

Teacher's Guide for
INTERACTIVE PLAYS BY Cwerks, Inc.
Puss in Boots, Jack & the Beanstalk, Princess on a Pea, Paul Bunyan,
The Tortoise & the Hare, The Grasshopper and the Ants

—About the performance—

The interactive play is humorously based on the story of the same name. Of course, as in all good storytelling, this version will be different from many of the others and we encourage the children to read other versions of the same tale, along with other stories. During portions of the play, the children will be asked to participate. Some students will be called up to play characters; other times, there will be a whole group response. Audience participation is necessary for the play to move forward and the performers clearly indicate when it is time for the audience to respond. Because we interact with the audience, some children will think that it is okay to yell out even when not asked. Please remind the children of good audience behavior even when the performers talk directly to them.

—About Cwerks, Inc. & the artists—

Cwerks was founded in 1995 and brings live theater to all ages through a variety of venues: interactive children's plays; audience-participation mysteries; workshops and classes. The directors, Christopher and Marian Scadden, have over 60 years combined theater experience. Christopher has a B.A. in Theatre Arts and M.S. in Bilingual Education; Marian has a B.A. in Children's Theatre and over 30 years experience in mime and teaching drama to children. They have directed, performed and taught with numerous amateur and professional theatre groups; such as, Park City Shakespeare Festival, Utah; Great American Melodrama, California; Young Audiences of Kern County, California; Children's Educational Theatre, Oregon; and many City Recreation Departments and School Districts.

—A little more about the performance—

Notice the simplicity of the set, costumes and props. Not only do we keep things simple for traveling but we also keep things simple for the children. They can see that much of what we use are things available to them. They could put on their own show without having to take a technical theater class!

—Books & Resources about performing & theater—

THE OTHER ART: THEATRE SKILLS FOR EVERY CHILD, by Marian Scadden. This PDF handbook is a step-by-step guide to teaching advantageous theatre skills without having to be a drama major. Add theater to the classroom through simple—and short—beneficial activities. (www.cwerks.com)

PLAYS, THE DRAMA MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (www.playsmagazine.com)

THEATRE GAMES FOR YOUNG PERFORMERS, by Maria C. Novelly

KIDS TAKE THE STAGE, by Lenka Peterson & Dan O'Connor

(Search under "children's theatre" at Amazon.com)

BAKER'S PLAYS (www.bakersplays.com)

Free, downloadable short plays for 2-6 children to perform (www.cwerks.com)

—Theater Vocabulary—

- Blocking: where a performer moves on stage.
- Projection: a performer speaking loudly enough for the person in the very back to hear. Not to be confused with yelling.
- Enunciation: a performer speaking the words clearly so that the audience can understand the words.
- Cheat out: performers standing and moving in such a way that most of the audience can see their expressions most of the time.

- Backstage: area beyond the audience's sight.
- Offstage: when an object or performer is not on stage.
- Stage right: area of the stage that is to the actor's right, not the audience's right.
- Stage left: area of the stage that is to the actor's left.
- Up stage: that area of the stage that is farthest from the audience.
- Down stage: area of the stage that is closest to the audience.
- Center stage: the middle of the stage.
- Props or Properties: items used in a play that are held by the performers.
- Set: Large items in a play such as furniture, trees, doors, etc. that show where the play is taking place.

—Possible follow-up activities—

- Read other versions of the story just seen.
- Choose a folk tale, fairy tale, myth, fable or tall tale and find several versions. What are some of the differences?
- Act out a story, creating props and costumes from simple materials. Make the performance different by using modern language or by singing some or all of the story, like a musical or opera.
- Draw a picture from the play or story.
- Do an internet search with the title of the story followed by the word "art."
- Create a crossword or word search puzzle.
- Do a geography or culture search, depending on the play. For instance:
 - After watching Tortoise and the Hare or Grasshopper and the Ants: Learn about the Ancient Greeks or Aesop.
 - After watching Puss in Boots, Princess on a Pea or Jack and the Beanstalk: Research castles around the world.
 - After watching Paul Bunyan: Use a map to track Paul's travels. (You may have to read a few more tales about Paul to get more information about his journeys).
- Some of the basal readers include simple plays that can be performed.

—Let us hear from you—

Questions, comments, concerns, suggestions, and accolades, about the program or the teacher's guide, all cheerfully accepted, as are notes and pictures from the children:

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If you care to write a testimonial that we can include on our website or with our promotional packets, let us know. We would love to have it!



cwerks

*Live theatre
 where people interAct*