



PRESCHOOL TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Arts Start program is supported by



Grow Up Great

Aesop Bops!

Friday, February 1, 2019
10:30 AM & 12:30 PM



Welcome!

This guide was created for use by teachers in the Springfield Urban League Head Start program, but it will also be sent to other teachers attending the performance who indicate they teach preschool students. Another Teacher's Guide, with content for older students, is available online at <http://uispac.com/education/class-acts/>. We hope the information and activities included in this guide will help your students better understand the performance.

We look forward to seeing you!



Youth programming in the Class Acts series is supported in part by the Helen Hamilton Performing Arts Endowment for Youth Fund, gifts from Elizabeth and Robert Staley, and a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.



The Arts Start program is an initiative of **University of Illinois Springfield** and the **Springfield Urban League Head Start**, funded by **PNC's Grow Up Great**® initiative. Through this arts education program, Head Start students, their teachers, and their families will become involved in live performances, enhancing the students' educational opportunities and school readiness.



Write to Us

We would love to hear from you and your students! If your students write about the performance they saw or create artwork related to it, you are welcome to send it to us via email to azepp2@uis.edu or through the mail to:

Amy Zepp
UIS Performing Arts Services
One University Plaza, MS PAC 397
Springfield, IL 62703

We love sharing student work with our Class Acts sponsors, so they can see the impact of their donations.



Attending a Live Performance

Please use the information below to help prepare your young students for attending a live theatrical performance. For many, this will be their first experience with live theater.

Going to a live theatrical performance is different than watching a movie or TV show – the members of the audience are very important, and the way they behave will affect the performance. That’s why theaters have their own special rules about behavior.

- Tell your students that when they arrive in the parking lot, there will be a lot of other buses there too. They will need to follow the instructions of their teachers and walk in a straight line (or maybe in a buddy-system line) to come into the building. Once inside, they need to stay in line because of all the other students who will be there.
- Ask your students how they think an audience should behave at a live performance. What are some of the things they should do and not do? If it is not covered by the student answers, make sure you talk about:
 - **Listen** to the performance (this ties into “don’t talk,” but it can be helpful to keep all the discussion points phrased in the positive and not in the “don’t-do-this” mode); use a “cupped ear” gesture to emphasize listening when it is mentioned
 - **Watch** the performance; point at both sides of your face near your eyes with your index fingers to emphasize watching when it is mentioned
 - **Clap** at the end of songs and at the end of the performance when the performers take their bows. Take the time to practice clapping with the students. Call one student forward who will pretend to take a bow at the end of a performance and the rest of the room will practice clapping for this student.

Repeat the gestures for the three points above and have the students do it with you.

- Let your students know that like in a movie theater, the area where the audience sits for the performance will be rather dark, but there will be lights on the stage and some small lights will remain on in the aisles. If they need to use the bathroom in the middle of the show, they can come to the end of the row and an usher will use a flashlight to make sure they can find their way to the correct bathroom.



Activities

These activities can be used together in any combination that works for the teacher. It would be best to do some activities before the performance, to help students understand the plot of the story, and some activities after the performance, to reinforce what they have seen.

About the Show

The show *Aesop Bops!* is a storytelling performance. You will only see two performers on stage – storyteller David Gonzalez and keyboardist Daniel Kelly. The performance will include several stories in the style of Aesop’s Fables. The activities in this guide will be based on the version of the story of *The Lion and the Mouse* as found in *The McElderry Book of Aesop’s Fables* by Michael Morpurgo with illustrations by Emma Chichester Clark.



What is storytelling?

Storytelling is the social activity of sharing stories for the purposes of entertainment, education, cultural preservation, or instilling moral values. It can be as simple as a parent talking with a child or a more formal theatrical performance in which one person dramatically tells a story to a group. As opposed to using lots of costumes and props, the storyteller will use his or her body, voice, and facial expressions to portray all the characters in the story.

What is a fable?

A fable is a short story that teaches a lesson. Many fables use animals as the main characters who often have distinct human-like personalities. The most famous collection of fables is known as Aesop’s Fables. Aesop was a Greek storyteller thought to have lived between 620 and 560 BC.

Many versions and collections of Aesop’s Fables exist. A free interactive version is available online through the United States Library of Congress at <http://www.read.gov/aesop/index.html>.

What is a moral?

A moral is the lesson you are supposed to learn by reading or hearing a fable story. In most versions of Aesop's Fables, you will find a short sentence at the end of each story that summarizes what you should have learned from the experiences of the characters in the story.

About David Gonzalez

David Gonzalez is a professional storyteller, poet, playwright, musician, and public speaker. He is a cultural ambassador for the U.S. State Department and is the proud recipient of the International Performing Arts for Youth *Lifetime Achievement Award for Sustained Excellence*. Mr. Gonzalez was named a Fellow of the Joseph Campbell Foundation and was nominated for a Drama Desk Award for "Unique Theatrical Experience" for *The Frog Bride*. David has created numerous productions, including the critically acclaimed *¡Sofrito!* with The Latin Legends Band, and *MytholoJazz*, both of which enjoyed sold-out runs at New Victory Theater. *Sleeping Beauty* was co-commissioned by the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Brooklyn College, and The McCallum Theater. David was a featured performer at the *National Storytelling Festival* and appeared for three seasons at the Royal National Theatre in London. *The Man of the House* was commissioned by and premiered at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 2013.

Pre-show Discussion Questions

Discuss the different types of performing arts (music, dance, theater) to help students understand that they are going to see people perform in a show. Ask if they have ever experienced a live theater performance before. What did they see? What was it like?

How is live theater different than movies and TV?

- There are real people on the stage.
- The performance will never be exactly the same again.

Familiarize your students with the following words – theater, play, actor, stage, costume, usher

Literacy and Writing

Hold up a picture of a lion and a mouse (you can use the coloring page found on the last page of this study guide) and practice using words that describe or compare two things.

- Which is bigger; which is smaller?
- Which is quieter; which is louder?
- Which eats more; which eats less?
- Which has a higher voice; which has a lower voice?
- Which is stronger; which is weaker?

Vocabulary – Your students may not be familiar with the following words used in the version of *The Lion and the Mouse* found in *The McElderry Book of Aesop’s Fables*:

- snoozing
- tiddly
- puny
- stalking
- herd
- raging
- gnaw
- scampered
- flashed
- paw

Fine Arts

Theatre – Storytelling is a special form of theatre performance. Any time you read a story aloud to a group of students, you are performing! Head Start teachers who participated in the professional development workshop led by Marcia Daft in October learned some storytelling techniques. Ms. Daft taught the three elements of storytelling:

- Voice
- Gesture
- Facial Expression



When you read a story aloud to your class, especially if it’s a story you’ve read to them before, talk with your students about what the characters’ voices should sound like. (“What do you think the lion’s voice sounds like? Does the lion have a low, loud voice or a high, squeaky voice? What do you think the mouse’s voice sounds like?”) Use their suggestions and try changing your voice quality while you read the story.



Dance/Movement – In building on the three elements of storytelling (voice, gesture, and facial expression), you can make your storytelling and read-aloud time more interactive for your students by incorporating movements and gestures. The story of *The Lion and the Mouse* is an easy way to start because there are only two characters in the story.

Students can be interactive participants in your reading/storytelling by doing gestures with you as you read. *The Lion and the Mouse* includes many descriptive action words that could be used as opportunities for gestures. For example:

- snoozed – put your head on your hands to pretend you are sleeping
- raging – put your hands up, with your fingers spread apart like claws, and make an angry face
- gnawing – move your mouth like you’re chewing something

Doing gestures with these words can also help reinforce understanding of the definitions of these words.

If you have a large space, you can use movement to help reinforce the learning about opposites and comparison words by moving like a lion and like a mouse. The story uses the word “stalking” to describe the lion’s movements and “scampered” to describe the mouse’s movements. Ask your students to show you how to move like a mouse with small quick steps and then like a lion with slow stalking steps.

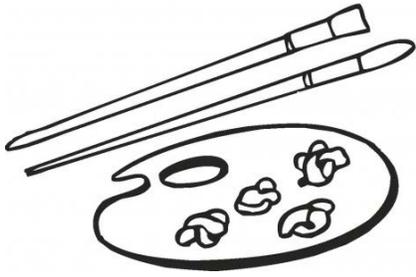
Music – You can continue the learning about opposites and comparison words through a rhythmic music activity. Start by having students chant the following phrase with you, which is the moral of this story:

KINDNESS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN STRENGTH.



Once they know this simple pattern, have your students repeat it in different ways, changing the dynamics, pitch, and tempo.

- Dynamics – the volume, how loud or soft
- Pitch – how high or low the sound of your voice is
- Tempo – the speed, how fast or slow



Visual Art – The concept of understanding opposites can also be applied in visual art, especially when thinking about texture as an element of art. Talk with students about different textures, focusing on the difference between a smooth texture and a rough/bumpy texture.

Give each student a piece of plain white paper and a crayon, so they can make their own rubbings of different textures. (You may want to tear the paper wrapping off the crayon so students can use the long side of the crayon to make the rubbings.) You can lead students to different locations in your classroom or outside, and have them feel different textures. Then have the students use their crayons and paper to make a rubbing of each texture. Older students can be encouraged to explore the space and find their own examples of different textures.

Other Activities

Take-home activity – Before or after the performance, send home the coloring sheet found on the last page of this study guide.

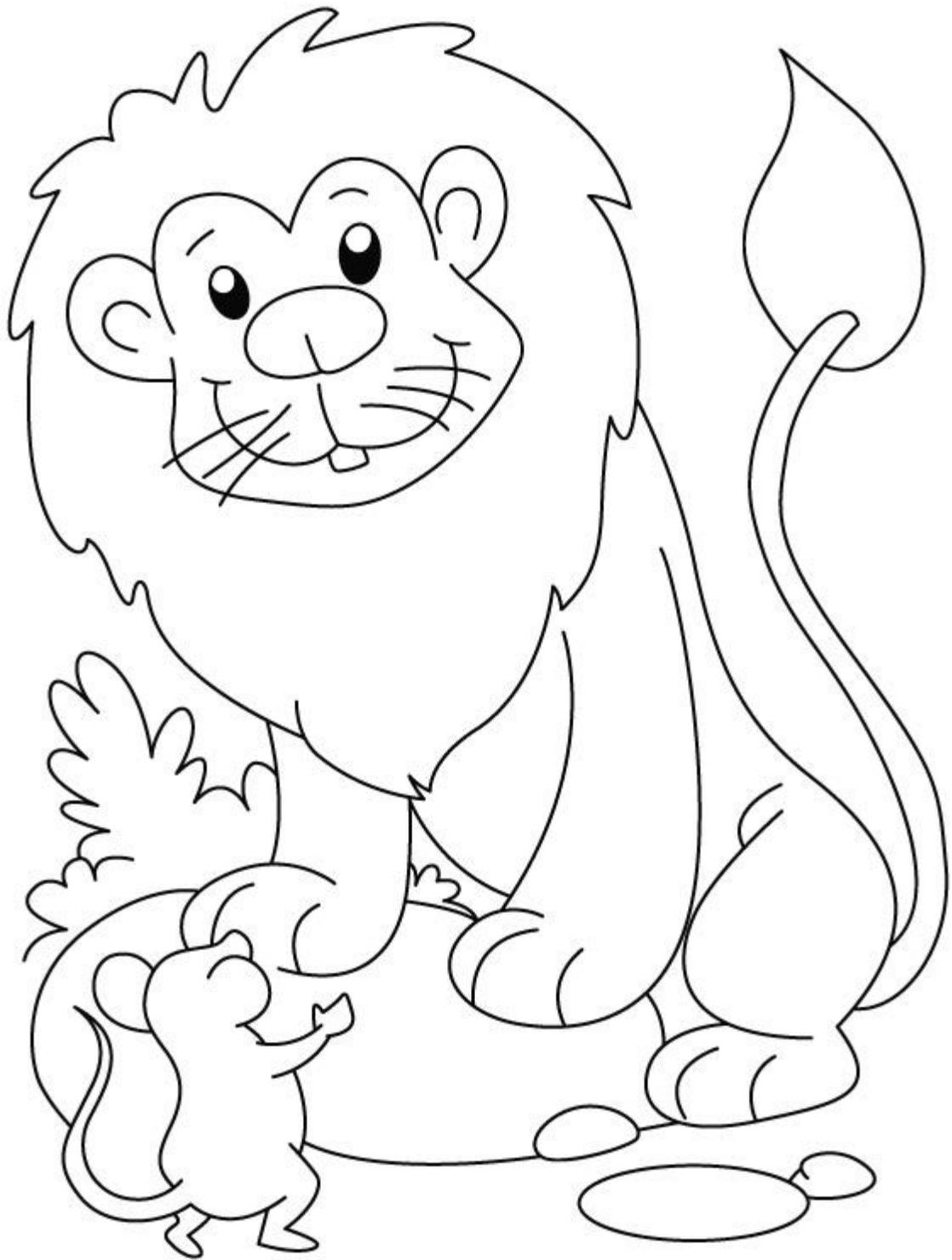
Science – A lion and a mouse are good examples of animals with many opposite characteristics. Which is bigger and which is smaller? Ask your students what other big animals they can think of and what other small animals they can think of. Name another animal your students know, and ask them if it's bigger or smaller than a lion, or bigger or smaller than a mouse.

Snack – What does a lion eat? What does a mouse eat? Is your snack today something a lion or a mouse would eat? You can also talk with your students during snack time about portion sizes – do you have enough food in front of you to feed a lion or to feed a mouse? Does a lion eat more than a mouse, or does a mouse eat more than a lion?

Post-show Discussion Questions

After attending the performance, it is very important to talk to your students about their experience, memory, and reaction to the live performance. These are some possible questions:

- Tell me about what you saw on the field trip.
- Tell me about what you heard on the field trip.
- What will you remember about the performance?
- What surprised you about our field trip?
- What was the most exciting part of our field trip for you?



The Lion and the Mouse