

Photo by T. Charles Erickson.

Going to See *A Christmas Carol*

Ford's Theatre: Sensory-Friendly Performance Pre-Visit Story

Ford's Theatre



Photo of Ford's Theatre ©Maxwell MacKenzie.

I am going to Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., to see a play called *A Christmas Carol*.

A Christmas Carol



Photo of the company of *A Christmas Carol* by Scott Suchman.

The play *A Christmas Carol* is based on the novel by Charles Dickens. The play tells a story with actors talking, singing and dancing on the stage.

In the play, the people are acting out a story about a man named Ebenezer Scrooge, who is transformed from being a selfish and unkind person to a very loving and selfless person.

Stage



Photo by T. Charles Erickson.

The things onstage (called "the set") for *A Christmas Carol* will change many times during the show.

I will see an office, a bedroom, inside different homes, a graveyard, street scenes and other places in the show's past, present and future.

Music



Photo of the company of *A Christmas Carol* by Scott Suchman.

There will be recorded music playing throughout the show.

The music can be both loud and soft at times.

The actors will sing songs with the music.

Special Effects



Photo of Joe Mallon and Craig Wallace by Carol Rosegg.

The show has many colorful lights.

Sometimes, there are spotlights that move around on stage.

When the Ghost of Jacob Marley and the Ghost of Christmas Future appear, there is stage fog, flashes of light and loud sounds of thunder.

Take a look at the behind-the-scenes resource to learn more about special effects in this production.

A Ghost Story of Christmas



Photo of Craig Wallace by Scott Suchman.

In order for Scrooge to learn his lesson, he must be visited by ghosts.

Sometimes the ghosts are called "spirits."

Some of the ghosts look scary and some of the ghosts look friendly. The ghosts are not real. They are actors playing pretend and helping to tell the story.

Past, Present and Future

The story of *A Christmas Carol* is set in the 1850s, but it doesn't all take place in the 1850s. Scrooge visits his past, present and future with the help of three ghosts. When Scrooge is with the ghosts, none of the other characters can see or hear him.



Photo of Justine "Icy" Moral and Craig Wallace by Scott Suchman.

When he visits the past, he is seeing things he remembers when he was young. They've already happened to him so he cannot change them.



Photo of Craig Wallace and Erin Weaver by Scott Suchman.

When Scrooge visits the present, he sees people and events happening at the same time in different places in the city. Even though the characters cannot see or hear him, the Ghost of Christmas Present does a little magic to help Scrooge connect with the people he visits.



Photo by T. Charles Erickson.

When Scrooge visits the future, he is seeing things that could happen based on all the choices he's made in his life. The future has not happened yet; it can be changed.

The Cratchit Family



Photo of the company of *A Christmas Carol* by Mishaal Hussain.

Bob Cratchit works for Scrooge.

His son, Tiny Tim, is very sick and uses a crutch to walk.

The Cratchits love each other very much.

The Ghost of Jacob Marley



Photo of Jonny Atkinson by Scott Suchman.

Jacob Marley is the first ghost to visit Scrooge. He is a very scary ghost.

He is covered in heavy chains, representing how he was greedy and selfish when he was alive. It is a terrible punishment.

Marley performs magic to get Scrooge to believe him. This part can be loud and scary, but the actors are just pretending and it is part of telling the story.

The Ghost of Marley scene is about six minutes long.

The Ghost of Christmas Past



Photo of Justine "Icy" Moral and Craig Wallace by Scott Suchman.

The Ghost of Christmas Past is the first Christmas spirit that Scrooge meets.

She is very beautiful and flies around the stage.

She shows him Christmases from his past.

He sees his sister, Fan, his first employer, Mr. Fezziwig and the woman he used to love, Belle.

The Ghost of Christmas Present



Photo of Erin Weaver by Scott Suchman.

The Ghost of Christmas Present is the second Christmas spirit Scrooge meets.

She is jolly and friendly to everyone.

She shows him what Christmas Day is like in the present.

They visit Scrooge's nephew Fred and the Cratchit Family.

The Ghost of Christmas Future



Photo by T. Charles Erickson.

The Ghost of Christmas Future is the final Christmas spirit Scrooge meets.

This spirit is also called "The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come."

They see people Scrooge knows and they visit a graveyard.

The ghost flies and does not speak. This spirit can be very scary. The ghost is an actor pretending to be a ghost.

The Ghost of Christmas Future is on stage for about 12 minutes.

Redemption



Photo of Craig Wallace by Scott Suchman.

At the beginning of the story, Scrooge is mean and selfish. But the three Christmas spirits teach him the importance of love and kindness.

Scrooge is changed at the end of the story.

He keeps Christmas in his heart all year long and not just on Christmas Day.

Scrooge helps Tiny Tim and the Cratchit family.

He shares love and kindness with everyone around him.

GOING TO SEE *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* – CREDITS

All stage photos, unless otherwise noted, are from the Ford's Theatre 2023 and 2025 productions of *A Christmas Carol*.

The pre-visit materials were developed by:

Ford's Theatre Access Committee

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