

# IF YOU GIVE A PIG A PANCAKE & Other Story Books

## STUDY GUIDE

Dear Teacher:

We have created the following study guide to help make your students' theater experience with TheatreworksUSA's production of *If You Give a Pig a Pancake & other Story Books* as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a live theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the production, the experience is more significant and long-lasting.

This performance highlights eight favorite children's books. The format is that of a musical revue made up of vignettes created by a variety of talented writers and performed by a cast of six actors. (Note: the actors assume various roles throughout the show through quick costume and character changes—a concept which you may need to review for younger children).

Following is an alphabetical list of the books used in the performance. You may choose to read some (or all) of the books to your class wither before or after seeing the performance (perhaps asking students which books from the show they would like to read). Similarly, depending on the grade level of your students and the time you have available, you can utilize the activities either before seeing the show (as pre-performance preparation) or as follow-up activities.

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### *DIARY OF A WORM*

Based on the book by Doreen Cronin and Harry Bliss. Used with the permission of Pippin Properties, Inc.  
Adapted by Robert Lopez and Kristin Anderson-Lopez.

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**Summary:** It's great to be a worm, but a wormy life also has its difficulties. Follow a worm's adventures as he writes about them all in his diary.

**Theme:** Even little creatures are important and can make big contributions.

-  Discuss the difference between fact and fiction in stories. Make a chart of what is factual in the story (worms eat garbage, dig tunnels) and what is fictional (worms go to school and dance). Add other facts students know about worms.
-  What is a diary? What kind of things would you write in a diary? Have students choose an animal and write a diary entry for that animal. Collect all the pages and make a class "Animal Diary" to display.
-  What would be good about being a worm? Bad? Chart the positives and negatives. Have students decide which animal they would be if they had the choice and why. Students can create an acrostic poem with features of their animals, i.e. BIRD: Beautiful feathers, Intelligent mind, Robin is eating Dining on worms.

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## ***FLUFFY THE CLASSROOM GUINEA PIG: (A Prize for Fluffy)***

Based on the book *Fluffy's Silly Summer* by Kate McMullan.

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Adapted by Steven Lutvak and Robert L. Freedman.

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**Summary:** When Fluffy the guinea pig enters a Best Pets contest, he is worried about not having a talent until a pesky flea changes everything.

**Theme:** Everyone has hidden talents and can achieve greatness.

- ✎ Research pets as a class project. Have students use their own pet or one they know and look up facts about them. Create a “trading card” of the pet with a picture and personal facts (i.e. name: Pepper, likes: chasing yarn, etc.) on the front side and statistics about the actual type of animal on the back (i.e. Domestic short hair cats have a life span of 18 years, etc.)
- ✎ Make your own guinea pig. Create pigs from socks filled with pillow stuffing. Tie the end with a ribbon for a tail and draw in a face on the other side with felt pieces glued on for ears. Use stuffed guinea pigs to re-enact scenes from the story or make up your own story and put on a show.
- ✎ Vote on a class mascot. List the qualities for a good mascot and come up with animal candidates. Run a campaign with posters for the top choices. Hold an election and create a special area for the winning mascot with the poster listing the animal’s attributes. If possible, get a real or stuffed animal to represent the class.

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## ***HORACE & MORRIS BUT MOSTLY DOLORES***

Based on the book *Horace & Morris But Mostly Dolores* by James Howe, Illustrated by Amy Walrod

Adapted by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul.

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**Summary:** Three mice promise to be best friends forever. But when Horace and Morris join the Mega-Mice club (for boys only!), and Dolores becomes a Cheese Puff (for girls only!), what will happen to their friendship?

**Theme:** Boys and girls can be friends together.

- ✎ Start a list titled “Good Friends”, and have the students come up with qualities they want in a good friend or behaviors that they expect in a friend. Students can trace their hands on colored paper and cut them out. On each hand they can list their most important qualities for a friend. Hang all the hands overlapping each other to form a “Rainbow of Friendship.”
- ✎ Create a class collage of friendship using old magazines. Let children cut out picture examples of friendship behaviors. Also cut out words having to do with friendship and display in one large collage poster.
- ✎ Divide the class into Mega-Mice (boys) and Cheese Puffs (girls) and have each group make up a cheer for their club. After each group performs their cheer, bring the class together to make a club that would include everyone and use the best parts of both cheers to make one for the new “all invited” club representing the whole class.

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## ***HOW I BECAME A PIRATE***

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Adapted by Laurence O’Keefe and Nell Benjamin.

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**Summary:** Young Jeremy Jacob would love to sail away and be a pirate – no vegetables, no manners, no bedtime, and no rules at all! But he soon discovers that there’s really no place like home.

**Theme:** Adventure is fun but home is really best.

- ✎ Research real life pirates. Were their lives really so much fun? Create a dictionary of pirate words and their meanings. Celebrate “Talk Like a Pirate Day” <http://www.yarr.org.uk/talk/>
- ✎ Have a treasure hunt in the classroom. Create a map and have the students use map skills to find “treasure” in the class. Have students create their own maps of their homes or neighborhoods.
- ✎ Imagine you are a pirate. Have students create individual pirate flags from construction paper. Attach all the flags spaced out on a long rope. Line the students up next to their flag. Have the child in the center step several paces forward to create a large inverted “V” shape like the bow of a ship. Have students sway in unison to commands of “left” and “right” as if they were rocking on a boat. They can also shout out their pirate phrases and act like the ship is in a storm.

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## ***IF YOU GIVE A PIG A PANCAKE***

Adapted from *If You Give a Pig a Pancake*. Text copyright © 1998 by Laura Numeroff, illustrations © 1998 by Felicia Bond. Used by permission of Harper Collins Publishers.  
Adapted by Anthony King and Scott Brown.

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**Summary:** A bossy pig’s demands frazzle a little girl in this hilarious story about cause-and-effect.

**Theme:** A single small request can lead to an endless series of other requests.

- ✎ Discuss sequence: beginning, middle, end. Read *If You Give a Pig a Pancake* and have students make a list of all the different things the pig does. Put the events of the story in chronological order. Have students create a sequence for an activity (i.e. making a sandwich). Put each step on a separate slip of paper and trade with classmates to see if they can put the activity into the proper order.
- ✎ Explore cause-and-effect in stories. Have the students sit in a circle and begin with a story prompt that each child will continue. For example: “If you give a dog a bone, he will want to...” and the next child in the circle adds to the story as in the book and will eventually bring it back to giving the dog a bone. Students can illustrate their piece of the story and display the sequence in the classroom.
- ✎ Read the other books by Laura Numeroff in the series: *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, *If You Give a Moose a Muffin*, *If You Take a Mouse to the Movies*, etc. and practice predicting what will come next once they understand the pattern. Brainstorm titles for her next book.

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## ***LILLY’S BIG DAY***

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Adapted by Kevin Del Aguila and Brad Alexander.

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**Summary:** Lilly’s teacher is getting married, and she just knows she’ll be a great flower girl, despite the fact that Mr. Slinger has already asked his niece. When she suffers a bout of stage fright, it’s up to Lilly to save the day!

**Theme:** You can make an important contribution even if you are not the center of attention.

- ✎ Color Lilly for her big day. Print out the reproducible sheet at <http://www.kevinhenkes.com/images/fun/weddingcolor.pdf>
- ✎ Plan a party with your class. What are the steps needed to organize a big event? Think of ideas for activities, decorations, food, etc. Put students into groups for different tasks. Parents can help too!

- ✎ Discuss stage fright, what does it mean? Children can give examples of times they were afraid to do something. Brainstorm ways to overcome stage fright. What made you feel better when you were afraid?

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## ***THE PAPER BAG PRINCESS***

Based on the book by Robert Munsch. Used with the permission of Annick Press.  
Adapted by David Kirshenbaum.

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**Summary:** When a ferocious dragon smashes Princess Elizabeth's castle, burns all her fancy clothes, and kidnaps her beloved prince, she dons a paper bag and comes to the rescue.

**Theme:** You don't have to wait for Prince Charming to save the day; you can do anything if you believe in yourself.

- ✎ Create characters from the story using real paper bags. Use the template from <http://www.dltk-teach.com/rhymes/princessandfrog/mprincessbag.htm> or use any lunch size bag as a puppet with the head glued onto the bottom folded part of the bag. The rest of the bag can be decorated as clothes or dragon scales. Students can choose the princess, prince or dragon as a character and work in groups to re-enact scenes from the story. Larger bags or boxes can be used to make scenery like the castle.
- ✎ Compare/Contrast: use a Venn Diagram to compare The Paper Bag Princess with Cinderella or Sleeping Beauty. What are the similarities and differences? How does the Paper Bag Princess deal with her difficulties compared to traditional Princesses? How would you deal with a dragon?
- ✎ Introduce the idea of genres. The stories in the play come from different genres, identify them (i.e. fairy tale, diary, fantasy) Have the class come up with examples of other stories they know and identify the genre. Make up a chart listing major genres (Fantasy, Adventure, Realistic Fiction, Mystery, Fairy Tale) and categorize their favorite books. Which genre has the most books listed?

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## ***RUBY MAE HAS SOMETHING TO SAY***

Adapted from the book Ruby Mae Has Something to Say by David Small. Published by Children's Books, a division of Random House, Inc. Copyright © 1992 by David Small.  
Adapted by Stephen Sislen and Ben Winters.

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**Summary:** Tongue-tied Ruby Mae dreams of delivering a message of universal peace and understanding to the United Nations. Her nephew creates a wonderful contraption that eases her fear of public speaking.

**Theme:** You have strength within yourself; you don't need tricks or magic to succeed.

- ✎ Practice public speaking in class. Have students choose a product (food, toy, etc) and write and advertisement for it. Let students perform their "commercials" in front of the class and evaluate for speaking style. Create a rubric and rate them on eye contact, projection, body language and speaking clearly.
- ✎ Explore the idea of fears (like public speaking.) Let students create their own "Bobatron" hat-machine to conquer a fear. Students can bring in everyday items from home, assemble them into a hat and explain to the class what fear or challenge the machine helps them overcome.
- ✎ Work in groups to make a "How-To" presentation. Students teach the class to perform a task (i.e. How to ride a skateboard, pitch a ball or make jello, etc.) using very detailed instructions. Props can be used for a real demonstration.