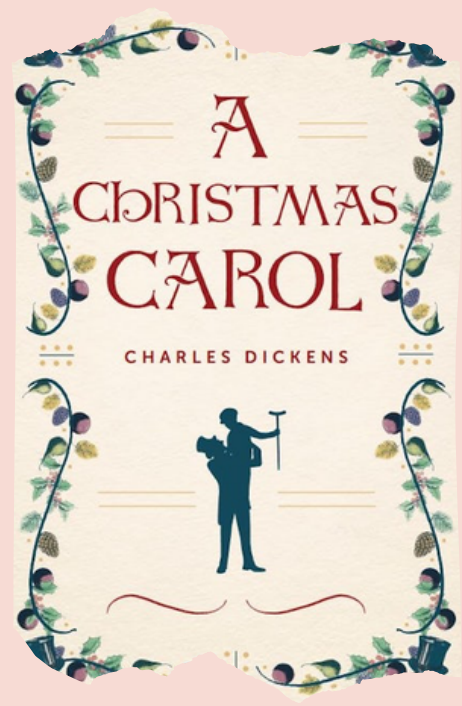




A Christmas Carol Education Packet

About the Play

A Christmas Carol is originally a novel written in 1843 by Charles Dickens about Ebenezer Scrooge: a greedy, selfish old man who hates Christmas. After three ghosts visit him and present visions of his past, present, and future, he realizes the harm of his selfishness. On Christmas morning, he changes completely, becoming kind, generous, and full of holiday spirit.



The play you will be watching is a modern stage adaptation that serves as a fresh interpretation of the original novel while staying true to its story. Sam Kebede, the playwright, brings an innovative take to the theater that preserves the heartwarming themes of the original story while introducing contemporary language, humor, and a cast of only three actors!

A Few Facts About A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* in just six weeks! In an effort to get copies printed before the holidays, he began writing the novel in October of 1843, finishing it in early December of the same year.

Dickens invented Christmas! Well, maybe that is a bit of an exaggeration. However, much of what comes to mind when we think about Christmas (family feasts, gifts, acts of generosity) were introduced or amplified by Dickens' story. Before the 1840s, the day was traditionally a quiet day reserved for church attendance.

It's been adapted over 250 times! A very, very incomplete list can be found later in this packet.

***A Christmas Carol* made society more charitable!** More quickly than anyone could have expected, this story changed the world.

"Blessings on your kind heart... you may be sure you have done more good by this little publication, fostered more kindly feelings, and prompted more positive acts of beneficence, than can be traced to all the pulpits and confessionals in Christendom." - Lord Frances Jeffrey to Dickens (Dec. 1843)

A note from the playwright:

"Did you know the mob used to send turkeys on Christmas as a sign of goodwill to the neighborhood? This story can do miraculous things."

Meet the Writers

Charles Dickens (1812–1870) was a famous English writer who grew up in a poor family. When he was a child, his father went to prison for debt, and Dickens had to work in a factory to help support his family. Those difficult experiences made him care deeply about fairness, kindness, and helping others, ideas that show up in many of his stories. In *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens used his own memories of struggle to show how generosity and compassion can change people's lives, reminding readers that caring for others is what defines holiday spirit.

Other works:

- *Oliver Twist* (1837–1839)
- *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859)
- *David Copperfield* (1849–1850)
- *Great Expectations* (1860–1861)



Sam Kebede (pronounced kuh-BEH-duh) is a first-generation Ethiopian/Eritrean-American actor, writer, and comedian based in New York City. He studied Neuroscience and Theatre Studies at Duke University before turning his focus to the arts. Drawing on his multicultural background, Kebede often explores themes of identity, family, and belonging through humor and heart. His work challenges audiences to see familiar stories in new ways, blending intellect, wit, and social awareness to make classic tales feel fresh and relevant today.

Other works:

- *EthiopianAmerica*
- *Elon Eats People*
- *Uncle Brown*
- *The Plagues: A Comedy*



The Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution was a time between the mid-1700s and mid-1800s when new machines, factories, and inventions changed how people worked and lived. Instead of making things by hand, people started using machines to produce goods faster and in larger amounts. This led to big cities growing around factories and created many new jobs, but it also caused problems like long hours, low pay, and unsafe working conditions. Many poor families, including children, had to work just to survive, while the rich became even wealthier. It was an exciting time for progress, but also a hard time for ordinary people.

In *A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens shows what life was like during the Industrial Revolution. He wrote about the struggles of working-class families and how harsh life could be for the poor.



Characters like **Bob Cratchit** represent hardworking people who barely make enough to live, while **Scrooge** represents the wealthy who ignore their suffering. Dickens used the story to remind readers to care about others and to use kindness and generosity to make society better for everyone.

“The progress of industry, which daily heaps up riches and luxury on the side of the wealthy, produces, on the side of the workers, the misery of ever increasing poverty.”

- Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845)

Discuss the quote above with your class. What does it say about what life was like for the rich and the poor during the Industrial Revolution in England?

Other Christmas Carols

A Christmas Carol has been adapted time and time again, making it one of the most timeless pieces of literature to exist! Just a few weeks after publishing his novel, Dickens was able to see stage adaptations of *A Christmas Carol* all over London. Since then, it's been recreated in TV shows, movies, plays, and more! Which of these adaptations have you seen?

- **Scrooge, or Marley's Ghost (1901)** – First film adaptation
- **Scrooge (1935)** – First sound film version
- **A Christmas Carol (1938)** – Classic MGM adaptation starring Reginald Owen
- **Scrooge (1951)** – Starring Alastair Sim, often considered the definitive version
- **Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol (1962)** – First animated adaptation
- **Scrooge (1970)** – Musical film starring Albert Finney
- **Mickey's Christmas Carol (1983)** – Disney's popular family version
- **A Christmas Carol (1984)** – TV film starring George C. Scott
- **Scrooged (1988)** – Modern comedy adaptation starring Bill Murray
- **The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992)** – Beloved musical with Michael Caine
- **A Christmas Carol (1999)** – Patrick Stewart television adaptation
- **A Christmas Carol (2009)** – Motion-capture animated film starring Jim Carrey
- **The Man Who Invented Christmas (2017)** – Story of Dickens writing the novella
- **Spirited (2022)** – Modern musical reimagining starring Will Ferrell and Ryan Reynolds
- **Scrooge: A Christmas Carol (2022)** – Netflix animated remake



During the Show

A few reminders as you join us in the world of the play: There is no photography or recording of any kind allowed during the performance. Silence your phone and refrain from texting as it can be distracting to those around you and those on stage.

No outside food or drink is allowed in the theater. However, any purchases made at our concession stand can be enjoyed throughout the show. There will be a 15-minute intermission between acts. Take this time to talk about the play with your classmates!

Timeliness is key. It is important to arrive before the show's start time (7:30pm for preview and evening shows, 2:00pm for Sunday matinees). Consider arriving earlier to beat the lines and snag good parking. Doors open thirty minutes before curtain.

Parking: Please do not park in the space between our building and the red brick building located on the east side (you will be towed). Street parking is available but limited.



About the Production

Why *A Christmas Carol*? A statement from Reno Little Theater's Artistic Leadership Committee

The Artistic Leadership Committee chose *A Christmas Carol* by Sam Kebede because it breathes fresh life into a timeless story of redemption, generosity, and hope. Kebede's vibrant adaptation invites us to reimagine this classic through a contemporary lens—highlighting the power of community and the possibility of change even in the darkest times. As we celebrate our 91st season, this play reminds us of the enduring spirit of compassion and the transformative magic of the holiday season.

A Christmas Carol is being produced by Reno Little Theater at 147 E. Pueblo St. Reno, NV. The show runs from November 14 to December 14, with a **preview on Wednesday, November 12** and a post-show talkback with the audience on Sunday, November 21.

For more information about the production and Reno Little Theater, visit renolittletheater.org

