the theatre besides acting. There are people who paint the sets, make costumes, write plays and more. Get the most out of your art, music and English classes. You can use all of these things to be a live theatre pro!

After seeing the Play...

Write your own review of the play! A review is a way of telling your thoughts about a play, movie or book. Consider the following when you are writing your review.

What was your favorite part? Who was your favorite character? Can you summarize the play in your own words? If you had written this play, would you have done anything different? Would you recommend this play to a friend? Name one new thing you learned from watching this play!

BEFORE YOU SEE THE PLAY...

Attending the theatre is very different from watching TV or going to the movies. For one thing, the actors are real people who are performing right then and there. They can see and hear everything that happens in the audience. Because of this, YOU are an important part of the play and its important to do your job as an audience member well. Here are some tips before you see the play.

1. Please be quiet and respectful so everyone else around you can hear what's happening and so the actors can do their job.
2. If something is funny, it is okay to laugh!
3. The actors may ask you to participate. Don't be afraid to respond, ask a question or volunteer!
4. Keep your hands to yourself and your eyes up front.
5. If you like the play, be sure to clap at the end.
6. Have fun! Enjoy yourself!



Pick up a pencil and write your own review of the show!

An illustration of "A Christmas Carol" with Ebenezer Scrooge and other London townspeople, right before Christmas!



A mini-van is our hip and favored mode of transportation for touring the country!

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THEATRE VOCABULARY!

Actor: The people on-stage performing the play.

Backdrop: The background for the play.

Props: Anything that an actor holds while on-stage--a cane, book or rubber chicken.

Downstage: the area closest to the audience a long time ago stage were built at angles.

Upstage: The area away from the audience, like the back wall of the a stage.

Director: The person who told the actors where to go while they were on-stage and helped them create the characters they played.

Costumes: The wigs, clothing and glasses that the actors wore to help flush out their characters .

Facts about us!

1. Did you know we're owned by an Emmy winning actor?
2. Our actors average 1,000 miles a week traveling the country to entertain young audiences.
3. Our programs have been seen in almost every corner of the country and even around the world.
4. We watch over 1200 actors audition before we cast our season.
5. We offer dozens of different shows a season from Black History to anti-bullying and literary classics.
6. We toured Moscow with performances of our Aesop's Fables.
7. We're based in Asheville, NC.

ABOUT US!

Founded in 2003, Bright Star Theatre tours the nation offering high quality, affordable programs to every imaginable venue. We've had countless engagements at the National Theatre, toured to Moscow and are so grateful to be in your very school today!



Auditions: How an actor gets a role is by auditioning. They may have to interview, pretend to be a character from the play or read something from it.

Set Designer: The person who decided what should be on the background and who painted or created it.

The Process of a Play:

1. Actors audition
2. Directors cast the show (that means they choose actors)
3. The directors and actors rehearse the play (that means they practice it).
4. A team of people works on building the set, costumes and props.
5. The play opens (that means it is performed for the first time)!

Were there other terms that came from the experience of seeing the live play that you'd like to learn more about?



BRIGHT STAR THEATRE

Bright Star Touring Theatre performs across the country from Boston to Burbank and many schools, museum,s theaters and community events in between. Each season our shows run the gamut from Black History to anti-bullying, from literary classics to biographical shows. Our shows are available throughout the year for any event in any part of the world.

SPENT: A COMMON CENTS SHOW

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Learn more about this show, this company & our whole Season:

www.brightstartheatre.com

A Dickens Tale

Made it's debut in November 2003

We want every show to be special and remarkable for our audience. Please feel free to connect with us at anytime to tell us about your experience:

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