

A Child's Christmas

A Guide for Teachers and Group Leaders



Westfield Heritage Village

A Child's Christmas



Thank you for your interest in A Child's Christmas. This guide provides an overview of the program and includes information to assist you in preparing for your visit to Westfield.

We are committed to partnering with you in providing your students with a unique and rich experience. Westfield strives to provide an informative, accessible, and inclusive learning environment where students can explore, imagine, and discover.

Our programs are developed in accordance with the learning objectives outlined in the Ontario Curriculum, with the goal of being a complement to the valuable work that you do in the classroom.

Introduction

The Child's Christmas program focuses on helping students gain an understanding of how this holiday was celebrated by families living on Turtle Island, the area now known as Southern Ontario, in the early 19th early – mid-19th century. Utilizing Westfield's beautiful rural location, rare collection of period buildings and rich artifact collection, our knowledgeable and welcoming costumed interpreters will introduce your students to the holiday spirit and traditions of earlier times.

Like all Westfield programs, A Child's Christmas will introduce students to several themes through engaging, active learning experiences.

Learning Objectives

The overarching learning objectives of this program are to:

- **Explore** the cultural origins of our Christmas celebrations and the ways in which these traditions were evolved over time
- **Discover** the ways in which families prepared for Christmas, within both the home and within their communities
- **Encourage** an appreciation for the simple pleasures of holiday foods, traditional music, festive games, natural decorations, friendship and family
- **Emphasize** the importance of community, not only at Christmas, but throughout the year
- **Demonstrate** that there were many types of families and communities in what is now known as Southern Ontario in the period 1790-1850 and many had their own traditions
- **Discover** that winter solstice was and continues to be an important cultural and spiritual event within Indigenous communities.

The Program

A Holiday Home: Getting Ready for Christmas

Location – The Misener House

Key Concepts – cultural origins of Christmas traditions – games, foods, decorations

How did settler families prepare for Christmas? Participants will find out through preparing decorations for the home, taking part in a simulated baking activity and trying their luck in an unusual game.



Darkness and Light: The Solstice

Location: D'Aubigny Inn

Key Concepts: winter solstice occurrence and celebration, focus on Great Lakes region Indigenous perspectives.



Through an engaging activity, story and game, students will learn about winter solstice and the historical and contemporary importance of this cultural and spiritual event within Indigenous communities. They will discover how the community gatherings, ceremonies, celebratory foods, storytelling, and ceremonies used to mark the solstice can be compared/ contrasted with other celebrations of light with which the students may be familiar, such as Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa.

School Days and Holidays

Location: Cathcart School

Key Concepts – learning, community, early school environments, art

In the 1845 Cathcart School, students will be led through a series of short, Christmas-themed lessons and activities, giving them a glimpse into the lives of students in a mid-19th century rural school. They students will make a lovely traditional paper ornament to take home.



Away in the Manger

Location – Mountsberg Church

Key Concepts – community, tradition, music, pageants, storytelling

Religious communities were an important part of everyday life for many settlers and played a central spiritual and social role. Children will learn about the importance of churches in early Canada and the types of activities that took place there. They will participate as performers or audience members in a play that dramatizes the traditional Christmas story of the Nativity.

Your Schedule for the Day

Learning Stations are 35-minutes in duration.

The schedule includes 5-minutes of walking time between stations.

Lunch Break is 35 minutes.

Activity	Times
Arrival	10:00 a.m.
Learning Station 1	10:15 – 10:50 a.m.
Learning Station 2	10:55 – 11:30 a.m.
Lunch Break	11:35 – 12 noon
Learning Station 3	12:05 -12:40 p.m.
Learning Station 4	12:45 – 1:20 p.m.
Departure Window	1:25 – 1:45 p.m.

FAQs

What do we do when we arrive?

The arrival time for this program is 10:00 a.m. Your bus will be greeted by a costumed interpreter and given further directions. Please do your best to arrive on time. If you are late, parts of your program may be shortened or omitted, and we wouldn't want your students to miss out.

Is Westfield accessible? A person in my group requires accommodation.

Westfield is working to make the village fully accessible for all. All areas, however, are not fully accessible at this time. It's very important for us that everyone has the best experience possible, so please let us know if anyone in your group requires special assistance or accommodation. We will do our best to provide what is needed.

What if the weather is bad?

Programs will run in rain, snow, or shine. During very bad weather, programs may be modified for the safety of participants and staff. In the case where schools, busing or roads are closed, alternative arrangements will be made.

What should we wear?

You should dress for the weather. You will be spending most of your time outdoors, on gravel roads and in buildings that are unheated or heated by 19th-century methods. During cold weather boots, mitts, hats, and heavy coats are essential. In warmer weather sun hats, sunscreen, bug repellants are all recommended.

What should we know about lunches?

Program participants are encouraged to bring nut-free, litter-less lunches and refillable drink bottles. Please note that Westfield cannot guarantee that our facilities are nut-free. You will be instructed upon arrival where lunches can be placed.

Where do we eat?

During winter months, the Ironwood Hall will be the usual lunch location. Please note that there is no refrigeration or microwaves available for school use. This area is not locked, so please do not leave valuable items. Washrooms are located in this building as well as a water cooler.

How is payment made?

We will send an invoice following your visit. If you will be paying on the day of your visit, cheques should be payable to "Hamilton Conservation Authority."

How do I contact you regarding school bookings?

School booking inquiries can be made through Westfield's main number at 519-621-8851 or at westfield@conservationhamilton.ca

What if I need to make a change to my booking?

Please contact us as soon as possible if you need to reschedule your program, request a change in the number of participants, or have other concerns.



Curriculum Connections

Grade 3 Social Studies

A. Communities in Canada 1780-1850

- A1.1 Describe some of the similarities and differences of various aspects of everyday life of selected groups living in Canada
- A.1.2 Compare some of the roles and challenges facing people in Canada around the beginning of the nineteenth century to those in the present day.
- A. 2.2 Gather and organize information on major challenges facing different groups and communities and on measures taken to address these challenges.
- A. 2.3 Evaluate evidence and draw conclusions about some of the major challenges facing different groups and communities in Canada during this period and measures taken to overcome these challenges.
- A.3.1 Identify various First Nations and some Metis communities in Upper and Lower Canada from 1780 to 1850.
- A.3.2 Identify various settler communities in Canada during this period.
- A.3.3 Identify some of the main factors that helped shape the development of settlements in Canada during this period. Describe how the physical features of the land and the availability of goods and services can facilitate settlement and enhance community life.
- A3.4 Describe some of the major challenges facing communities in Canada during this period.

