

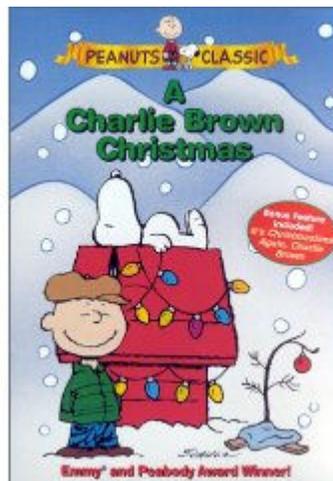
A Charlie Brown Christmas

Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?

Sure, Charlie Brown, I can tell you what Christmas is all about.

Lights, please. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring unto you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (Luke 2:8-14)

That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown.



Bringing the *Peanuts* characters to television was not an easy task. The strip's creators, with funding from sponsor Coca-Cola, presented the CBS network with an idea for a Christmas television special starring Schulz's characters. Network executives were not at all keen on several aspects of the show, forcing Schulz and Melendez to wage some serious battles to preserve their vision. Most pointedly, the executives did not want to have Linus reciting the story of the birth of Christ from the Gospel of Luke; the network orthodoxy of the time assumed that viewers would not want to sit through passages of the King James Version of the Bible. Charles Schulz was adamant about keeping this scene in, remarking that "If we don't tell the true meaning of Christmas, who will?" When executives saw the final product, they were horrified and believed the special would be a complete flop.

The show first aired on Thursday, December 9, 1965. To the surprise of the executives, it was both a critical and commercial hit. One prominent reviewer said, "Linus' reading of the story of the Nativity was, quite simply, the dramatic highlight of the season."

A full 50% of the televisions in the United States were tuned to the first broadcast. *A Charlie Brown Christmas* won an Emmy and a Peabody award. The show enjoyed its 40th anniversary broadcast in, 2005, and had the highest ratings in its time slot.