


# Every Christmas Story Ever Told

## Study Guide

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# Every Christmas Story Ever Told

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## How It Came To Be...

Welcome to the Orlando-UCF Shakespeare Festival's 2005-06 season and our PlayFest Premiere production of *Every Christmas Story Ever Told*. This production is called a PlayFest Premiere because it was a part of our 2005 Festival of New Plays. During the Festival of New Plays the playwrights were given the opportunity to work with a trio of professional actors and a very creative director. Through the rehearsal process they refined their vision and, with the assistance of the audience feedback sessions after each public reading, they sculpted their words to fit their vision. The result is a fresh new play that the Orlando community helped create.

## About The Play

As the lights rise on this production, the audience will wonder if they have entered the correct theater, for there sits a man clearly beginning a performance of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. He is quickly interrupted by his two actor buddies who refuse to perform *A Christmas Carol* for the hundredth time in their careers. Claiming that they only do it "for the insurance" the actors lead a mutiny and instead decide to present every Christmas story ever told. Over the course of the next 90 minutes the audience is called upon to help these three comedic actors as they portray as many holiday stories and characters as they can remember. Using crazy costumes, special effects and, of course, their wits, they visit such stories as *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*, *The Gift of the Magi*, *Frosty the Snowman*, Holidays in Sweden, and everything in between.

The style of this play is reminiscent of the popular plays *The Complet Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)* and *The Complete History of America (abridged)*.

## Learning Plan

This LEARNING PLAN is designed for Grades 7 - 12

**Objectives:** To expand students' knowledge and respect for other cultures.

**Standards and Benchmarks:** LA.A.1.4, LA.A.2.4, LA.B.2.4, LA.C.1.4, LA.E.2.4, TH.C.1.4, TH.D.1.4, TH.E.1.4,

**Materials Needed:** pencils, paper, research materials

**Introductory Information:** Most cultures in the world have a well-loved holiday occurring around the winter solstice.

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### Lesson Process:

1. Assign each student a culture, religion or country to research. Have them write a Travel Brochure advertising the beauty and unique points of their holiday celebration. Use the following list or create a list of your own.

Christmas in: Mexico, Holland, Spain, France, Cuba, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Belgium, Brazil, Finland, Australia, The Philippines, Russia, England, South Africa

Other Holidays: Ramadan (Islam), Diwali (India), Kwanza, Hanukah

2. Pitch It! Have each student write, memorize and present a 60-second commercial on their celebration. For variety, invite them to pick one of the characters from the play and present their commercial as that character.

### Post Performance Activity: a pop quiz

The next class period after attending the play, give students 5 minutes in which they must list every holiday reference they can remember from the play. By making the quiz a surprise instead of homework you ensure that there won't be any answer sharing!

For Additional Information on *A Christmas Carol* and Charles Dickens, please see our *A Christmas Carol* study guide posted on our website from the 2003-04 season.