

PLAY GUIDE



Aesop's Fables On Stage

By Vivian and Larry Snipes

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Major Contributors:



Dear Educator -

Lexington Children's Theatre is proud to be producing our 82nd season of plays for young people and their families, even in the midst of these unprecedented times. As an organization that values the arts and education, we have created this Play Guide for teachers to utilize in conjunction with watching an LCT digital production. Our Play Guides are designed to be a valuable tool in two ways: helping you prepare your students for the enriching performance, as well as serving as an educational tool for extending the production experience back into your classroom.

We designed each activity to assist in achieving the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS), including the National Core Arts Standards for Theatre. Teachers have important voices at LCT, and we rely heavily on your input. If you have comments or suggestions about our Play Guides, show selections, or any of our programming, your thoughts are greatly appreciated. Please email Rhonda Bell, our Education Coordinator, at education@lctonstage.org.

We are thrilled that you rely on LCT to provide your students a quality theatrical experience, and we hope this resource helps you in your classroom.

-LCT's Education Department

The mission of our education programming



The mission of Lexington Children's Theatre's Education Department is to **provide students of all ages with the means to actively explore the beauty, diversity, complexity, and challenges of the world around them through the dramatic process.** We strive for young people to develop their own creative voice, their imagination, and their understanding of drama and its role in society.

Thank you for choosing LCT!

By supporting Lexington Children's Theatre during this time, you are giving you students access to high-quality, professional theatre; supporting a local arts organization; and ensuring that LCT is able to continue creating imaginative, compelling theatre experiences for young people and families for years to come. We know we will get through this together, and we thank you for your support.



Meet the Cast - *Aesop's Fables On Stage*



THOMAS COSTELLO Thomas is thrilled to be returning for his second tour with Lexington Children's Theatre. You may have seen him last fall in *Jack and the Wonder Beans* (Jack) or *Amelia Earhart* (Reporter). He recently finished a run of *Jelly's Last Jam* (Melrose Brother) with the North Carolina Black Repertory Company and the National Black Theatre Festival. Thomas holds a BFA degree in Musical Theatre from The South Carolina School of the Arts at Anderson University. Much love and thanks to family, friends, and directors for the support and guidance received along the journey. Commit-trust-act, Psalm 37:5. Thomas-costello.com.



HANNAH LEE HERNANDEZ Hannah is a recent graduate from SUNY Fredonia with a BFA in Musical Theatre and is very excited to join Lexington Children's Theatre for their fall season! She was most recently seen in Western New York Chamber Orchestra's production of *My Fair Lady: In Concert*. Other favorite roles include: John Quincy Adams (*Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*), Lucio (*Measure for Measure*), Cha-Cha DiGregorio (*Grease*), Pozzo (*Waiting For Godot*), Mrs. Bumbrake/Teacher (*Peter and the Starcatcher*), and Belinda Blaire (*Noises Off!*). Thank you to Mom, Dad, and Jake for your constant love and support.



DARREN VANCE Darren is thrilled to join Lexington Children's Theatre for the first time. Darren is a graduate from Catawba College where he earned his BFA in Musical Theatre and Minor in Dance. He recently finished a run as Race in *Newsies* at Lees-McRae Summer Theatre in North Carolina. He would like to thank his family, friends, Justin Bulla, and LCT for giving him an amazing opportunity to pursue his dreams while also making an impact on the next generation of theatre practitioners.

What to know - before the show!

Play Synopsis

The play begins with an energetic rap which explains who Aesop was and the definition of a fable. This fast-paced play presents the audience with nine different fables, each with a unique moral. The first fable is “Hermes and the Woodcutter” and the moral is we are all wiser when we tell the truth. The second fable, “The Milkmaid,” tells the story of a young girl who learns not to count your chickens before they are hatched. The next fable presented by the actors is “The Goose Who Laid the Golden Egg” with the moral of greed destroys the source of the good. The moral no act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted comes from the story “The Lion and the Mouse,” where a small mouse realizes that despite her size, she can be a gigantic help to a large lion. Do not be fooled by flattery comes from the next dramatized fable, “Fox Tale.”

In “The Dog and his Bone” a dog learns that the greedy may lose everything when he loses the bone in his mouth while trying to capture a bone that is only his reflection. Don’t put off for tomorrow what you should do today is the moral of “The Ant and the Grasshopper.” Perhaps the most familiar of Aesop’s tales is “The Tortoise and the Hare.” This tale reminds us that slow and steady wins the race and that we often need to take our time and not become lazy. Three actors portray all the characters in the play and this makes for an energetic and entertaining telling of some of the world’s favorite fables.



What to know - before the show!

Animal Relay

Divide the class into four to six groups. Explain that the teams will be doing a relay. Ask participants to talk about all the ways that animals move. Encourage them to think about the animals from *Aesop's Fables*.

Lion	Mouse
Dog	Ant
Grasshopper	Tortoise
Hare	Crow
Fox	Goose

Each team member will move in a special “animal” way to the other end of the room and back. Line up the teams. Have the first child in each line move like a lion to the end of the room and back. The second child will hop like a hare, while the third will jump like a grasshopper (etc). Repeat the sequence until all have had a turn. Try and use all of the animals from *Aesop's Fables*.

Emphasize that this is not a race or contest; there will be no winners or losers. Encourage all team members to clap and cheer for everyone. When everyone is finished, have the group give themselves a round of applause.

Questions to Consider:

- Show us some ways that animals move.
- Why would it be hard for your body to keep moving this way for a long time?
- What would happen if a lion moved like a grasshopper?
- Why is it important to the lion that he moves like a lion and not like a grasshopper?



DA: CR1.1.2A

Sharing Stories - Oral Traditions



Discuss with your students the oral tradition of stories and how stories change when they are passed down orally.

Broken Telephone Game: a group of students get together in a circle and one person whispers one phrase into the ear of the person beside them. Then the phrase is repeated until it gets to the last person of the circle, who says it out loud.

After the game, discuss how the phrase changed from the first person and stress that Aesop's stories are hundreds of years old and that's why they may have heard different versions of the stories.

R:R.K.2

What to know - before the show!

Contextual Article

From www.artsedge.com

Coaching the Storyteller by Kevin Cordi

All students can tell stories.

Though each may be proficient in different aspects of the art of storytelling, students naturally love stories and want to improve their storytelling. Realize that you are coaxing out a natural skill and desire.

Coaching is a positive experience.

Whether students receive comments from peers or teachers, feedback should always be positive and/or constructive. If students know what to expect from coaching, they will not be embarrassed by the situation.

Sometimes a student is not ready to be coached.

Never force a student to engage in a coaching session. Wait until the student asks for help. Spend more time on the act of storytelling before rushing into a coaching session, so the student feels competent as a storyteller. Once the student is ready, make sure they feel they are contributing to the process and that their feelings are respected.

Praise first, then suggest

If you begin feedback with constructive suggestions, students may not hear you praise the positive aspects of their storytelling. You are coaching people with real feelings. When working with students—and even adults—the story is not as important as the teller.

Be specific with praise.

Saying “good job” does not help the student improve. Instead, saying something like, “I really enjoyed the voice you used for the wolf, and it was enhanced by the snarl,” is more helpful.

Goals may differ.

Ask the student, “Why are you telling this story?” Your goal might be to prepare a student for a performance, but the student may be telling a story to honor his mother or for a special occasion. Listen to your student’s goals and help him or her guide the story in the right direction.

Encourage risk-taking in order to see progress.

Persuade students to try out new voices, new ways to bring a character to life, and new beginnings or endings. These experiments may evolve a clearer direction for the story and the storyteller.

Review progress with the storyteller during and after the session.

Give feedback whenever necessary. Don’t provide feedback at only the end. Immediate feedback enables the student to focus on improving a particular aspect of storytelling.

Outline goals for the next session.

Come up with three goals at the beginning of each session. After each session, evaluate the student’s progress and come up with goals for the next session. This helps students see how far they’ve progressed and what they should continue to work on.

Coaching is an enjoyable experience. With proper coaching, students will not just tell stories repeatedly but will improve with each telling.

About the Author: Kevin Cordi, a professional storyteller, is also a storytelling and writing teacher in Ohio and California. He is the Executive Director of the National Youth Storytelling Olympics. He had told and taught stories in over 25 states as well as Japan and England. Visit Kevin Cordi’s site, YouthStorytelling.com.

How to grow - after the show!

Reading Comprehension

Use the following passage with your students as a reading comprehension tool. Students may read the passage out loud or silently to themselves. Then ask the questions following the passage to challenge your students' listening skills. You may also create your own.

What kinds of stories do you like to read? Do you like stories that make you laugh? Maybe you like stories that make you think or learn? If so, you may like to read fables.

Have you ever read a story like *The Ant and the Grasshopper*, *The Mouse and the Lion*, or *The Tortoise and the Hare*? These stories are fables. That means they are stories that teach us a lesson. All of them were said to be written by a man named Aesop.

No one knows for sure who Aesop was. This is partly because he lived a very long time ago and not much was written about him. Even so, many people admired the stories he told, and they wrote them down.

It is thought that Aesop was born between 620 and 560 B.C.E. That would be about 2,600 years ago. He is thought to have been born somewhere in Greece, but no one knows where for sure. One thing they are sure of is that he was a slave. Legend says that Aesop was born deformed and mute. One day while he and his master were traveling in Egypt, he helped the goddess Isis. As a reward, she gave him a voice. Aesop used that voice to earn himself a name for being clever. It started at home, when he would make fun of people and play tricks on them. He made sure the tricks were very funny to avoid being punished. After a while his master gave him his freedom because of his cleverness. Aesop found his way to the court of King Croesus in Greece. There, he used his wit to get an important position. He told fables to explain why things happened or to teach a lesson. While there are many stories about Aesop's life, they all end the same way. Now we remember him as a man who was able to teach through his stories.

Questions

1. Can you name one of Aesop's stories?
2. What type of stories did Aesop write?
3. When did Aesop live and where did he live?
4. What was Aesop considered before he received his voice?
5. Why did Aesop write stories?

R:RI.2.10; R:RI.2.1



How to grow - after the show!

Sort the Animals (Copy Page)

Have your students clear their desk tops before starting the activity. Next, have each student cut out the pictures provided below. Then using the example categories below have each of the students sort their animals into the appropriate two groupings on their desk. For example, "put all of the bird cards on the left side of your desk and all non-birds on the right." Continue until all categories are used or make up some of your own.

Examples:

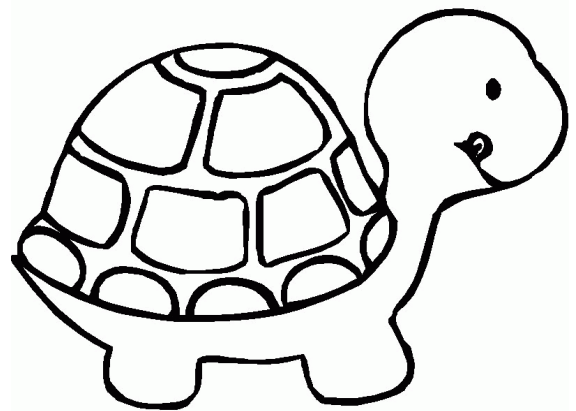
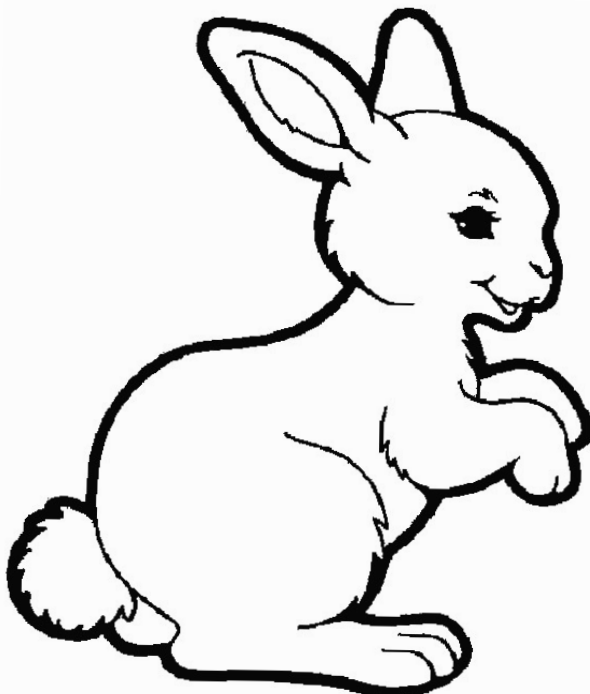
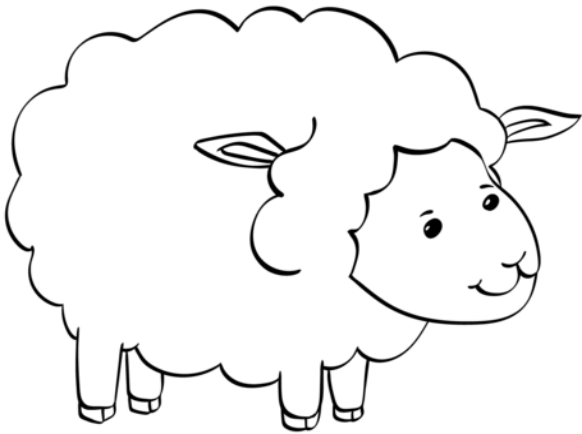
Birds and not birds, small and big

Fur and no fur, soft and not soft

Shell and no shell, fast and slow

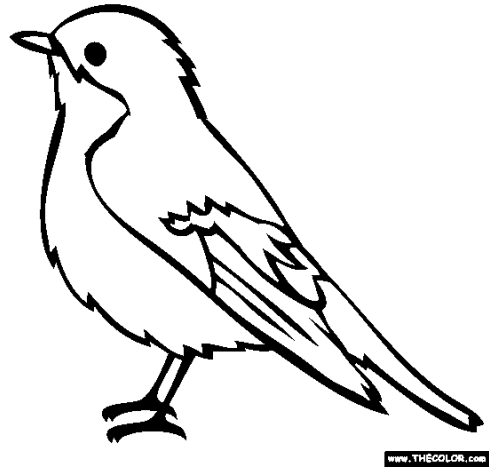
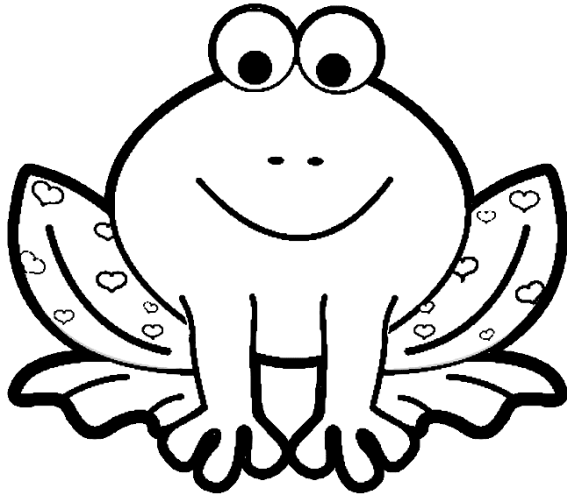
On a farm and not on a farm, birds and not birds

Green and not green, tails and no tails



How to grow - after the show!

Sort the Animals Continued...



Write Your Own Fable! (Copy Page)

Use this worksheet to write your own fable like Aesop.

Step one - choose one of the morals listed below.

1. Think before you act.
2. Look before you leap.
3. One good turn deserves another.
4. Slow but steady wins the race.
5. Do not count your chickens before they are hatched.

Step two - choose one set of animals to write your story about (usually fables have one bad guy and one good guy).

1. Lion / mouse
2. Fox / rabbit
3. Cat / dog
4. Ant / grasshopper



Step three - using the lines below write a story that uses your chosen animals and illustrates your chosen moral.

How to grow - after the show!

What to Read Next

***The McElderry book of Aesop's Fables* by Michael Morpurgo**

A timeless collection of over twenty of Aesop's best-loved fables

***Aesop's Funky Fables* by Vivian French**

From the boy who cries wolf to shake up his dull day to the mouse who tells the lion "I will chew right through all the ropes until you are free, like me," the tricks and foibles of Aesop's best-loved characters are captured here as never before.

***The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* by Janet Stevens**

After visiting each other's homes and staying for a short visit, both the Town Mouse and her cousin, the Country Mouse, decide that their own home environment suits them best.

***A Sip of Aesop* by Jane Yolen**

"The Tortoise and the Hare" and "The Lion and the Mouse" are just two of the thirteen classic fables presented in this bright picture book for early readers.

***Doctor Coyote; a Native American Aesop's Fables* by John Bierhorst**

Coyote is featured in each of these Aztec interpretations of Aesop's fables. The illustrations are set in the twentieth century.

***Agua, Agua, Agua: Fabula de Esopo* by Peter Mora**

This is a Spanish version of Aesop's fable about the raven who is thirsty but can't reach the water that he seeks. He learns to drop pebbles into a crack until the water level rises and he can drink. This story is told with bold and attractive illustrations.

LCT teaches in YOUR school!

Would you like to see some of these play guide activities modeled for your classroom?

Book a virtual workshop for your class with one of LCT's teaching artists! In our pre-show workshops, our teaching artists will engage students in acting skills and themes from the play through drama activities. In our post-show workshops, students will extend their play-going experience by strengthening their personal connection to the play and deepening their understanding of the themes and characters.



Got questions? Email Rhonda at education@lctonstage.org to learn more about our programming.

Ready to book? Email Kathryn at khenriques@lctonstage.org or visit our website!

To learn more about Lexington Children's Theatre and our programming for your school visit:
www.lctonstage.org/for-educators/