

December 1-18, 2015



A
**Charlie
Brown**
Christmas

**FIRST
STAGE**
Transforming Lives Through Theater

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A Note to Teachers and Parents

A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS

Dear Educators and Parents,

We are overjoyed to welcome in the holiday season with the beloved Peanuts characters in the modern classic, A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS. Charlie Brown struggles to find the true meaning of Christmas and his friends try to help him uncover his holiday spirit. Finally, through acts of kindness and goodwill, Charlie Brown discovers what Christmas means to him.

Enclosed in this Enrichment Guide is a range of materials and activities intended to help you discover connections within the play through the curricula. It is our hope that you will use the experience of attending the theater and seeing A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS with your students as a teaching tool. As educators, you know best the needs and abilities of your students. Use this guide to best serve your children – pick and choose, or adapt any of these suggestions for discussions or activities.

Enjoy the show!

Julia Magnasco
Education Director
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First Stage Policies

- The use of recording equipment and cameras are not permitted during the performance.
- Food, drink, candy and gum are not permitted during the performance.
- Electronic devices are not permitted in the theater space.
- Should a student become ill, suffer an injury or have another problem, please escort him or her out of the theater space.
- In the unlikely event of a general emergency, the theater lights will go on and the stage manager will come on stage to inform the audience of the problem. Remain in your seats, visually locate the nearest exit and wait for the stage manager to guide your group from the theater.

Seating for people with special needs: If you have special seating needs for any student(s) and did not indicate your need when you ordered your tickets, please call our Assistant Patron Services Manager at (414) 267-2962. Our knowledge of your needs will enable us to serve you better upon your arrival to the theater.

Setting the Stage Synopsis

All of the children are playing outside; some are skating, some are making snowballs, and even Charlie Brown is trying to have fun. He talks to Linus about how he feels there must be something wrong with him: he doesn't feel happy during the Christmas season. After Linus leaves, Charlie Brown checks the mail and finds the mailbox empty. No one has sent him a Christmas card.

Later, Schroeder, Patty, Lucy and Linus play outside in the snow, catching snowflakes on their tongues. They try hitting a can off of a wall with snowballs, but only Linus and his blanket are successful.

Charlie Brown comes across the kids and visits Lucy's psychiatric booth. She tries to figure out what Charlie Brown is afraid of and determines that he is afraid of everything. Charlie Brown admits that he always feels let down at Christmas. Lucy suggests that he should direct the Christmas play in order to get more involved at Christmastime.

On his way to rehearsal, Charlie Brown sees Snoopy decorating his doghouse for a contest and laments about the commercialization of Christmas. He runs into

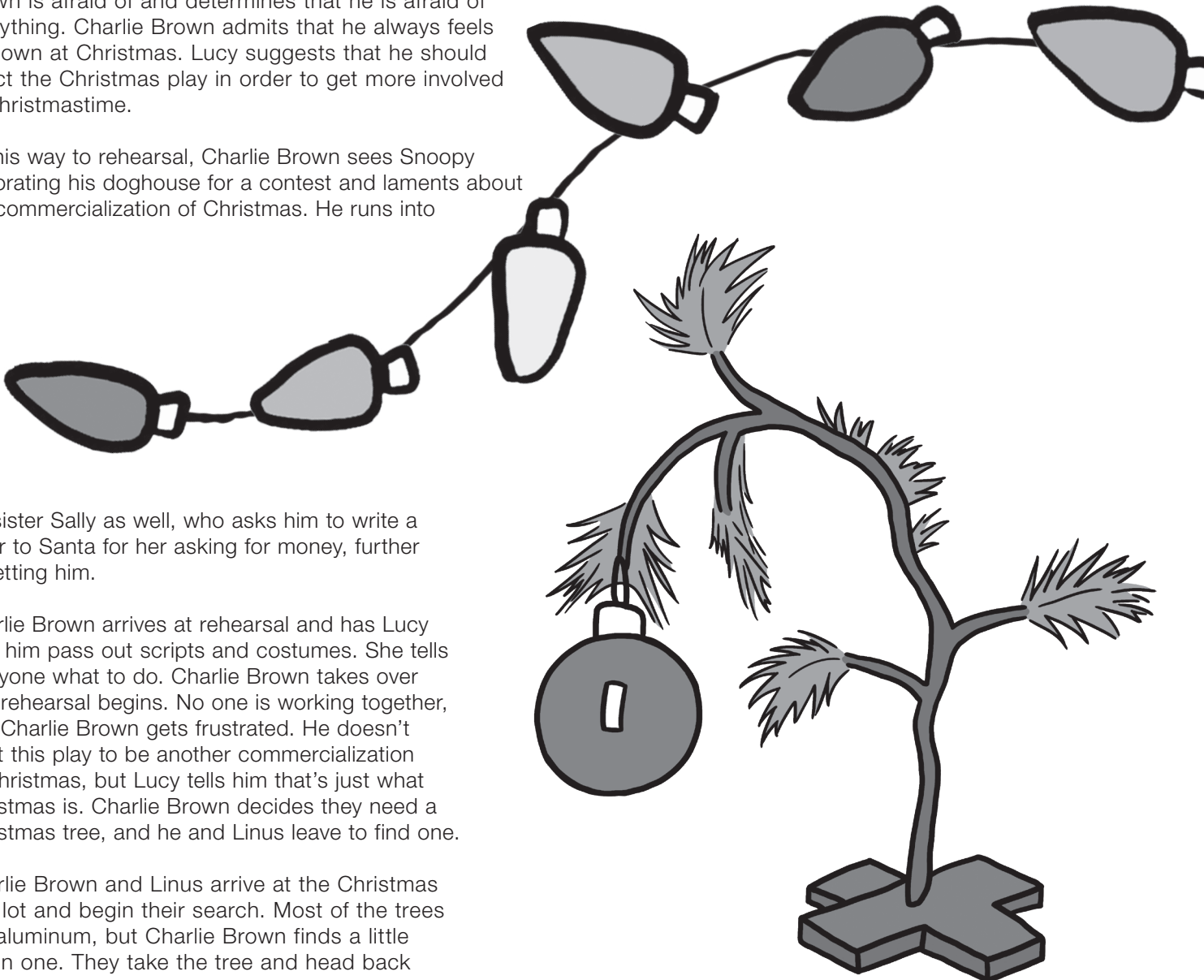
his sister Sally as well, who asks him to write a letter to Santa for her asking for money, further upsetting him.

Charlie Brown arrives at rehearsal and has Lucy help him pass out scripts and costumes. She tells everyone what to do. Charlie Brown takes over and rehearsal begins. No one is working together, and Charlie Brown gets frustrated. He doesn't want this play to be another commercialization of Christmas, but Lucy tells him that's just what Christmas is. Charlie Brown decides they need a Christmas tree, and he and Linus leave to find one.

Charlie Brown and Linus arrive at the Christmas tree lot and begin their search. Most of the trees are aluminum, but Charlie Brown finds a little green one. They take the tree and head back

to rehearsal. When they arrive, the other kids call him stupid and hopeless for getting such a little, sad tree. Charlie Brown asks again what Christmas is all about, and Linus tells him the story of Christmas and the birth of baby Jesus.

Charlie Brown is inspired by Linus and takes the tree home to decorate it for the play. The first ornament he puts on it tips the tree over and Charlie Brown abandons his project, sure that everything he touches gets ruined. Linus and the rest of the kids come and finish decorating the tree for Charlie Brown, surprising him and finally making him smile on Christmas.



About the Author: Charles M. Schulz

Taken directly from <http://schulzmuseum.org/about-the-man/schulz-biography/>

The poetry of Schulz's life began two days after he was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on November 26, 1922, when an uncle nicknamed him "Sparky" after the horse Spark Plug from the Barney Google comic strip. Sparky's father, Carl, was of German heritage and his mother, Dena, came from a large Norwegian family; the family made their home in St. Paul, where Carl worked as a barber. Throughout his youth, father and son shared a Sunday morning ritual reading the funnies; Sparky was fascinated with strips like Skippy, Mickey Mouse, and Popeye. In his deepest desires, he always knew he wanted to be a cartoonist, and seeing the 1937 publication of his drawing of Spike, the family dog, in the nationally-syndicated Ripley's Believe it or Not newspaper feature was a proud moment in the young teen's life. He took his artistic studies to a new level when, as a senior in high school and with the encouragement of his mother, he completed a correspondence cartoon course with the Federal School of Applied Cartooning (now Art Instruction Schools).

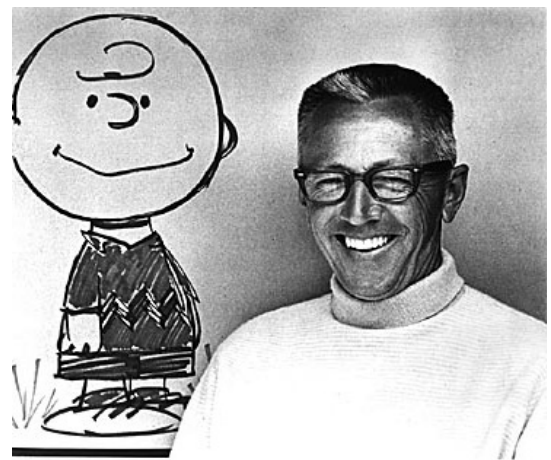
As Schulz continued to study and hone his artistic style from the late 1920s through the 1940s, the genre of comic art experienced a great shift. Newspaper editors in the late 1940s and 50s promoted a post-War minimalist model, pushing their cartoonists to shrink strip size, minimize pen strokes, and sharpen their humor with daily gags and cerebral humor for an ever-increasingly educated audience. Schulz's dry, intellectual, and self-effacing humor was a natural fit for the evolving cultural standards of the mid-20th century comics.

Two monumental events happened within days of each other in 1943 that profoundly affected the rest of Schulz's life; his mother, to whom he was very close, passed away at age 50 from cervical cancer; and he boarded a troop train to begin his army career in Camp Campbell, Kentucky. Though Schulz remained proud of his achievements and leadership roles in the army for the rest of his life, this period of time haunted him with the dual experiences of the loss of his mother and realities of war.

After returning from the war in the fall of 1945, Schulz settled with his father in an apartment over Carl's barbershop in St. Paul, determined to realize his passion of becoming a professional cartoonist. He found employment at his alma mater, Art Instruction, sold intermittent one-panel cartoons to The Saturday Evening Post, and enjoyed a three-year run of his weekly panel comic, Li'l Folks, in the local St. Paul Pioneer Press. These early published cartoons focused on concise drawings of precocious children with large heads who interacted with words and actions well beyond their years. Schulz was honing his skills for the national market. The first Peanuts strip appeared on October 2, 1950, in seven newspapers nationwide. Although being a professional cartoonist was Schulz's life-long dream, at 27-years old, he never could have foreseen the longevity and global impact of his seemingly-simple four-panel creation.

The continuing popular appeal of Peanuts stems, in large part, from Schulz's ability to portray his observations and connect to his audience in ways that many other strips cannot. As each character's personality has been fleshed out over the years, readers came to intimately understand Linus' attachment to his Security Blanket, Charlie Brown's heartache over the Little Red-Haired Girl, Schroeder's devotion to Beethoven, Peppermint Patty's prowess in sports and failure in the classroom, and Lucy's knowledge of ... well ... everything. The rise in Snoopy's popularity in the 1960s had a direct correlation to his evolution from a four-legged pet to a two-legged, highly-imaginative and equal character in the strip, which allowed Schulz to take his storylines in increasingly new directions.

Schulz's understated genius lay in his ability to keep his well-known and comfortable characters fresh enough to attract new readers while keeping his current audience coming back for more. His humor was at times observational, wry, sarcastic, nostalgic, bittersweet, silly, and melancholy, with occasional flights of fancy and suspension of reality thrown in from time to time. When Schulz announced his retirement in December 1999, the Peanuts comic strip was syndicated in over 2,600 newspapers worldwide, with book collections translated in over 25 languages. He has been awarded with the highest honors from his fellow cartoonists, received Emmy Awards for his animated specials, been recognized and lauded by the U.S. and foreign governments, had NASA spacecraft named after his characters, and inspired a concert performance at Carnegie Hall. And still today, the Peanuts Gang continues to entertain and inspire the young and the young at heart.



<http://www.movdata.net/charles-m-schulz-books.html>

Recommended Reading

Charlie Brown's Christmas Stocking, by Charles M. Schulz

Happiness is a Warm Blanket, Charlie Brown, by Charles M. Schulz

The Joy of Peanuts Christmas: 50 Years of Holiday Comics, by Charles M. Schulz, Don Hall

Schulz and Peanuts: A Biography, by David Michaelis

The Complete Peanuts, by Charles M. Schulz

How the Grinch Stole Christmas, by Dr. Seuss

The Little Christmas Tree, by R.A. Herman

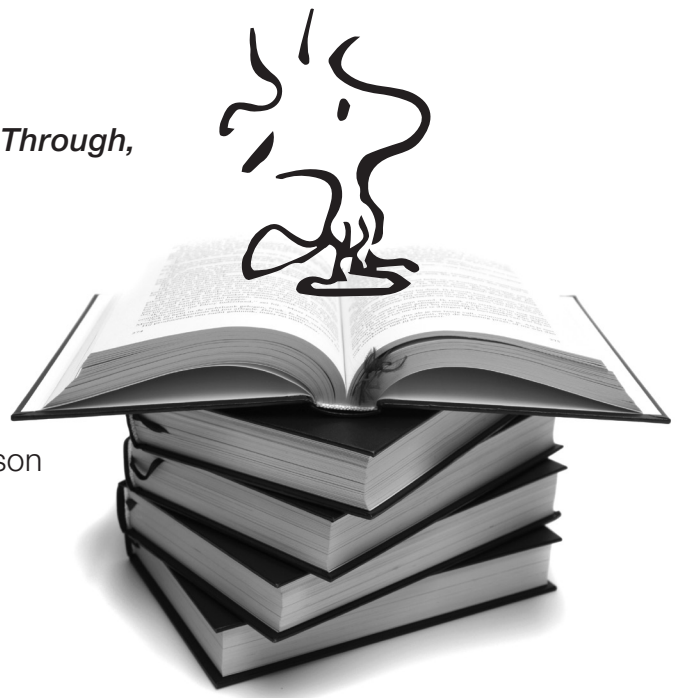
Peanuts: Be Joyful - Peanuts Wisdom to Carry You Through,
by Charles M. Schulz

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, by Rick Bunsen

Polar Express, by Chris van Allsburg

A Wish to be a Christmas Tree, by Colleen Monroe

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever, by Barbara Robinson



Pre-Show questions

1. *A Charlie Brown Christmas* is a made for TV special that some families have a tradition of watching every holiday season. What are some traditions you have with your family? Can you think of a new tradition to try this year?
2. Charlie Brown can't seem to catch the holiday spirit. What do you do to get you in the holiday mood?
3. Charlie Brown doesn't think the true meaning of Christmas can be bought at a store. What do you think is the true meaning of Christmas?
4. Charlie Brown is feeling down and out, and his friends try to cheer him up. How do you help cheer up friends when they are feeling blue?

The Perfect Classroom Christmas Tree

Art Classroom Activity

Adapted from: <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/christmas/handtree/>

Charlie Brown finds his perfect Christmas tree – a tree that he felt needed a home and needed him. Have your students work together to make a Christmas tree from their handprints – a tree that symbolizes how when we work together we can create something truly special.

MATERIALS

- green construction paper
- one piece of brown construction paper (for the tree trunk)
- one piece of yellow construction paper (for the star)
- a large piece of butcher paper to mount the Christmas tree on
- Pencils
- Scissors
- Glue
- Optional: Glitter, glitter glue, or paper ornaments to glue on the tree

ACTIVITY

1. Have each student trace their hand on a piece of green construction paper. Cut out the hand print. Fold the wrist over.
2. Make a lot of paper hands (the number you'll need depends on the size of your tree), and make sure each student's name is on the back of each of their hand prints.
 - a. You may wish to have each student write a Christmas wish for themselves on one paper hand, and a Christmas wish for the world on the other.
3. Draw a tree shape on a large piece of paper.
4. Cut out a small rectangle of dark brown paper (this will be the tree trunk). Glue the rectangle below the tree.
5. Glue the hand prints together in a tree shape, gluing the folded part of the wrist to the background. Start at the bottom of the tree. Starting with the second row, make the fingers overlap the next hand a little bit.
6. Cut out a yellow star for the top of the tree. Glue it on the tree.
7. Optional: Decorate your tree with glitter, glitter glue, or paper ornaments.



The Science of Snowflakes

Science Classroom Activities

Adapted from: <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/kids/kids.htm>

Snowflake Watching

There are so many different shapes and sizes of snowflakes! Living in Wisconsin, we have the opportunity to observe snowflakes outside in the winter. When it begins to snow, go outside with a dark sheet of construction paper and allow snowflakes to fall on the sheet. Using a magnifying glass and the Types of Snowflakes Guide, see if throughout the winter months you can identify one of each snowflake type.

				
Simple Prisms	Solid Columns	Sheaths	Scrolls on Plates	Triangular Forms
				
Hexagonal Plates	Hollow Columns	Cups	Columns on Plates	12-branched Stars
				
Stellar Plates	Bullet Rosettes	Capped Columns	Split Plates & Stars	Radiating Plates
				
Sectored Plates	Isolated Bullets	Multiply Capped Columns	Skeletal Forms	Radiating Dendrites
				
Simple Stars	Simple Needles	Capped Bullets	Twin Columns	Irregulars
				
Stellar Dendrites	Needle Clusters	Double Plates	Arrowhead Twins	Rimed
				
Fernlike Stellar Dendrites	Crossed Needles	Hollow Plates	Crossed Plates	Graupel

Types of Snowflakes

The Science of Snowflakes

Science Classroom Activities

Adapted from: <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/kids/kids.htm>

Snowflake Construction

Cutting snowflakes out of paper is a classic winter activity. Snowflakes in nature have six sides, and luckily folding a 6-sided snowflake is very easy! The trick is all in how you fold it before you cut.

1. Begin with a square piece of paper.

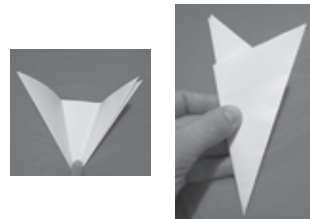
2. Fold the square of paper diagonally to make a triangle.



3. Fold this larger triangle in half to make a smaller triangle.



4. Point the triangle tip down to become the bottom of your paper. Fold the smaller triangle into thirds.



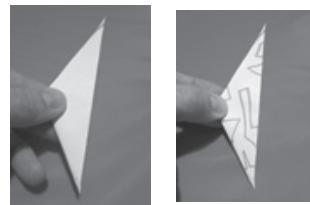
5. Cut through all the layers of paper at an angle close to that drawn in orange.



6. Throw away the top half.



7. Cut fun designs out of the bottom half.



8. Carefully unfold and display your masterpiece!



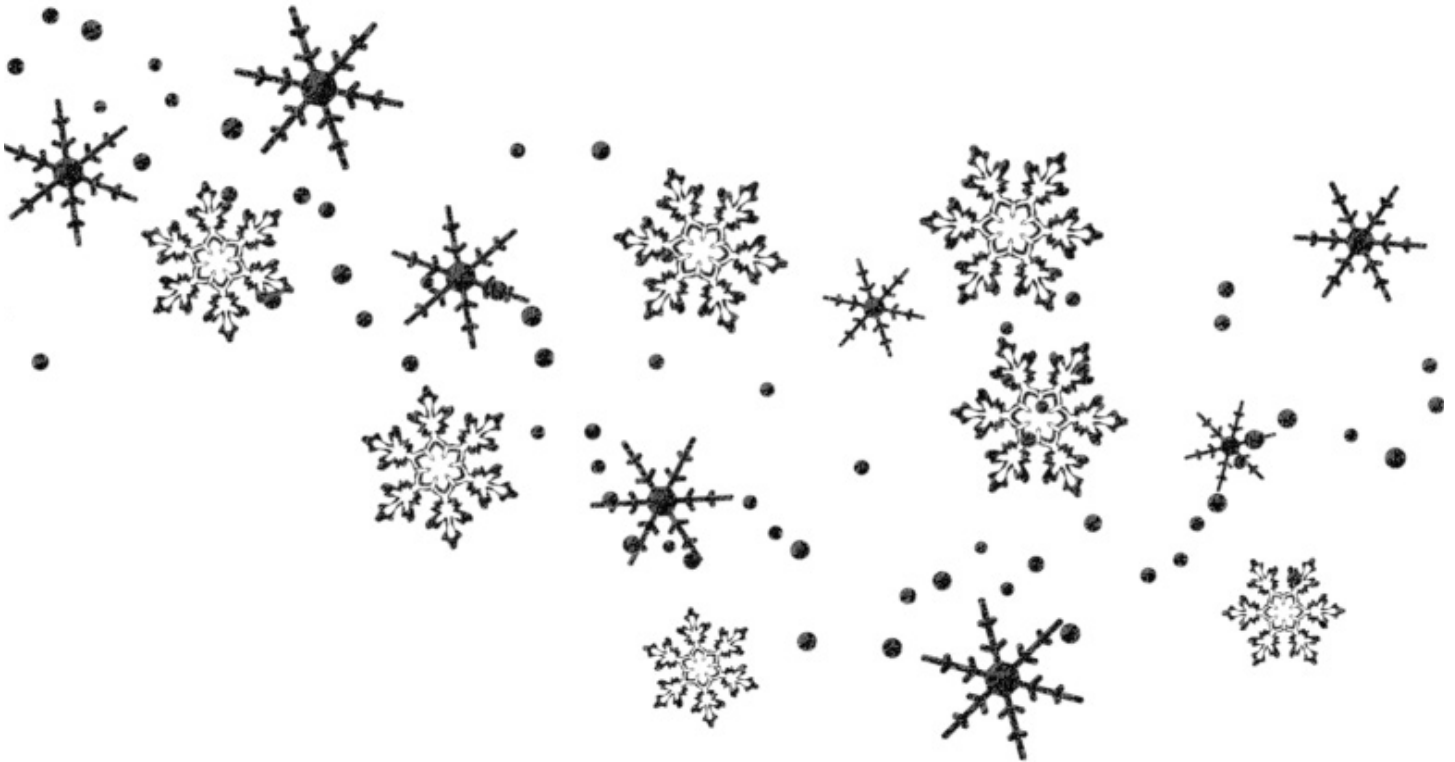
Unique Snowflakes

Language Arts/Emotional Wellbeing Classroom Activity

Every snowflake is unique, and every person is too!

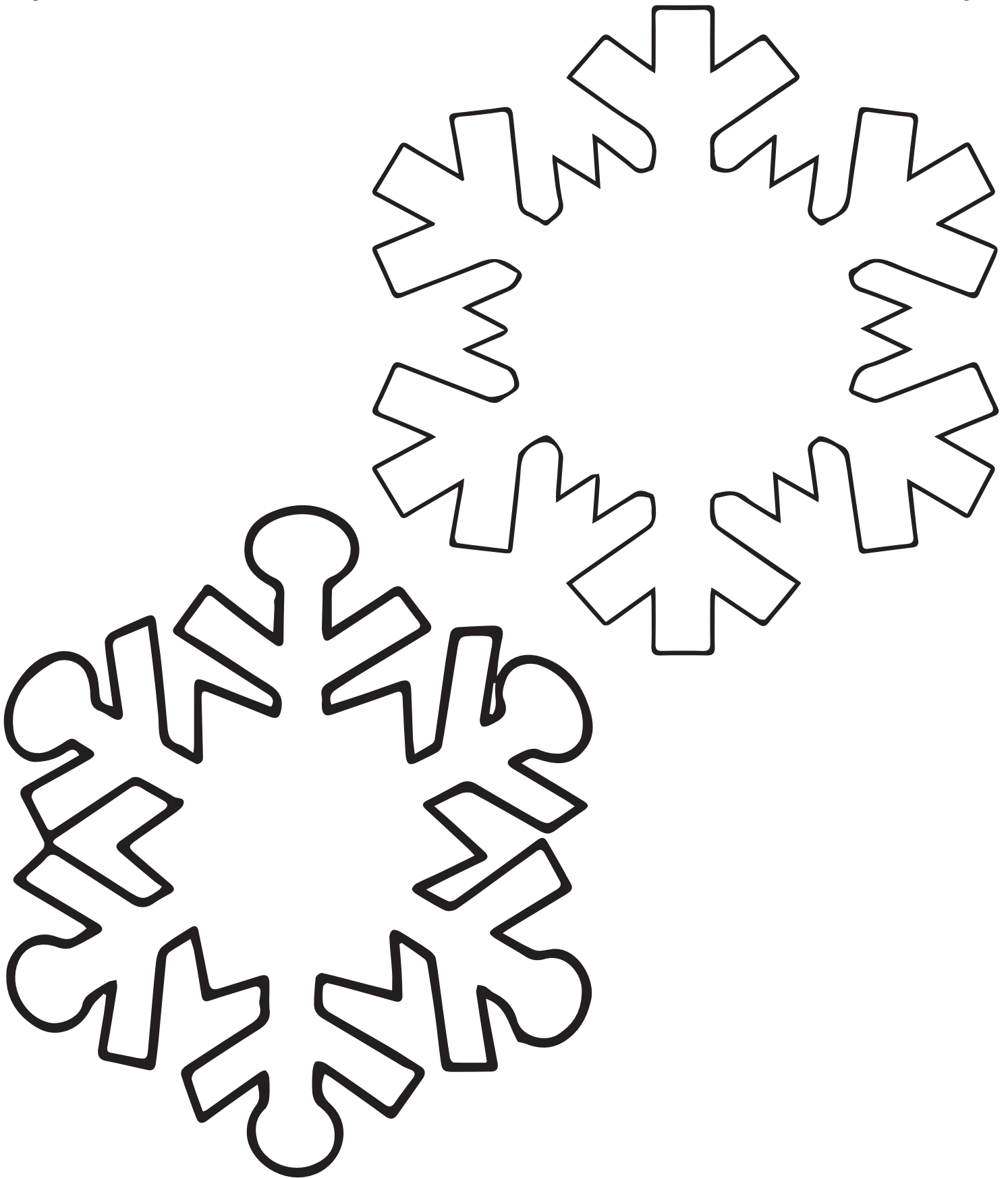
ACTIVITY

1. As a class, discuss what it means to be unique, and come up with a definition for the word. Continue by exploring how the characters in Charlie Brown are each unique and special. It may be related to their personality, physical make up, heritage, and family, or something they are especially good at.
2. Make copies of the snowflake templates found on the next page and have students cut them out in class. Each student should receive two snowflakes.
3. In a hat or bowl, place slips of paper with each students name. Make two copies of each students name to place in the bowl.
4. Direct the students to write a positive message about what makes the students they chose unique on each snowflake. There should be two positive thought snowflakes for each student.
5. Hang the snowflakes up around the classroom. Every day, the students will see something nice about themselves and feel good that they gave that feeling to someone else.



Unique Snowflakes: Templates

Language Arts/Emotional Wellbeing Classroom Activity



O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree!

Christmas Tree Traditions. Classroom Information.

Adapted from <http://www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas-trees> and <http://www.realchristmastrees.org/dnn/Education/QuickTreeFacts.aspx>

- Germany is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition as we now know it in the 16th century when devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes.
- Christmas trees have been sold in the United States since about 1850.
- The tallest living Christmas tree is believed to be the 122 foot, 91 year old Douglas fir tree in the town of Woodinville, Washington.
- Christmas trees take 6-8 years to mature fully.
- They are grown in all 50 states, including Hawaii and Alaska.
- 98% of all Christmas trees are grown on farms.
- 80% of artificial trees worldwide are made in China.
- Real trees are a renewable, recyclable source. There are more than 4,000 local Christmas tree recycling programs throughout the United States.
- 77 million Christmas trees are planted each year.
- 100,000 people are employed in the Christmas tree industry.
- A Christmas tree is usually an evergreen, such as a spruce, pine, or fir tree.
- Oregon, Michigan, Wisconsin, Washington, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina are the top Christmas tree producing states.



The Doctor is In

Math Classroom Activity

**Lucy needs some help counting the money from her psychiatric help booth.
Use the worksheet below to calculate how much she has made so far.**

***She charges a nickel a visit**

Math Worksheet

If Lucy has 60 nickels, how many dollars would she have? _____

How many dimes? _____

If Lucy had 45 nickels last year and 35 dimes, how many dollars does she have?

If Lucy had 60 nickels and gave 18 to Linus to buy a new blanket,
how many dimes would she have? _____

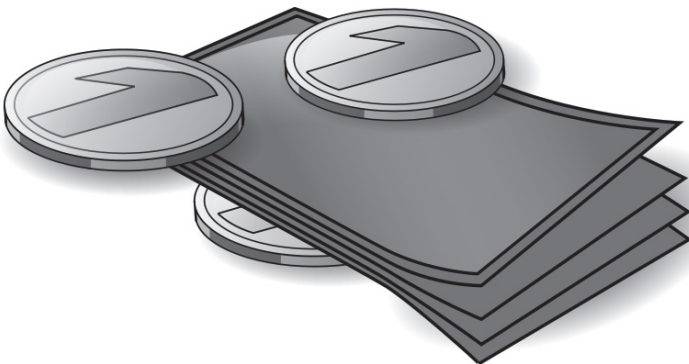
If Lucy had 60 nickels, gave away 14, and received 2 dimes, how much money does she have?

If Charlie Brown visited Lucy twice a week each week of the year (52 weeks total), how much money
would Lucy get just from Charlie Brown? _____

If Lucy's booth has 12 visits per week, how much can she make per week? _____

If Lucy ends up with 125 nickels, how many quarters does she have? _____

How many dollars? _____



Create a Comic Strip

Art/Language Arts Classroom Activity

A comic strip is a form of storytelling using a sequence of pictures, and sometimes captions. Charles Schulz used speech and thought bubbles along with his drawings to tell a short story each week. He slowly developed well-loved characters over the course of many years.

Take a look at one of his strips below. As a class, make some observations about what you notice. Then, using the template below, have each student create their own comic strip, either using Peanuts characters or a completely new idea. Encourage at least 3 thought or speech bubbles to help tell the story. More inspiration and Peanut strips can be found here: <http://www.peanuts.com/comics/>



Charades with Snoopy

Theatre/Movement Classroom Activity

What makes the Charlie Brown stories unique is the lack of dialogue. A lot of the story is told through movement and sometimes lazzi. Lazzi is an Italian word meaning 'comedic action onstage.' Snoopy, Charlie Brown's dog, tells his stories though lazzi, because he cannot speak. His action sequences tend to be very funny: Snoopy and Woodstock (his bird friend) have many comic moments together.

Start by introducing pantomime to the students. Pantomime expresses meaning through gesture when one cannot speak and does not have any props. Play a version of Simon Says where the students must pantomime whatever Simon tells them to do. This could include brushing teeth, putting on clothes, eating cereal, jumping rope, etc.

Divide the class into small groups and give each a task or fairy tale from the following list to act out. No words, only movement and pantomime.

- Planting a large garden
- Building a snowman
- Baking a cake
- Decorating for Christmas
- Cinderella
- Hansel and Gretel
- Little Red Riding Hood
- Goldilocks and the Three Bears
- Sleeping Beauty
- Jack and the Beanstalk

Give each group 10 minutes to plan. Then, act the scenarios out for each other and have the other groups try to guess what is happening.



The Gift of Giving

Philanthropy Classroom Activity

Adapted from <http://www.learningtogive.org/lessons/npd/6-8%20-%20NPD%20Lesson.pdf>

Charlie Brown is sad about the commercialization of Christmas. In the end, he is cheered up not by money or material things, but by the generosity of his friends.

1. Discuss as a class what 'philanthropy' means. Write on the board the suggestions of a definition. What are some characteristics of people that are philanthropic? What does 'nonprofit' mean? What nonprofit organizations do you know of?
2. Start to connect these words to the students' lives. Do you volunteer anywhere? Do your parents volunteer? How are you generous? What can you share with others? How can these qualities be applied in school? At home? In the community? Make a list on the board of all the discussed ideas.
3. Tell the class that they will be philanthropic this holiday season. Brainstorm a list of activities that don't cost (a lot) of money to do. This could include:
 - Making holiday cards for a children's hospital
 - Making holiday cards for a veteran's hospital
 - An environmental clean up (maybe planned now and taking place in the spring)
 - Starting a school wide book/food/clothing drive.
 - Starting/enhancing a school wide recycling program
 - Hold a penny drive to collect money and donate to a local charity
 - And many many more!
4. Have one of these ideas, or new ideas from the students become a reality.
5. As a reflection, talk about the community we live in today. What is good about the community? What can we do to improve our community? What do you want our community to be like or look like in 10 years? Discuss how philanthropy and volunteerism can help make these changes, and how being philanthropic can make you feel.



Choosing Words Carefully

Social and Emotional Wellbeing/Language Arts Classroom Activity

Taken directly from http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/03/p294-03.shtml

What we say and how we say it can have a large impact on someone else.

MATERIALS

Construction paper (bright color; green or blue is best)

LESSON

1. Before the lesson, trace and cut out a life size (or close to) outline of a person. To avoid gender or race specific figures, use a more neutral color such as green or blue.
2. Gather students and introduce them to their new 'classmate.' Explain that some students have a difficult time fitting in; they might be new to a group where friendship bonds have already been formed, they might be shy, or they might be self-conscious about themselves.
3. Ask students to imagine that the figure (you can give it a name, such as Greenie, etc.) has come into a classroom where bonds have already been formed. The atmosphere is very unwelcoming. Invite students, one at a time, to say something mean to Greenie. They will have to use their imaginations. Each time a mean thing is said to Greenie, the teacher rips off a piece of Greenie's body and hands it to the person who made the comment. (Note: when ripping, rip large chunks. It will need to be fairly obvious where each chunk fits into the whole if the students are to piece Greenie back together again)
4. After everyone has had a chance to say something mean to Greenie, start taping it back together. Invite each student who said something mean to Greenie come up and use tape to reattach the piece of Greenie in its proper place. As each piece is reconnected, the student must apologize to Greenie for the mean thing that was said.
5. When the torn body is fully repaired, Greenie will not look the same as when the students met him/her for the first time. Ask questions that lead students to the understanding that although some of the damage has been repaired, Greenie will never be the same. Feelings were hurt, and the scars remain.
6. Have the students write a paragraph explaining in their own words what they took away from this activity. Discuss these responses as a class.
7. Discuss what we can do to stop this from happening in the first place. How can we greet new people? If someone does something we don't like, how can we respond in a kind way? What can we do to prevent apologizing for our words in the first place?

Who said it?

1. I just don't understand Christmas, I guess.
2. Of all the Charlie Browns in the world, you're the Charlie Browniest.
3. It's too early. I never eat December snowflakes. I always wait until January.
4. How I love hearing that old money plate, that beautiful sound of cold, hard cash—that beautiful, beautiful sound.
5. All I want is what I have coming to me. All I want is my fair share.
6. This will be the worst Christmas play ever.
7. In spite of my outward appearance, I shall try to run a neat inn.
8. Ugh! I've been kissed by a dog! I have dog germs! Get hot water! Get some disinfectant! Get some iodine!
9. Christmas is not only getting too commercial, it's getting too dangerous.
10. I can't go on. There's too much dust. It's taking the curl out of my naturally curly hair.
11. We need a Christmas tree.
12. Do something right for a change, Charlie Brown.
13. How can you say someone is great who's never had his picture on bubble gum cards?
14. Everything I do turns into a disaster.
15. I never thought it was such a bad little tree. It's not bad at all, really. Maybe it just needs a little love.

POST-SHOW QUESTIONS

1. At the beginning of the show, Charlie Brown says he doesn't understand Christmas. Do you think he understands it better at the end of the show? How would you explain Christmas to someone like Charlie Brown?
2. Commercialization means to exploit or manage something to make a profit. What other holidays are commercialized? What is lost when people commercialize things?
3. Linus says that the tree Charlie Brown got 'just needed a little love.' What have you made better by giving a little love? What other things that don't cost money can you give during the holiday season, and the rest of the year?
4. All the kids work together at the end to give Charlie Brown a Christmas gift. When have you worked together with others? How is working as a team different than doing something by yourself? How does cooperation and teamwork make you feel?

Who said it? (Answers)

1. I just don't understand Christmas, I guess. CHARLIE BROWN
2. Of all the Charlie Browns in the world, you're the Charlie Browniest. LINUS
3. It's too early. I never eat December snowflakes. I always wait until January. LUCY
4. How I love hearing that old money plate, that beautiful sound of cold, hard cash—that beautiful, beautiful sound. . LUCY
5. All I want is what I have coming to me. All I want is my fair share. SALLY
6. This will be the worst Christmas play ever. PATTY
7. In spite of my outward appearance, I shall try to run a neat inn. PIGPEN
8. Ugh! I've been kissed by a dog! I have dog germs! Get hot water! Get some disinfectant! Get some iodine! LUCY
9. Christmas is not only getting too commercial, it's getting too dangerous. LINUS
10. I can't go on. There's too much dust. It's taking the curl out of my naturally curly hair. FRIEDA
11. We need a Christmas tree. CHARLIE BROWN
12. Do something right for a change, Charlie Brown. PATTY
13. How can you say someone is great who's never had his picture on bubble gum cards? LUCY
14. Everything I do turns into a disaster. CHARLIE BROWN
15. I never thought it was such a bad little tree. It's not bad at all, really. Maybe it just needs a little love. LINUS