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Foreword

Charles Dickens' 19th-century English story, *A Christmas Carol*, is revered throughout the world. Its central character is Ebenezer Scrooge, a shrewd and hard-working business-man who becomes so obsessed with money that he has no room in his heart for humanity.

A Christmas Carol: Scrooge in Bethlehem is a delightful adaptation of Dickens' tale. In our story, Scrooge is the Bethlehem Innkeeper who refuses shelter to Mary and Joseph on that first Christmas night. His front desk clerk, Bob Cratchit, comes to their aid while Scrooge sleeps alone in his dark room in the inn. When God sends an angel with the Light of Salvation to Scrooge, the wretched man is forced to search his soul. Gradually he realizes that he has traded his soul for money. His final redemption reflects the promise of salvation for all, both poor and rich, in the birth of Emmanuel, God with us.

Recommended for grades K–8 and approximately 20 minutes long, **A Christmas Carol: Scrooge in Bethlehem** is great for children's choirs, Christian schools or Sunday schools. This charming program features a rich tapestry of seasonal scripture and English carols and hymns, interwoven with Dickens' classic tale. The staging can be as simple or complex as you desire, and the dialog is minimal and quickly prepared.

The cast size is flexible and easily expands to accommodate both small and large groups. For example, you can employ one angel or three, and one reader or as many as five, in speaking roles. You can add non-speaking roles for shepherds, guests in the inn, and manger animals. Fully-orchestrated recordings are also available.

May the spirit of Christmas shine in your heart now and always, and may God bless us, everyone!

Anna Laura Page   *Jean Anne Shafferman*

Anna Laura Page and Jean Anne Shafferman

Cast of Characters, Costumes, and Props

Speaking Roles and Costumes

- **Narrator (story)** – adult or older child, dressed either casually or in a flowing robe

- **Reader (scripture; optional up to five readers)** – adult or older child in dress similar to the Narrator

- **Ebenezer Scrooge** – adult or older child, dressed as an old man, with flowing beard, simple black nightclothes and (optional) nightcap

- **Bob Cratchit** – older or younger child, dressed in a "desk clerk's uniform"

- **Angel (optional three angels)** – older or younger child, in a sparkling white robe with a golden halo

Non-Speaking Roles and Costumes

- **Mary, Joseph, and Mrs. Cratchit** – older children, dressed in humble robes or clothes with head covering

- **Tiny Tim** – younger child, dressed in humble robes or clothes, with a crutch

- **Shepherds (optional)** – younger children, dressed in humble robes with head coverings and, if possible, shepherds' staffs

- **Guests in the Inn (optional)** – younger children, dressed as peasants in their best "town" clothes

- **Manger Animals (optional)** – younger children, representing cows, sheep and donkeys; they can wear T-shirts that have been screened with their respective animal images, OR they can wear more elaborate costumes

Props

- Bethlehem Inn: front desk or high counter for Bob Cratchit; optional sign for The Bethlehem Inn

- Scrooge's room: small office desk, bed, large clock or grandfather clock, black cloak, and gold and silver coins, including a large silver coin for him to hold

- Cratchits' room: Chair or rocking chair for Mrs. Cratchit

- Stable: Chair or bed of hay or straw for Mary in the manger; Baby Jesus wrapped in humble "swaddling" cloths;

- Podium for Narrator and Reader

- Crutch for Tiny Tim
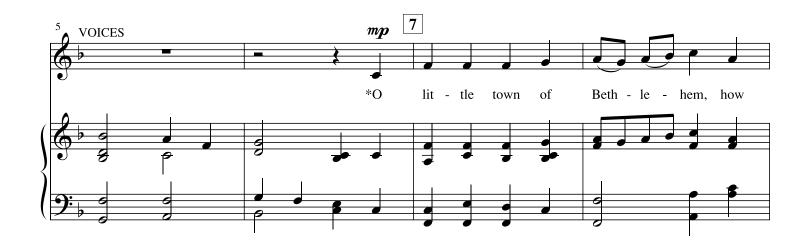
- Shepherds' hooks

- Angel halos

Note: An integral part of the story is the tolling of the clock bells to signal the appearance of the angel. The "bells" can be played by keyboard, chimes or handbells. Additionally, the accompaniment/performance CD features track IDs for each of the bell tolls.
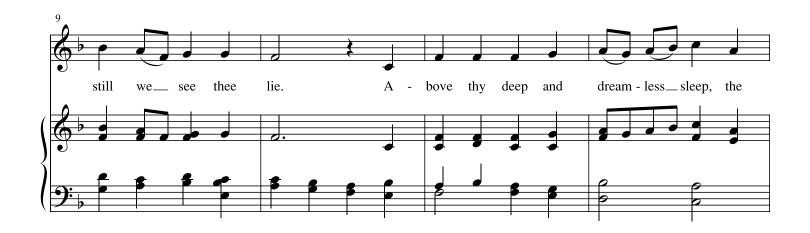
Overture:
O Little Town Of Bethlehem

Choir / Opt. Keyboard Only

(During Overture, Narrator and Reader take their places. Choir enters singing [optional: keyboard only on Overture]. Mrs. Cratchit and Tiny Tim move to their room; Mr. Cratchit, Mary and Joseph move to front desk. Scrooge moves to his room, sits at his desk, and begins to count his money.)

*Traditional Surrey village ballad; Words by Phillips Brooks (1835–1893).

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