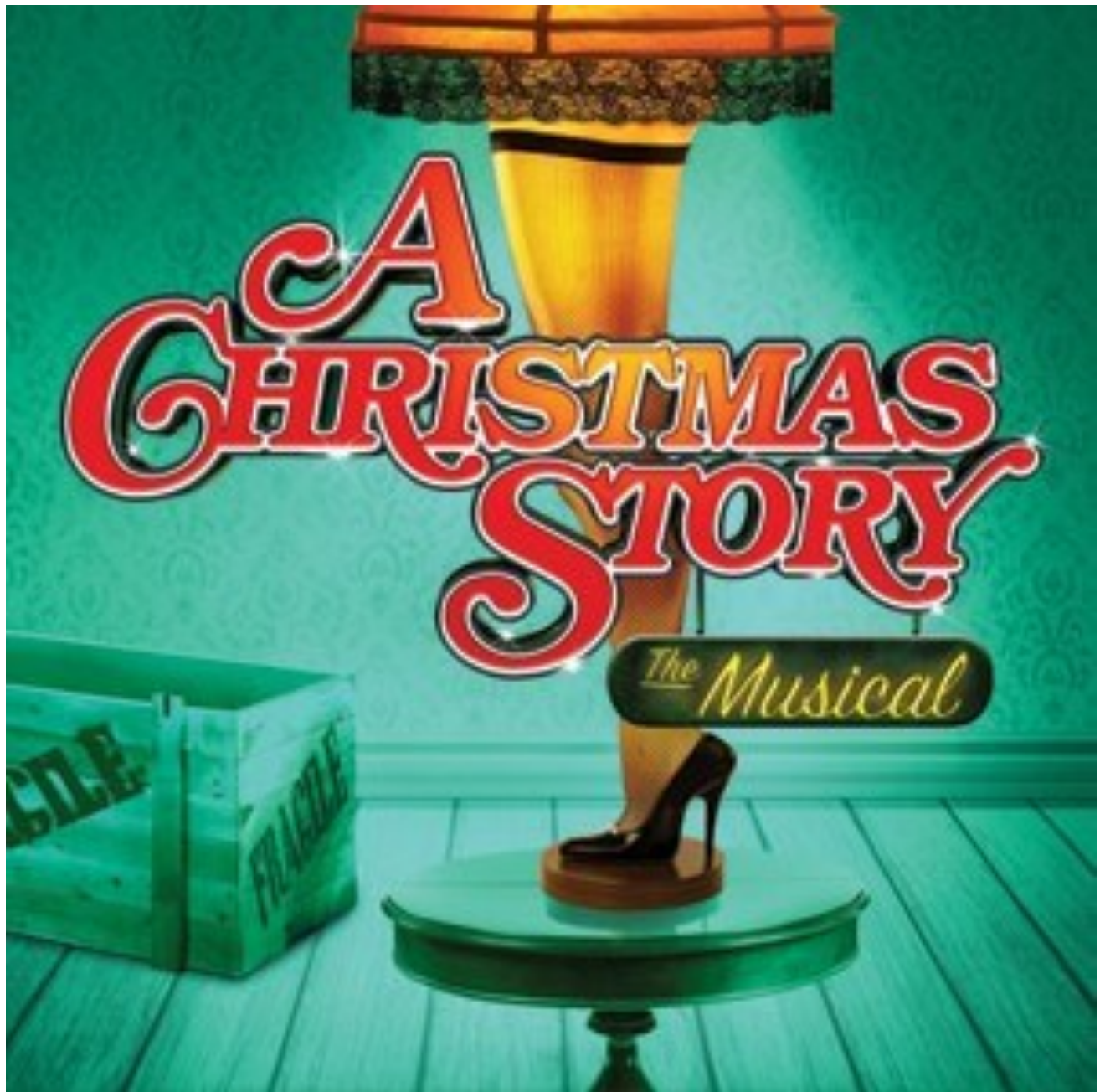
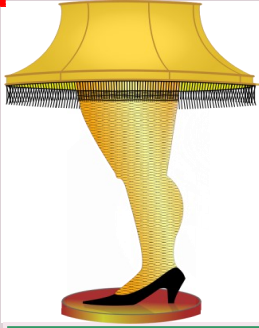




WALNUT STREET THEATRE



STUDY GUIDE



SHOW SYNOPSIS

A *CHRISTMAS STORY*, The Musical is the Broadway musical comedy gift you will cherish all holiday long! In 1940's Indiana, a bespectacled boy named Ralphie has a big imagination and one wish for Christmas—a Red Ryder BB Gun. A kooky leg lamp, outrageous pink bunny pajamas, a cranky department store Santa and a triple-dog-dare to lick a freezing flagpole are just a few of the obstacles that stand between Ralphie and his Christmas dream. Based on the classic 1983 movie, *A CHRISTMAS STORY*, The Musical captures holiday wonder with funny and heartfelt songs, show stopping dancing, delicious wit and a heart of gold. After two triumphant sold-out seasons on Broadway this hilarious musical makes its Philadelphia debut!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BEFORE THE SHOW

- Has anyone ever been to a live play before? How was it different from television or a movie?
- What is the difference between a play and a musical?
- Have you ever seen the movie *A Christmas Story*?
- Have you ever wanted something as a gift more than anything in the whole world? What was it and why did you want it? Did you ever end up getting it? And was it as great as you had imagined?

AFTER THE SHOW

- Did you enjoy this performance? What was your favorite part?
- Who was your favorite character? Why?
- How was the experience seeing *A Christmas Story, the Musical* live different from watching the movie *A Christmas Story*?
- Identify some similarities you noticed between the musical and the movie. Identify some differences.



THEATRE 101



Ever wondered how to put on a play?

There are many different elements that go into putting a show up on its feet. Please review the following with your students:

PLAYWRIGHT The playwright writes the script.

DIRECTOR The director is in charge of orchestrating the entirety of the production. They lead the actors, designers, and production crew to put the show on its feet.

COSTUME What the actors wear during the show.

SCENERY Everything on stage (*except props*) used to represent the place at which action is occurring.

PROPS All physical items on stage with the exception of the scenery. This includes lamps, chairs, pens, paper, books, and more!

LIGHTS Stage lights illuminate the actors so that they look their best. The colors used, focus of the light, and amount of lighting can really set the mood and environment of a scene.

SOUND Everything that you hear during a performance that does not come from the actors.

ACTORS The actors are the people that perform the show onstage.

AUDIENCE The lucky people that get to watch the show. New to being an audience member? Follow these rules and you will be a natural!

AUDIENCE RULES

- ◆ Unlike a movie, the actors are performing in front of you. They can see everything that you do. Talking, sleeping, poking your neighbor, or making noise during the performance distracts the actors and others around you.
- ◆ Don't bring electronics to the performance. The use of cell phones, cameras, computers, tablets, and video game devices are **not allowed**.
- ◆ Use your better judgment on when to laugh, clap, and/or cry during the performance. But don't forget to clap at the end of the show!
- ◆ Stay in your seat during the performance.
- ◆ Make sure you go to the bathroom *before* the show starts.

TRY IT YOURSELF!

DIRECTIONS

Give students a chance to act out a scene from *A Christmas Story, the Musical*. Before jumping into the performance, think about all of the elements that go into a play. Are there any props that we can use to help improve the scene? Where are the characters when this scene is taking place? What might the scenery look like? Also think about Jean's place in the play—how does his character's voice fit into the scene?



SAMPLE SCENE

JEAN: I knew The Old Man would never get me the gun for Christmas. Maybe I'd convince Mom, I only had 23 days left. How could I make the case that the Red Ryder wasn't just a Christmas present – it was a necessity!

RANDY: I want a toy zeppelin that lights up and makes noises.

MOTHER: That's nice . . . Ralphie?

JEAN: I knew the moment called for nuance and nonchalance. But sometimes –

RALPHIE: An official Red Ryder carbine action two-hundred shot range model air rifle with a compass in the stock and a – uh – uh –

JEAN: Oh, no! My tongue short-circuited my brain. I was dead. Even before she opened her mouth, I knew what was coming.

MOTHER: Ralphie – You'll shoot your eye out.

JEAN: It was the classic Mother BB gun block. That deadly phrase uttered many times before by hundreds of mothers was not surmountable by any means known to kid-dom. I had to immediately rebuild the dike.

RALPHIE: Heh, heh . . . I was just kidding. I guess I'd like, uh – some TINKER TOYS.

JEAN: TINKER TOYS! . . . I couldn't believe my own ears. She'd never buy it . . . Who could I turn to next?

MOTHER: Boys, time for school. Ralphie, put on your things. Here, Randy, let me help you.

RANDY: Mom, it's too cold to go to school.

JEAN: Hah . . . There was no question of staying home. It never entered anyone's mind. It was a heartier time, and Miss Shields was a hardier teacher than the present breed. Cold in Hohman was something that was accepted, like air, clouds, parents – a fact of nature, and as such could not be used in any fraudulent scheme to stay out of school. And preparing to go to school was like preparing for extended deep-sea diving.

ACTIVITY: SEEING THE WORLD IN DIFFERENT WAYS on SANTA'S LAP!

IT'S HOT SEAT TIME!

A story can change depending on who tells it. You've gotten to a chance to meet the characters in *A Christmas Story the Musical* and learn about their personality traits throughout the story. Now it's your turn to become the characters by expressing their viewpoints in words and styles that you help to create!

STEP 1: Set up a "Santa's Lap hot seat", which is a single chair in front of your classroom.

STEP 2: One by one, each member of your class should take a turn on Santa's Lap "hot seat". When it's your turn, choose one of the characters from *A Christmas Story the Musical* and introduce yourself in the voice and manner of the character you have chosen.

STEP 3: Find an important event from *A Christmas Story the Musical* and ask the "characters" in the "hot seat" questions about how these events affect them.

FOLLOW-UP

- After students have interviewed several "characters", discuss how the characters' viewpoints differed. How were they alike?

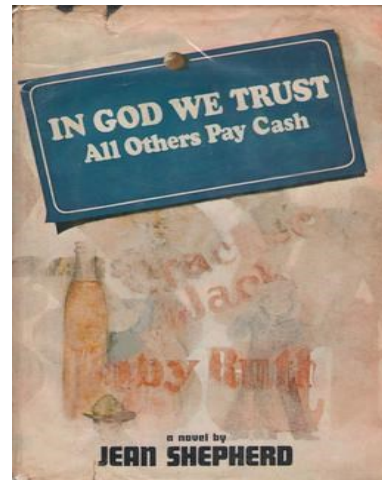
VARIATIONS:

- Instead of acting out the characters' viewpoints, write about them in diary entries.
- How would the characters respond to events in your life? How would they respond to current events happening today?



THE BOOK THAT STARTED IT ALL: *In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash*

In God We Trust: All Others Pay Cash is a novel by American humorist Jean Shepherd first published in October 1966. A best-seller at the time of its publication, it is considered Shepherd's most important published work. *In God We Trust: All Others Pay Cash* was the first book Shepherd wrote, and contained his most popular radio stories. The stories in the book are told by the fictional character Ralph, who has returned to his home town of Hohman as an adult and remembers or relates these stories to his friend, Flick, who runs the bar in which Ralph spends the day. Four of the short stories—"Duel in the Snow", "The Counterfeit Secret Circle Member Gets the Message", "My Old Man and the Lascivious Special Award That Heralded the Birth of Pop Art", and "Grover Dill and the Tasmanian Devil" were used as the basis for the 1983 movie *A Christmas Story*. Some phrases and small elements of other stories were also used for the film. Another short story used for the film, "The Grandstand Passion Play of Delbert and the Bumpus Hounds", appeared in Shepherd's second novel, *Wanda Hickey's Night of Golden Memories*. The five short stories that were used as the basis for the motion picture were collected under the title *A Christmas Story* and published as a stand-alone book in 2003.



Jean Shepherd



"*In God We Trust: All Others Pay Cash* original cover artwork

"In god we trust all others pay cash first edition" by Source. Licensed under Fair use via Wikipedia - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:In_god_we_trust_all_others_pay_cash_first_edition.jpg#/media/File:In_god_we_trust_all_others_pay_cash_first_edition.jpg

STUDENT ACTIVITY: FREEZE! AND JUSTIFY

Flick gets his tongue frozen to a pole in *A Christmas Story, the Musical*, causing him to be stuck for quite a while! Practice your frozen poses and quick thinking with this wacky improvisation game, "Freeze and Justify".

PROCEDURE:

1. Actors walk around the space, constantly changing the shapes of their bodies, exploring unusual poses (consider adding instrumental music to help their imagination)
2. The leader at any point can call out "Freeze!" at which point all the actors freeze in their current pose.
3. The leader calls out a name and asks them to "Justify" their pose. For instance, someone posed with their arm raised high above their head might be "cleaning cobwebs from the ceiling" or "raising his hand in a classroom" or "playing basketball and just threw and 3 pointer".
4. It is the actor's job to imagine a situation in which their pose makes sense.
5. After the leader asks about 3 or 4 kids to Justify, unfreeze everyone and let them walk around again, posing and contorting some more. Repeat!



STUDENT WORKSHEET: YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST

DISCUSSION

Ralphie asks for and receives some pretty wacky gifts for Christmas!

DIRECTIONS

- What would you ask for as a gift if you could be given ANYTHING in the world?
- Draw or write your gift wish list below—be as creative and crazy as you want!

LIKE THE SHOW? LET US KNOW!

Send letters or drawings to:

Walnut Street Theatre

ATTN: Education Department

825 Walnut St.

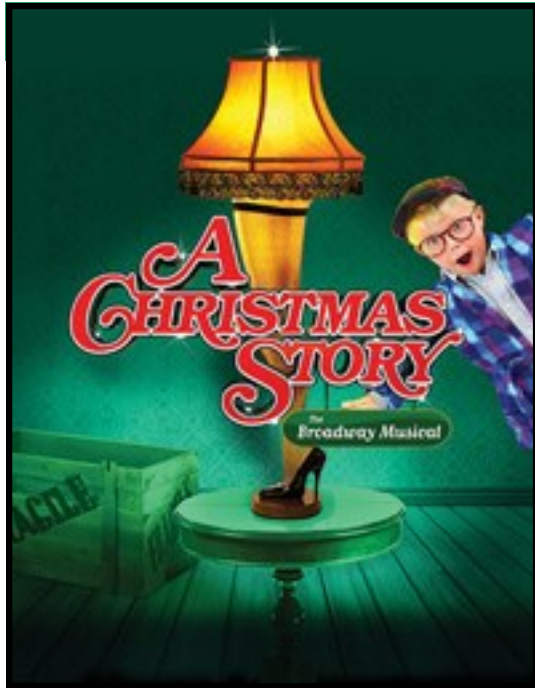
Philadelphia, PA 19107



A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a black border, intended for students to draw or write their Christmas gift wish list.



WALNUT STREET THEATRE



BIOGRAPHY

Walnut Street Theatre has the unique distinction of being the oldest, continuously operating theatre in the English-speaking world, having served Philadelphia audiences for over 200 years!

Today, under the direction of Producing Artistic Director Bernard Havard, Walnut Street Theatre is in its 33rd season as a self-producing, non-profit theatre company. Walnut Street Theatre continues to entertain and enlighten diverse audiences with high quality theatrical programming. With more than 50,000 subscribers, the Walnut is also the most subscribed theatre company in the world!

Last season, 180,000 children and adults were impacted by the Walnut's Education Programs- including our theatre school with classes for kids and adults, Camp Walnut, Our Touring Outreach Program to local schools and our artist in residency programs.

WALNUT STREET THEATRE EDUCATION STAFF

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Thomas Quinn

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Ashley Kerns

EDUCATION PROGRAMS ASSOCIATE

Patrick Shane

EDUCATION PRODUCTION ASSOCIATE

Amanda Gallup

EDUCATION APPRENTICE

Angie Confredo

ACTING APPRENTICES

Jared Calhoun

Devon Fields

Donovan Lockett

Kathryn Miller

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WEB

- **Educational Drama Activities**
<http://dramagames.info/>
- **Walnut Street Theatre Touring Outreach Company**
<http://walnutstreettheatre.org/education/touring.php>

ORIGINAL CREATIVE TEAM

Book by:

Joseph Robinette

Based on the motion picture:

A Christmas Story

and on the book *In God We Trust: All Others Pay*

Cash written by:

Jean Shepherd

Music and lyrics by:

Benj Pasek and Justin Paul

Sponsored by:

Media Partners:



Joseph Robinette

Joseph Robinette is a Tony Award nominee and Drama Desk Award nominee for the libretto of the acclaimed *A Christmas Story, The Musical*. He is the author or co-author of 55 published plays and musicals. His works have been produced at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, The Theater at Madison Square Garden and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City, the 5th Avenue Theatre in Seattle, the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, the BBC in Britain, in all 50 states and in 21 foreign countries. Twelve of his works have been translated into foreign languages, and another five have been anthologized. Robinette collaborated with E.B. White on the authorized stage version of *Charlotte's Web*, and he wrote the musical version with Charles Strouse (*Annie and Bye, Bye, Birdie*). Other dramatizations include *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Anne of Green Gables* and *Debbie Macomber's A Gift to Last* and *The Inn at Rose Harbor*. He is the recipient of the American Alliance for Theatre and Education's Distinguished Play Award for Sarah, Plain and Tall and the Children's Theatre Foundation of America medallion for his "body of dramatic works for family audiences in the United States and beyond." Photo: Summerfield Studios.

Walnut Street Theatre Educational Opportunities!

2015-2016
SEASON

WALNUT STREET THEATRE TOURING OUTREACH

BRING A SHOW TO YOUR SCHOOL!

Oskar and the Big Bully Battle (Bullying) Grades K-6
Only 13 (Choices) Grades 6-9
Freedom Riders (Diversity) Grades 6-9
The Berenstain Bears Hospital Friends (Family & Good Health) Grades pre K-3
The Adventures of Nick Nutrition and his Dog Fiber (Nutrition) Grades K-6

Open a dialogue with students about issues
that affect them!

Call 215-574-3559, ext. 584

WALNUT STREET THEATRE FOR KIDS

BRING YOUR KIDS TO
WALNUT STREET THEATRE!

Shrek the Musical Jr. (September/October)
Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (December)
Zombie in Love (January/February)
Freckle Face Strawberry the Musical (April)
Miss Nelson Has a Field Day (June)

Tickets just \$10-\$16

Read the books, then see the stories LIVE!

Call 215-574-3559, ext. 504



The Theatre School at WALNUT STREET THEATRE

CLASSES FOR KIDS, STUDENTS
AND ADULTS

For students from 5 to 105! Great for networking,
providing a creative outlet and professional training!

Find your inner star at the Walnut!
Call 215-574-3550, ext. 510

RESIDENCY PROGRAM

LET US DESIGN A DRAMATIC
AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
FOR YOUR SCHOOL!

We support teachers' objectives with personalized
programs designed that meet your needs and budget.

Call 215-574-3550, ext. 511

WHEN WE PLAY, LEARNING HAPPENS!