

Jim West in **NORTH, SOUTH, EAST & JIM WEST** Study Guide

A multifaceted puppet production, starring Jim West, and introducing children aged 4 to 9 to three different cultures and three different kinds of puppets! From China, an imaginative story about a boy and his dragon uses cardboard boxes and rags to create a giant dragon on stage. An inspiring North American Indian legend about a boy who yearns to fly uses hand puppets and cutouts to create a colorful story totem pole. And a lively African tale of Anansi the Spider utilizes hand shadows. And, as always, children leave with creative ideas to take home.

PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

1. Explain the directions north, south, east, and west, and discuss how they interrelate and why they are helpful to us and to pilots, car drivers, sea captains, etc.
2. Locate on a globe where you live. Also locate Canada, North America (Vancouver area); Guana, Africa; and China, Asia. Discuss the distances between these places, using the directions north, south, east, and west. Also discuss languages, as well as cultural and climate differences.
3. What is a puppeteer? What kind of stories can be told with puppets? What is the difference between reading and telling a story with puppets?
4. Teachers might like to check out a recording of Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite*. Mr. West uses the sequence "The Fairy Garden" during his program. Play the recording as the children enter the class in the morning. If they ask about the music, just say, "It's a nice way to start the day." Just let the music be there without fuss. If you can repeat this for several days prior to the performance, the children will enjoy recognizing the music when they hear it in the show.

POST-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

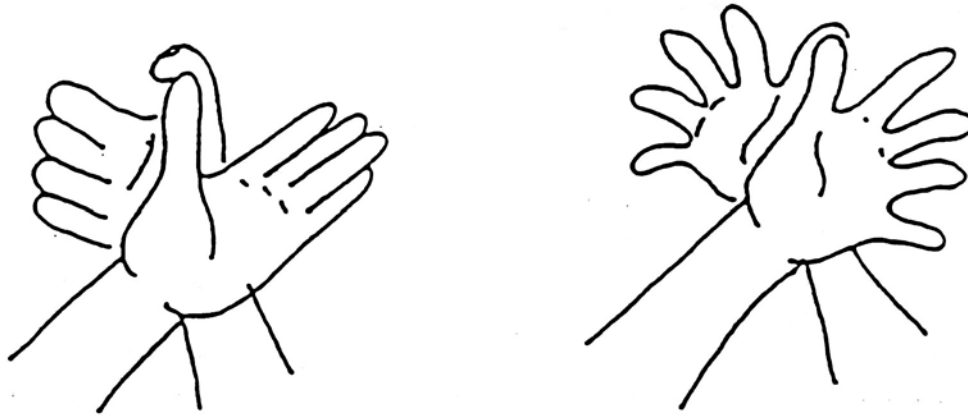
Little One:

1. Choose a story. Cut out faces and figures to illustrate it.
2. Build a totem pole like Little One's. This may be done as a class project or by each student individually. A class project could involve students working together in small groups on each segment of the pole and displaying it taped or pinned together on a bulletin board. Individually, each student could be given a paint stirrer or a heavy piece of cardboard doubled over and mounted on a clay base (see illustration). To this, each student may tape painted faces and figures as he/she chooses.



Anansi:

1. Check out some of the Anansi stories from the school library and read them to the class.
2. Use a slide or overhead projector to create a shadow light and have children take turns practicing shadow puppets. Encourage the students to create their creatures using the two illustrated here as examples.



China:

Build a box puppet. Again, this can be a class project using a large box and many children to make the body or each student may bring in a box and make a puppet individually. See illustration.



Turn box upside-down. Cut hole for fingers. Note: cutting the hole may be difficult with scissors. A straight edge or mat knife, when available, is ideal. Cut off back lid lip for greater mobility and make a hinge by taping box lid to just below finger hole. Decorate as desired.

Puppet suggestions: dragon, lion, donkey, tiger, elephant, horse, zebra, unicorn, rhinoceros, dinosaur, dog, monster.

Please check out my website for more Puppet Making ideas!
www.JimWestPuppets.com