

Long Island Children's Museum
Education Packet



Winter 2022

November 25 – December 30, 2022

Adapted by Christopher Parks of Experiential Theater Company
from Charles Dickens' book *A Christmas Carol*



About Our Show

Join us on the streets of 19th century London at the beginning of the winter season. Meet the Cratchit family, Mr. Scrooge and the ghosts of past, present and future in this classic story of acceptance and understanding. Our cast weaves music, humor and puppetry into this interactive show. The audience helps us tell the story! Celebrate the change of seasons through this classic literary tale.



What is Experiential Theater?

“If you are in the room, you are in the show” -Experiential Theater Company
Student and family audiences typically come to the theater expecting to see a play, but what they find out very quickly is that they are there to be in a play. They are co-creators and collaborators who sing, dance and act alongside professional performers. It is a safe environment, so whatever our audience’s interest in participating, everyone feels just as welcome to watch as those who come up and play.
A message from Christopher Parks, adapter and director of *A Christmas Carol-Experiential*
<https://youtu.be/2d4nBnErPTI>

Question Quest! What is the difference between live theater and a movie? Have you ever seen a live theater performance? What do you do when you see something on stage that you like? Do you clap? Cheer? Smile?

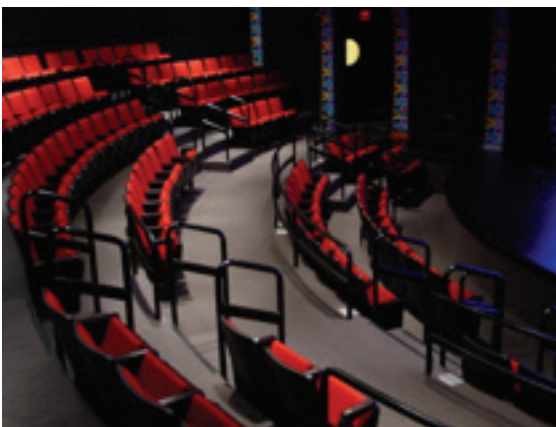
Click Further: Watch Rachel Harry explain how theatre education can change the world:
<https://youtu.be/Vh2tNfTTbUU>

Literary Link: Learn about determination and introduce young audience members to the art of theater with the fun and lighthearted, *Amandina* by Sergio Ruzzier.

Literary Link: Have some fun learning to be on stage:
https://www.amazon.com/Stage-Theater-Games-Activities-Kids/dp/1613740735/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=on+stage&qid=1556548616&s=books&sr=1-1



Where you will go



Long Island Children’s Museum Theater is the only theater on Long Island presenting performances specifically for family audiences on a year-round basis. It has presented vibrant and engaging performances for families since the Museum opened in 1993 and plays a central role in the range of educational experiences provided to visitors. In 2008, the LICM Theater expanded its role and began producing professional level family theater shows. Scripts are selected that encourage audience interaction and create personal experiences that we hope children will take with them throughout their lives.

Who You Will See...

Fun fact: Our cast members are all professional actors.

The Cast, in alphabetical order:

Austin Costello - Ghost of Christmas Present

Annabel Espinal – Tiny Tim, Ghost of Christmas Past, Goodwife Molly

Freyja Goldstein - Jacob Marley, Belinda Cratchit, Ghost of Christmas Future

Carrie Heffernan - Bob Cratchit, Young Scrooge

Charles Jacker - Ebenezer Scrooge

Kit James - Nephew Fred, Peter Cratchit

Lisa Rudin - Mrs. Cratchit, Caroling Boy, Fezziwig



The Production Staff

Theater Fun fact: Over the course of their careers, our production team has worked on more than 300 productions combined!

Theater Program Director - James Packard

Director - Christopher Parks

Puppet Director and Stage Manager - Austin Costello

Assistant Stage Manager/Swing – Delvin James

Question Quest! What does an actor do? What does a puppeteer do? What does a set designer do? Would you ever like to work on a play? If so, would you like to be an actor, a puppeteer, or a designer?

What You Will Hear

The play takes place in 19th century England. The actors in our production use British accents to represent how people spoke in that region at that time period. There are some words in our production that are used primarily in England, or specifically in *A Christmas Carol*, that we are not as familiar with here in the US.

Vocabulary: words and phrases

- **Aghast:** horrified, shocked
- **Cross:** annoyed
- **Doddy:** sulky or ill-tempered
- **Half a crown:** a British coin worth 2 shillings and sixpence
- **Humbug:** something designed to deceive or mislead
- **Liberality:** the quality of giving or spending freely

- **Quintuple:** increase five times
- **Quip:** a witty remark
- **Redemption:** the action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil.
- **Revel:** enjoy oneself in a lively and noisy way
- **Shilling:** a British coin worth 1/20th of a British pound (similar to our American dollar)
- **Stave:** stanza or chapter
- **Union workhouses:** a place where poor people would go to live and work. They were not nice places.

What You Will See



Victorian Costumes:

A Christmas Carol takes place in Victorian England, and our characters are dressed in clothing that is similar to what people wore at that time. The style of dress was more formal than it is today. Women primarily wore long dresses, and men wore trousers and suit jackets. Everyone wore hats. No sweatpants or jeans for Victorians!

Puppets:

Different types of puppetry are used in this production: hand puppets, rod puppets and shadow puppets. A hand puppet is used exactly as it sounds, you put your hand inside the puppet and make the mouth move when you speak.

A rod puppet has rods attached to its arms and sometimes legs. It can be operated by multiple puppeteers. In our production, the Caroling Boy and The Ghost of Christmas Past are rod puppets.

A shadow puppet is created by shining a light on a screen and putting a cut out in front of the light. It creates a shadow. In our production the scene with the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come is performed using shadow puppets.

Learn a little about puppetry and how to make a sock puppet, with our own Resident Puppet Artist and Puppet Director on our show, Austin Costello.

To make a sock puppet, you will need the following items:

- A sock
- thin cardboard or plastic
- marker
- glue
- scissors
- decorations

<https://youtu.be/OkKIWZga1Mk>



What You Will Learn

What was daily life like in Victorian England?

A Christmas Carol takes place in England in 1843. This period in history, from 1837-1901, is called the Victorian era, after the British Queen Victoria. Life was very different then it is today. The character Ebenezer Scrooge is rich, and the Cratchit family is poor.

Many people worked in factories, including children! Not all children went to school, but they didn't get to stay home and play all day. Everyone in a poor family would work. The children would take dangerous jobs that were better served by a smaller person, like crawling under textile machines or in small places in a mine. Would you like to do a job like that?

There was a big difference between the rich and the poor's lives. Rich people lived in large homes that were heated properly. Their children were educated, either in school or with a governess at home. They had servants, like a maid or butler. Poor people lived in small, cramped houses close to others. They often lived in cities where the air was more polluted and did not have yards and parks in which to play. They could not afford to buy healthy food and worked very hard every day.

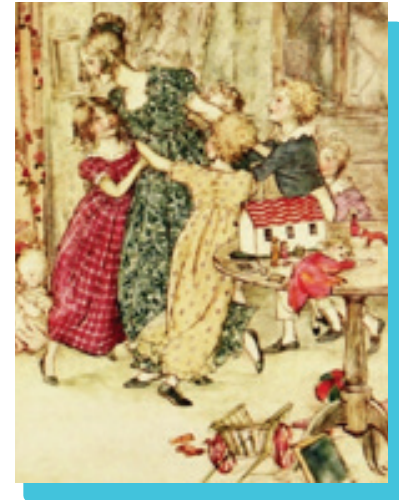
The character of Tiny Tim is very ill and is unable to walk without a crutch. It is not specified in the book exactly what his illness is, but during that time period, you could only see a doctor if you had enough money to pay for it.

There was no electricity in homes yet; people used candles and oil or gas lamps for light, and fire for cooking. That means no video games or television! What did children do for fun?

They played parlor games! Some of them we still play today, like Charades.

In our production the characters play a game called "Yes and No," which is also known by the name "Twenty Questions." Here are some fun Victorian era games, so you can play too!

<https://sites.google.com/site/victoran203/home/games>



What are the Main Themes of Our Production?

Some of the main themes in this story are the close bonds of family, empathy, acceptance, generosity, kindness and redemption.

Close bonds of family: The Cratchit family is very close and have a lot of love for each other. Mr. Cratchit tells his children that even though they are poor, they are lucky to have each other to be with on a special holiday.

Empathy: The Ghost of Christmas Present shows Ebenezer the Cratchit family's life, and he is able to see and understand their struggle, especially for Tiny Tim.

Acceptance: Scrooge's Nephew Fred invites Scrooge to Christmas dinner. Fred accepts Scrooge as he is, cranky and miserly. Fred would still like to spend time with him.

Generosity: Scrooge is shown by the spirits that there are people in need, and by the end of the story becomes very generous and wants to help them.

Kindness: Scrooge's sister Fan gives him a present, the book *The Arabian Nights*. She gets in trouble with her employer for giving him the book, but she wants him to have it to be happy.

Redemption: Scrooge is shown the error of his ways by the three spirits. He sees how his past actions and current behavior is affecting those around him. He realizes that if he became kinder, he would be able to help a lot of people, by giving his time and money.

Question Quest! What are some ways that you like to show kindness to others?

For additional resources go to:

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>

Play kindness bingo!

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/printables/kindness-bingo>

During Your Visit

Show Time!

Before the Show:

- Please do not bring food or beverages into the Theater (bottled water is permitted).
- Please turn off or silence cell phones when entering the Theater. This makes the experience more enjoyable for everyone.

During the Show:

- LICM Theater is a place that encourages audience interaction in most of our shows. However, we ask that the audience remain seated until prompted by the actors to enter the stage area or respond to questions.
- Keep the aisles clear as per fire safety regulations and in case of emergency.
- We know that young children are curious and will want to ask you questions during the performance—feel free to talk quietly with your children.
- The use of recording and/or photographic equipment is strictly prohibited. You will have an opportunity to take photos of our performers and chat with them at the end of every show.

After the Show:

- Stay and meet the performers!

Making Connections

Sock skating for winter fun

Slide into the snowy season at LICM as you slip on “sock skates” and take a spin on our indoor rink. Enjoy all the fun of this winter sport without the runny noses or cold hands. Our indoor rink is made from a high-tech synthetic polymer surface that lets kids slide around without blades. This exhibit offers plenty of opportunities for active play as kids stretch, twirl and glide at LICM. As visitors step off the “ice” they can jump into winter dramatic play in our Snowflake Village. Become a baker in our holiday sweet shop, step inside a giant snowman and serve up some hot cocoa, take a turn in our rink “ticket booth” and “warm up” around our rink side “fire” pit as the whole family enjoys cozy winter fun.



Shadow puppets

Make your own shadow puppets on our shadow screen! It is located upstairs near Communication Station. Make different animals or use your own ideas!

Fun activities to do at school or home

The book *A Christmas Carol* is credited with helping to popularize Christmas traditions that were new for that time period. Prior to the Victorian era, Christmas was not celebrated in the same way as we do today. The Victorians began traditions that are continued today:

- giving Christmas cards
- eating special treats
- decorating a Christmas tree
- eating turkey for dinner
- singing carols
- giving gifts
- spending time with family.



Question Quest! What is your favorite winter holiday tradition? Does your family have their own special traditions?

Make your own Victorian Christmas

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/victorianchristmas/activities.shtml>

Explore Dickens' other work

Charles Dickens wrote numerous works including popular classic stories that have been made into movies, plays and musicals, including: *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *David Copperfield*.

For more information about Charles Dickens and his work:

<https://www.charlesdickensinfo.com/>