Denver Center Theatre Company

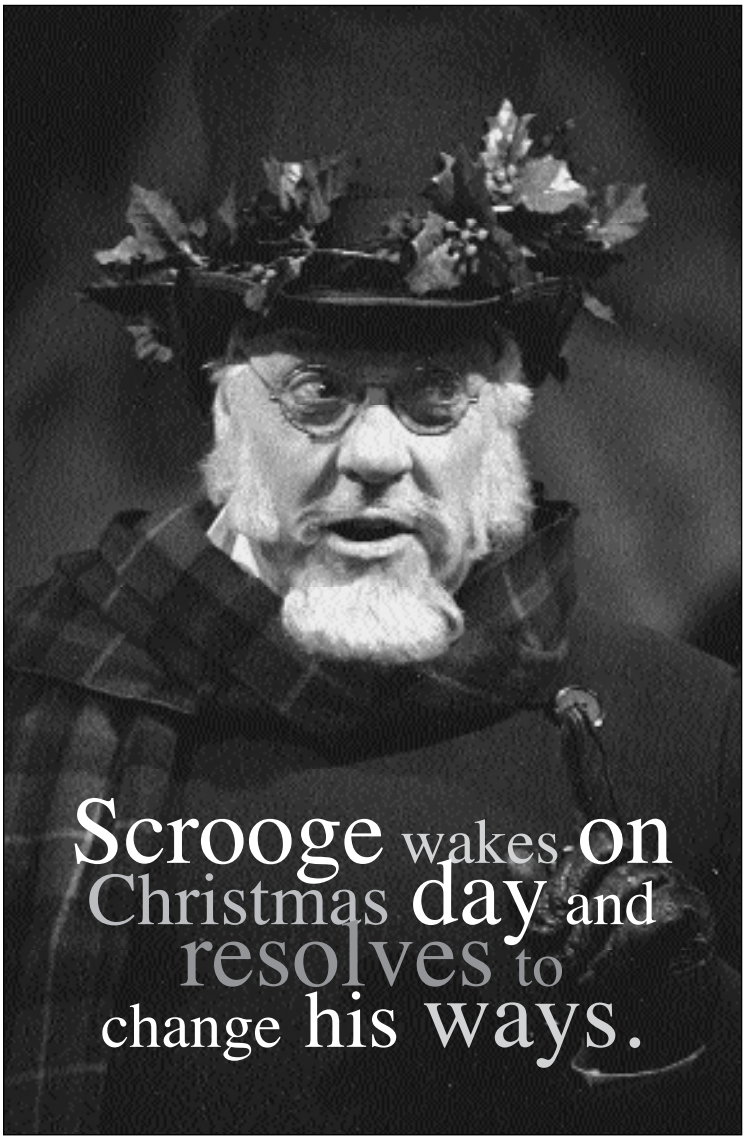
Inside Out

A STUDY GUIDE

PRODUCED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT | NOVEMBER 1997

A Christmas Carol

What's Happening, Where It's Happening and Who It's Happening To



William Denis • Photo by Terry Shapiro

Adapted for the stage

almost immediately after its publication – a performance in London is recorded in 1844 – *A Christmas Carol* easily lends itself to drama because of its many vivid characters and incidents along with its striking use of fantastic elements. In adapting the story, Laird Williamson and Dennis Powers have streamlined the narrative while preserving the basic plot and spirit of the original. The play is structured in one act and is presented without an intermission.

A Christmas Carol, begins on Christmas Eve when the miserly Scrooge is visited by the ghost of his former partner, Jacob Marley, now dead seven years. Marley warns Scrooge that he is to be visited by three spirits without whose visits he cannot avoid the endless wandering now inflicted upon Marley. The trio consists of the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Yet to Come. Escorted by each in turn, Scrooge is transported to the scenes of his youth, to the present family life of his nephew and his loyal clerk Bob Cratchit (whose household includes the crippled Tiny Tim) and to the ominous shape of things to come if he does not change his ways. Chastened by his experiences, Scrooge wakes on Christmas Day and resolves to change his ways. The tale ends in a glow of warmth and bonhomie. ✳

Dickens' England

BY PAT PEDERSON-LAWTON
Courtesy of *Stage View* from Syracuse Stage

"We are so like our ancestors

of that period (1782-1917), and yet so unlike; so near them in time and in affection, so far removed from them in habits and in experience. There lie the paradox and romance of modern history."
George Macaulay Trevelyan.
—*British History in the Nineteenth Century*

British history in 19th century Victorian England, was a time of prosperity, refinement, high living standards and overstuffed living rooms; it was living in the style of the television series "Upstairs, Downstairs." But life in *fin de siecle* England was very different from life at mid-century. Inner-city England in the 1830s and 1840s was plagued by problems of the Industrial Revolution. Air, soil and water pollution were not dealt with any more than overcrowded living or working conditions that disrupted family structures. The British government encouraged the economic potential of the Revolution but discouraged legal or political intervention in its negative side effects. There was no precedent for legislation of private enterprise, the prevalent economic theory being *laissez-faire*. "The result was that by 1832 there was scant provision for the political, municipal, educational or sanitary needs of the population, most of whom were not even tolerably clothed or fed." Dickens knew of these conditions first hand, between his family's chronically unstable economic condition and his stint as a reporter for *The Mirror of Parliament*.

In the early 1800s, factory employees worked as many hours as their employers required or they lost their jobs. Not until the Factory Act of 1833 limited the hours of children and youths and prohibited the employment of children under the age of nine, was there any regulation. Implementation of the Act led to government factory inspection and to the Ten Hours Bill, which limited women and youths to ten hours of work per day. They performed much of the finish work in textile factories and the mining done in shafts no bigger than crawl spaces, so in effect work ceased when they left.

The Poor Law of 1834 created a board of three commissioners to oversee local parish relief. Like preceding Poor Laws, it also required that those unemployed but able to work be sent to workhouses where conditions were deplorable at best. Since 1688, workhouses had been under the control of private contractors who set their own hours, maintained working conditions or not, paid living wages or not with no one to answer to. An outbreak of fever in 1838 prompted the Board to intervene, leading to the formation of the Health Board in 1848, the Local Government Board and the Ministry of Health.

Prisons were also managed by private contractors as profit-making ventures. There were no government subsidies or support of any kind. It is estimated that some 40,000 people were arrested every year for debt alone. "In some prisons nothing could be had for nothing, as not even a minimum allowance of food was supplied out of the public funds.... In other prisons the free food was filthy and inadequate. The debtor, the most innocent class of prisoner, was least able to purchase alleviation."

In 1818, only one third of all children attended school. Many of these schools were church-sponsored. The government began supporting school construction in 1833 and formed an Education Committee in 1839 to monitor the construction grant and inspect the school buildings. In 1839, the government did nothing to maintain quality in education. Like prisons and workhouses, schools were private profit-making enterprises. There were no national standards to which they were compelled to conform.

When *A Christmas Carol* was published in 1843, the working class was still faced with many of the same untenable conditions as they had before, but the seeds had been sown for rudimentary change. This era of government legislation paved the way for the improved living conditions and general material increase for all classes that we associate with Dickens' England. ✳

The Roots of Christmas Time Celebrating

"Masters in this hall, hear ye news today;
Brought from over sea, and ever you I pray."
—A Christmas Carol

Although the Christmas story centers on the Christ child of Bethlehem, celebrations at this time commenced long before His coming. They began in Mesopotamia more than 4,000 years ago as the festival of renewal called "Zagmuk." There, the New Year was a time of crisis. The Mesopotamians believed that their chief god, Marduk, had routed the monsters of chaos and built an orderly world, but after crops had been harvested, the empty brown fields revealed that life was dying. To keep death from triumphing, the sacrificial drama of Marduk and the evils of chaos were re-enacted each year. Presumably, the king of the Mesopotamians died at the end of the year in order to accompany Marduk into the underworld and do battle at his side, while a new king took his place on earth. Traditionally, however, a criminal was substituted for the king; he was selected, dressed in royal garb and given all the homage and indulgence due a king during the celebration. When his reign ended, he was sacrificed in place of the real king. The people then rejoiced, joined processions of masquerades, built bonfires and exchanged gifts and visits.

Another festival called Sacaea was celebrated by the ancient civilizations of the Persians and Babylonians. There, masters and slaves traded places; the slaves commanded; the masters obeyed. One slave was chosen to be head of the household and everyone paid homage to him. This ritual lasted 12 days. As the old year died, the rules of ordinary living were relaxed. Then, as the new year arrived, the order of the world was restored.

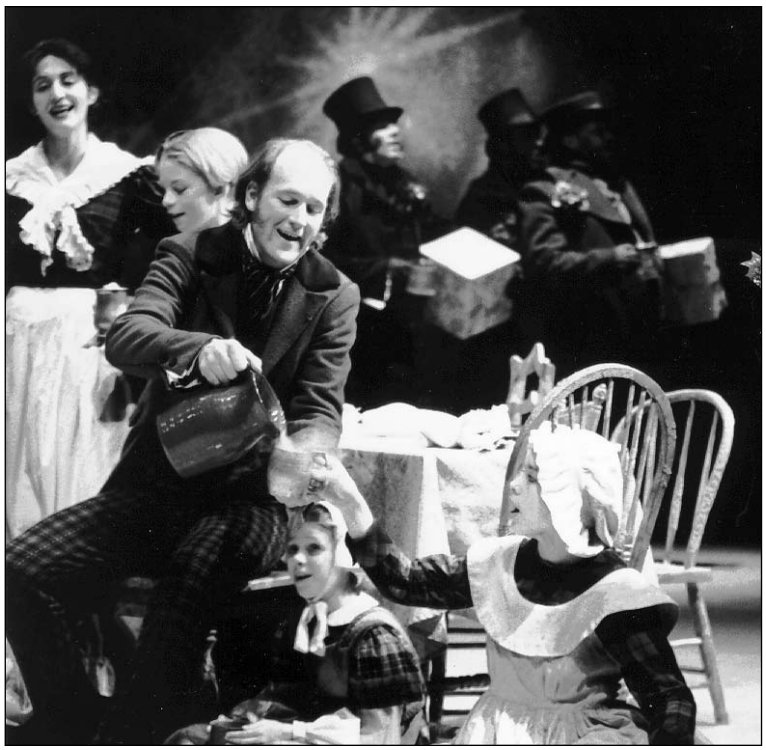
The festival of Saturnalia began around the middle of December when the days were darkest and continued until January 1. In its midst was December 25, the day, as the Romans calculated, when the sun was at its lowest ebb. The Roman Saturnalia and the holidays which followed were boisterous. People masqueraded through the streets, ate huge dinners, visited their friends and gave each other good-luck gifts. The Roman houses were decked with boughs of laurel and green trees, with lighted candles and lamps—for the spirits of darkness were afraid of light. Masters and slaves ate together on this occasion and sometimes traded roles.

The Christians found Saturnalia celebrations to be too boisterous for their liking, so they turned to the Persian religion, Mithraism. The followers of Mithraism worshiped the sun and celebrated its return to strength on December 25, as the day of the Unconquered Sun. Thus the Christian church borrowed that day of merriment, greenery, lights and gifts to celebrate the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem.

To Christians, the beginning of a new era was marked by the coming of Christ, His death and His resurrection. By 336 or 353 AD, the birth of Christ was officially celebrated on December 25 in the city of Rome. Thus, Christians celebrated this event during that long interval between the dying of the old year and the birth of the new and on into Spring. This time of celebration was a centuries-old habit, but borrowed as it was from other cultures and religions, it was now richer and different in meaning.

To these events must be added the feast that accompanied the Cleansing of the Temple that occurred in the latter part of December; while in the cold North, the Teutons observed the winter solstice, calling it by a word known as "Yule." Because the nights were long, it was referred to as "twelve nights." ✳

At Christmas play and make good cheer for Christmas comes but once a year.
—Thomas Tusser, 1557



The cast of Denver Center Theatre Company's production of *A Christmas Carol*

Christmas Customs and Winter Celebrations

"I have often thought, says Sir Roger, it happens very well that Christmas should fall out in the middle of winter."
—Joseph Addison,
The Spectator, No. 269

Christmas, New Years and the winter solstice

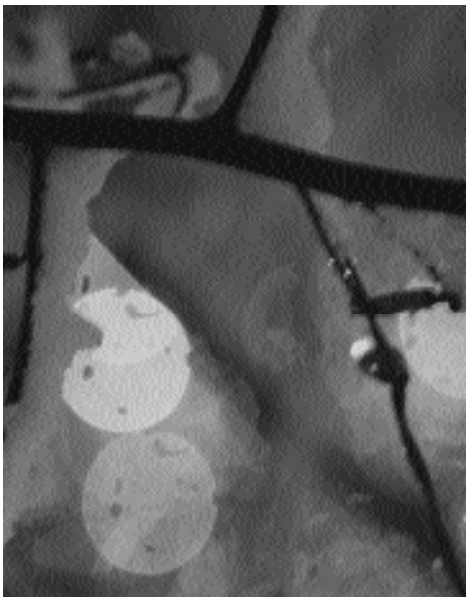
are celebrated all over the world. St. Lucy's Day, or Luciadagen, is celebrated on December 13 and marks the official beginning of the Christmas season in Scandinavian countries. St. Lucy was betrothed to a pagan nobleman against her will, so she cut out her eyes on the shortest, darkest day of the year. But God restored her vision and she became the symbol for the preciousness of light. Lucy means "light" and she appears in a shining white robe crowned by a radiant halo of candles set into a metal crown covered with lingonberry leaves. The oldest daughter of the family usually assumes the "Lucia" role, followed by her entourage of younger members of the family. They serve the family on the morning of December 13 with a tray of coffee and saffron buns.

December 16 opens the nine-day Posada season in Mexico. The Posadas re-enact the story of Mary and Joseph searching for shelter the night Christ was born. Singers/actors set out along the street to ask for shelter in various homes and finally find their kindly "innkeeper" who invites them in to feast.

In Italy, the day of Epiphany (January 6) is the day of gift giving. The "Befana," a benevolent old witch, comes down the chimney to fill children's shoes with "goodies" or, in retribution for some misdeed, a few pieces of charcoal.

Some festivals celebrate events other than Christmas. Dewali is a November Hindu festival. It is a week of festivities illuminated by lamps, fireworks and bonfires, and includes gifts and festive meals. Families clean their homes and draw elaborate designs (alpanas) on their floors with colored powder to welcome the Hindu goddess of wealth and prosperity. They set up little clay lamps (diyas), on courtyards, windows and roofs because Lakshmi won't bless a home that isn't lit up to greet her.

The Jewish Hanukkah is celebrated for eight days between November 25 and December 26. Hanukkah commemorates the successful rebellion of the Jews against the Syrians in 162 BC. After their



victory, they cleansed and rededicated the Temple in Jerusalem and re-lit the Holy Perpetual Light. There was only enough oil to keep the lamp burning for one day and it would take eight days to get more. Miraculously, the oil lasted for the eight days. So, Hanukkah is also known as the Feast of Lights. It is celebrated by lighting a candelabrum called a Menorah which holds eight candles plus a ninth, the shammash or "server" used to light all the others. Gifts are given, especially to children.

The Chinese New Year begins in the 12th month of the Chinese year. A rigorous housecleaning is done both materially and spiritually. Dirt is thrown out the door and with it goes evil. The Chinese family celebrates the hearth god on the 24th day of the 12th month. The family gives him a farewell dinner so that he can only say good things about them to the other gods. His image is set upon a chair of bamboo stalks then set afire so that the god rides up to heaven. People buy each other the traditional New Year's gifts. The holiday ends with the Parade of the Golden Dragon, symbolizing strength that marks the end of one year and the beginning of another.

Kwanzaa was established in 1966 by Maulana Karenga. It is a time for African Americans to reaffirm their culture. Kwanzaa comes from a Swahili word meaning "first." Occurring annually from December 26 to January 1, Kwanzaa is a time of fasting, feasting and self-examination. It is celebrated with the other seasonal holidays and may be celebrated with them.

The celebration of Kwanzaa is guided by the Nguzo Saba or Seven Principles. They are: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. The symbols are fruits and vegetables, the placemat on which they are arranged and the seven branched candlestick that holds the the red, black, and green candles that are lit each evening. There are also the ears of corn representing each child in the home, the communal chalice from which a ceremonial libation is poured and the gifts. It is a family holiday where one is free to improvise on the music, food and language.

In the winter observances described above, a commonality of rededication celebrated with light, food and gifts is experienced in this the dark time of the northern hemisphere that signifies an end of the year and a rebirth or new beginning. ✳

"Truly the light is sweet,
and a pleasant thing it is
for the eyes to behold the sun."
—Ecclesiastes, 11:7.

ANECDOTES FROM

The Annotated Christmas Carol

There are many allusions to Dickens' life and the Victorian era in his famous story. *The Annotated Christmas Carol* gives us some insight into his life and times. According to *The Dickensian* (September 1938), Dickens took the name of Scrooge's partner from one Dr. Miles Marley. At a party at which both were present, Dr. Marley, who knew of the novelist's interest in unusual names, mentioned that he thought his own last name was quite remarkable. Dickens reportedly replied, "Your name will be a household word before the year is out." (p1)

Dickens likely derived his main character's name from the colloquial vulgar word "scrooge": to crowd or to squeeze. The meaning is apparent in the old man's description as "a squeezing, drenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner." The miser's character was also based in part on that of the gravedigger Gabriel Grub in *The Pickwick Papers* who was described as "an ill-conditioned, cross-grained surly fellow—a morose and lonely man." (p59)

According to Charles Kent in *Charles Dickens as a Reader* (1872), Fred, Scrooge's nephew, was "quite unconsciously but most accurately—a literal description of Dickens himself, just as he looked upon any day in the blithest of all seasons." (p 61)

When Scrooge is confronted by Marley's ghost, the specter is described as "having no bowels." At one time, the bowels were thought to be the center of compassion. Thus, Marley, like Scrooge, lacked in life any pity for his fellow man. When Marley takes off the bandage round his head, —his lower jaw dropped down upon his chest. The dead at the time were often bound around the chin and head to keep the mouth closed. (p74)

The Ghost of Christmas Past is described as "a strange figure"; there is an ambiguity in age in that it is a child and an old man at the same time. The illusion of youth suggests the "Christkind," the Germanic Christ Child who, during the Reformation, replaced the Roman St. Nicholas; this figure, thought to be a girl, was said to be a messenger who came to announce the coming birth of Christ. Supposedly, the name "Christkind" was corrupted into Kris Kringle, the prototype for the American Santa Claus. The spirit may be either male or female. In the Alastair Sim film, the spirit was an old man; in the Mr. Magoo cartoon, a child; and in the movie musical *Scrooge*, it was played by Dame Edith Evans. (p85)

When The Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge to see his old school, they find a solitary boy reading. This child was the boy Charles Dickens. In a biography by Forster, "Dickens was a very little and sickly boy—subject to attacks of violent spasms which disabled him from every active experience." (p90) The boy is rescued from his loneliness by his little sister Fan, who comes to take him home. In reality, Fan (Fanny) was the name of Dickens' older sister who was gifted in music. (p94)

Scrooge's schoolmaster makes a brief appearance in this scene. Dickens painted many unsympathetic portraits of educators in *Nicholas Nickleby*, *David Copperfield* and *Hard Times*. Dickens described schoolmasters as "ignorant, sordid, brutal men, to whom few considerate persons would have entrusted the board and lodging of a horse or dog—." (p94)

Scrooge's betrothed, Belle, breaks their engagement because of his greed. Belle might be the abbreviation of "Maria Beadnell," the woman young Dickens loved and lost to what he believed were economic necessities. Dickens and Maria met again when both were middle-aged, but no romance was rekindled. (p105)

The inspiration for Tiny Tim came from a visit to Manchester in October of 1843 when he visited his sister Fanny and her invalid son, Harry Burnett. Several years later, when his nephew died, Dickens immortalized him as this character, as well as other handicapped children in his fiction. (p120)

When the Ghost of Christmas Present is about to leave, he shows Scrooge two wretched, miserable children. The boy is Ignorance; the girl is Want. These act as is Dickens' visual metaphor and strongest plea for an active concern for children of the poor. His own childhood had been difficult and he had worked from dawn to dusk for meager wages. He expressed concern for those children who "know nothing of affection, care, love, or kindness of any sort." (p141) He predicted that if such children were left to suffer, it would lead to Britain's destruction. As the Spirit says, "Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy,

for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased."

(p142) ✳

Activity Package

ELEMENTARY

SHARING from Feldman, Jean R. *Ready-to-Use Self-Esteem Activities for Young Children*. NY: Center for Applied Research, 1997.

You will need:
Treats for the class but only half as many as you normally need, and napkins.
To Start:
Have children wash their hands.
Choose a helper to pass out napkins.
Choose another child to pass out the food. Ask children to wait until every thing has been passed out. Have the children suggest solutions when it is discovered there isn't enough to go around. Listen to all the possible solutions; then encourage the group to decide on the best idea.
Praise the class for their resolution and willingness to share.

Variation: Pass out a sheet of paper and **one** crayon to each child. Ask them to draw a picture. Explain that they may use their color or trade with a friend. When the children have finished, let them show their pictures. Talk about how colorful their pictures are because they learned to share.

PASS THE PARCEL

This is a game English children play from *Ready-to-Use Self-Esteem Activities* (see above)

You will need:
small box, tape, tissue paper or comics from the newspaper, one sticker or other treat for each child, music.
To start:
Put the treats in the box and wrap a layer of tissue paper or funny papers around it.
Continue wrapping more layers around the box. (Ten layers work well. Or make enough layers so each child in the room can unwrap the package.)
Have the children sit in a circle and explain that this is a game that children in England like to play at parties. It's called "Pass the Parcel" because in England people call a package a "parcel." The game is played by passing the package around the circle. When the music stops, whoever is holding the parcel may unwrap **one** layer. When the music starts, they must continue passing the parcel. (If it stops at a child who has already unwrapped a layer, then the package is passed to the next child who has not had a turn.)
Play the game until the last layer is unwrapped. The person holding the box may then pass out the treats to the rest of the class.
Ask: "How do you think children in England are like you? What game would you like to teach children in England?"
Variations: Let the children wrap the package for the game.
Wrap a book, puzzle or new toy the whole class can enjoy.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

DETECTIVE WORK

I. Answer the following questions about Scrooge as if he lived now.
favorite TV show_____
movie or author _____
expression _____
color _____
weather _____
sport _____
smell _____
food _____
biggest pet peeve _____
political affiliation_____

If he were a member of a musical group, what would be its name?

_____

II. Now anonymously answer the same questions of yourself.

favorite TV show_____
movie or author _____
expression _____
color _____
weather _____
sport _____
smell _____
food _____
biggest pet peeve _____
political affiliation_____

If you were a member of a musical group, what would its name be? ___

_____

After 15 minutes collect the questionnaires, mix them up and redistribute one to each student, checking that students do not get their own.

Instruction to students: you have been given some information about a classmate. Use that information to make some inferences about that person as you answer the following questions. Draw the best conclusions you can and state the reason(s) for your conclusions. Some conclusions you will feel more certain of than others, but make your best guess.

What is your classmate's favorite subject in school? Why do you think so?
What is you classmates favorite food? How did you decide this?
Describe his/her favorite activities.
How would his/her room be decorated?
What job or profession will your classmate have ten years from now? Why?
What will his/her home or apartment be like ten years from now?
The following day ask students to describe their classmate's responses to the first questionnaire and their own inferences, conclude by guessing who the classmate is; to maintain suspense, keep the real identities secret to the end.

Follow-up Discussion:
1. How hard was it to come up with these answers?
2. Can you get any kind of a picture of the individual from the information given?
3. How often do we make choices without realizing it and how often do the inferences upon which our choices are based turn out to be only partially correct?
4. How does this influence the way we communicate and relate to others?

HIGH SCHOOL

QUESTIONS

One facet of Dickens' genius was his talent for transforming the most ordinary people into memorable figures. Choose five characters from Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and describe the devices he used to make these characters unforgettable.

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Continued from page 6

Most of Dickens' novels are concerned with the social and political problems of Victorian England. Do you think *A Christmas Carol* stimulated reform at the time in which it was first published? How did you feel after the show?
3. Do you think Charles Dickens could have ended *A Christmas Carol* differently? If yes, how?
4. Who was your favorite character? Why?
5. Pretend it is one year later, after the story ends. What do you think will be different about Scrooge the next Christmas? What about Bob Cratchit? Mrs. Cratchit? Tiny Tim?
6. Write a short version of this story from another character's perspective. Pretend you are Mrs. Cratchit or Scrooge's nephew Fred. Tell the story as they might perceive it. How would they explain Scrooges' change of heart?

IMPROV: from *Acting Out—The Workbook: a Guide to the Development and Presentation of Issue-Oriented, Audience-Interactive Improvisational Theatre*. NY: Accelerated Development, 1995.

Socio Dramas
For a scene you need elements
WHO—people in the scene, ages, relationships to one another, relevant background material. Names are used to distinguish characters of the same general type. The actors with audience support should develop a brief history for the characters and their previous interactions.
WHAT—actual content of the scene. Remember that each student approaches the "what" in terms of his/her own assigned "who."
WHERE—this is the suggested location in which the scene takes place.
What would happen if - list of questions that suggest variations on the "who," "what" and "where" that you might want to try out.
Things to think about - a list of questions that help explore while working on the scene. The information might then be worked into the scene depending on the direction of the scene (i.e., if your group members are learning for themselves, sharing information with others, or both).
Identifying resources in your community that can respond to your questions is an important part of this process. New information becomes available almost daily in many of these topic areas, and your group will want and need to know it.

Scenario: The Soup Kitchen
WHO—Perry is 17 years old and spends Monday nights helping in the soup kitchen at a local church. Reed is 15 years old and has not helped in the kitchen before.
WHAT—Reed thought

Continued on page 8

A Dickensian Timeline

February 7, 1812
"I am born" in Kent.
1823 The Dickenses move to Cheapside, London; Charles is kept out of school to save money.
1824 Charles is sent to the bootblacking factory. Two weeks later his father goes to debtor's prison; the rest of the family, except Charles, followed soon after. Charles continues to work after his family leaves prison.
1824-25 Charles returns to school.
1827-30 Charles becomes an office boy in an attorney's office, learns shorthand and eventually becomes a freelance reporter.
1830 He obtains a "reader's ticket" to the British Museum; becomes a staff reporter for *The Mirror of Parliament*.
Ca. 1830 Begins seeing Maria Beadnell; her family did not approve and she strung him along until he finally broke it off. She is said to be a model for *David Copperfield's* Dora.
1833 Publishes his first London sketch in *Monthly Magazine*.
1836 *Sketches by Boz* published.
1836 Charles marries Catherine Hogarth.
1836-37 *The Pickwick Papers* and *Oliver Twist* appear in monthly installments simultaneously. *Pickwick* finished and *Oliver Twist* half done, he begins *Nicholas Nickleby*.
1841 Publication of "The Old Curiosity Shop" in *Master Humphrey's Clock* pushed that magazine's sales to a 100,000 per week.
1842 First American tour.
1843 His first Christmas story, *A Christmas Carol*, sells 6,000 copies the first day.
1843-44 *Martin Chuzzlewit*.
1843s Dickens begins his private theatrical productions; public readings of *A Christmas Carol*, *Cricket on the Hearth* and other works begins.
1849 *David Copperfield*
1852 *Bleak House*
1854 *Hard Times*
1857 *Little Dorrit*
1858 Catherine Hogarth Dickens moves out of the Dickens household, having withstood Charles' flirtations and neglect for many years.
1859 *A Tale of Two Cities*
1861 *Great Expectations*
1864-65 *Our Mutual Friend*
1867 Second American tour.
1860s Public readings supplant writing new novels.
1868 His health becomes increasingly delicate. Doctors counsel him that he is risking paralysis and a stroke.
1869 He begins *Edwin Drood*.
March 15, 1870: Last public reading.
June 1870: He moves to the Kent countryside, where he dies, June 9, surrounded by his children.
June 14, 1870: Buried in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey

Sources

Count, Earl W. *4000 Years of Christmas*. New York: Henry Schuman, 1948.
Eberhard, Wolfram. *Chinese Festivals*. New York: H. Wolff, 1952.
Foley, Daniel J. *The Christmas Tree*. Philadelphia: Chilton Co., 1960.
Harris, Jessica B. *A Kwanzaa Keepsake*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995.
Ray, John B. *Christmas Holidays Around the World*. New York: Comet Press, 1959.
Thompson, Sue Ellen and Carlson, Barbara. *Holidays, Festivals, and Celebrations of the World Dictionary*. Detroit: Omnigraphics, 1994.

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that working at the soup kitchen would be very sad. He is surprised by the joviality of the people and their diversity both racially and educationally. The scene starts as they are leaving.

Where - Outside the church, in the evening.

What would happen if -

Reed has a negative attitude about some of the people who were at the kitchen?

Reed isn't sure how to react to some of the people with disabilities and asks Perry what to do?

Reed is surprised by how much he or she enjoyed working with the kitchen staff and wants to know how he or she can become a full-time volunteer?

Things to think about -

How would you react to working with the disabled?

What other types of community services are there in your community?

How does volunteering help your community? How does it help you?

Recommended Reading: The following works are recommended as "read-to's," "read-alongs" and "read-abouts" to extend the spirit of the holiday season.

■ Bolton, Philip H. *Dickens Dramatized*. Boston, Mass.: Mansell, 1987. Dramatizations of Dickens' work.

■ Briggs, Raymond. *Father Christmas*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1973. British writer illustrator Briggs tweaks the reader's nose as he gives us his version of Santa Claus grumbling his way ("Blooming soot!" "Blooming chimneys!" "Blooming snow!") through his beloved labor. A hilarious glimpse, vibrantly illustrated, of the right jolly old elf.

■ Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol* in *The Christmas Books*, vol.1. New York: Penguin, 1984. This story exists in many editions, but its original version is as fresh and touching today as when it was written nearly 150 years ago.

■ Dickens, Charles. "The Story of the Goblins Who Stole a Sexton" in the *Complete Ghost Stories of Charles Dickens*. Edited by Peter Haining. Connecticutt: Franklin Watts, 1983. Dickens, who loved to tell and write ghost stories, also gave the world the story of stingy, ill-humored Gabriel Grub, sexton and grave-digger, years before he wrote *A Christmas Carol*. The goblins, offended by the way Grub "keeps Christmas," decide to "show the man of misery and gloom a few pictures from (their) own great storehouse," which make him a changed man. Much shorter than *A Christmas Carol,* this story lends itself well to dramatization and is a good example of Dickens' writing.

■ Fraser, James Howard. *Las Posadas; A Christmas Story*. Illus. Nick Degrazia. Michigan: Northland Press, 1963. A Mexican Christmas story with wonderful illustrations for children.

■ Harris, Jessica B. *A Kwanzaa Keepsake: Celebrating the Holiday with New Traditions and Feasts*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995. A book containing social life, customs and cookery of African Americans celebrating this holiday.

■ Johnson, Barbara.*The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972. Excellent modern portrayal of the real meaning of Christmas. The horrible Herdsman children, "absolutely the worst kids in the history of the world...lied and stole and smoked cigars (even the girls) and talked dirty and hit little kids and cussed their teachers," are cast as the leads into the holiday show at school.

■ Lane, Julie. *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus*. New York: Equity Publishing Corp., 1932; reprinted, 1979. In this story of Nicholas the Wandering Orphan, the author unifies all the different cultural traditions into one story: gift-giving, toy-making, prancing reindeer, stocking-filling, the first tree decorating, coming down the chimney and finally how Nicholas came to be known as "Saint Nicholas" and "Santa Claus."

■ Madhubuti, Safisha L. *The Story of Kwanzaa*. Chicago: Third World Press, 1989. Contains the story of the holiday and material about African folklore.

■ Moeri, Louise. *Star Mother's Youngest Child*. Illus. by Trina Schart. Boston: Hyman, Houghton Mifflin, 1975. The life of a grumpy old woman who had never properly celebrated Christmas is changed the year that the Star Mother's youngest child comes to earth to find out what Christmas is all about.

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Glossary

alleviation reduction or pain, punishment, etc.

betrothed engaged, pledged.

blithest gayest, merriest, most joyful.

boisterous loud, noisy, clamorous, wild.

chronically habitually, constantly, persistently.

compassion forgiveness, tenderness, mercy, pity.

conform comply with, respect, obey.

ebb decline, decay, reduction.

enterprise a venture a project or a company or business.

fin de siecle end of the century.

homage respect, honor, esteem.

indulgence luxury, gratification.

laissez faire a doctrine opposed to governmental interference in economic affairs, business.

morose gloomy, depressed, morose, irritable.

prototype model, ideal, pattern.

ritual ceremony, rite.

solstice time of the sun's passing a solstice (furthest points in ecliptic) which occurs about June 22 and December 22.

sordid foul, dirty, unclean.

specter ghost, spook, apparition.

subsidies aid, allowance, grant (money).

surly unfriendly, rude, crabby, sullen.

underworld purgatory, Hades, Hell.

untenable unreasonable.

venture a project, an undertaking, an investment as in a business.

Victorian referring to the time period of Queen Victoria in England, latter half of the 19th century.

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Contributing Writer

***Inside Out* is intended for students and teachers but may be enjoyed by audiences of all ages.**