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Thank you for participating in Western Canada Theatre's matinee programming! We would like you and your students to get the most out of your experience with us. Included in this package is some inside information exclusive to teachers and students, lesson ideas, discussion questions, and online resources. We hope you find them useful before and after seeing the show.

Please take a few minutes to review appropriate theatre etiquette with your students. While clapping and laughing are most appropriate for the theatre, whispering, talking, and excessive movement during the show is distracting to others in the audience and our actors on stage.

Audience members are encouraged to get comfortable, remove coats, use the washroom and turn all electronic devices OFF before a show begins. Please remind your students that texting is not allowed during the show.

Remembering theatre etiquette makes the show more enjoyable for everyone!

Curriculum Connections

Course	Strand(s)
K - 7 Drama	Performing and Presenting
Grade 2 Science	Physical Science
Grades 4 - 12 English Language Arts	Writing and Representing
Grades 4 - 12 English Language Arts	Oral (Speaking and Listening)
Grades 3 - 7 Health and Career Education	Healthy Relationships Safety and Injury Prevention

A Christmas Story

Production Personnel

Cast

Ralph (as an adult)

Miss Shields

Schwartz

The Old Man/Voice of Santa

Esther Jane Alberry

Flick

Helen Weathers

Ralphie Parker

Randy

Scut Farkas

Mother

Shane Carty

Sheanna James

Erik Manholdt

Thom Marriot

Cali McKinlay

Alex Mittelsteadt

Sydney Preymak

Sebastian Tow

Sylar Unser-Kleissen

Lukas Vanderlip

Anita Wittenberg

Creative Team

Director

Set Designer

Costume Designer

Lighting Designer

Sound Designer

Scenic Painter

Assistant Scenic Painter

Stage Manager

Assistant Director

Assistant Stage Manager

Apprentice Stage Manager

Daryl Cloran

Ross Nichol

Cindy Wiebe

Michael Walton

Doug Perry

Sondra Haglund

Kathy Schwab

Krista Blackwood

Heather Cant

Kira Maros

Skylar Nakazawa

Western Canada Theatre Staff

Staff

Daryl Cloran
Lori Marchand

Artistic Director
General Manager

Administration

Ron Thompson
Marilyn Zuke
Catrina Crowe
Kelly Manson
Lacey Stark
Terri Runnalls

Financial Manager
Associate Financial Manager
Marketing & Communications Manager
Special Events & Administrative Associate
Special Events & Marketing Assistant
Education Coordinator

Production

Ross Nichol
Heather Cant
Brian Britton
Joel Eccleston
Terri Grant
Cindy Wiebe
Jessie Paynter
Dale McRann
Paul Cuthbart
Eric Maher
Darren John
Ryan Pollon
Sondra Haglund
Kathy Schwab

Production Manager
Associate Producer
Technical Director
Head Carpenter
Head of Properties
Head of Wardrobe
Assistant Technical Director
Mentor / 2nd Carpenter
Assistant Carpenter
Technical Staff
Technical Staff
Junior Technician
Scenic Painter
Assistant Scenic Painter

Facilities

Terri Runnalls
Jean Choi
Nicole Bremner
Amy Baskin, Allison Chlow, Christine Leroux, Phyllis Mader, Dušan Magdolen, Gabrielle Putoto, Jessica Reid, Carling Ryan, Melissa Thomas
Sharen Michael

Facilities Manager
Volunteer Coordinator
Lead Concession Services
Guest Services Staff

Parking Attendant

Kamloops Live Box Office

Geraldine Penny
Janet Riggs
Judy Day

Box Office Staff
Box Office Manager
Box Office Staff

Inside Western Canada Theatre

with Lori Marchand

General Manager Lori Marchand gives a short description about what she does at Western Canada Theatre.

Type or paste the following link into your browser:



<http://youtu.be/4FvzGy-PJCY>

A Sneak Peak at the Set

Below are photos of some parts of the set for *A Christmas Story*.

Ross Nichol is the Set Designer for this show.



A Sneak Peak at Costumes

Cindy Wiebe, the costume designer for A Christmas Carol explains her process as a designer and gives a little look at how she's constructing one of the costumes.

Copy or click the following link into your browser to view this youtube clip:



<http://youtu.be/r7dWZra6eGI>

About the Play

The Plot

Based on a holiday classic film from the 1980s, *A Christmas Story* is the story of little Ralphie Parker's pursuit to get a BB gun for Christmas. While his attempts are creative and entertaining, he often faces the same negative: "You'll shoot your eye out!"

From encountering a bully, receiving tacky Christmas gifts, and antics with his teacher, the audience can't help but be reminded of the concerns and anticipations they once had as a child.

The story is set in the late 1930s in Indiana.

Characters

Ralph (as an adult)

As an adult, Ralph narrates the perspective of himself as a young boy during this particular Christmas season.

Ralphie Parker

The main character, insistent on getting a BB gun for Christmas despite the opinions of the adults in his life. He is 9 years old.

Mother

Ralphie's mother.

The Old Man

Ralphie's father.

Randy

Ralphie's 6-year-old brother.

Miss Shields

Ralphie's teacher.

Flick

Ralphie's friend from school. He gets his tongue stuck to a lamp post.

Schwartz

Ralphie's friend from school.

Esther Jane Alberry

A classmate of Ralphie's.

Helen Weathers

A classmate of Ralphie's.

Scut Farkas

The bully that Ralphie regularly encounters.

Playwright, Jean Shepherd

While his career spanned decades, Jean Shepherd is most commonly known for the film *A Christmas Story*, released in 1983. In this film he narrated and co-scripted, as this story recounted the semi-autobiographical stories. He wore many hats throughout his career: raconteur, radio and TV personality, writer, and actor.

He wrote many plays and films in his lifetime, including one written under a false name. In 1956 he allegedly wrote a book entitled *I, Libertine* to express his annoyance at the way best seller lists were being compiled in the late 1950s. While the book did not in fact exist and neither did the author's name that he invented, it made it onto the New York Times Best Seller list, thus proving his point.



While some may not have heard of Jean Shepherd, comedian Jerry Seinfeld regards Shepherd quite highly, stating that, “He really formed my entire comedic sensibility—I learned how to do comedy from Jean Shepherd.” Also interesting to note that Seinfeld’s third child is named Shepherd.

It has been stated that while poet Shel Silverstein wrote *A Boy Named Sue* as a poem, Shepherd wrote the core of the song that later became a hit by singer Johnny Cash..

Don't Try This at Home



In the movie *A Christmas Story*, Flick is dared to stick his tongue on a freezing cold pole outside of his school. His tongue ends up sticking to the pole and the fire department has to attend and help him get free.

How could that actually happen?

The short answer, according to the Cornell Center for Materials Research, is that the water on your tongue freezes solid between the skin on your tongue and the cold metal. For this to happen the temperature of the metal must be below 32°F / 0°C , otherwise the water cannot freeze. The

lower the temperature of the metal the quicker your tongue will stick.

Interview with Anita Wittenberg (who plays Ralphie's mother)

Q: Before taking on the role in *A Christmas Story*, had you seen the film?

A: Yes, I had seen the film several times through the years. Four years ago I worked with an actress whose son had played Scut Farkas in the film! Yes, I will watch it before rehearsals...but there are quite a few differences between the film and the play, so I know I will find my own version of "mom".

Q: Do you see any connection between yourself as a mother and the mother role you play in this show?

A: Of course I see many connections between the mom in the play and myself as a mom...especially trying to understand and connect with each child as an individual and do my best to love them.

Q: Are there any instances where you can relate to Ralphie's mom?

A: The mom in the play takes a lot of time trying to cajole her youngest son into eating... "Mommy's little piggy!" ... I can relate to that- especially when my children were young.

Q: In the past productions you have been a part of, which has been your favourite?

A: It's hard to name a past production as favourite because I have been so fortunate to be in many different kinds of plays over the years. One highlight was a play called "Enchanted April" based on a book by one of my favourite writers. The play had comedy and drama..so it was everything an actor could want!

Q: What are you most looking forward to?

A: I am most looking forward to working with my son Sebastian! We were in a play together two years ago (I was his mom then too!)...but this play offers us so many fun scenes together!

Q: What is your favourite part of the show?

A: My favourite parts of the show are all the fantasy sequences from Ralphie's imagination! I think everyone, young and old, will find them funny and charming!

Q: If you could be any other character in the play who would you be and why?

A: If I could be any other character in the show, I think I'd be Scut Farkas! It's always fun to play bad guys!!

Interview with Sebastian Tow

(who plays Ralphie)

Q: You must be excited to play such a fun and important role in this play – is this your first time on stage at Western Canada Theatre?

A: No, it's not my first time on the WCT stage... I played "Tiny Tim" in "A Christmas Carol" two years ago.

Q: What do you like about Ralphie's character?

A: I love Ralphie's fantasy dreams and his imagination

Q: Have you seen the movie? Do you plan on seeing the movie, why or why not?

A: I've watched the movie a lot..its one of my favourite Christmas movies. It helps to be familiar with some lines by watching it now too.

Q: What is the best part of being an actor?

A: The best part of being an actor is meeting other actors and having fun!

Q: What is the most challenging part of being an actor?

A: The most challenging part of being an actor is learning lines.. if you have a big part.

Q: Do you think Ralphie should get a BB gun for Christmas? Why or why not?

A: YES! Ralphie should get a BB gun for Christmas because he is so cute he deserves it!!

Q: Do you have any tips for children who are hoping to receive something specific for Christmas?

A: I think if you want something specific for Christmas you should do what Ralphie does and put a lot of hints out there to your parents where they can see them!

Lesson Activity

As an introduction to some lesson activities (or if you're in a pinch for time before taking your class to the show), have a look at the two short clips below. They're sure to get your kids excited or curious about the show. (Above is an interview with the child actor who plays Ralphie.)

Western Canada Theatre introduces *A Christmas Story* in a YouTube clip featuring Ralphie:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opYSmpvnLSE>

A Christmas Story movie trailer:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvMLfSQrHKE>

Lesson Activity

Using the audience etiquette tips included at the beginning of this guide, have a discussion with your students regarding appropriate audience behavior and what their job is at a live show.

Brainstorm criteria for students to keep in mind during the performance.

Attend the performance.

After the performance, ask students to submit a self-assessment of their audience etiquette based on the class-generated criteria.

A simple rubric they could follow:

I was a leader in etiquette and so much more and that is why I got a 4!
I didn't talk during the show and kept my hands to me and that is why I got a 3.
I might have whispered once or twice it's true and that is why I got a 2.
I talked and had a bit too much fun and that is why I got a 1.

Lesson Activity

As a short, fun discussion to have before seeing the show, have a friendly dialogue with your students using the following “Would you rather?” questions.

The questions all relate to the show and are best asked before seeing it.

- Would you rather receive pink bunny pajamas or a giant-sized tacky lamp for Christmas?
- Would you rather be bundled up and too hot in the winter, or not wearing enough clothes and being cold?
- Would you rather eat a turkey dinner that a dog took a bite out of or have Chinese food for Christmas dinner?
- Would you rather accept a triple dog dare from friends to stick your tongue to a frozen pole outside, or say no and risk being called names?
- Would you rather grow up in this time period or in the 1930s?
- Would you rather have a tacky display in your window at home for Christmas or walk to school for a week in a giant snowsuit?
- Would you rather receive have your car break down in the middle of a cold winter or in the middle of a very hot summer’s day?

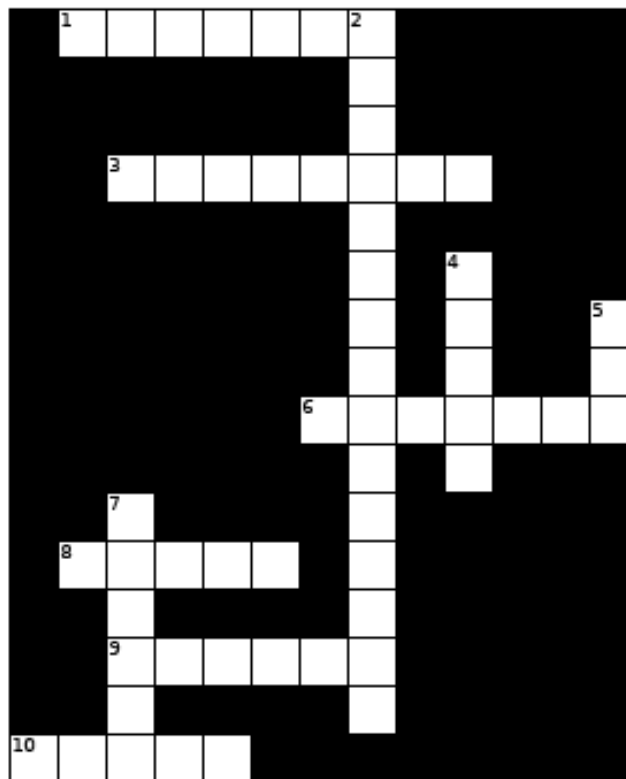
Lesson Activity

Photocopy the “Characters” sheet and the “About the Play” sheet for students and a copy of the crossword. Depending on the age of your students, read through the information pages together, then have students work in partners to solve the crossword.

A Christmas Story

Western Canada Theatre

Answers found on the "Characters" sheet and "About the Play" sheet



- | Across | Down |
|--|--|
| 1 This is where the story takes place | 2 The title of the movie that this play is based on |
| 3 Ralphie's friend from school who double dog dares Flick to stick his tongue on a frozen flagpole | 4 Narrator of the play |
| 6 The main character who tries to get a BB gun for Christmas | 5 Ralphie is often told he will shoot this out if he gets a BB gun for Christmas |
| 7 Ralphie's father is known as this | |
| 8 Get his tongue stuck on a frozen pole | |
| 9 The head of the household | |
| 10 Ralphie's younger brother | |

A Christmas Story

Western Canada Theatre

Answers found on the "Characters" sheet and "About the Play" sheet



- Across
- 1 This is where the story takes place
 - 3 Ralphie's friend from school who double dog dares Flick to stick his tongue on a frozen flagpole
 - 6 The main character who tries to get a BB gun for Christmas
 - 8 Get his tongue stuck on a frozen pole
 - 9 The head of the household
 - 10 Ralphie's younger brother

- Down
- 2 The title of the movie that this play is based on
 - 4 Narrator of the play
 - 5 Ralphie is often told he will shoot this out if he gets a BB gun for Christmas
 - 7 Ralphie's father is known as this

Lesson Activity

As a class, read through the “Characters” sheet and the “About the Play” sheet, then distribute the wordsearch for students to complete.

A Christmas Story

f l i c k y o l z o p
h e i h p l a r t a g
e e g a d l e m r s r
s t o r y u y k a h e
s e p a h b e m w o h
a s t c o r t i h o t
z e o t l s s m c t o
s d l e i h s s s i m
r e p r d n u g b b o
s o h s a r g i l g d
h c l m y d n a r t r

characters
plot
setting
ralphie
parker
mother
old
man
randy
missshields
flick
schwartz
christmas
story
bully
bbgun
holiday
shoot
eye
wish
hope

A Christmas Story

f l i c k y o l z o p
h e i h p l a r t a g
e e g a d l e m r s r
s t o r y u y k a h e
s e p a h b e m w o h
a s t c o r t i h o t
z e o t l s s m c t o
s d l e i h s s s i m
r e p r d n u g b b o
s o h s a r g i l g d
h c l m y d n a r t r

characters
plot
setting
ralphie
parker
mother
old
man
randy
missshields
flick
schwartz
christmas
story
bully
bbgun
holiday
shoot
eye
wish
hope

Lesson Activity

At one point during the play, Randy is being suited up to head to school in the morning. His mother struggles to get into his snow suit and winter gear to brave the cold. The scene evokes a scenario most can connect with. Using the image below, or by viewing that particular scene online (link below image), have students discuss or write about something that happened to them, a story they know, or something it reminded them of.

Read Robert Munsch's *Thomas's Snowsuit* as your connection to this occurrence.



<http://youtu.be/HW4lZoFlh3M>

Lesson Activity

Create a dialogue with your class about a time they might have received a gift that was pretty eccentric and strange. Discuss how they reacted or could have reacted ensuring show gratitude and acknowledging generosity.

After, show your students the picture of little Ralphie (below) in the pajamas he received from an aunty. Ask students to write about how they would handle the situation.



Lesson Activity

Activities outlined below can be delivered in sequence or individually as standalone lessons.

A

Ralphie has a few encounters with a bully during the play. Most of the time he works hard to avoid conflict. At one point in the play, however, he is already emotional about his failed attempts to get a BB gun for Christmas and he gets quite physical and visibly angry with Scut Frakas. Ralphie's younger brother runs to get his mother when he sees that Ralphie is on top of Scut, hitting him in the face.

Create a discussion with your students from each vantage point in a bullying situation.

- How might the bully feel during the situation, after the situation, and days after the incident?
- How might the bystander feel in a bullying situation?
- What can a bystander do when witnessing bullying?
- How might the bullied feel when they have been bullied?
- What can a bullied student do after they have been bullied?
- What should a bullied student do after being bullied?
- What resources are available to you at your school to help you in conflict situations?

B

Show some or all of the following video clips to your students:

The Bully – Kids Help Phone

<http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/AboutUs/Television-PSA-The-Bully.aspx>

The Locker – Kids Help Phone

<http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/AboutUs/The-Locker-Hall.aspx>

The Washroom – Kids Help Phone

<http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/AboutUs/Television-PSA-The-Washroom.aspx>

Alone in the Crowd – Kids Help Phone

<http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/AboutUs/Television-PSA-Alone-in-the-Crowd.aspx>

Cyberbullying – Kids Help Phone

<http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/Teens/AboutUs/Television-PSA-Cyberbullying---The-Bedroom.aspx>

C

In your school's computer lab, have students visit www.kidshelpphone.ca, click on the bullying link, then read more about the five categories they have listed online: Types of Bullying, I'm being bullied, I've seen bullying, I've bullied, and Cyberbullying. Also there are helpful videos for students, games, blogs, and access to anonymous help.

Revisit some of the discussion questions in section A and see if any ideas or perspectives were formed or changed based on viewing the information on www.kidshelpphone.ca.

Lesson Activity (Post Show)

After seeing the live performance at Western Canada Theatre, sign out a copy of *A Christmas Story* on DVD at Movie Mart* in downtown Kamloops.

Engage the class in a dialogue comparing and contrasting the two presentations of the show.

*Movie Mart has moved!

They are located at 444 St. Paul Street

Phone: 250.828.9988

Post Show Discussion Prompts

If that film were remade today, what toy would be more realistic for the main character to want?

In this time period, was the father right in giving Ralphie the BB gun after all? Why or why not? Didn't he almost get his eye shot out by using it?

Have you ever received a terrible Christmas gift? How did you ensure you were polite about receiving it?

How would you handle receiving pink pajamas like Ralphie did?

Would you try Ralphie's strategies, why or why not?

Resources Used

<http://the-reaction.blogspot.ca/2012/02/rediscovering-jean-shepherd.html>

www.Wikipedia.org

<http://splitsider.com/2012/10/more-than-a-christmas-story-remembering-jean-shepherd-radios-great-teller-of-tales/>

www.flicklives.com

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opYSmpvnLSE>

www.kidshelpphone.ca

<http://www.asterling.com/2010/10/where-is-ralphie-from-a-christmas-story-now.html>

<http://begrudginglybb.blogspot.ca/2011/12/christmas-story.html>

<http://blogs.static.mentalfloss.com/blogs/archives/20859.html>

A Christmas Story script