Ford's Theatre Student

PROGRAM

FORD'S THEATRE

A Christmas Carol
A Ghost Story of Christmas

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In 1834, the English Parliament passed the New Poor Law which made going to a workhouse the only option for poor people seeking relief or help. Living conditions in workhouses were harsh. The poor were forced to work long hours and were fed little. Families were separated from each other, and were punished if they tried to talk to each other.

After watching the play, what do you think Dickens though of workhouses?

Do you think Dickens used his books to comment on his society?

If you were going to write a book, what would you comment on your society?

We don’t have workhouses now in America because…

| How do you think Dickens used his books to comment on his society? |
| If you were going to write a book, what would you comment on your society? |

Did You Know?

At age 12, Charles Dickens (the author of A Christmas Carol) was removed from school by his father and sent to a shoe blacking factory (basically, they made shoe polish there). Dickens loved school and resented this system that took him away from learning. He worked Monday through Saturday, 10 hours a day, for the equivalent of $12 per week.
Christmas Gifts:
Even prior to the Civil War, Christmas presents were simple. Children usually received gifts of handmade toys, fruits or cakes. During the war, goods were scarce, and children were lucky to receive anything at all.

A White House Christmas:
During the first year of the war, Abraham Lincoln hosted a huge holiday party at the Executive Mansion. Over the next few years, Abraham Lincoln spent the holiday visiting wounded soldiers, while Mary Lincoln fundraised for care packages to send to soldiers. Even their young son, Tad, got into the charitable spirit and sent gifts to soldiers in the field.

A Battlefield Christmas:
During this usually happy season, soldiers often felt lonely and homesick. To combat these feelings, they decorated trees in front of their camps with whatever spare supplies were available. Those at home spent their Christmases making clothing and food and tending to wounded soldiers.

Did You Know?
Christmas wasn’t a federal holiday until 1870 when President Grant signed the bill into law.

The first images of the jolly, modern Santa were created by political cartoonist Thomas Nast in the 1860s.
Imagine the Ghost of Christmas Future came to visit YOU and showed you your future self.

Close your eyes and picture yourself in your perfect future.

- Who is with you?
- Are there new people in your life?
- Where are you?
- What is going on in your life and career?
- Is there anything that you, like Scrooge, would want to change now to achieve this future?

Now, think about the holidays this year.

What will you do to be your BEST self?

How about volunteering at one of these great organizations?

- Bright Beginnings
- Homeless Children’s Playtime Project
- Friends of Homeless Animals
- Meals on Wheels
- Capital Area Food Bank
- Helping neighbors in your community with groceries, snow removal and light errands.

Tweet us @FordsEdu and let us know how you’re giving back this season!

#FordsCarol

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