

Study Guide

A CHARLIE BROWN Christmas



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Dear Educators and Parents



Charlie Brown might be feeling a little blue this time of year, but our production of *A Charlie Brown Christmas* has got everyone in high spirits! Adapted straight from the beloved TV special, this story and its message remains as relevant as ever. Join the whole Peanut gang as they try to beat back those Yuletide Blues!

At SteppingStone Theatre we are committed to building a vibrant community. No time of year brings us together quite like the Holidays. Through watching Charlie Brown and his friends struggle to put on the best Christmas play possible, we hope your students learn that theatre can be used for building connections and reminding of us of the things that matter most.

Big Ideas explored in *A Charlie Brown Christmas*:

- Sometimes people get sad and that's okay.
- Listening to other people can give them a sense belonging.
- The best ideas can come from the most unexpected places.
- Theatre and other forms of Storytelling can serve as powerful tools.

We hope this study guide provides opportunities for inquiry and conversation with the young people you bring to the theatre. Use the content to provide connections between the play and your curricula. It is our hope that you will use the experience of attending the theater and seeing ***A Charlie Brown Christmas*** with your students as a teaching tool. Please feel free to adapt or extend discussion topics and activity suggestions.

We hope you enjoy the show!

The SteppingStone Team
SteppingStoneTheatre.org
651-225-9265



PRODUCTION SYNOPSIS

All of Charlie Brown's friends are brimming with holiday cheer, but he's having trouble getting in the spirit. Can directing a Christmas play help him kick the Yuletide Blues? Discover the true meaning of Christmas and the place where you belong with Charlie Brown, Snoopy, and the whole Peanuts gang!

This show is great for all ages!

Run Time: 55 minutes
with no intermission.



Welcome to SST

Where is SteppingStone? All SteppingStone performances will be presented at our theatre: 55 Victoria St. North, Saint Paul, MN 55104 This is two blocks north of Summit Ave at Holly Ave (next to Mitchell Hamline College of Law).

When should we arrive? Please allow plenty of time to unload your buses or vans, and park. We recommend that you arrive to the theatre 30 minutes before show time.

Where do we park? Bus drivers may park and stay with their bus along Concordia (frontage road south of I-94). Busses may not park in front of the building, block the alley, or park along Portland headed westbound, as this is a fire lane. Paid parking for cars and vans is available at the Victoria Crossing Ramp (corner of Victoria and Grand Ave.) There are two handicap accessible parking spaces in our employee lot near the north entrance. Additional unmetered parking is available along the streets surrounding the theatre. Please respect posted parking restrictions.

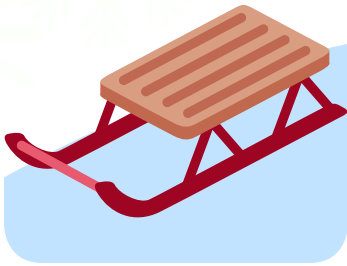
Seating for people with special needs: If you have accessible seating requirements and did not indicate your need when you ordered your tickets, please call our Front of House and Volunteer Manager, at (651) 225-9265. Our knowledge of your needs will enable us to serve you better upon your arrival to the theater.

SteppingStone Policies

- The use of recording equipment and cameras are not permitted during the performance.
- Food, drink, candy, and gum are not permitted in the theatre.
- Should anyone become ill, suffer an injury, or have another problem, please escort them out of the theater space and notify our Box Office Staff. Staff will be able to assess the situation and assist.

How can I prepare for my visit to the theatre? Discuss audience behavior expectations with students before you attend the performance. Use this study guide to prepare content-specific questions. At a performance, audience members are active participants. Their quiet attention, applause and laughter (both appropriate and inappropriate) are all heard by the young actors on stage and affects the performance in good or bad ways. The best way to show that you're enjoying the show is to listen attentively, laugh when something is funny, and clap loudly following a scene or song you enjoyed!

QUICK CONVERSATIONS



On the ride there...

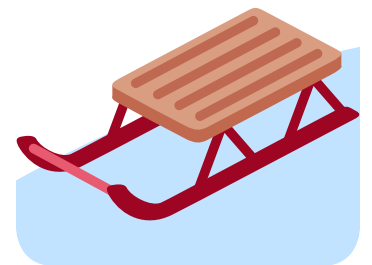
Our play is adapted from *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, a TV special that debuted in 1965. Over the years it has become a tradition for many families to gather every year and watch this 25 minute show. *What holiday traditions do you have in your house? How long have they been traditions? Do you know how, or why they became traditions?*

As you'll see in our play, Charlie Brown has quite a dilemma: he can't get into the Christmas Spirit. *When you get excited for the Holiday Season, what type of things do you get excited for? Are there certain foods you only eat around the holidays? Things you love to smell? What are your favorite type of decorations?*

Our play discusses some traditions specific to Christmas - a Christian holiday - but every year, during the month of December, many religious holidays are observed in our community and around the world. *Can you name any of these Holidays? Do you know when, or how they are celebrated?*

...On the ride home

Most of the Peanuts are obsessed with Christmas because of the presents, the delicious foods, and the beautiful decorations, but Charlie Brown believes that the Holidays are about more than just the stuff you get. *What do you think Charlie Brown means by this? Is there something more important than material items during the Holidays?*



When Charlie Brown brings his little Christmas Tree to play rehearsal, some of his friends are less than subtle with their opinions. Violet even says "Boy, are you stupid, Charlie Brown." *Even though they didn't like the tree he picked, what is a kinder way they could have handled the situation? Is there a nice way to tell somebody you don't like their idea? What would you say?*

Towards the end of the play, Charlie Brown is almost ready to give up on directing the Christmas Play. *How does Linus and the rest of the gang cheer him up? What are other ways they could have made him feel better? What would you have done?*



Want more?!

Did you know SST can ignite theatre learning inside your classroom?

Contact us to book a theatre arts program for your classroom or after school program. Customizable to fit with your curriculum.

SteppingStoneTheatre.org | 651.225.9265

HOLIDAY CARDS

Charlie Brown laments at that beginning of the play that “Nobody sent me a Christmas card today” and this is part of the reason he feels so blue. Unfortunately, Charlie Brown isn’t alone. Loneliness and depression are increasingly common around the Holiday Season but something as simple as a handwritten card can make a huge difference in someone’s outlook.

THE CHALLENGE

Work with your teachers or parents to send out a Holiday Card to someone who may be in need of a little Holiday Cheer. Don’t know how? Here are some ideas!

- While store bought cards can be convenient, creating your own shows the recipient you care so much that you actually put aside everything else you had to do to just make them something special. So grab your construction paper and crayons and get to work!
- Start with a greeting! If you’re not sure what Holidays they celebrate, you can say things like “Seasons Greetings!”, or “Happy Holidays!”
- Don’t know what to say? Share them how you’ve been getting ready for your Holidays. Tell them what kind of things you are excited for. If you haven’t seen them for a while, you can even tell them how school has been going!
- Include a bonus! It can be a picture of your family, one of the winter arts projects you made at school, or even a silly joke.

YOUR VERY OWN CHRISTMAS PLAY!

The Peanuts spend a lot of time rehearsing their Christmas Play! Although they have costumes, props, and set pieces, none of that is required to tell a good story!

THE CHALLENGE

In one hour, come up with your own play about the Holidays!

- Choose what you’d like your play to be about. Maybe it’s based on a memory you have of a Holiday gone past, or maybe, like our play, it’s an adaptation of a show or movie.
- Plot out the Beginning, Middle, and End.
 - **Beginning** - Introduce a problem - “Somebody stole my stocking!”
 - **Middle** - Attempt to solve the problem - “Mom, will you help me look for my stocking?”
 - **End** - The problem is solved - “I found it! The cat took it!”
- Cast your play! Assign all of your friends to play different parts.
- Rehearse it! Be sure to run through it at least 3 times!
- Share it with your friends and family!

ENJOY THE SHOW!

ACTIVITIES: GENERATING JOY!

