

TEACHER'S GUIDE
James and the Giant Peach
SPRING 2019

Teacher's Guides are developed by members of Nine O'Clock Players, who operate Theatre for Children, a service of Assistance League of Los Angeles.

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826 Cole Avenue
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Weekend Performances of *James and the Giant Peach*

Sundays: March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 and April 7

All performances are at 2 p.m.

Ticket Donation: \$15

Group Sales and Birthday Parties available

Notes to the teacher:

Guides are distributed to facilitate learning and discussion and to provide an enhanced theatre experience for our audience. These pages have been written with young students in mind so that they will have a better understanding of the production they will be seeing.

Seat assignments are predetermined based on age levels of classes. Ushers will ask adults to sit toward the aisles.

THE STORY OF THE MAKING OF A PLAY
ACT I: GETTING STARTED

First, a Play is chosen, one that is appropriate for young audiences. A play is a story told by actors on a stage right in front of you. The play will be called a musical if it contains singing and dancing. The Production Chairman, the person in charge of the play, then selects the following individuals who will help to tell the play's story:

- The Director, who plans how to tell the story by using actors who learn dialogue, songs, and dances
- The Musical Director, who teaches the actors musical numbers and orchestrates the music throughout the entire play
- The Costume Designer, who creates costumes based on the characters in the play
- The Scenic Designer, who builds sets to make the different scenes in the play
- The Prop Designer, who fills the stage with objects (such as tables and chairs) to help the actors tell their stories
- The Lighting Designer, who chooses colored lights to make the sets and stage look like real places
- The Sound Engineer, who sets the volume of all of the "mics" (microphones) the actors wear and the special sound effects that you hear during the play.
- The Stage Manager and Technical Director, who help to make all the elements of the play come together

ACT II: THE PLAY COMES ALIVE

- Actors audition for the parts in the play. They sing a song, read lines from the script and are given a role to play.
- Beginning with rehearsals, the actors learn their lines, songs and dances, have costumes fitted, learn to use props and move scenery.

ACT III: ON WITH THE PLAY. . . .

The members of the audience arrive and are ushered into the theatre. They take their seats and see the piano played by the musical director. An announcement says that the show is about to begin and asks the audience to practice theatre etiquette by remaining quiet while the actors are speaking and to enjoy the play by clapping for the parts they like.

After the play is over, audience members can talk to the actors and ask them about their characters or the play itself.

SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY: *James and the Giant Peach*

When James is sent by his conniving aunts to chop down their old fruit tree, he discovers a magic potion that results in a gigantic peach. Suddenly James finds himself in the center of the huge peach—among human-sized insects with outsized personalities. But after the peach falls from the tree and rolls into the ocean, the group faces some madcap adventures, including hunger, sharks, and plenty of disagreements.

Thanks to James' quick wit and creative thinking, the group learns to live and work together as a family, ultimately saving the day.

Come and see this magical production on stage at the Assistance League theatre performed by the award winning Nine O'Clock Players!

VOCABULARY

Bait: food used to attract an animal

Bobby: old fashioned name for a British police officer

Centipede: a bug with many segments and two legs for each segment

Cottage: a small, simple house

Pickpocket: a person who steals from another person's pocket

Seasick: feeling sick to the stomach; caused by motion of a boat

Slithering: moving smoothly over the surface in a twisty motion

Spire: the pointed top of a building

BEFORE ATTENDING THE PLAY: THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Students often need guidance in how to behave while watching live theatre. Some pointers you can share with your students are:

- How the audience behaves is important—it helps to make the play fun for everyone. Students must not walk in the aisles while actors are present or try to touch the actor or the props. They can applaud when appropriate, but talking or when actors are speaking or singing is to be avoided so the audience can hear the words and music.

- Audience members may not use any photographic device (flash, digital, cell phone cameras) during the play.
- Please explain to the students the differences between watching live theatre, movies, and television.

BEFORE THE PLAY: DISCUSSION

- What are the responsibilities of the actors and the audience? (See Theatre Etiquette above.)
- What careers are involved in producing a play? (See “The Story of the Making of a Play” in this Teacher’s Guide.) Do you think you would be interested in any of those jobs? Which ones? Why?

BACK AT SCHOOL, AFTER THE PLAY: DISCUSSION, WRITING, SPEAKING

- Write a conversation you might have via email or texting with one of the characters in the play. Ask a question of the character; then let the character answer.
- Aunties Spiker and Sponge were mean to James. Write a paragraph describing how they were mean.
- Who was your favorite character and what did you like about the character?
- Earthworm did a favor for James. Has someone done you a big favor? Can you describe what it was?
- How did James convince Centipede to trust him?