

# Child's Play Touring Theatre DO THE WRITE THING!

## Study Guide for Teachers



Local sponsors have scheduled Child's Play Touring Theatre to perform for your students in a few months, and we thought you might like to know more about us and what we do. To help make this a fun and motivational experience, we have provided materials to assist you and your students in the preparation and follow up of the show.

### What is Child's Play Touring Theatre?

Child's Play Touring Theatre is a professional traveling theatre for young audiences that performs stories and poems written by children, transforming young writers' manuscripts into plays, songs, and dances. Every year, the company performs the works of hundreds of young poets, essayists, playwrights and short story writers from classrooms just like yours.

Child's Play combines the imagination of children and the craftsmanship of professional theatre artists. Using characters, narration and dialogue created by young authors, the actors of Child's Play Touring Theatre add songs, mime, music, sound effects, props and costumes to fashion a complete show. A lively pace, energetic performances, and lots of audience participation keep the children involved throughout the presentation.

A Child's Play performance can spark the writing program in your classroom, as well as open doors to discussion, writing, and theatre activities. As children watch our actors performing literature written by other children, they become very excited about their own potential as writers. They say, "I can do that, too!"

### What can I do to prepare for the show...

- The best way for you to prepare your students for a Child's Play performance is to let them know that this is a show written by kids - kids just like them!
- Talk about the vocabulary of the theatre. Discuss the roles of the actors, a musical director, the set, a script, etc.
- Ask how many students have seen a play. Have them share their experiences.
- Let the children know that they should feel free to clap if they like the actors or something that happens on the stage. At this performance, they will be asked to sing along, make movements, or even come on stage to help the actors.

### After the performance...

Following you will find a few suggestions for follow-up activities in your classroom.

## ***SAM & THE FAT LIE***

by Taylor, Grade 5

Lake Forest, IL

### **Play Synopsis:**

In this story, a boy named Sam lies about breaking his neighbor's window. Doing so, he creates a creature called Zeko Lie. To cover up the first lie, though, Sam has to lie again. This makes Zeko grow. As Sam continues to lie, Zeko keeps growing until he is a huge monster. Sam, in desperation to get rid of Zeko, tells the truth to his neighbor and pays to replace her window. Zeko disappears and Sam never lies again.

### **Production Style:**

Zeko is a puppet and to make him grow, the actors use a series of larger puppets. The first puppet is a hand puppet, the second is a full body puppet, and the last is a mechanical rod puppet.

### **Discussion Topics - Young Students:**

- Since Zeko is a puppet, discuss famous puppets that the children know about. Let the students make their own puppets (ex: out of paper bags).
- Zeko Lie grew because Sam kept lying. Have the children think of all types of things that grow. What makes those things grow?
- Discuss lies with your students. What makes a lie wrong? Did Sam's lie hurt anyone? How do lies hurt people? Have your students write a homework excuse or about a lie that backfires.

### **Discussion Topics - Older Students:**

- Sam is a boy who lied. Discuss the different types of lies. (For example, telling Aunt Bertha that you like the green and orange plaid socks she gave you for your birthday versus lying about a test grade to your parents.) Is there a time when you should lie? Have your students write about one of the types of lies discussed.
- Zeko was a puppet. Talk about other types of puppets (marionettes, hand puppets, ventriloquist dummies) and how they work.
- Talk about perspective with the children. Since the actor playing Sam is smaller than Zeko, it makes the puppet seem huge. Would Zeko seem even bigger if the actor playing Sam had really been a little boy? What does it do to our sense of perspective if everything is either bigger or smaller than it should be? (Example - you are playing with building blocks that are as big as a school desk.)

# ***THE SPOILED BRAT***

by Tena, Grade 4

Norridge, IL

## **Play Synopsis:**

This is the story of a ‘princess’ who is extremely spoiled by her parents. Anything and everything she asks for, she gets. She is never grateful, she just wants more. She wants ten gowns for the ball, she wants her own castle, she wants a crown better than her friend’s crown. And, now she wants a pet dragon! Her parents for the first time say ‘no’. But the princess continues to throw tantrums. They finally give in – with one rule... The dragon is to be totally her responsibility – she is the one who must house, clothe, and feed it. The princess reluctantly agrees, and finally learns about taking responsibility.

## **Discussion Topics - Young Students:**

- The little girl in this story is a ‘spoiled brat’. Discuss with children what it means to be a ‘spoiled brat’. Was the girl grateful for all the things she received? Do you think her parents did the right thing? What does being ‘responsible’ mean?
- Ask children if they have a pet? Discuss what pets need, and who takes responsibility for these things with their pet. Students can paint a picture of their pet (or one they would like) and the things it needs -i.e. food, shelter, toys.

## **Discussion Topics - Older Students:**

- Discuss what it means to be ‘responsible’. What responsibilities do adults have that children don’t? Ask students ways that they have learned/demonstrate responsibility in their own lives. Did they have to earn this responsibility? How do they feel about being responsible? Does it make them feel proud? Have students write about what it means to them to be responsible.
- **Project:** Give each student a raw egg. Tell students they are totally responsible for keeping this egg safe for one week. The egg must accompany them everywhere during that week, and be protected from any damage. At the end of the week, ask students about the experience. Who kept their egg unbroken for the full week? Who didn’t? How hard was the task? What did they learn from this experience?

## ***RACISM***

by Jamie, grade 6  
Wilmington, DE

Put together with movement and masks, this beautiful poem shows the emotions behind racism and what may happen when we refuse to look past our differences.

### **Activities for Younger Students:**

- Masks can be a fun way to show any number of emotions as well as a representation of a persons own personality. Have the students create their own masks using paper plates. The masks can be happy, sad or any other emotion the students can think of with decorations that reflect their own personality.
- Have students draw a picture of themselves that shows how they are one of a kind. They can show themselves playing their favorite sport, engaged in their favorite hobby or anything that shows off their individuality.

### **Discussion and Activities for Older Students:**

- Pride is an interesting emotion, it can push us to accomplish great things or it can cause great conflict. Lead a discussion about how pride can affect students in their everyday life both in good and bad ways.
- Poetry is a beautiful way to express emotions using words and rhythm. Have each student choose an emotion that they can write a poem about.

### **Critiques and Reviews**

Encourage your students to become theatre critics. They can write reviews of our show for an assignment or just for fun. Think about publishing opposing viewpoints in a school newsletter. And of course, we're always thrilled to receive constructive criticism from our toughest audience! Send stories, drawings, letters, and reviews to:

#### **CHILD'S PLAY TOURING THEATRE**

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[www.cptt.org](http://www.cptt.org)

For more information contact Child's Play at (773) 235-8911

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## Write a Review

Today we went to a show by Child's Play Touring Theatre. Fill in the blanks to tell all about the show. Draw pictures in the boxes to show what you saw and did.

Today we went to a \_\_\_\_\_

One thing I saw was \_\_\_\_\_

We also saw \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite person was \_\_\_\_\_

The part I didn't like was \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite part was \_\_\_\_\_

Written and drawn by \_\_\_\_\_

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