



# KidSeries Season 2016-17



## EDUCATOR STUDY GUIDE

Thumbelina (Fall 2016)  
Fable-ous! (Winter 2017)  
Giggle, Giggle, Quack (Spring 2017)

**Lifeline Theatre \* 6912 North Glenwood \* Chicago, Illinois 60626 \* 773-761-4477**

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# Thumbelina



Based on the book by Hans Christian Anderson  
Adapted & Directed by Amanda Delheimer Dimond  
In collaboration with Mariana Green, Brandi Lee, & Liz Rice

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## Introduction to the Student Matinee Program

Lifeline Theatre's award-winning adaptations of children's literature inspire a love of reading that will activate your students' imaginations and stay with them throughout their lives. Every year, Lifeline Theatre's KidSeries Student Matinee Program serves over 3,000 students, 40 schools, 129 classrooms, and 222 teachers with school-day performances of our season productions.

We encourage you to use this study guide to enrich your students' experience of *Thumbelina* and enhance the educational value of the production. Please let us know what parts are helpful to you and where you would like additional materials. There is a teacher feedback form and student survey to copy for your class, and we hope you will take the time to let us know what you thought of both the show and the study guide. We do this work for you and your students, and we want to make it beneficial and user friendly!

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### PREPARING FOR YOUR FIELD TRIP

#### *Before the Play: Discuss Appropriate Behavior*

Have a discussion with your students about proper theatre etiquette. For example, it's okay to clap and laugh, but it's not okay to talk to your neighbor. Have students compare and contrast the difference between watching a movie and watching a play. Ask if students have been to a play before. If so, what play? What was the experience like? Talk about the concentration that performing in a play requires, and ask the students what they find distracting when they are trying to accomplish a task in front of people. How can they help the actors succeed and do a good job? Let students know that in plays, actors sometimes play several different characters, and change roles by simply swapping out costume pieces and altering their voices and bodies.

#### *After the Play: Reflect on the Experience*

Ask students if they enjoyed the play. Based on this experience, would they like to see other plays? If they've seen plays before, how did this play compare? What happened that they weren't expecting? How was seeing a play a different experience than seeing a movie?

Have the students write a review of the play. Use the attached form or have them write a paragraph or two on their own. Encourage students to be specific about why they enjoyed a certain part of the play. If they liked a scene because it was funny, have them explain *why* it was funny, what the characters *did* or *said* that was funny, etc. Have the students draw a picture or make a collage of their favorite scene or character. Have them show their picture to the class and explain why that scene or character was their favorite. We invite you to send the reviews and pictures to Lifeline – we enjoy reading them and learn from student feedback.

## TRADITIONAL PLAYS VS. LITERARY ADAPTATIONS

Lifeline Theatre's KidSeries productions are often musical adaptations of picture books and short stories for children. We encourage you to discuss the elements of each version and compare/contrast the two both before and after you see the play.

### *Before the Play: Get to Know the Original Story*

Read the story to your students, or have them read the book themselves, before the production. After reading the book, discuss it with your students, using these questions as launch pads:

- Who are the characters in the story?
- What happens in the beginning of the story? The middle? The end?
- Is there a character in the story you don't like? What makes you dislike this character? How do you think he/she might be portrayed in the stage version?
- What do you think you will see on stage as the actors tell this story?
- How might the play be different from the story? How might it be the same?

### *Beginning, Middle and End*

To encourage sequential thinking, have students act out the beginning, middle and end of the story. Split the students into three groups (or more, depending on the number of students in your class) and have one group enact the beginning, another group enact the middle, and the final group the end. Have the students watching the performances help the group to remember any parts they may have left out. Give the groups the chance to redo their performances, including any elements suggested by their classmates.

### *After the Play: Compare/Contrast the Story to the Play*

- How were the book and the play different?
- How were the book and the play the same?
- What elements of the play surprised you, based on your knowledge of the book?
- Which did you enjoy more, reading the book or watching the play?
- What was your favorite part of the play? Was that your favorite part of the book too?
- Were there any characters in the book that were not in the play, or vice versa?
- Why do you think the playwright added or subtracted certain parts?

## **JOBS IN THE THEATRE: BEHIND THE SCENES**

### *Before the Play: Prepare Your Students to Observe All Aspects of the Production*

When we create a play at Lifeline, we have a community of artists working together to make a complete production. Ask students to be particularly observant during the performance for the parts of the show that are done by the various people listed below:

Playwright/Adaptor/Author – writes the play

Composer – writes the music for the show

Lyricist – writes the words (or “lyrics”) for the songs in the play

Director – directs the play - makes decisions about costumes, lights, sets, and what the actors do onstage

Choreographer – creates and teaches the actors the dances in the show

Lighting Designer – designs and hangs the lights for the show; designs lighting effects

Set Designer – designs and builds the scenery and props for the show

Sound Designer – designs and records the sound effects for the show

Costume Designer – designs and finds or makes the costumes for the show

Stage Manager – helps the director during rehearsals; sets props and scenery before each performance; runs the sound and lights during the performance

Actors – perform the play

### *After the Play: Discuss the Students' Observations*

Ask the students what they noticed about the “behind-the-scenes” jobs:

- How did the costume designer make the actors look like the characters they were playing?
- What about their costumes helped you to know what kind of people or animals they were?
- Did you have a favorite costume in the show? Which one? Why was it your favorite?
- If there were animal costumes, how did the costume designer create them so that they would look more like animals than people?
- What are some of the locations the play took place in?
- How did the set designer make the settings look realistic?
- What sound effects did you hear in the play? How did those sound effects help you to know what was happening in the play?
- Why do you think the composer chose the styles of music he did? What sorts of music would not make sense with the story?

## ***Thumbelina Synopsis***

A widow who lives alone in the woods desperately longs for a daughter. One day, she meets a woman in the forest who gives her a seed, which she plants and pours her heart into. When the seed grows, it produces a flower, and in the center of the flower is a tiny infant, whom she names Thumbelina. Thumbelina grows into a thumb-sized girl who loves to be outside in the forest. The woman, however, fears for Thumbelina's safety because she is so small. She is very protective and keeps her mostly indoors.

One evening, Thumbelina sneaks outdoors to explore. She meets a frog who offers to show her his lily pad, and curious Thumbelina agrees, thinking she'll only be gone for a few minutes. Once there, though, the frog tries to convince Thumbelina to marry him. The frog leaves to fetch his mother for introductions, and with the help of a fish and a moth, Thumbelina manages to escape down the river on the frog's lily pad. When she crashes into the bank of the river, she finds herself lost.

As Thumbelina tries to figure out how to get back home, she meets a squirrel who warns her about owls and the dangers of the forest. Thumbelina finds food and survives, but winter is approaching, and the june beetles advise her to find a place to stay safe and warm. During the first snowstorm an exhausted Thumbelina falls asleep in the open. She is found, nearly frozen, by a field mouse, who takes Thumbelina back to the underground home she shares with a mole, and nurses her back to health.

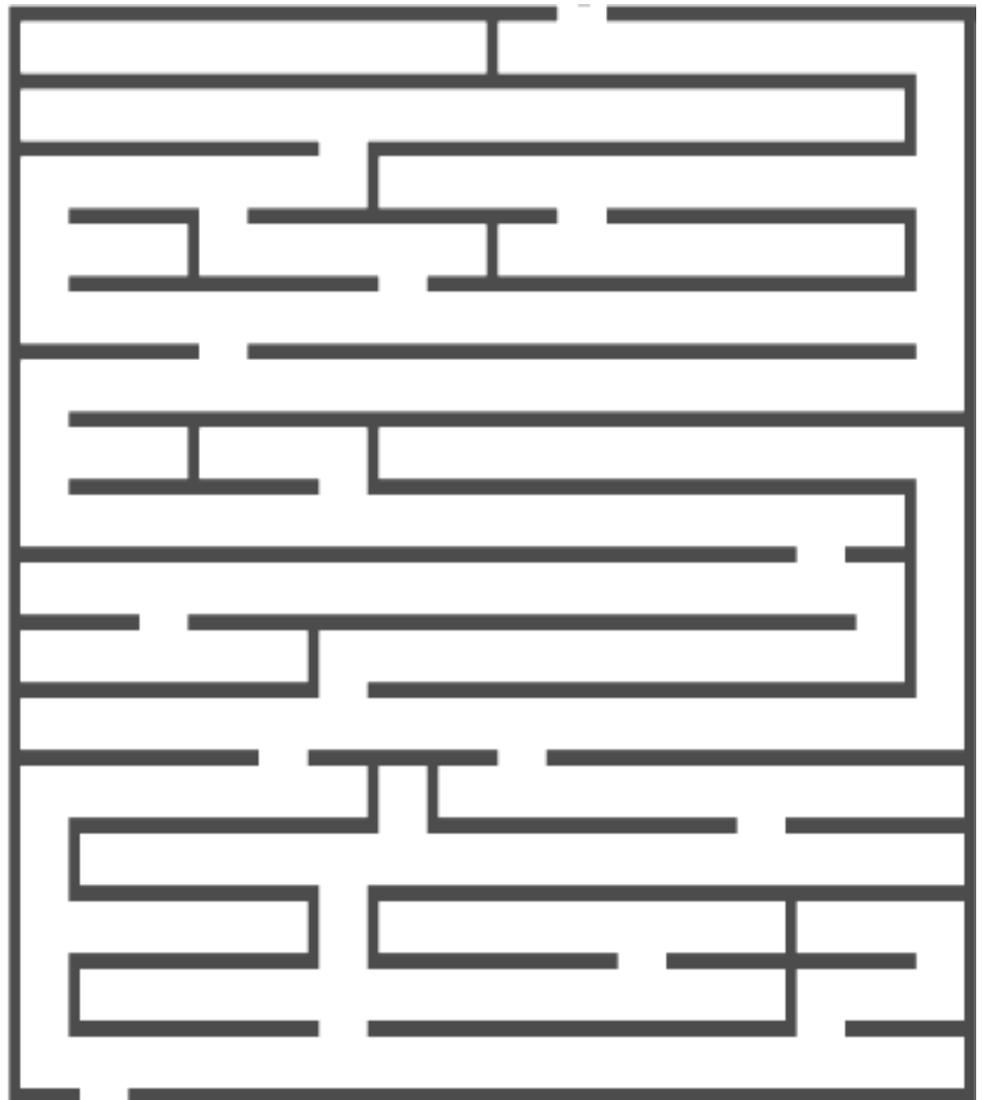
Thumbelina spends the winter underground with the field mouse and mole. One day, venturing out, Thumbelina finds a swallow on the ground, cold and unmoving. Thumbelina cares for the bird, and when he awakes, he tells her the story of breaking his wing and being separated from his flock. The two become friends. Both feel out of place: Thumbelina stuck underground all winter, and the swallow separated from his flock and unable to fly. When the swallow heals, he gives Thumbelina the experience of flight, letting her ride upon his back as he flies. For the first time, in the air, Thumbelina feels as if she is where she belongs.

Spring arrives, and the swallow must leave to join his mate and his flock. Thumbelina is grateful for the care she has received from the field mouse and mole, but she is anxious to live her life above ground again. Before she leaves, the mole, who is quite educated and fascinated with flying things, tells Thumbelina that he suspects she might be a fairy.

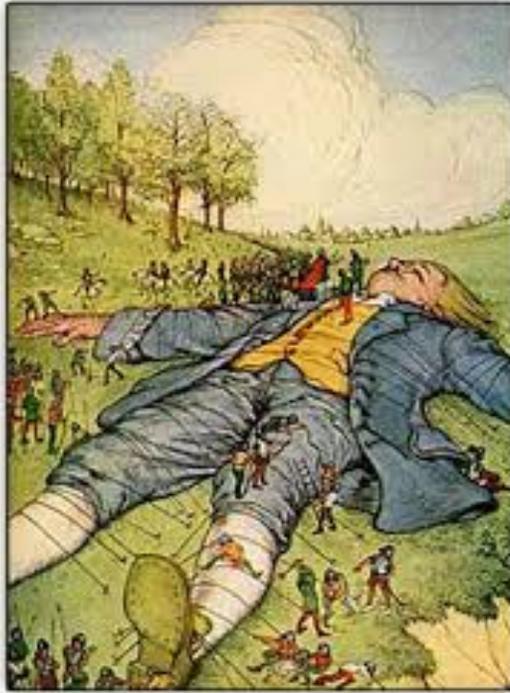
Out in the forest again, Thumbelina stumbles upon Richard, a fairy who has lost his magic. In fact, Richard's entire fairy family lost its magic when a very important flower seed went missing. When the rest of the fairies meet Thumbelina and hear her story, they suspect that she may have grown from the lost flower seed. Richard and Thumbelina set out on a dangerous journey back to the flower from which Thumbelina was born. The flower will die if fairies do not tend it. And if the flower dies, the fairies' magic will die as well. Climbing a treacherous cliff, Thumbelina and Richard are rescued by the swallow. He flies them back to Thumbelina's mother, who has missed her terribly. Richard and Thumbelina are able to revive the dying flower, and when the fairies' magic returns, Thumbelina finds she is able to fly as well. She is indeed a fairy, and now, having found where she belongs, among the fairies, and near her mother, she thrives.



Help  
Thumbelina find  
her way to  
Field Mouse's  
house!



## Creative Writing Image Activity



*Thumbelina* is said to be partly inspired by the Lilliputians in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, which was published in 1726. The story contains allusions and references to English society and government. The Lilliputians, pictured above, were modeled after members in the house of parliament. Because of Swift, "Lilliputian" is now synonymous with "little" or "delicate." *Gulliver's Travels* was written as a satire of the traveler's tales literary genre. *Thumbelina* is also a traveler's tale, and asks the same question as Swift: "Does our size determine our power, or personality, or our destiny?"

1. Before students are given this context ask them to look at the picture above and answer the following questions for discussion:

- Who are the main characters in the painting? Describe them. What are they doing? How does the artist depict them? Realistically or abstractly?
- What is happening? What happened moments before? What happens moments later?
- When do you think this event took place? Why?
- What is the conflict?
- If this image were the cover of a storybook, what title would you give it?

2. Have students share their answers with the class and how they think the image relates to the play.

3. Give students the historical context of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and discuss the influence he may have had on Hans Christen Anderson.



## How To Catch a Garden Fairy

Garden fairies are not as private and elusive as forest fairies. Use your imagination to come up with a process for catching a garden fairy (without harming her, of course!) Don't be afraid to get silly, but make sure your steps make sense in order.

First,

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Then,

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---

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Next,

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Finally,

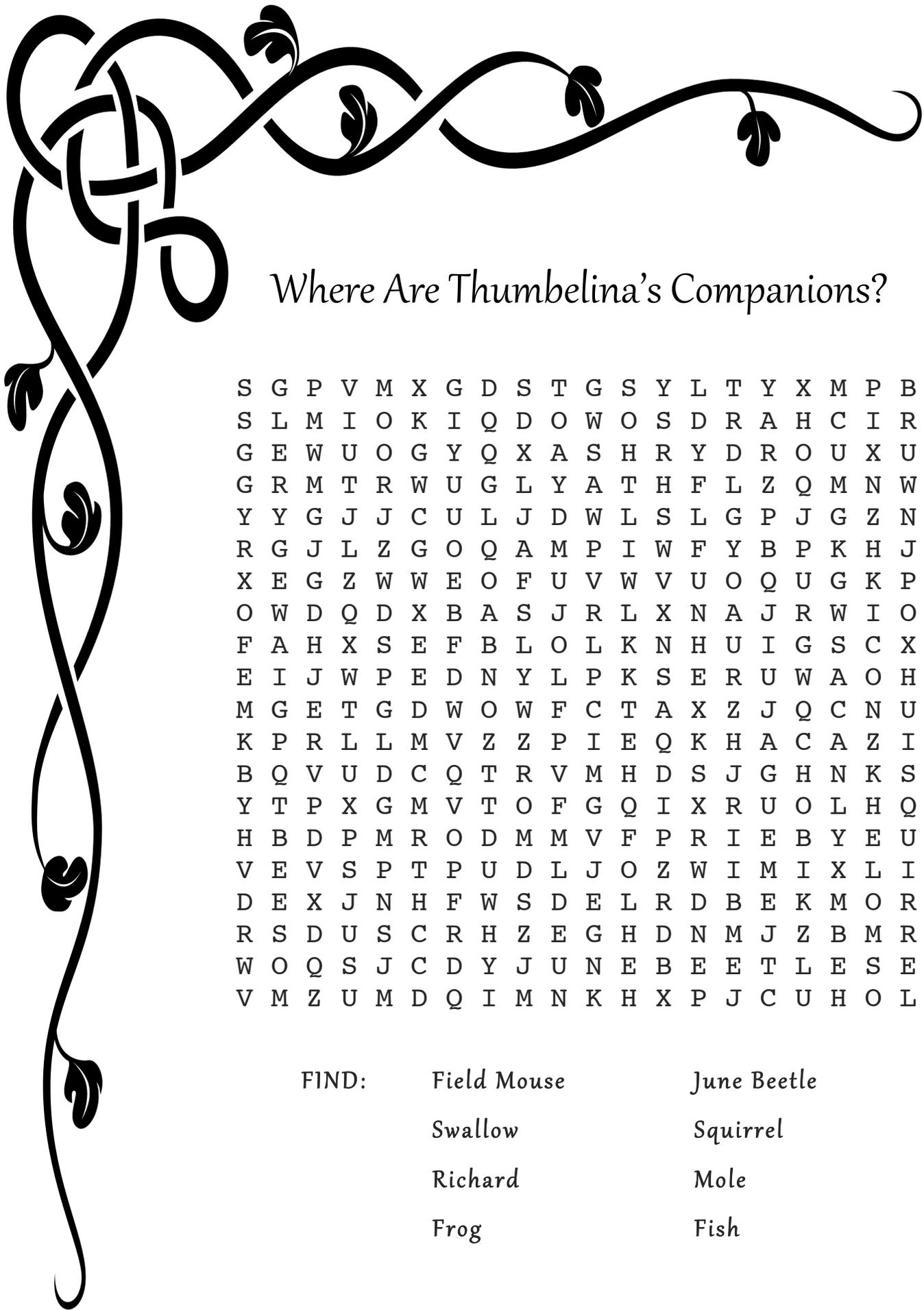
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## Where Are Thumbelina's Companions?

S G P V M X G D S T G S Y L T Y X M P B  
S L M I O K I Q D O W O S D R A H C I R  
G E W U O G Y Q X A S H R Y D R O U X U  
G R M T R W U G L Y A T H F L Z Q M N W  
Y Y G J J C U L J D W L S L G P J G Z N  
R G J L Z G O Q A M P I W F Y B P K H J  
X E G Z W W E O F U V W V U O Q U G K P  
O W D Q D X B A S J R L X N A J R W I O  
F A H X S E F B L O L K N H U I G S C X  
E I J W P E D N Y L P K S E R U W A O H  
M G E T G D W O W F C T A X Z J Q C N U  
K P R L L M V Z Z P I E Q K H A C A Z I  
B Q V U D C Q T R V M H D S J G H N K S  
Y T P X G M V T O F G Q I X R U O L H Q  
H B D P M R O D M M V F P R I E B Y E U  
V E V S P T P U D L J O Z W I M I X L I  
D E X J N H F W S D E L R D B E K M O R  
R S D U S C R H Z E G H D N M J Z B M R  
W O Q S J C D Y J U N E B E E T L E S E  
V M Z U M D Q I M N K H X P J C U H O L

FIND:      Field Mouse              June Beetle  
                 Swallow                      Squirrel  
                 Richard                      Mole  
                 Frog                              Fish

## **FURTHER CLASSROOM ADVENTURES**

### **Drama Games relating to *Thumbelina***

*In our Lifeline residencies, we use theatre games to not only teach the basics of performance, but also to explore themes in the student matinees. Below are some games you can play with your class that touch upon some of the concepts conveyed in the production.*

#### **Build A Where** *(experience creating environments with bodies as the Thumbelina actors did)*

**Ages:** 2nd grade and up

**How to Play:** In groups of five or six, students should choose an environment or a place to create with their bodies, such as a jungle, or Field Mouse's house from *Thumbelina*. Have them layer one element of this environment at a time, whether that be different characters, plants, animals, or structures they might find there. Let students form their bodies to the shape of this element and then hold still. Ask students to focus on what the group is doing before layering in. How can they compliment their classmates with their bodies? Can they add on to a tree someone else is creating or does the environment need something new? Maybe the jungle only needs one snake, not three? Once they have created this still tableau a teacher should wave a hand over one student at a time, asking them to add sound and movement. Once every student has had a chance individually the teacher can ask the whole group to "come to life."

#### **Group Sculptures** *(explore working with space as an ensemble)*

**Ages:** 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and Up

**How to Play:** Students get into groups of 5 or 6 and are told that they will silently work together to create statues, as the teacher counts backward from 5. Each time, the group creates ONE sculpture of whatever the example is, for instance: ONE dinosaur, washing machine, cuckoo clock, spider, race car, vase of flowers, etc. Remind participants: 1) Move Slowly: If you jump into place, you don't allow room for your partners to work with you. 2) Make eye contact and move slowly, working together to make the shape. 3) No Talking: No communication of any kind, except that you make eye contact and watch how your group is moving. No one is directing. Any whispering or indicating how others should move disqualifies the whole group for that round. When a group is out, they will sit out the rest of that sculpture round. 4) Stay Touching: You must connect to your group, even if it's with the edge of your pinkie toe. You are making ONE sculpture, not many. 5) Use Levels: If the whole group is going up, think about whether or not there's a place for you to go down, or to use a middle level. Variety makes most sculptures better. 6) Use Your Whole Bodies, not just your arms or upper body.)

#### **Mirror** *(practice responding to another physically)*

**Ages:** K and Up

**How to Play:** Students are put into pairs, and instructed to find their own space in the room. They should face each other and determine which player will be Player A and which will be Player B. Then, Player A begins slowly, silently, moving his body, and Player B must be the mirror, following his actions exactly, creating the illusion of the mirror. At the teacher's prompting, Player B then leads, and Player A follows. Urge students to move slowly, in ways that their partners can follow, working together to create the illusion of the mirror. Eventually, designate "no leader," so that both players are leading and following simultaneously, or switching back and forth on their own.

#### **River/Bank** *(a quick focusing warm up based on *Thumbelina*)*

**Ages:** K-3rd

**How to Play:** The teacher makes an imaginary line on the floor, and the group stands on this line. On one side of the line is the "river" and on the other side is the "bank." The teacher calls out "river" or "bank," determining to which side the kids should jump. Students must pay close attention. Then add "swallow" and "mole" as prompts. When you say "swallow" students must make their bodies high and bird shaped. When you say "mole", they must make a shape close to the ground. Combine the prompts for more complexity.

# Student Review of *Thumbelina*

By: \_\_\_\_\_

I give this play a (circle the number of stars): ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

My favorite part of the play was \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My favorite character was \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If I had to choose what I liked best, I would choose (circle one)

the story      the characters      the music      the costumes      the scenery

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **KidSeries Teacher Comment Form**

We'd love to hear from you! Please fill out this comment form, and get it back to us one of two ways: Either mail it to Julie Ganey, Education Director, Lifeline Theatre, 6912 North Glenwood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60626, or email it back to us at [julie@lifelinetheatre.com](mailto:julie@lifelinetheatre.com). If your students have completed review sheets, we'd love to see those too!

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_\_\_ Number of Students: \_\_\_\_\_

Show your class saw: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you attended a Lifeline KidSeries show before? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

If yes, which one(s) have you seen?

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you read your class the book before coming to see the show? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

What was the strongest part of the show for you, or what did you like best?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What was the weakest part of the show for you, or what did you like least?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you bring your students to another performance at Lifeline? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which activities in the study guide were most beneficial to your students?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us about any other books you would like to see Lifeline adapt:

\_\_\_\_\_

(optional) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_