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Teacher's Guide

A Christmas Carol

An Original Adaptation
by Buck Busfield

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BEFORE THE PLAY

SYNOPSIS

What's it like to be made the poster-child for the cold-hearted and stingy every 25th of December? What happens if you can't manage to change your entire personality and world view all in one night? Audiences will rediscover the true magic in *A Christmas Carol* as Ebenezer Scrooge tells all in B Street's reimagining of Dickens' classic holiday tale.

THEMES: Classic Literature, Family Fun, Friendship, Trust, Reconciliation, Inquiry-based Learning

THEATRE TERMS

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS
3.0 Historical & Cultural Context

Make sure you know the following terms so you can use them later.

SCRIPT: The written play that tells actors what to say and what to do.

ACTORS: The people who say the words and do the actions on stage.

CHARACTER: The person or thing that an actor pretends to be or portrays.

DIRECTOR: The person who tells the actors how to say the words and how to do the actions.

SCENERY or the SET: The backdrops, furniture, and other pieces that show the audience where the play is happening.

COSTUMES or WARDROBE: The clothes and other things an actor wears to show who they are.

PROPS: The things that actors use (such as a book or broom) during the play.

SOUND: The sound effects (like a doorbell or thunder) that help to tell the story.

LIGHTING: The lights that help the audience to see the actors and scenery on the stage.

THEATER: The place where a play is performed. It is from the Greek word *THEATRON*, which means "watching place".

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

READING (Literature): Key Ideas and Details

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Comprehension & Collaboration

K.1 1.1 2.1 3.1 4.1 5.2

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas

K.4,6 1.4,6 2.6 3.6 4.6 5.6

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

1.0 Artistic Perception

1. How much of Dickens' original book *A Christmas Carol* can you recall? Who were the main characters and what did they do? What were Dickens' main themes and messages?
2. What does it mean to adapt a story into a play or movie? How strictly do playwrights who adapt a story stay to the original?
3. What does it mean to "re-imagine" a story in a play or movie? What kinds of liberties do playwrights take when they re-imagine stories?
4. Introduce the terms listed in the Theatrical Terms list provided. Can you give examples of these terms from plays or movies you've seen?
5. What do you know about the life and work of Charles Dickens? Compile your knowledge as a class.
6. What does it mean to redeem oneself or to be redeemed? Is redemption an event or a process? Why do you think this?

DURING AND AFTER THE PLAY

DURING THE PLAY

AUDIENCE BEHAVIOR

While watching a live theatre performance, it is important to sit quietly and listen. It does not mean that you need to be silent. Be sure to laugh at the funny parts (or cry at the sad parts), and certainly applaud at the end! Actors love it when an audience is involved with the show by actively watching and listening.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

READING (Literature): Key Ideas and Details

5.3

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Comprehension & Collaboration

K.2 1.2 2.2 3.2,3

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas

K.4,6 1.4,6 2.6 3.6 4.6 5.6

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

1.0 Artistic Perception

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

1. Compare and contrast Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* with Busfield's re-imagined version:
 - a. How were the characters similar and how were they different?
 - b. Did the playwright leave out any major events? Add any new ones?
 - c. What other aspects did he change, add, or leave out?
2. Refer back to the Theatrical Terms list on page 3. What examples of these terms did you find in the play?
 - a. What did you think of the scenery, costumes, and props? Did they help you understand the story being told? Why or why not?
 - b. How did the music, lighting, and sound effects used during the play help you understand the story being told?
3. What themes did the playwright develop throughout the play? How did they differ from the themes Dickens' developed in his book?
4. When playwrights or artists re-imagine a story, the changes they make often stem from one or more specific points of departure from the original. They look at the story from different perspectives, ask questions of it, and/or critique it, but preserve the aspects of it that make the most sense or seem most truthful to them.
 - a. What do you think Busfield's point(s) of departure are from Dickens' original story?
 - b. What aspects of Dickens' story seem most truthful to Busfield?
 - c. Why do you think Busfield changed Dickens' story the way he did?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

VOCABULARY

LANGUAGE: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

3.4 4.4 5.4

READING (Foundational Skills): Phonics and Word Recognition

3.3 4.3 5.3

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Activity 1: Words of Christmas Past

The following words can be used in discussion of the play and in other activities.

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1. redemption | 6. spirit | 11. hovel |
| 2. donation | 7. trifle | 12. maudlin |
| 3. covetous | 8. apprentice | 13. caricature |
| 4. repentance | 9. career | 14. intervention |
| 5. austerity | 10. accumulation | 15. interpret |

Use a DICTIONARY to do the following:

- Define the words and identify their parts of speech.
- Divide each word into syllables and identify roots, prefixes, suffixes, and language of origin.
- Can you add/take away any prefixes or suffixes to make different words?
- Do any of these words have multiple meanings? Describe the different meanings.
- See if you can use any of these three words in a sentence.

MATH

MATHEMATICS

1.OA 2.OA

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

People Who Make a Difference 2.4

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Activity 2: The Almighty Dollar

Solve the following math problems:

- If Fan has 4 coins and her father gives her 5 more, how many coins does she have?
- Scrooge has 11 pieces of coal. If Bob Cratchit takes 6 pieces of coal, how many pieces does he have left?
- Dick wants to give Belle some candies. If he has 3 candies, buys 5 candies from one shop, and buys 6 candies from another, how many total candies does he have for Belle?
- Scrooge likes to buy his tea from Fezziwig, who imports it from a friend in the Caribbean. If Scrooge buys 20 tea bags and drinks 5 the first week, 5 the second week, and 5 the third week, how much does he have left for the fourth week?

Connections: Answer the following questions

- Who are the buyers and who are the sellers in question 4?
- Could Scrooge get his tea if Fezziwig's friend didn't sell any to Fezziwig?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Activity 3: Tell Your Story

WRITING: Text Types and Purposes

1.3 2.3 3.3 4.3 5.3

Write a story using one of the following prompts. Share it with the class.

- In *A Christmas Carol*, we see how showing kindness can change a person. Describe a time when you did something kind for someone else. Why did you do it and how did it make you feel?
- Redemption has long been an important theme and motivation for characters in literature. Describe a time when you felt the need to redeem yourself. Why did you do what you did?

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Comprehension and Collaboration

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Listen carefully to your classmates' presentations and ask them questions.

WRITING

WRITING: Production and Distribution of Writing

1.5 2.4,5 3.4,5 4.4,5 5.4,5

WRITING: Range of Writing

LANGUAGE: Conventions of Standard English

LANGUAGE: Knowledge of Language

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Be sure to revise and edit what you write.

Activity 4: Rave Reviews

WRITING: Text Types and Purposes

1.1 2.1 3.1 4.1 5.1

Reviews give insightful and critical opinions on plays that help people decide if they want to see them or not. Write a review that gives your honest opinion of B Street's production of *A Christmas Carol* that tells why people should or should not go see it. Be sure to include a short summary of the play and mention outstanding examples of acting and design features (scenery, costumes, lighting, sound etc.).

Activity 5: It's Your Turn: Re-Imagine It

READING (Literature): Key ideas and Details

1.2 2.2 3.2 4.2 5.2

WRITING: Text Types and Purposes

1.3 2.3 3.3 4.3 5.3

WRITING Research to Build and Present Knowledge

1.7,8 2.7,8 3.7 4.7 5.7

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

2.0 Creative Expression

Many holidays, including Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, the Winter Solstice and New Year's, occur in the months of November and December. These holidays all have stories attached to them forwarding such themes as:

- Birth, Rebirth, Renewal and Miracles
- Faith, Hope, Charity and Gratitude
- Redemption and Change
- Peace and Social Responsibility
- Reverence for nature and/or a Higher Power
- The importance of connecting with and learning from one's culture and past

Divide the class into groups and have each group choose a common holiday story that fits one or more of the themes above. Have each group research the culture and context from which that story grew and critically discuss the following questions:

- What about this story applies best to our lives?
- What about this story resonates with us least?
- What confuses us about how this story is told?
- Who tells the story and why?
- How can we change this story so that it applies better or makes more sense to us?

Have each group rewrite their story as a narrative or play and share it with the class.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

People Who Make a Difference; Continuity and Change; California: A Changing State; Making a New Nation; Ancient Civilizations

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Activity 6: Business Sense

WRITING: Text Types and Purposes

1.2 2.2 3.2 4.2 5.2

Ebenezer Scrooge is known as a ‘man of business’ in London—a fact that he never forgets however much his heart is softened.

In groups or as individuals, imagine a business that you would like to start using the following questions:

- Would you sell things or provide a service?
- Would you run your business from a storefront or online?
- What resources present in your community would you draw from?
- What need would your business meet for your community?
- What opportunities would it create?

Have your students describe their imagined businesses in writing in a way that answers all of the questions above. Have them share their ideas with the class.

Activity 7: Happy Holidays

WRITING Research to Build and Present Knowledge

1.7,8 2.7,8 3.7 4.7 5.7

Most every culture celebrates a holiday at some point during the year. Some holidays celebrate the beginning or end of a certain season or mark a point in the agricultural cycle, while others commemorate a past event or call the community to remember and honor certain people.

Have your students, individually or in groups, look into a holiday celebrated by a community or culture you are currently studying using the following points as guides. Have them present their findings to the class orally and through visual aids.

- Timing & frequency during the year
- Changes in daily routines (employment, trade, governance, etc.)
- Roles of married and unmarried men and women, children, elders
- Special foods, beverages, clothing, arts & crafts, décor, music, dancing, and other entertainment
- Religious, cultural, national significance

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

ANTI-BULLYING AND CHARACTER COUNTS

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Comprehension & Collaboration

K.2 1.2 2.2 3.2,3

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas

K.4,6 1.4,6 2.6 3.6 4.6 5.6

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

7

Anti-Bullying Thematic Questions for *A Christmas Carol*

1. Which characters in the story are bullies? Which characters get bullied?
2. What do the characters do to bully each other? Why are these types of behavior unacceptable?
3. How did the characters who were bullied react? What did they do to stop others from mistreating them? How else could they have reacted?
4. According to the play, why did Scrooge mistreat Bob Cratchit, Fred, the Messenger, and others? What were the consequences of his actions?
5. Why do Marley and the three Spirits appear to Scrooge every year? Why do their efforts bring about a change in Scrooge for only a short time?
6. In what situations do you think an intervention like the one staged by Scrooge's friends is appropriate? How else could they have constructively made their concerns known to Scrooge?

Character Counts Thematic Questions for *A Christmas Carol*

Friendship:

1. According to the play, what makes someone a good friend? What makes someone a bad friend?
2. In what ways did the characters show that they valued their friends?
3. Friendships stay healthy through 'give and take'—each friend giving to and taking from the other relatively equally. What did Scrooge take from his friends? What did he give?
4. What makes you a good friend? Are there ways you could be a better friend?

Trust:

1. What does it mean to trust someone? How do you know if you can trust someone?
2. How does your level of trust with someone determine what you tell them, how much time you spend with them, and whether or not you let them borrow things from you?
3. How do you know when someone is telling you the truth and when they are not?
4. Why didn't Scrooge trust the following people? Describe his relationships with them.
 - a. Fan and his father
 - b. Dick and Fezziwig
 - c. Fred and Delia
5. Why did Scrooge trust Belle and Tiny Tim?

Reconciliation

1. What does it mean to reconcile with someone? Describe situations where you would want or need to reconcile with someone.
2. Give examples of when characters reconciled during the play. Why did they reconcile? What happened because they reconciled? What would have happened if they hadn't reconciled?
3. What are some good ways to reconcile with someone? How can you move forward afterwards and be friends?

RESOURCES & ADDENDA

FURTHER READING & LEARNING

Electronic Resources

“Dickens’ Christmas Stories” by the Florida Center for Instructional Technology: <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/67/dickens-christmas-stories/>

Charles Dickens Online:

<http://www.dickens-online.info/>

Charles Dickens: Biography

<http://www.biography.com/people/charles-dickens-9274087>

Holidays: A Sampler from Around the World

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/holidays-sampler-around-world>

Web Activities

Celebrate Winter Holidays

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/holidays/>

Holidays Around the World: A Math Hunt Activity

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/mathhunt/StartGame.asp?QuizID=9>

Beekman’s Ice Cream Shop: A Max’s Math Adventures Activity

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/max/icecream/index.htm>

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Production and Distribution of Writing: 6

Research to Build and Present Knowledge: 6, 7

Range of Writing: 6

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MATH

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HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

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California: A Changing State: 6, 7

Making a New Nation: 6, 7

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Applications: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Words of Christmas Past

Word Search

Find these words in the word search.

1. redemption
2. donation
3. covetous
4. repentance
5. austerity

6. spirit
7. trifle
8. apprentice
9. career
10. accumulation

11. hovel
12. maudlin
13. caricature
14. intervention
15. interpret

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



"The kids were completely engaged and entertained."

- Staff Member, Shriners' Hospital

SCHOOL MATINEES

You come to us!

Anansi the Spider

September 29 – November 6, 2015

Adapted by Dave Pierini

INTRODUCING! Anansi, the Spider! One of the GREAT folk heroes of the world! He is a rogue, a mischief-maker, and a wise, lovable creature who triumphs over larger foes. These African folktales will delight all ages.

A Christmas Carol

November 17 – December 18, 2016

Adapted by Buck Busfield

Dust doesn't have time to settle on this age-old story! And more than just dust flies with this B Street adaptation!

Frankenstein

February 16 – March 18, 2016

Adapted by Jerry Montoya

Travel in time to the first science fiction story ever written! Journey with Viktor Frankenstein and encounter his doomed creature! A surprising tale of friendship, alienation and love.

Alice in Wonderland

April 12 – March 18, 2016

Adapted by Buck Busfield

Don't be late for these very important dates! Come down the rabbit hole with Alice!

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B Street Theatre Outreach & Education 2015-2016

"You put the spark in them to write."

- 4th Grade Teacher, Cordova Villa Elementary,
Rancho Cordova

WORKSHOPS & RESIDENCIES

We come to you!

Introduction to Playwriting

Single interactive 90-Minute Playwriting Workshop designed to inspire and empower students to write their own plays.

Playwriting Towards Production

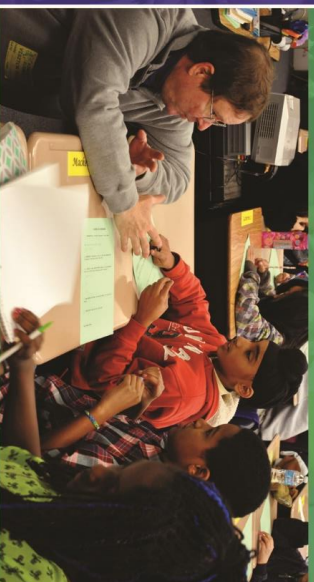
Three interactive 90-Minute Playwriting Workshops designed to lead students from inspired ideas to completed drafts of original plays.

Bespoke Theatre!

After-School Workshops & Residencies

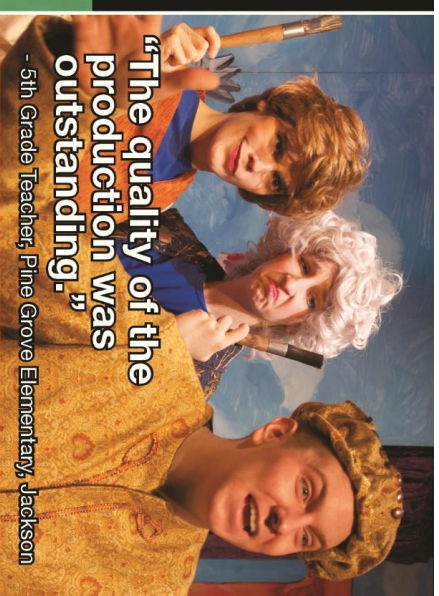
Our Teaching Artists will tailor your after-school program to suit your organization's needs. Participants:

- Learn theatre games and exercises!
- Develop communication and performance skills!
- Perform plays either from their own writing or from B Street's own catalog of scripts!



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"The quality of the production was outstanding."

- 5th Grade Teacher, Pine Grove Elementary, Jackson

SCHOOL TOUR

We come to you!

PRESIDENTIAL PALOOZA!

November 2 – 25, 2015

They manage congress, balance budgets, and negotiate for peace. How hard can the job of President be? Find out more in this colorful, engaging, and fast-paced tribute to the uncommon citizens who mastered the art of multitasking while occupying the highest office in the land!

PRESIDENTIAL PALOOZA - with a TWIST!

November 30 – December 18, 2015

Our B Street School Tour performers add our traditional holiday twist to the antics in the Oval Office!

HISTORY EXTRAVAGANZA II

January 18 – March 11, 2016

From Ancient Greece to the California Gold Rush, from Medieval Europe to the Making of a New Nation, and onto the Industrial Revolution! Enjoy this veritable buffet of select plays written by students of ALL grade levels based on topics tied directly to curriculum.

FANTASY FESTIVAL XXX

March 28 – June 3, 2016

Now in our 30th year! The winning plays of our annual playwriting contest for kids. Behold the extraordinary results of putting a professional theatre's staff at the service of young writers' talents.

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