

STAND-UP STORIES *Multicultural Tales to Live By* **A Study Guide for Teachers of Grades 1-6**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To introduce students to Moral Tales from around the world
- Identify the definition and understand elements of Moral Tales
- Compare and contrast themes of Moral Tales from different cultures
- To introduce students to a multidiscipline approach to theatre
- To encourage students to seek out and read other Moral Tales
- To help develop creative imaginations
- To introduce the importance of oral tradition as an educational tool
- To create an appreciation and affection for live stage performance

ABOUT THE COMPANY

BOXTALES is a storytelling theatre company which uses masks, movement, storytelling and live music to present myths and folklore from around the world. The performers, Michael Andrews, Matt Tavianini, and Marie Ponce combine their diverse talents to create a professional, high energy, highly interactive theatrical experience for young audiences

Boxtales shows are fun and entertaining but also carry cultural wisdom from all over the world, and teach compassion, self-discipline, resourcefulness.

Our multi-disciplined approach is auditory, kinesthetic, visual and linguistic, bringing the tales alive and driving them deep into memory, whatever the child's learning orientation.

All Boxtales shows are crafted with the California Department of Education content standards in mind, covering English Language Arts, Word Analysis, Vocabulary Development and Literary Response and analysis, to name just a few.

Beyond the traditional disciplines of the theatre, the Boxtales style makes use of many things borrowed from other performance traditions or areas of life, such as storytelling, masks, dance, martial arts, circus arts, acro-yoga or radical-sports. The company tries to create images in the mind of the audience without the use of too many props or a set of any kind. They often transform from one character to another on stage, using props, costume pieces or just physical characterization.

Sometimes they will take turns playing a character. They believe that engaging the audience's imagination is important, and tends to make the work open to interpretation.

ON MYTHOLOGY

Myth has played a very significant role in the development of civilization. Through the development of myths mankind has been able to pass down from generation to generation the history and beliefs of early ancestors, and teach us how to live a better life.

Through the ages the most effective forms of this "wisdom" for the general populous have been narrative and allegorical in nature, and mythology transcends race, creed, color, social status and religion while teaching ethics and moral conduct.

Myths teach us that we have the power of narrative, the power of creating ideas, the power of naming, the power of understanding, and the power of love.

The ancient art of myth transforms us by helping us to turn the meaninglessness of existence into a life full of meaning.

SUMMARY OF THE PRODUCTION

The performance features a collection of multicultural folktales and myths which provide the listener with valuable messages and cultural wisdom they can use to live by.

The stories include:

Phaethon (Greek Mythology)

A boy name Phaethon goes to find out if his father is Helios, God of the Sun. Helios offers Phaethon anything he wants to prove it to him. Phaethon rashly chooses to ride the chariot that carries the sun through the sky. Helios tries to change Phaethon's mind, but Phaethon is stubborn. When Phaethon tries to ride the chariot, the horses go where they want and almost burn up the Earth when the sun gets too close. Zeus saves the earth by striking him down with his thunderbolt and scaring the horses back to the sky. Being young like Phaeton, is a time to play, a time to be patient, a time to listen and a time to learn.

The Stonecutter (Chinese Folktale)

A stonecutter is envious of rich people. An angel turns him into a rich man. But he keeps finding things he'd rather be. He'd rather be king, a farmer, the sun, a cloud, the wind, a mountain. While he's a mountain a stonecutter comes by and starts to chip away at him. The pain is too much for him to bear. He realizes that being a stonecutter was best after all. Be happy with who you are, you don't need to look around and be envious of others.

The Lions Whiskers (*Amhara Tribe of Ethiopia, Eastern Africa*)

Finaye, a woman past childbearing age, longs for a family of her own. When she marries Tesfa and meets his motherless son Abebe, she is overjoyed. Fanaye tries hard to please the boy, but he wants no part of her. Desperate, Fanaye seeks the wisdom of a shaman—a tribal medicine man. He sends her on a mission to gather three whiskers from a fierce lion for a magic potion that will win her Abebe's love. She collects the whiskers very carefully, by slowly gaining the lion's trust. Once obtained, the whiskers are no longer needed, as Fanaye has also learned how she must likewise gain Abebe's trust and love, with patience, respect and discretion.

BEFORE ATTENDING THE PERFORMANCE

ACTIVITY AND DISCUSSION IDEAS

Define Moral Tales

Identify other Moral Tales, Cautionary Tales:

The Tortoise & the Hare, The Boy Who Cried Wolf, The Lion & the Rabbit, etc.

(Aesop's Fables page link: <http://www.taleswithmorals.com/>)

In open discussion, develop a list of morals and values that the students can think of (give definition below if necessary) Ask students to give examples of them in life.

Moral (Definition)

1. *a lesson, especially one concerning what is right or prudent, that can be derived from a story, a piece of information, or an experience. "the moral of this story was that one must see the beauty in what one has"*
2. *a person's standards of behavior or beliefs concerning what is and is not acceptable for them to do.*

Then have the students tell how they learned the lessons/values/morals for themselves.

Next, have the students try to further develop their own story by writing it out, giving it beginning, middle and end, filling it out with more details.

Finally, have them tell their stories again and discuss how they have developed. (Not reading)

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Discuss the themes of the stories. Talk about the values and behavior of the characters.

LIST OF CHARACTORS

Phaethon
Clymene
School Mates
Helios
Fire Horses (Chariot Of The Sun)
People of the Earth (Audience)
Zeus (Ruler of The Gods)
Stonecutter
Mountain
Rich Man
Emperor
Carriage Driver
Sun
Cloud
Wind
Chief
Boy
Grandmother
Scout
Eagle
Ravens
Fanaye
Abebe
Witch Doctor
Lion

Discuss what the students did or did not like about the play, the characters, costumes, or set.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE TEACHERS' EVALUATION FORM AT END OF THIS DOCUMENT

OTHER STORIES AND RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STORYTELLING

The King and the Mangoes (Dharma Publishing) Part of their Tibetan Buddhist Tales Series inspired by Nazli Gellek & Adapted by Grania Davis

Based on the Buddha's previous lives The Jataka Tales.

"A good leader must love his followers by ruling kindly."

The Hunter and the Quail (Dharma Publishing) Part of their Tibetan Buddhist Tales Series inspired by Nazli Gelek & Adapted by Trudy Crofts and Ken McKeon

"Those who work together can escape the cleverest foe."

The Proud Peacock and the Mallard (Dharma Publishing) Part of their Tibetan Buddhist Tales Series inspired by Nazli Gellek & Adapted by Grania Davis

"It does not pay to show off your belongings"

Ugly Duckling by Hans Christian Andersen (Danish Tale) Different Publishers *"Beauty is relative, beauty grows, beauty is knowing who you are."*

Ma Liang and the Magic Paintbrush (Henry Holt and Co.) by Demi (Southern Chinese Folktale/Han Folktale) A Parallel tale is **The Magic Brush** found in the Collection Treasure Mountain (ATHENEUM) edited by Catherine Edwards Sadler

"A poor boy who longs to paint is given a magic brush that brings to life whatever he pictures. Being responsible."

The African Folktale of **The Poor Man's Reward and The Crocodile the Boy and the Kind Deed** found in the collection Tales from the African Plains (Dutton) Retold by Anne Gatti *" Good deeds are rewarded with kind deeds"* Also in **The Wise Man's Story** *"One is stronger as one group than as an individual"*

The Norwegian folktale of East of the Sun, West of the Moon (Many Sources)

"A tale about what is true love"

The Mouse Bride (Mayan Folktale) *Great parallel to **The Stonecutter**.*

"Believe in yourself, no need to go any further than your own home."

The Greek myth of **Echo & Narcissus** Many Sources we use Mythology Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes (Mentor) by Edith Hamilton *"Don't talk too much. Vanity. Narcissism."*

Lion's Whiskers by Len Cabral & **The Black Prince** by Laura Simms can be found in the collection Ready to Tell Tales (August House) edited by David Holt and Bill Mooney, 1994. *This book has great tellable tales.*

You can find endless folktales, fairy tales, and myths in the 398 and 398.2 section of the library.

Books and Resources on the Craft of Storytelling

Michael Katz

P.O. Box 91316, Santa Barbara, CA 93190, (805) 961-3906

Michael offers workshops in storytelling and has several handouts on the craft. He can also answer your questions on the world of storytelling.

August House Publishers

(800) 284-8784. *Order their catalogue. The experts in storytelling materials*

The Storyteller's Start-Up Book

Margaret Read McDonald, August House Publishers.

A book on how to learn to tell stories.

Ready to Tell Tales

David Holt & Bill Mooney, August House.

A good source for easy to tell tales.

Barbara Budge Griffin's Storytelling Journal:

10 South Keeneway Dr., Medford, Oregon 97504, (503) 773-3006

A book on how to learn to tell stories.

Katz Pajamas Radio Storytelling Program

Every Saturday morning from 9:30-10:00 on 91.9 FM KCSB and every Saturday morning from 7:00 - 7:30 on 89.9 KCBX Fm. Your host is Michael Katz. (805) 961-3906

National Storytelling Association (NSA)

NSA, P.O. Box 309, Jonesborough, Tenn., 37659, (615) 753-2171

A great resource for National storytelling information: Storytellers, workshops, festivals (around the U.S. and in your area), books etc.

QUICK POINTERS ON STORYTELLING

Learning the Story

- Find a Story you like
- Start with a simple story
- Know the story don't memorize it!!! The strength of a teller is in the tellers" comprehension of what the story is about and putting it in their words
- Develop the story landscape. Where are things and people in your story, and through your movement and gestures make those invisible things become real to listener

The Telling of the Story

- Shake out before telling
- Close your eyes and visualize the story from beginning to the end in pictures not in words.
- Make sure you are comfortable with the space you are telling in
- Be present and immerse yourself in the story as you tell it.
- Speak Clearly
- Make eye contact
- Find ways to involve the audience
- Vary the Rhythm of the story

NOTE

Educational Programs

Boxtales offers unique theatre residencies for local elementary schools and a three-week summer, theatre camp, including training in storytelling, movement, music, characterization and collaboration. These programs stimulate minds, encourage team work, build character, and develop self-esteem. To learn more www.boxtales.org

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Phaeton (Greek Myth)

Many Sources including:

Mythology Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes (Mentor) by Edith Hamilton, 1969

Favorite Greek Myths (Scholastic Inc.) retold by Mary Pope Osborne (1989)

The Stonecutter

The Stonecutter (Crown Publishers) by Demi

The Lion's Whiskers

The Lion's Whiskers: An Ethiopian Folktale, Nancy Raines Day, Scholastic Press Inc. New York, 1995

BOXTALES Theatre Company Program Evaluation

Name of Performance: _____

Date: _____

School Name: _____

Grade Level: _____

Evaluator (please circle one): Teacher Administrator Specialist Student Staff Volunteer

The Artists

	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Artists' verbal presentation and communication skills	1	2	3	4
Quality of artistic skill	1	2	3	4

The Program

Organization and pace	1	2	3	4
The story was interesting	1	2	3	4
Creativity of presentation	1	2	3	4
Appropriate content for grade level	1	2	3	4
Length of program	1	2	3	4
Effectiveness in teaching educational concepts	1	2	3	4
Quality of printed teacher guide (if applicable)	1	2	3	4

Students' Response

Students' attention to program	1	2	3	4
Rapport between performers and audience	1	2	3	4
Students' level of understanding of the story and characters	1	2	3	4

Would you recommend BOXTALES Theatre Company to another school?

YES NO

Please describe the impact of this program on yourself and/or your students. Was there any aspect of the program that inspired you as a teacher? Please feel free to share additional comments or suggestions for improvement. Use the back of this paper as needed.