



# imaginary theatre company

2009–2010 SEASON



Adapted from *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens  
Book, Music and Lyrics by Jack Herrick  
Directed by Bruce Longworth

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Adapted from *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens  
Book, Music and Lyrics by Jack Herrick  
Directed by Bruce Longworth

**Musical Director**

Neal Richardson

**Scenic & Costume Designer**

Lou Bird

**Stage Manager**

Danny Maly

**Director of Education**

Marsha Coplon

## The Company

Do-Gooder, Scroogette, Bob Cratchit, Marley's Ghost,  
Ghost of Christmas Past (Young Scrooge), Announcer,  
Doctor / **Chauncy Thomas**

Little Beggar Girl, Scroogette, Little Polly, Ghost of Christmas  
Present, Ma Cratchit, Nurse / **Ann Ashby**

Scrooge / **Lakeetha Blakeney**

Do-Gooder, Scroogette, Mama, Tiny Tim,  
Ghost of Christmas Future / **Amanda Williford**



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# SETTING THE SCENE

Watching Imaginary Theatre Company's production of *Bah! Humbug!* is a little like stepping into a time machine. Because the play features supernatural visitors (the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future) we get to travel to many interesting times and places in Scrooge's life, all in the course of one night. In much the same way that Dickens' original story, *A Christmas Carol*, is set in his own time—Victorian England—Jack Herrick's adaptation shifts the basic plotline into our contemporary time—modern America. We see evidence of this throughout the play, ranging from ATMs, 24-hour banking, television and a “skater dude” to fast food fried chicken. At the same time though, we see hints of Dickens' Victorian world, such as the old-fashioned poultry shop, scattered throughout the play. Even portions of the dialogue have an old-world feel as they practically double Dickens' own words. This subtle mix of old and new helps to remind us, as the audience, that the lessons of this story are timeless, as valuable today as they were over 150 years ago when they were read and heard for the first time. So enjoy your trip in the time machine and “heed well the lessons of the spirits.”



## WHO'S

## WHO



Scrooge,  
a filthy rich bank owner, believes that Christmas is simply another excuse for people to try to separate him from the love of his life—his money.

The Little Beggar Girl  
gets more than she bargained for when she tries to sell Scrooge a pencil.

The Do-Gooders  
make the mistake of trying to persuade Scrooge to part with some of his money to feed the poor.

Bob Cratchit,  
Scrooge's overworked and underpaid clerk, manages to keep the Christmas spirit in spite of his employer's foul mood and his own problems at home.

Marley's Ghost,  
Scrooge's former business partner, is condemned to roam the earth seeking the spirit of Christmas and tries to steer Scrooge away from a similar fate.

The Ghost of Christmas Past  
is a scooter-riding teenaged version of Scrooge.

Little Polly  
is Scrooge's childhood sweetheart.

The Ghost of  
Christmas Present,  
with her feet in the past and  
her head in the future, is stretched to  
nearly eight feet tall.

Tiny Tim,  
Bob Cratchit's son, is cheerful even though  
he is abnormally small from  
living in a cardboard box and not getting  
enough to eat.

Ma Cratchit,  
Bob's wife, does not find Scrooge  
as charitable as her husband does.

The Ghost of Christmas  
Yet to Come  
is a hotline psychic who tells Scrooge  
of his dismal future.



# WHAT'S THE STORY

**B** *ab! Humbug!* begins on Christmas Eve night with a Little Beggar Girl selling pencils on the sidewalk in front of Scrooge and Marley's 24-hour bank, hoping to make enough money to stay warm. As she sings a happy holiday song, banker Ebenezer Scrooge enters and drowns out her tune with his own song of greed and grumbling. When she offers him a pencil, he takes it without paying for it and then pinches a dime from her cup as well. While he deposits his stolen money in the nearby ATM, a man and woman collecting money for the poor walk past singing of the need for kindness and generosity during the holidays. The woman gives her scarf and the money that they have collected to the Little Beggar Girl. They are about to leave when they notice Scrooge straightening the bank's sign and decide to approach him for a donation. He mistakes them for customers and offers them a no-interest savings account, but they explain that they are seeking donations for the poor. Scrooge is appalled that they would ask him to give them money, since he is only accustomed to taking cash from other people. He turns them away with a firm, "NO!" and continues to fume about their rudeness until he is interrupted by pounding that seems to be coming from inside the ATM.

**\$** crooge is startled at first but quickly becomes annoyed when he hears Bob Cratchit, his only employee, begging to be released from the ATM. Scrooge confides that he keeps Cratchit locked in the ATM to count the money because he pays him less than it would cost to operate a computer. When Scrooge unlocks the door, Cratchit comes tumbling out, stiff after an 18-hour shift in the machine. Hesitantly, he asks Scrooge if he can have Christmas Day off to celebrate with his family. Scrooge is outraged

and complains that it is unfair for employees to expect a day off from work simply because it is Christmas. Eventually, though, he tells Cratchit that he may go, but only on the condition that he will work a 36-hour shift when he returns. With Cratchit gone, Scrooge rants about the ills of the holidays and ends with his standard response to most things: "Bah! Humbug!"

Scrooge then goes into the bank, which doubles as his home, since he is too penny-pinching to buy a house. He sits down to enjoy an evening of cold fish guts soup and *The Simpsons* but is horrified to find that the only thing on television is holiday specials. Defeated, he decides to go to sleep and settles in for the night. Shortly after he climbs into bed, he is awakened by someone calling his name. When he opens his eyes, he finds the ghost of his dead partner, Jacob Marley, standing in front of him. At first, Scrooge insists that the ghost is simply a bad dream caused by indigestion, but Marley tells

Scrooge that he has come to warn him about the dangers of greed because in death, he has come to realize that the wealth that he sought in life has little lasting value. Now he is condemned to seek the Christmas spirit forever without any hope of finding it, and he warns Scrooge that the same fate will come to him if he does not change how he lives. He advises Scrooge that he will be visited by three Christmas spirits who will help him to see the error of his ways. Scrooge offers to buy his way out of the problem by "paying off" the spirits, but Marley says that it doesn't work that way.

Scrooge retreats under his covers and when he comes out, Marley has been replaced by the first of the three spirits, the Ghost of Christmas Past. The "ghost" is actually a teenaged version of Scrooge and rides a



Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit your classroom needs and reproduce them for future use.

The activities in this guide address the following Missouri Show Me Standards and Illinois Learning Standards.

MO: CA1, 2, 3, 4, FA2, 5, MA1, SS2, 6

IL: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 16, 18, 27

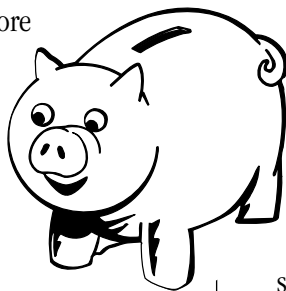
scooter. He takes the old banker to a Christmas Eve long ago when he is still a young man and shows him a pretty young girl, Little Polly, waiting for her boyfriend, Scrooge, to take her to a party. When the young Scrooge finally does arrive, he tells Polly that he has been on a date with Gloria Hobknobber whose father is rich and will give him a job at the bank. The old Scrooge is saddened by what he sees and tries to tell Polly that he is sorry, but she cannot hear him. He orders the ghost to take him home immediately and soon finds himself back in his chair in the bank.

**J**ust as he returns, Scrooge is confronted by a second spirit, the Ghost of Christmas Present. She is unbelievably tall and much more soft-spoken than the ghost who came before her. She introduces him to Tiny Tim, Bob Cratchit's little son who, in spite of his size, has the true Christmas spirit. Scrooge is not impressed and is happy to see Tim go when his father calls him for dinner. The old man asks to be taken home, but the ghost tells him that there is more to see and reveals a new scene: the Cratchits' table set for Christmas dinner. Sadly, the only piece of food is one chicken wing and the Cratchits' "house" is nothing more than a cardboard box.

Ma Cratchit grumbles about the salary that Scrooge pays her husband, but Bob says that he feels rich in spite of their poverty and toasts his boss for giving him the day off. Scrooge, looking on, is touched by this loyalty, even though Ma Cratchit is not. She worries about what has happened to Tiny Tim and fears that he is lost. Scrooge, unseen and unheard by the Cratchits yells out that he has just seen Tim and will go to get him.

As Scrooge gets caught up in looking for Tim, his guide disappears and is replaced by the third spirit, the Ghost of Christmas Future. She offers him the free opportunity to call the Christmas Psychic Hotline to learn what will

happen on any future Christmas. Scrooge, a sucker for a good deal, eagerly accepts the offer and finds himself on hold for the duration of his "free" call. He then has to deposit 50 dollars to hear the psychic's predictions, which are not good. He is told that he will die and that Tiny Tim will be lost in a snow bank. Scrooge pleads for a different future and asks if he can change things if he changes himself, but the spirit demands another 10 dollars, which Scrooge does not have. The spirit leaves him and Scrooge is suddenly back in front of the bank with the Little Beggar Girl. Confused, Scrooge asks the girl what day it is, and she tells him that it is Christmas Day. He hugs her in his excitement and sends her to the poultry shop down the street with orders to buy the biggest turkey that they have, with all the trimmings. He tells her to put the food into the trunk of a taxi and to go to the Cratchits' home and bring them back in the cab. He promises her that if she does all of this in an hour, he will give her a bag of dimes and a pencil factory.



**I**n no time, she returns with the Cratchits. Ma Cratchit is fuming because she thinks that Scrooge is going to make her husband work, but Tiny Tim knows the truth because he rode in the trunk with the food. When he tells his mother about the surprise, she can't believe it. Scrooge shuffles Bob into the ATM, telling him to get out the good silverware and a few bags of money. While Bob is in the ATM, Scrooge gives the bank to Ma Cratchit and tells her that she can pay Bob whatever she likes. When Bob comes back out, he is beside himself with all the good news but still wishes that there was something that could be done to help Tiny Tim. Scrooge suggests that they simply take off the sneakers that he wears on his knees and put them on his feet. This, of course, makes him much taller and fulfills every Christmas wish for both the Cratchits and for the new and improved Ebenezer Scrooge.



# WORDS TO THE WISE

**Mackerel**—To make the point that Marley really is dead, Scrooge compares him to this kind of fish.

**Deceased**—This is another word that Scrooge uses to say that Marley is dead.

**No-interest savings account**—Ebenezer’s offer of a no-interest savings account proves just how stingy he is. Normally, a savings account allows you to earn money, or interest, but Scrooge is taking people’s money without giving them anything in return.

**Destitute**—This is another word meaning “poor” and is used by the volunteers collecting money for the homeless.

**Anonymous**—The volunteers mistakenly think that Scrooge wants to make a donation anonymously, or without giving his name.

**Abundance**—The money collectors hope that during the holidays, people will want to share their abundance, or wealth, with the poor.

**Humbug**—When Scrooge yells “Humbug!” at someone, he is basically saying that what they think is nonsense.

**Gets my goat**—When Scrooge complains that Christmas gets his goat, he doesn’t mean that it takes his pet, simply that Christmas irritates him.

**Thrifty**—This is a nice way of saying that Scrooge is very tight with his money.

**Mr. Burns**—Scrooge likes Mr. Burns, a character on *The Simpsons*, because like Ebenezer, the most important thing to Mr. Burns is money.

**Shun**—Marley warns Scrooge that if he doesn’t listen to the spirits who visit him, he won’t be able to shun, or avoid, a terrible future.

**Miser and Cheapskate**—Ma Cratchit is angry about the way Bob is treated by Scrooge and uses these words to say that Scrooge is selfish and keeps all of his money for himself.

**Hearse**—The Ghost of Christmas Future predicts that Scrooge will need this special kind of car used to carry coffins to pick him up if he doesn’t start living differently.



## READ MORE ABOUT IT



**We encourage you to examine these topics in-depth by exploring the following books, websites and videos.**

**An Alcott Family Christmas** written and illustrated by **Alexandra Wallner**. **Picture Yearling, 1996.**

Another tale of holiday giving, this book offers a fictional account of American author Louisa May Alcott and her family sharing their Christmas dinner, among other things.

**The Charles Dickens Encyclopedia** by **Michael and Mollie Hardwick**. **Osprey Publishing Limited, 1973.** An excellent research tool for students

and teachers alike, this reference book covers Dickens literally, from A to Z.

**Charles Dickens: The Man Who Had Great Expectations** by **Diane Stanley**. **Morrow, 1993.** This accessible biography is a wonderful way for students to learn more about the life and times of Dickens.

**Kids Around the World Celebrate! The Best Feasts and Festivals from Many Lands** by **Lynda Jones**; illustrated by **Michele Nidenoff**. **Wiley, 2000.** Discover the many different days and ways that cultures throughout the world celebrate. The book is complete with recipes in case

you decide to hold a feast of your own.

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**The Shaking Bag** by **Gwendolyn Battle-Lavert**; illustrated by **Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson**. **A. Whitman & Co., 2000.** An excellent read-aloud selection, this book reemphasizes the value of generosity with the story of an old African-American woman who freely shares all that she has and in return is repaid with a bag that provides for all her needs.

<http://gaslight.mtroyal.ab.ca/carol.htm> Visit this site to view the condensed version of *A Christmas Carol* which Charles Dickens edited for his

public readings of the tale.

**Cricket on the Hearth** [videorecording] by **Charles Dickens**. **Rankin-Bass, 1989.** Based on another classic Dickens holiday story, this video features a heroic cricket and a magical Christmas Eve when toys come to life.

**The Muppets Christmas Carol** [videorecording] by **Brian Henson**. A fun, light-hearted take on Dickens’ classic tale, starring Kermit the Frog as Bob Cratchit and Michael Caine as Ebenezer Scrooge.

# Victorian Times

Charles Dickens' original Christmas story, *A Christmas Carol*, takes place in a time in England known as the Victorian Age. The term "Victorian" describes things and events of the mid to late 19th century, or roughly during the reign of Queen Victoria.

## Monarchy

Born on May 24, 1819, Queen Victoria became queen when she was only 18! Very quickly after, the young queen fell in love with a German, Prince Albert, and they were married in 1840. In the next few years, the Queen and her husband expanded their family with nine children—four sons and five daughters. The family was close-knit and happy until the Prince died suddenly in 1861 of typhoid.

Queen Victoria was so sad that for a long time she refused to go out in public. After a time, she continued her reign alone and expanded her kingdom and raised the population from 21 million to over 410 million people!

## Society

During Queen Victoria's reign, Britain went from a farming population to a city society thanks to new factory manufacturing. Lots and lots of people began moving to cities but the cramped towns were not very nice places to live. Dirty and overcrowded, these conditions led to increased disease. Also, new jobs began to divide people into categories. The working class was comprised of men and women who performed physical labor and often made only 25-75 pounds a year (that's like \$50-150 in a whole year!). Annual



income for the middle class ranged greatly but some could make up to 10,000 pounds a year. The upper class society was made up of people who were considered "gentlemen." These people were so rich that they usually didn't have to work at all and got to spend most of their time attending parties, studying art or reading books.

## Victorian Christmas

When we celebrate Christmas today, many of the customs we cherish can be traced all the way back to the Victorian Age. Queen Victoria and her focus on family inspired other citizens to gather with family over the holidays. With everyone in one home, a Christmas feast became tradition. Just like in the play, even poor families used this time for a special meal. For decoration, the Christmas tree became popular during this time. Some historians credit Prince Albert with bringing this German custom to a larger crowd. Also, in 1843 (the same year Charles Dickens wrote his story) the first Christmas cards were sold. Do you send Christmas cards? If so, you're following the tradition started by Sir Henry Cole, a man who printed cards because he didn't have enough time to write all his friends holiday letters.





# Helping Hands

Even though winter holidays are all very different, they also share some things that are exactly the same. All of these holidays encourage people to be good to one another, share with those less fortunate and help each other in times of need.

## The Salvation Army

Have you ever seen those people standing outside in the cold next to a little red kettle? They're usually ringing bells at all the stores during the holidays. Those folks are volunteers from the Salvation Army, and they stand out in the chilly winter air in order to collect money for people in need. Each year this organization collects millions of dollars to help families get the food, clothes and even holiday gifts they need to make it through the winter.

## Toys for Tots

Wouldn't it stink to wake up Christmas morning and find no presents under the tree? In their yearly Toys for Tots drive, the U.S. Marines try to make sure no kids go empty handed during these festive times of year. Through the gift of a new toy, the Toys for Tots organization aims to provide joy and hope to disadvantaged children all over the country—last year they helped over 7.5 million kids!

## The Humane Society

It's not only people who need help; animals need us too, especially in the cold winter months. Since 1870, The Humane Society has been dedicated to providing safe and caring homes to all animals in need, from the smallest kitten to the largest horse. The Humane Society helps animals through spay/neuter programs, adoptions, education classes, behavior training and rescue efforts.

These organizations and many others are active right here in your community, and they all have ways that you can help. If you can't get out to volunteer, there are also lots of ways you can help right in your own neighborhood, or even in your own house.

On the lines below, write three ways you can help others during the holiday season.

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# Time Warp

In *Bab! Humbug!*, Scrooge gets to travel back in time to revisit his past deeds. Do you ever imagine what it would be like to travel to a different time period? Throughout history, there have been many different eras in which people lived in very different ways. Choose one of the three time periods below and do some additional research. Then on the lines at the bottom, write a story about what a typical day might have been like if you lived in that time.



## Wild West

Not long after America became a country, people began moving from the first states on the east coast into the unexplored and dangerous western United States. Pioneers packed their whole lives into covered wagons and headed into new territory. At this time, Native Americans had to deal with new people interrupting their way of life, and new settlers had to find a way to live in very tough conditions. Cowboys lived on ranches taking care of cattle, and settlers began to pan for gold in the mountains. How might you have lived?



## Dungeons and Dragons

Kings, queens, knights in shining armor—these things weren't just in stories, they're real! In England, where Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol*, they have a rich history full of these characters. In fact, their country still has a queen, though she isn't quite the same as queens were in the medieval days. At one time in history,



England had a king who ruled the country. He was protected by knights who fought battles with swords, bows and wore real metal armor, just like in the movies. Those people who were not members of the king's family or inner circles lived very differently though. Most of the other citizens were servants or very poor workers. What would have been your role at this time?

## Patriot Pride

You've heard of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, right? These guys and lots of other settlers were really important to the start of our country. Living at a time when there was lots of fighting and rebellion against a way of life that people thought was unfair, these early patriots risked their lives for what they believed in. Moving all the way across an ocean from Britain was a very scary thing to do, and many people got sick or even starved before they even got to the new country. What would you risk to create a new and better life for yourself and your family?

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# Check Please!

Scrooge's restless night with his ghostly visitors teaches him a valuable lesson about the true spirit of Christmas and giving. As a result he decides to share his wealth with those around him, especially the Cratchits. His first act of kindness is bringing Bob and his family to the bank for a huge Christmas dinner.

Find out how much Scrooge's newfound generosity will cost him by calculating the bill for his meal with the Cratchits. Use the take-out menu shown to help figure the cost of the meal as you work the following problems.



1. Scrooge tells the Little Beggar Girl to get the “big prize turkey” for the dinner. If the prize turkey weighs 30 pounds, how much will it cost?

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2. Including Scrooge, there will be a total of four people eating this meal. If each of them will eat 2 potato wedges, how many orders should the Little Beggar Girl buy and how much will they cost?

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3. Scrooge doesn't tell the Girl to buy rolls, but when she gets to the store, they smell so good that she can't resist. She guesses that each person will eat two rolls, but she isn't sure if it would be cheaper to buy a dozen or not. Figure how many rolls she needs for each person to have two, and then decide if she should buy them individually or by the dozen. What will the cost for rolls be?

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4. If the Girl buys enough stuffing for each person to have a 1/4 pound serving for dinner and another 1/4 serving for lunch the next day, how much stuffing will she buy? What will be the cost?

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5. The Little Beggar Girl has a soft spot for sweets and has trouble deciding which kind of pie to buy. As a result, she chooses one pumpkin, one pecan, one cherry and one banana cream. How much will all of her pies cost?

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6. Choose one more item from the menu to add to the Cratchits' feast. If the Girl buys only enough for each person to have one serving, what will the cost of your new dish be?

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7. Now total Scrooge's bill for the meal by adding your answers from each of the questions above. How much does it all cost?

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# It's A-maze-ing

Can you find your way through the stocking maze?

