



**ORLANDO
SHAKESPEARE
THEATER**
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UCF

Curriculum Guide 2016-2017



By Michael Carleton, Jim Fitzgerald & John Alvarez

Standards

Theatre

TH.68.C.2.4: Defend personal responses.

TH.68.C.3.1: Discuss design elements.

TH.68.H.1.5: Describe personal responses.

TH.912.S.2.9: Research artistic choices.

English Language Arts

LAFS.68.RH.1.2

Determine central ideas.

LAFS.1112.SL.1.1: Initiate collaborative discussions.

Content Advisory: *The play is a parody of popular secular holiday stories, told by three male actors. The actors occasionally dress as females to portray female characters in these stories.*
Parental Note: *There is a lengthy discussion of whether Santa Claus exists, but it is decided eventually that he does.*

Rating: *If it were a movie, Every Christmas Story Ever Told would be rated "PG."*

Every Christmas Story Ever Told
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Every Christmas Story Ever Told

An Introduction

Educators:

Thank you for taking the time out of your very busy schedule to bring the joy of theatre arts to your classroom. We at Orlando Shakes are well aware of the demands on your time and it is our goal to offer you supplemental information to compliment your curriculum with ease and expediency.

What's New? Lots! First, let me take a moment to introduce our new Children's Series Coordinator, Brandon Yagel. Brandon comes to us with a Masters in Theatre for Young Audiences from the University of Central Florida. We are excited to have him be a part of our team and look forward to growing with his input and passion! If you come to see a Student Matinee or Children's Series performance, please introduce yourself!

Second, we are adding Talkback Discussion Questions to our Study Guide to help structure the Q&A portion of our Student Matinee Field Trips. We will review the questions in the curtain speech, but we strongly encourage you to present them to your students before your visit. Our hope is that by focusing on certain key themes and questions that the play presents, your students will be even more engaged while watching and in the discussion after the performance.

Additionally, please take a moment to explore our website at <http://www.orlandoshakes.org/education/>. We've added 10-15 minute "on your feet" activities that you can do in your classroom to supplement your curriculum. We've also posted edited of Shakespeare scripts that range from 60 – 120 minutes long that are perfect for school productions. As always, we've included Sunshine and Common Core Standards to assure you that those curriculum needs are being met.

We look forward to hosting you at the Lowndes Shakespeare Theater. Additionally, should you wish to bring our Actor/Educators into your classroom, we will work around your schedule. Feel free to contact us at Orlando Shakes should you have any questions or suggestions on how we can better serve you. We are always learning from you.

Thank you for your tremendous work in nurturing our audiences of tomorrow.

Anne Hering

Director of Education



Every Christmas Story Ever Told

Enjoying Live Theater

Theater Is A Team Sport

The **Playwright** writes the script. Sometimes it is from an original idea and sometimes it is adapted from a book or story. The Playwright decides what the characters say, and gives the Designers guidelines on how the play should look.



Sound Designer Bruce Bowes
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Director** creates the vision for the production and works closely with the actors, costume, set and lighting designers to make sure everyone tells the same story.



Costume Designer-
Denise Warner
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Actors** use their bodies and voices to bring the author's words and the director's ideas to life on the stage.

The **Designers** imagine and create the lights, scenery, props, costumes and sound that will compliment and complete the director's vision.

The **Stage Manager** assists the director during rehearsals by recording their instructions and making sure the actors and designers understand these ideas. The Stage Manager then runs the show during each performance by calling cues for lights and sound, as well as entrances and exits.



Stage Manager-Stacey
Renee Norwood
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Shop and Stage Crew** builds the set, props and costumes according to the designer's plans. The Stage Crew sets the stage with props and furniture, assists the actors with costume changes and operates sound, lighting and stage machinery during each performance.



Costume Apprentice-
Sheldon Desmond
Lamar Roberson
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Front of House Staff** welcomes you to the theater, takes your tickets, helps you find your seat and answers any question you may have on the day of performance.

The Theater is where it all takes place. Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF is the only professional, classical theater company in Central Florida, reaching students and audiences in the surrounding eight counties.

Mission/Vision:

With Shakespeare as our standard and inspiration, the Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF produces bold professional theater, develops new plays, and provides innovative educational experiences that enrich our community. Our vision is to create theater of extraordinary quality that encourages the actor/audience relationship, embraces the passionate use of language, and ignites the imagination.

Every Christmas Story Ever Told

Enjoying Live Theater

The Actor/Audience Relationship

The Audience is the reason Live Theater exists. At Orlando Shakes, we cherish the Actor/Audience relationship, the unique give and take that exists during a performance which makes the audience an ACTIVE participant in the event. The actors see the audience just as the audience sees the actors, and every, laugh, snuffle, chuckle and gasp the audience makes effects the way the actor plays his next moment. We want you to be engaged, and to live the story with us!



Photo: Rob Iones

There are certain Conventions of the Theatrical Event, like, when the lights go down you know that the show is about to start, and that the audience isn't encouraged to come and go during a performance. Here are some other tips to help you and your classmates be top notch audience members:

- Please make sure to turn off your cell phones. And NO TEXTING!
- Please stay in your seat. Try to use the restroom before you take your seat and stay in your seat unless there is an emergency.
- Please do not eat or drink in the theater.

Talkback

After the performance, the actors will stay on stage for about 10 minutes to hear your comments and answer any questions you have about the play, the production and what it means to be a professional actor. We'd love to hear what you felt about the play, what things were clear or unclear to you, and hear your opinions about what the play means. This last portion of the Actor/Audience Relationship is so important to help us better serve you!

Here are some things to think about while watching the show. You might be asked these questions in the talkback!

1. What is the effect of actors playing multiple characters in the play? Is it confusing? Why or why not? How does it change the impact of the scenes?
2. How did the director and designers let you know the location had changed on stage?
3. How did you know time had passed?
4. Note when the actors directly address the audience. Why do you think they do this at some times and not others? How does it make you feel?

Every Christmas Story Ever Told

About the Play

Summary

About The Play

As the lights rise on this production, the audience will wonder if they have entered the correct theater, for there sits a man clearly beginning a performance of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. He is quickly interrupted by his two actor buddies who refuse to perform *A Christmas Carol* for the hundredth time in their careers. Claiming that they only do it "for the insurance" the actors lead a mutiny and instead decide to present every Christmas story ever told. Over the course of the next 90 minutes the audience is called upon to help these three comedic actors as they portray as many holiday stories and characters as they can remember. Using crazy costumes, special effects and, of course, their wits, they visit such stories as *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*, *The Gift of the Magi*, *Frosty the Snowman*, *Holidays in Sweden*, and everything in between. The style of this play is reminiscent of the popular plays *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)* and *The Complete History of America (abridged)*.



Every Christmas Story Ever Told

About the Play

Meet the Stories

A Christmas Carol

Ebenezer Scrooge is a miserly old man who believes that Christmas is just an excuse for people to miss work and for idle people to expect handouts. Scrooge is visited by the ghost of his former business associate, Jacob Marley -- a man who was as greedy and cold as Scrooge is. Marley warns Scrooge that if he continues to live so selfishly, he will spend eternity wearing the chains that his greed has built.

Three ghosts visit Scrooge successively: the Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. They show Scrooge his error in valuing money over people. Scrooge is frightened by the bleak picture of his life and promises to change his ways.

Scrooge awakes on Christmas morning a new man. He becomes jolly and charitable, and truly turns into the man he promised the ghosts he would become. He carries the spirit of Christmas with him all the year round.

<http://www.bookrags.com/notes/xmas/#gsc.tab=0>

It's a Wonderful Life

George Bailey is a small-town man whose life seems so desperate he contemplates suicide. He had always wanted to leave Bedford Falls to see the world, but circumstances and his own good heart have led him to stay. He sacrificed his education for his brother's, kept the family-run savings and loan afloat, protected the town from the avarice of the greedy banker Mr. Potter, and married his childhood sweetheart. As he prepares to jump from a bridge, his guardian angel intercedes, showing him what life would have become for the residents of Bedford Falls if he had never lived.

<http://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/title/79566/It-s-a-Wonderful-Life/>

How the Grinch Stole Christmas

The Grinch is a bitter, grouchy, cave-dwelling green monster with a heart "two sizes too small" who lives on snowy Mount Crumpit, a steep high mountain just north of Whoville, home of the merry and warm-hearted Whos. From his cave, the Grinch can hear the noisy Christmas festivities that take place in Whoville. Annoyed, he decides to stop Christmas from coming by stealing their presents, trees, and food for their Christmas feast. He crudely disguises himself as Santa Claus, and forces Max, disguised as a reindeer, to drag a sleigh to Whoville. Once there, the Grinch slides down the chimney and steals all of the Whos' Christmas presents, the Christmas tree, and the log for their fire. He is briefly interrupted in his burglary by Cindy Lou,

a little Who girl, but concocts a crafty lie to effect his escape from her home.

The Grinch then takes his sleigh to the top of Mount Crumpit, and prepares to dump all of the presents into the abyss. As dawn breaks, he expects to hear the Whos' bitter and sorrowful cries, but is confused to hear them singing a joyous Christmas song instead. The Grinch's shrunken heart suddenly grows three sizes larger. The reformed Grinch returns all of the Whos' presents and trimmings and is warmly invited to the Whos' feast, where he has the honor of carving the Roast Beast.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/How_the_Grinch_Stole_Christmas!

Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer

Rudolph, the little reindeer with the bright red nose, gets jeered at by the other reindeer (even his father tries to get him to hide his "disability") so he runs away with another misfit -- Hermey, the youthful elf who really wants to be a dentist. They hook up with the prospector Yukon Cornelius, travel to the Island of Misfit Toys, and meet the terrifying Abominable Snowman . . . but all turns out well. Burl Ives narrates as Sam the Snowman, and sings several of the songs, including "Silver and Gold," "Holly Jolly Christmas," and the famous carol that inspired this story.

<http://allreaders.com/movie-review-summary/rudolph-the-red-nosed-reindeer-1964-22857>

Frosty the Snowman

A discarded silk top hat becomes the focus of a struggle between a washed-up stage magician and a group of schoolchildren after it magically brings a snowman to life. Realizing that newly-living Frosty will melt in spring unless he takes refuge in a colder climate, Frosty and a young girl who he befriends stow away on a freight train headed for the north pole. Little do they know that the magician is following them, and he wants his hat back. This animated short is based on the popular Christmas song of the same name.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0064349/plotsummary>

Every Christmas Story Ever Told
About the Play
Meet the Playwright

Michael Carleton is the Producing Artistic Director of the Baltimore Shakespeare Festival. He directs frequently at regional theatres around the United States. As a playwright his plays include *Michelangelo's Ladder*, *Anais Nin: An Unprofessional Study*, *Every Christmas Story Ever Told (And Then Some!)*, and *Hyde, in the Shadows*. He is a lifetime member of the Actors Studio in New York.



Every Christmas Story Ever Told
Activities

1. Assign each student a culture, religion or country to research. Have them write a Travel Brochure advertising the beauty and unique points of their holiday celebration. Use the following list or create a list of your own.

Christmas in: Mexico, Holland, Spain, France, Cuba, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Belgium, Brazil, Finland, Australia, The Philippines, Russia, England, South Africa

Other Holidays: Ramadan (Islam), Diwali (India), Kwanza, Hanukah

2. Pitch It! Have each student write, memorize and present a 60-second commercial on their celebration. For variety, invite them to pick one of the characters from the play and present their commercial as that character.

Every Christmas Story Ever Told

Activities

Write a Review

Explain to students that the director's job is to take the words on the script from the printed page to the stage and bring them to life. Explain that theater critics review shows and publish their opinions. For AmericanTheatreCritics.org, critic Sherry Eaker wrote, "My point of view was that it wasn't the theatre critic's place to tell the playwright what he or she should be doing; instead, the critic should focus on what is already there and explain either why it works or why it doesn't work."

After seeing the production, have each student write a review of Orlando Shakes' production of *Every Christmas Story Ever Told*. The review should include one paragraph each for:

- Introduction – What did you watch, where and when, and maybe, why?
- The script – Did you like the writing, the story, the characters? Why or why not?
- The score - Did you like the music? Why or why not?
- The acting – Did you believe and care about the characters as portrayed? Why or why not?
- The design – Did you like the set, costume and light designs? Why or why not?
- The staging – How did the director stage the violence? Was it effective?
- The audience – What ways did the audience respond to particular moments?
- Conclusion – What will you remember about this performance?

If you wish, send your reviews to us at: anneh@orlandoshakes.org

We'd love to hear your opinions of our show!

Read more: How to Become a Theater Critic | eHow.com http://www.ehow.com/how_2079002_become-theater-critic.html#ixzz1v9tEyMnc

