

RESOURCE GUIDE
GRADES 4-12

'T WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE...

BY CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the world of Cirque du Soleil's 'Twas THE NIGHT BEFORE...

This guide offers activities and resources to spark curiosity, creativity, and connection around the performance. Whether you are a teacher bringing your class or a family enjoying the show together, you'll find ideas for critical thinking, active participation, and creative projects. The activities can be used before and after attending the performance and are adaptable for classrooms and at-home learning. Each section also includes opportunities for deeper exploration to keep the magic going long after the curtain falls.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

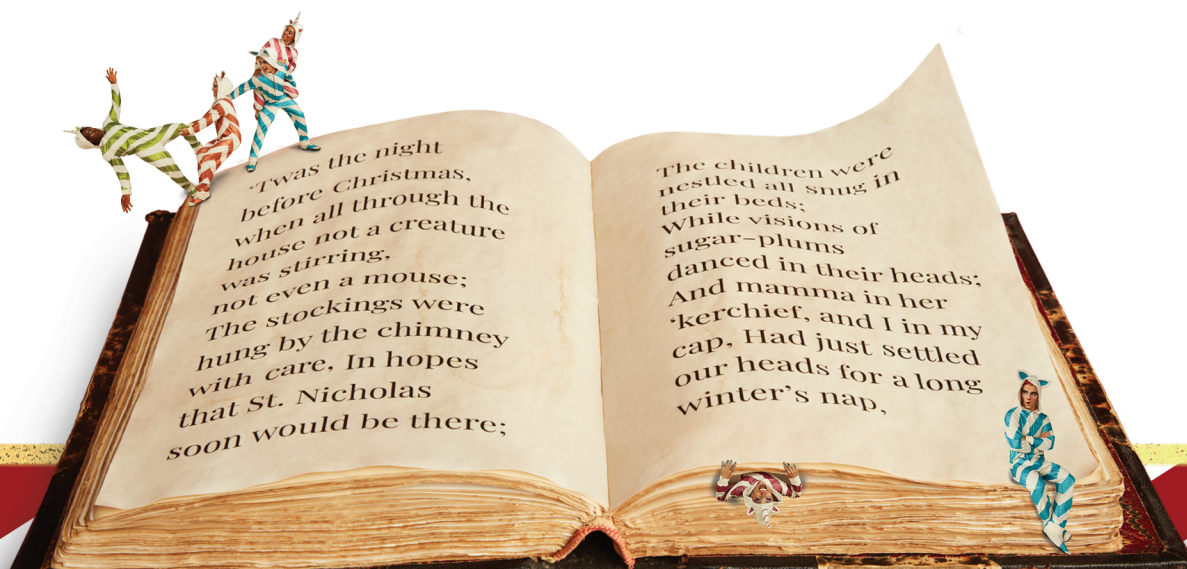
How does Cirque du Soleil's 'Twas THE NIGHT BEFORE... invite us to rediscover the wonder of the holiday season, exploring how imagination, tradition, and community help us believe in magic at any age?

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Discover the world of Cirque du Soleil through a live performance and hands-on activities.
- Examine how elements of costumes, music, acrobatics, and theatrical design create a magical winter wonderland inspired by the classic holiday poem.
- Reflect on how holiday traditions and stories can inspire wonder and connection across generations.
- Develop their own imaginations and make personal connections to the performance.

ABOUT THE SHOW

It's the holidays, and this year things are different. For as long as she can remember, Isabella and her father have read "A Visit from Saint Nicholas"—the classic 'Twas the Night Before Christmas poem—together. But now Isabella feels she has outgrown the family tradition. Suddenly, the magic of the poem whirls to life, sweeping Isabella and her father into a snowstorm that sets them on a fantastical journey. In a winter wonderland filled with whimsical characters, dazzling acrobats, playful reindeer, and spirited children, they discover the joy of togetherness and rediscover the true magic of the holidays.



FUN FACTS

The roller skaters perform on a **350-pound Platform** only **6 FEET** in diameter, reaching speed of **30 mph**.

The hair and makeup dept requires **25 pots of glitter** and **60 cans** of hairspray, during the shows run.

The hair suspension artist performs about **100 turns and spins** as fast as **7 revolutions** per second supported by a performer whose hair can withstand **250 pounds** of dynamic pressure.

- ❖ 'Twas the Night Before... marks Cirque du Soleil's inaugural production focused on the holiday season.
- ❖ Each performance uses nearly 5 dump trucks worth of artificial snow, which is cleaned and reused.
- ❖ 50 different costumes are used in the show, including eight reindeer costumes that each require 2,000 sequins.
- ❖ Despite a smaller cast than many Cirque du Soleil shows, the performers represent 21 different countries.
- ❖ 'Twas the Night Before Christmas was first published in 1823 as a poem called "A Visit from Saint Nicholas" by Clement Moore
- ❖ Music is at the heart of Cirque du Soleil's storytelling. In this show, you'll hear a soundtrack of 41 songs—including 29 original pieces and fresh arrangements of beloved holiday songs like "Jingle Bells," "Silent Night," and "Deck the Halls."

ACTIVITIES

Pre-and Post-Show Discussion Questions

PRE-SHOW

- What do you think you will see and hear?
- What are you excited about?
- What are you curious about?

POST-SHOW

- What do you think you will see and hear?
- What were your favorite moments of the performance?
- What surprised you?
- What questions do you still have?

GO DEEPER:

Write or draw about your experience using these prompts:

I can't wait to see....

I wonder if....

I think I will....

I hope....

I am inspired to...

MEET THE CHARACTERS



ISABELLA

A young girl who loves everything trendy and new. She thinks she's outgrown the joy of the holidays and often takes her family for granted—especially her father.



JOLLY

A colorful, comedic free spirit who guides Isabella with humor and kindness. Only at the very end is his identity revealed – he's Santa Claus!



AVA

A spoiled starlet who craves attention and gifts. However, when she decides to share a gift with Isabella, she discovers the true magic of the season.

THE FATHER



LES TUQUES

Energetic, playful dancers who bring the spirit of the holidays alive and move our story along, until we find out that they are actually Santa's elves!





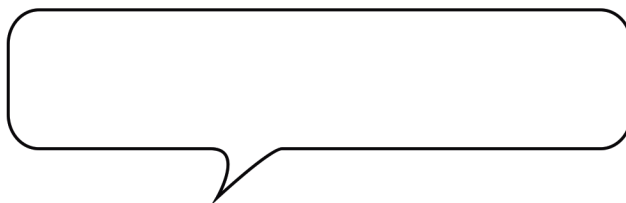
◆ DISCUSSION SPARKS ◆

- ✿ Which character reminds you most of yourself—or someone in your family? Why?
- ✿ Isabella changes her mind about the holidays. What made her see things differently?
- ✿ Jolly uses humor and kindness to guide Isabella. How do you like to spread joy to others?
- ✿ Ava learns that sharing feels better than getting. What's a gift you've given that made you feel happy inside?

GO DEEPER

At Home or in Class: After the show, choose one character and retell the story from their point of view. (For example: What would the story sound like if Ava or Jolly were narrating it?)

Extension: Draw a picture of your favorite character and add a speech bubble showing what they might say about the holidays.



STORYTELLING & IMAGINATION

Create Your Own Holiday Poem:

- ✿ Begin with the classic line: 'Twas the night before..."
- ✿ Add your own twist. Think of something funny, magical, or special to you. (Maybe "...the big snowball fight" or "...Grandma's gingerbread bake-off.")
- ✿ Keep the rhythm. Each new line should tell what's happening, just like in the poem.
- ✿ Share it. Read your poem aloud to family, friends, or classmates!

'Twas the night before _____,

And all through the _____,

Not a creature was stirring, Except for the _____.

Go Deeper:

Move with Your Poem: Choreograph a short dance or create simple acrobatic-style movements to act out your poem. Use some of the moves you saw in 'Twas the Night Before... as inspiration—like spins, jumps, balances, or playful gestures.

Add Music: Choose a favorite holiday song to accompany your poem.



A SEASON OF GIVING

The holidays are about more than presents—they're about kindness, generosity, and community. In *'Twas the Night Before...*, Isabella learns that sharing and connection bring more joy than any gift. Let her journey inspire you to spread a little holiday magic of your own.

Gratitude Ornament

- ✿ Cut out a paper circle (or decorate a real ornament).
- ✿ Write or draw one thing you're thankful for.
- ✿ Hang it on a tree, window, or "gratitude wall" so everyone can see your holiday spirit grow.

Ways to Give as a Family

Choose one way to brighten someone else's season:

- ✿ Bake cookies for neighbors or first responders.
- ✿ Donate gently used coats, toys, or books.
- ✿ Create holiday cards for a local nursing home or hospital.

Holiday Traditions Across Generations

Interview a grandparent, elder, or family friend about their holiday traditions.

- ✿ What foods, music, or rituals were most important?
- ✿ What's stayed the same, and what's changed today?
- ✿ Share your findings with your class or family.

Go Deeper: Cultural & Creative Explorations

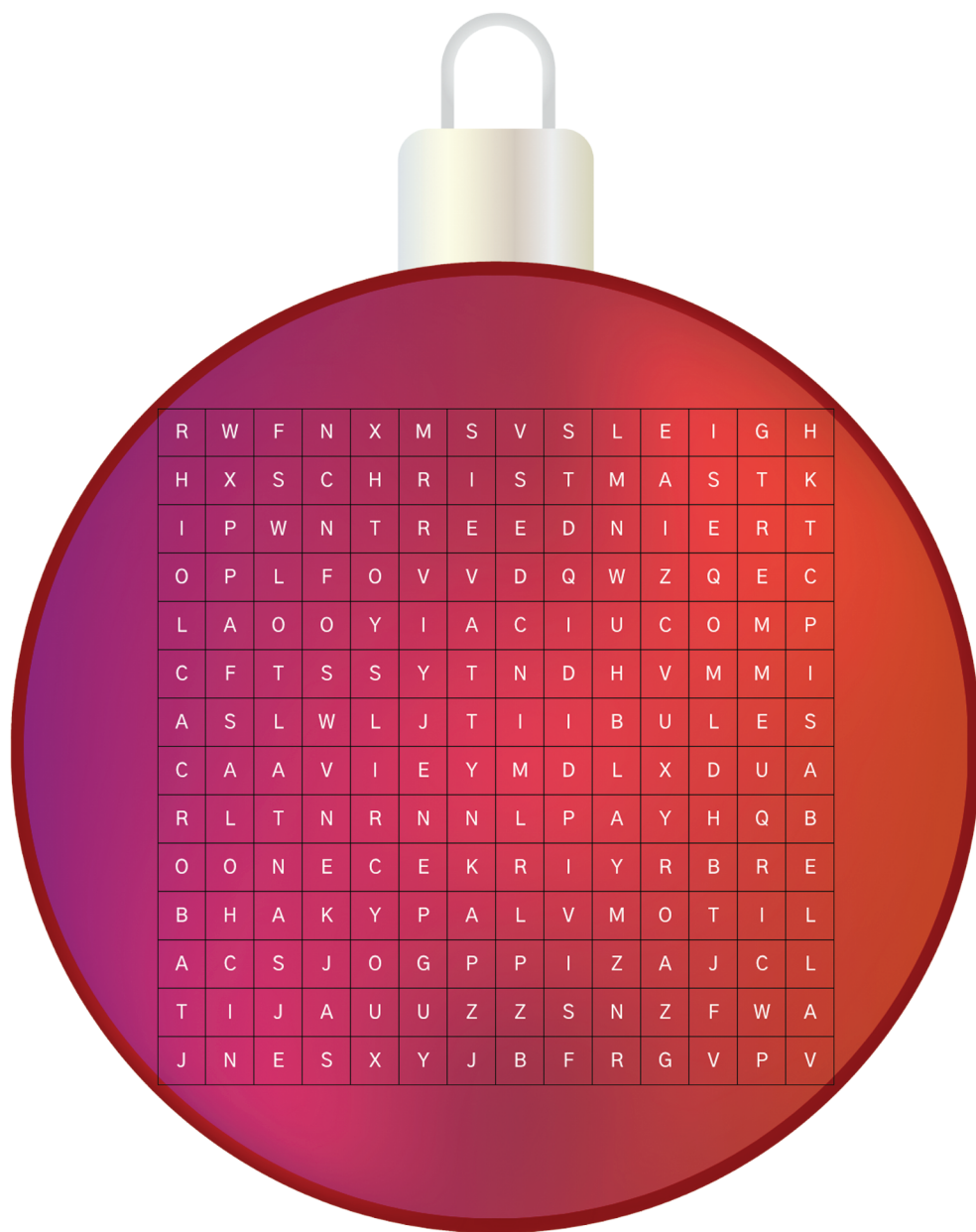
The winter season is celebrated around the world through many traditions: Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Diwali, Las Posadas, Lunar New Year, and more. Choose one tradition and explore it through a creative outlet:

- ✿ **Writing:** Create a short poem or story about a celebration of light, family, or giving.
- ✿ **Music Playlist:** *'Twas the Night Before...* blends classic holiday tunes with Cirque's signature musical style. Create your own playlist by mixing favorite holiday melodies with other songs you love—old or new—that capture the spirit of the season.
- ✿ **Visual Art & Design:** Design a costume, mask, or festive decoration inspired by your favorite holiday tradition—and give it a magical Cirque twist! Use color, pattern, or shape to show how cultural traditions can blend with the dreamlike imagination you saw onstage in *'Twas the Night Before...*



CIRQUE HOLIDAY WORD FINDER

Can you spot the magic? Search for words from the show hidden in this puzzle
—look up, down, sideways, and even backwards!



SUGARPLUM
TRADITIONS
TWINKLING
CHRISTMAS
ISABELLA

NICHOLAS
REINDEER
ACROBAT
CHIMNEY
SLEIGH

CIRQUE
WINTER
FAMILY
SANTA
TOYS



FURTHER EXPLORATION

Visit the ['Twas the Night Before... website](#) or [view the Press Kit](#) to learn more about the show, listen to the music, and see images of the circus acts. Learn more about the characters, performers, and behind-the-scenes action in these video resources:

- * Explore [The Making of 'Twas the Night Before...](#)
- * Relive [The Best Holiday Moments from 'Twas The Night Before...](#)
- * Listen to [musical selections](#) from 'Twas the Night Before...
- * Explore a world of Cirque du Soleil show footage and backstage videos on [CirqueConnect](#)

BRING CIRQUE TO LIFE @ HOME

Try these fun circus activities at home or in the classroom:

- * Place a rope or painter's tape on the floor and try to walk the "highwire" without falling.
- * Create a circus obstacle course at home that includes hula-hoops, jumping, balancing, juggling, dancing with scarves, etc.
- * Listen to the 'Twas the Night Before... music and choreograph movements or a dance that illustrates what you hear in the music. Try incorporating some acrobatic movements, like a handstand, cartwheel, or partner balancing.



ABOUT CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

Cirque du Soleil Entertainment Group is a world leader in live entertainment. Building on four decades of pushing the boundaries of the imagination, the artistic entertainment company brings its creative approach to a large variety of artistic forms such as live shows, multimedia productions, long-form content, music, immersive experiences, and special events. Since its creation in 1984, more than 400 million people have been inspired on 6 continents and 86 countries. The Canadian company now employs almost 4000 employees, including 1200 artists from more than 80 different nationalities.

For more information about Cirque du Soleil Entertainment Group, please visit cirquedusoleil.com.

