

A Child's Christmas

A Guide for Teachers



Westfield Heritage Village

This guide provides an overview of the "A Child's Christmas" program as well as information that you will need to make the most of your visit to Westfield.

Program Overview

Christmas traditions and the wonder and excitement of the holiday season come alive at Westfield in *A Child's Christmas*, and we are delighted that you and your class will be joining us. Westfield is a special place where students have the opportunity to learn about the past in an immersive, multi-sensory environment. We strive to provide enjoyable and informative educational opportunities that allow students to learn about our past through active, hands-on experiences.

Westfield's educational programs are developed in accordance with the learning objectives outlined in the Ontario Curriculum, with the goal of being a valuable complement to the work that you do in the classroom. We are committing to offering a unique learning environment where students can explore, imagine and discover.

Program Objectives

This program focuses on helping students gain an understanding of how Christmas was celebrated by families living in Southern Ontario during the 19th century. Utilizing our 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 of earlier times.

The primary objectives of this program are...

- to explore the cultural origins of our Christmas celebrations, and the ways in which these traditions were introduced and adopted by early Canadians
- to discover the ways in which families prepared for Christmas, within both the home and in their greater community
- to encourage an appreciation for the simple pleasures of holiday foods, traditional music, festive games and activities, natural decorations, friendship and family
- to emphasize the importance of community not only at Christmas, but throughout the year



Making the Most of Your Visit

Confirmation Form

Please check your confirmation form carefully and notify us as soon as possible if the information is incorrect, or if you need to make any changes. Westfield has a three week cancellation policy.

Payment

We will send an invoice following your visit. If you prefer to pay on the day of your visit, please make cheque payable to “**Hamilton Conservation Authority.**”

Arrival Time

Program times are 10:00 - 11:30 and 12:30 – 2:00. Please plan to arrive by 9:45 a.m. for a morning or all day program and by 12:15 pm. for an afternoon program. This will ensure your program will begin on time. When your group arrives you will be greeted by a costumed interpreter and given further directions.

Late Arrivals

Any groups arriving after the program start time of 10:00 am or 12:30 pm will result in parts of the program being shortened or omitted. We will not be able to extend program times.

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.

Lunch Space - The Ironwood Hall

The Ironwood Hall is available as a lunch room at a cost of \$37.29, but needs to be booked in advance. Lunches will be stored here but 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 and you will also find a pay telephone and water fountain at the side entrance.

Outside Picnic Area – Groups are welcome to use our picnic area free of charge and the space does not need to be booked in advance. The picnic area is uncovered. You will have access to washrooms, a pay telephone and water fountain.

Storing Belongings

In cases where groups have not booked the Ironwood Hall but wish to have lunch in the picnic area, you will be asked to leave your lunches outside of the Hall while in program. Please note that there is some shade in this area however no refrigeration. Please encourage program participants to pack an icepack and/or use thermo lunch bags.

Dressing for the Weather

Students should dress appropriately for cool, hot or rainy weather. They will be spending the majority of the time outdoors and on gravel roads and in buildings that are heated by methods used during the 19th century. During cold weather boots, mitts, hats and heavy coats are strongly encouraged. In warmer weather sun hats, sunscreen, bug spray are all recommended.

Extreme Weather

All programs continue rain, snow, or shine. During weather extremes however a greater portion of our programs may be conducted indoors or adapted for the safety of participants and staff.

Movement between Stations

To make the most of your program, please encourage your group to move as efficiently as possible from station to station. Your interpreters will direct you to each of your stations.

Supervision

You know your group best, so we will leave it to you to determine how many additional supervisors will be necessary. Please note, however, that due to the small sizes of many of our historic buildings, we recommend you not exceed a ratio of 1:5. You are responsible for supervising your group(s) at all times while on site.

Special Needs

Westfield is working to make the village fully accessible for all visitors, however all areas are not fully accessible at this time. Please let us know if anyone in your group requires special assistance or accommodation and we will do our best to provide the best experience possible.

Costumes

Students and teachers wishing to get into the spirit of the day are welcome to visit in historical costumes. Boys can wear dark dress pants, a white or plaid shirt, suspenders and vest. Girls can wear a dark dress or long dark skirt with cotton blouse and bib-style apron. All can wear straw hats, long black socks and dark leather shoes or boots. No jewelry or makeup should be worn.

Gift Shop

The Gift Shop is not normally open during school programming days however if requested in advance arrangements may be made.

Program Structure

Oh Christmas Tree!

Welcome and Introduction

Why do we bring trees into our homes at Christmas time? Students will be introduced to the cultural and historical origins of Christmas trees. They will also learn about tisket-tasket baskets, and have an opportunity to carry out this tradition throughout their visit.

School Days and Holidays

Location: Cathcart School

Students will enjoy learning about the environment of early schools through taking a seat in a one room log schoolhouse. Here, students will experience the routines and expectations of early classrooms. The Cathcart school teacher will guide the participants in making a unique, traditional Christmas decoration that can be taken home.

Getting Ready for Christmas

Location: Misener House

How did the early settlers prepare for Christmas? Participants will find out through preparing decorations for the home and trying their hand at a simulated baking activity.

Away in the Manger

Location: The Mountsberg Church

Religious communities were an important part of everyday life for many early Canadians, 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. Students will participate as performers or audience members in a play that dramatizes the traditional Christmas story of the Nativity.

