



UKRAINIAN CANADIAN STUDENTS' UNION
СОЮЗ УКРАЇНСЬКОГО СТУДЕНТСТВА КАНАДИ
UNION DES ÉTUDIANTS UKRAINIENS CANADIENS

KOLIADA TOOLKIT



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A GUIDE TO UKRAINIAN CAROLLING

Carolling/Vertep/Koliada is one of our oldest and cherished Ukrainian traditions. This event surpasses conventional carolling in many ways: it is successful (University of Saskatchewan and University of Manitoba both raised over a thousand dollars in a few days' time), fun for the local USO, culturally relevant, and deeply engages the local community.

Consider the scope of your event:

- Scope can include local homes (more likely to donate), Ukrainian families or relevant community locations, or campus locations.
- We encourage USOs to do in-person koliada. If you are planning to carol at local homes, you will need to coordinate drivers within your group and give yourselves enough time to get from one location to the other.
- Determine which days you want to go carolling in advance, with early/mid-February usually closing out carolling season (Note that Ukraine has formally shifted the celebration of Christmas to December 25th this year, although it is worth noting that, being the first year for this adjustment, there is generally a certain degree of flexibility.) A newer or smaller USO may find one night enough of a tall order, whereas more established and larger USOs may want to carol for 3-7 days and smaller select groups to maximize fundraising opportunities.
- Announce your paroling as far in advance as possible. Your USO can start sharing a sign-up sheet as early as Holodomor Awareness Week to attract new potential hosts. Local Ukrainian hubs (churches, stores, museums, etc.) are great places to put up a sign-up sheet.
- To go carolling, you'll first need a list of hosts who are interested in having you in their homes.

Suggestions include:

- Local Ukrainian (ethnically Ukrainian or subject matter) professors
- People from local churches
- Ukrainian retirement homes
- UCC Offices
- Ukrainian Banks



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- Your personal community connections
- USO family members
- Alumni (if applicable)
- We recommend you keep an online list of carolling hosts and include: their phone number, email address, which part of the city they live in, their address, and which years they hosted. This list can then be used for future years.

Additional Tips:

- Having costumes always helps! Local dance groups are often willing to lend.
- Include Christmas greetings (Різдвяні Віншуння) to break up the signing portions or recite them as a final touch
- You can create a standard repertoire, such as including only 1-2 verses from each song or a medley that shifts from song to song. Be creative and also respectful of your host's time: doing 5-6 full carols isn't always realistic for each venue, but keeping prepared with backup lyrics and songs can also be a good tactic.
 - Make sure to gauge everyone's skills and ability and make adjustments. It's possible that many of you know the carols by memory, but it is also important to accommodate those who may need smaller printed cue cards of lyrics. Before venturing out, make sure everyone is on the same page.
- For the more serious USOs, you can look into developing your carolling repertoire into a Vertep.
- Be receptive to newer members who have not learned carols yet. Some did not grow up with these songs and may need additional time for practice. To make it more accessible, some printed song books and online resources, like some of the YouTube links below, include English transliterations and/or translations of the Ukrainian text. Remember that you, as a group, are inspiring *new* students to learn and celebrate these traditions to keep them going!

Resources:

- Ukrainian Christmas Playlist Links: [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)
- Options for Christmas greetings (Різдвяні Віншуння): [here](#) and [here](#)



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