

Aesop's Fables

Enrichment Works

Our Mission

Enrichment Works creates and presents theater to inspire learning.

Classroom Connections

Synopsis

A musical number introduces us to the world of Aesop's Fables and their famous morals ("Look Around You"). Aesop, in our fable, is a disgruntled carpenter who is unhappy in his profession ("Woe is Me"). His friendly workshop companion, Miss Mouse, encourages him to pursue his true calling by asking him to act out his tales. With the students' help, they enact the stories of "The Tortoise and The Hare" ("Speedy Hare") -- *Slow and steady wins the race;*

"The Boy Who Cried Wolf" ("I Just Saw a Wolf") -- No one will believe a liar, even when he tells the truth; and "The Fox and the Crow" ("The Handsomest Crow I Know") -- Flatterers live at the expense of those who believe them. Aesop, with a little help from Miss Mouse and the students, finally realizes that storytelling is what he does best. He changes the sign on his shop from Aesop's Tables to Aesop's Fables ("Look Around You - Reprise"). *Everyone is master of his own fate.*



Jamie Hobert and Danielle Vernengo

About the Artists

Jamie Hobert (Aesop) is a graduate from UCLA School of Theater, Film & Television. He was a regular performer the Grove in Hollywood as Uncle Gard & Jiggy Nye in the Los Angeles production of *The American Girl Revue* and recently finished a run of "Life Could Be a Dream" at the Laguna Playhouse.

Danielle Vernengo (Female Lead) was a series regular on TV's Heartbreak Café and played a leading role in Keenan Ivory Wayans ON UPN. She holds a BA in Theatre from Cal State Fullerton and a multiple subject teaching credential from National University. Danielle has worked as a teaching artist at Gary Spatz' The Playground and High Touch High Tech and Destination Science.

Cy Young (Book, Lyrics & Music, *Aesop's Fables*) appeared on Broadway, as a principal in *Subways Are For Sleeping*. He became a regular at New York City's elegant Upstairs At The Downstairs nightclub and can be heard on many *Upstairs* recordings. Cy toured in the National Company of *Once Upon A Mattress* playing Prince Dauntless to Buster Keaton's King, then worked with Howard Keel in a tour of *On A Clear Day*. As an author, Cy has had three plays published by Samuel French: *James Skipworth*, *The Sloth*, and *Jump, I'll Catch You!* His song, *Draw Me A Circle*, is on the *Barbra Streisand Third Album*.

Project Ideas

Discussion and Writing Questions

- What is a fable? Why are animals used as characters?
- Why do you think Aesop wrote these stories?
- Are you more like the tortoise or the hare?
- How can you win someone's trust again after you have told them a lie?
- How do you feel when someone flatters you?

- Illustrate one of the fables you heard in the style of a comic strip. Each character should have their unique way of speaking so they don't sound the same. Example: The Fox can speak in slang by dropping "ing" at the end of words. "How's it goin'?" The Sheep could speak perfect English and never use contractions. "I cannot step any closer to you."
- Choose one of the morals (lessons) from the stories in this play or another Aesop's Fable. Write your own story that teaches that lesson, or an experience where you learned a lesson.
- Collect pictures of different animals. Label them with the human traits that you think each animal could represent. Could the Fox and the Crow be interchanged with other animals? How about The Boy Who Cried ??? What animals could replace the tortoise and the hare?
- Go to the library or one of the websites listed below and read more of Aesop's Fables. Work with some classmates to create your own play from one of these fables. You can even make up a song to include in your play. Perform it for the class.
- Think about the morals in these three fables. (See Synopsis) What do the morals mean? Which morals can you live by? What is hard about trying to live by these morals? When would you apply these morals?

Resources

Websites:

<http://aesopfables.com>

<http://www.taleswithmorals.com>

<http://www.read.gov/aesop/index.html>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/schoolradio/subjects/english/aesops_fables

<http://www.catawba.k12.nc.us/webquest/lundeen/Aesop-page.html>

Booklist:

[Aesop's Fables](#) by Aesop, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney

[The Classic Treasury of Aesop's Fables](#) by Aesop, illustrated by Don Daily

[The Fabled Fourth Graders of Aesop Elementary](#) by Candace Fleming

[Aesop's Fables \(Oxford World's Classics\)](#) by Aesop, translated by Laura Ginns

[Aesop's Fables](#) by Ann McGovern

[Dramatizing Aesop's Fables](#) by Louise Thistle

[A Sip of Aesop](#) by Jane Yolen

Vocabulary Words

deceptive

fable

flatter

moral

outwit

shepherd

toiling

tortoise

vigilance

Contact Us

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Standards and Learning

Enrichment Works is a theater company whose productions are designed to inspire children to learn by creating an emotional connection to educational subjects. "Aesop's Fables" uses the Theater Content Standards of California to provide a positive theatrical experience. The performers interact directly with students and ask them questions about the topic of the play, inviting students onstage to act out specific roles and events in the story.

Visual and Performing Arts Connections

1.0 Artistic Perception

Students process, analyze and respond to sensory information through language and skills unique to theatre. They learn theatrical vocabulary such as actor, musical, prop, script, score, etc. They analyze the elements of "Aesop's Fables" by identifying the who, what, when, where and why of each story. They identify the objectives of each character as the stories are dramatized through acting and singing. Students respond to Aesop's literary works and are able to analyze the morals taught as the drama unfolds before their very eyes.

2.0 Creative Expression

Students observe the actors dramatize literature through the medium of theater, and learn how stories can be lifted from the page and presented on the stage. They learn that literature can be transformed into dramatic action, and that lyrics are created through creative writing.

3.0 Historical and Cultural Context

Aesop's Fables helps students understand the tradition of storytelling as the oldest form of theater. Fables were used in ancient theater from various cultures to teach moral lessons. Students participate as both spectator and participant as the actors address them directly during the course of the show to emphasize the moral in each story.

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

Following the play, students participate in a Question and Answer session where they can criticize and query the actors/characters about the content of the play or the artistic choices made in the production. Students are given the opportunity to express how they felt about what they experienced. Post performance activities are provided through study guides, and workshops for teachers are available to help students understand the historical events addressed in the play.

5.0 Connections, Relationship, Applications

Activities will be provided through study guides in order to help them encourage students to connect what is learned in Aesop's Fables to other subject areas. Through hands-on approaches, including improvisation and dramatization students can explore concepts in other subject areas including English Language Arts (Sequencing stories) and literature (Myths, Folktales, Legends) as well as other resources. Theatre games and activities encourage students to learn more about the role of an actor, director and writer, and to use their imaginations and creativity to create their own creative writing.