



# KidSeries Season

## 2014-15



### EDUCATOR STUDY GUIDE

The Velveteen Rabbit (Fall 2014)  
Lions in Illyria (Winter 2015)  
The One And Only Ivan (Spring 2015)

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

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# The Velveteen Rabbit



Based on the book by Margery Williams  
Adapted by Elise Kauzlaric • Directed by Amanda Link  
Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 Introduction to the Student Matinee Program
  - How to Prepare for your Field Trip
  - Traditional Plays vs. Literary Adaptations
  - Jobs in the Theatre
- 6 Synopsis of the Play
- 7 –10 Activity Pages
  - The Perfect Toy- an art activity
  - My Favorite Thing- a writing exercise
  - What Are Textures- a vocabulary worksheet
  - Seeing Real and Not Real- compare, contrast, and draw
- 11 Further Classroom Adventures: Drama Games relating to *The Velveteen Rabbit*
- 12 Student Review Sheet
- 13 Teacher Comment Form

# Introduction to the Student Matinee Program

Lifeline Theatre's award-winning adaptations of children's literature inspire a love of reading that will give flight to your students' imaginations and stay with them throughout their lives. Every year, Lifeline Theatre's KidSeries Student Matinee Program serves over 3,000 students, 35 schools, 120 classrooms, and 185 teachers with school-day performances of our season productions. Prior to every show, teachers receive this comprehensive Study Guide, complete with play synopses, pull-out activity pages that relate the play to other school subjects, and student/teacher reviews to send back to the cast. Following every school matinee, our cast engages the student audiences in post-performance Talk Backs. The actors ask and answer questions, encouraging deeper analysis of the play.

We are committed to bringing children's literature to the stage to entertain, educate and empower both kids and adults. Our goal is to help students develop greater appreciation of literature and theatre as art forms, to excite kids about reading, as well as to teach them about various subjects within each individual show.

The enclosed educational activity sheets are beneficial to deepening your field trip experience at Lifeline Theatre. We encourage you to use this study guide to enrich your students' experience of Lifeline's KidSeries, and to enhance the educational value of the performance you attend. 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 work!

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## HOW TO PREPARE 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? What do they think this particular experience will be like? If the students have not been to Lifeline before, have them think about what they might expect: a big theatre or a small one, many seats or only a few, young actors or older ones, etc.

### *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 were expecting to happen? 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 the 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?
- What is your favorite part of the story? Why?
- Who is your favorite character? Why?
- Is there a character in the story you don't like? What makes you dislike this character?
- 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, have the next 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?
- Some parts of the play are different from the book. 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 the Roles

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, etc.

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

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

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 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 about 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?

#### KIDSERIES SEASON 2014-15 SUPPORT

Lifeline Theatre's programs are partially supported by Alphawood Foundation; The Arts Work Fund; Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation; a CityArts grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; The Common Cup; Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; FGMK LLC; FlexPrint Inc.; Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; The Grover Hermann Foundation; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; Netrix LLC; The Polk Bros. Foundation; Service Club of Chicago; The Shubert Foundation; and the annual support of businesses and individuals.

## SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY

It is Christmas morning. A young boy wakes in his nursery full of his favorite toys, and calls to his Nana. He is anxious to see his new toys, and while he waits for his family to be ready he plays with some of his old favorite toys. We meet the Skin Horse, the Toy Soldier, and the Model Boat, whom he plays with, all quite roughly. Nana finally calls him downstairs. As soon as he leaves, the toys come to life. They discuss their fears about being replaced, what with the new toys on the way, and complain about how roughly the boy has played with them. They see the boy's full stocking, still in the nursery, and peeking out of the top is a Velveteen Rabbit. The toys introduce themselves to the bunny, and warn her that she probably won't be anything special next to the mechanical toys the boy will probably receive.

The boy does return to the nursery, finds the Velveteen Rabbit, and is overjoyed- much more so than the other toys expected. Upon the boys' leaving once again, the bunny is happy but laments about being less interesting than some of his other fancier toys—to which the skin horse tells him that fancy isn't important... what is important is if you can be so loved that you become REAL.

The boy does attach to the bunny, and soon she becomes the dearest companion of the boy, sleeping in his bed every night, going with him wherever he travels, becoming the central character in every fantasy game he concocts. At night one evening when the boy is sleeping, the Velveteen Rabbit asks the Skin Horse again about becoming real: how does it happen, does it hurt, does it happen quickly or over time...? The Skin Horse explains that it happens over a long time, a long time of being so loved that you begin to change shape, become shabby, loose, maybe even look ugly to those who don't understand. Rabbit decides she would like nothing more than to become real ...

Time passes, and as winter turns to spring, the boy has indeed loved his bunny so much that she has begun to get worn and shabby, and is beginning to change shape. The other toys talk poorly of her looks, but the Skin Horse defends her because it is due to so much loving. When Nana tries to discard her one night for being such a filthy toy, the boy tells her "No! She's not a toy! She's real!" The rabbit's eyes light up.

Some time later, when they are playing in woods behind the boys' house, he leaves the Velveteen Rabbit there alone for a moment to go inside, because he hasn't been feeling well. While she is left alone, the Velveteen Rabbit meets a few real, actual animal rabbits. They laugh at her because she thinks she is real, when in fact they know that loved or not, she is still just a toy.

We soon learn that the boy has fallen ill with Scarlet Fever. Nana finds the bunny and brings it to him for comfort. He is sick for some time, and holds dear to his bunny during his illness. When he is better, the doctor advises the family to throw everything out that could have the germs, including his toys and especially the Velveteen Rabbit. Nana does so, leaving it in a pile to burn.

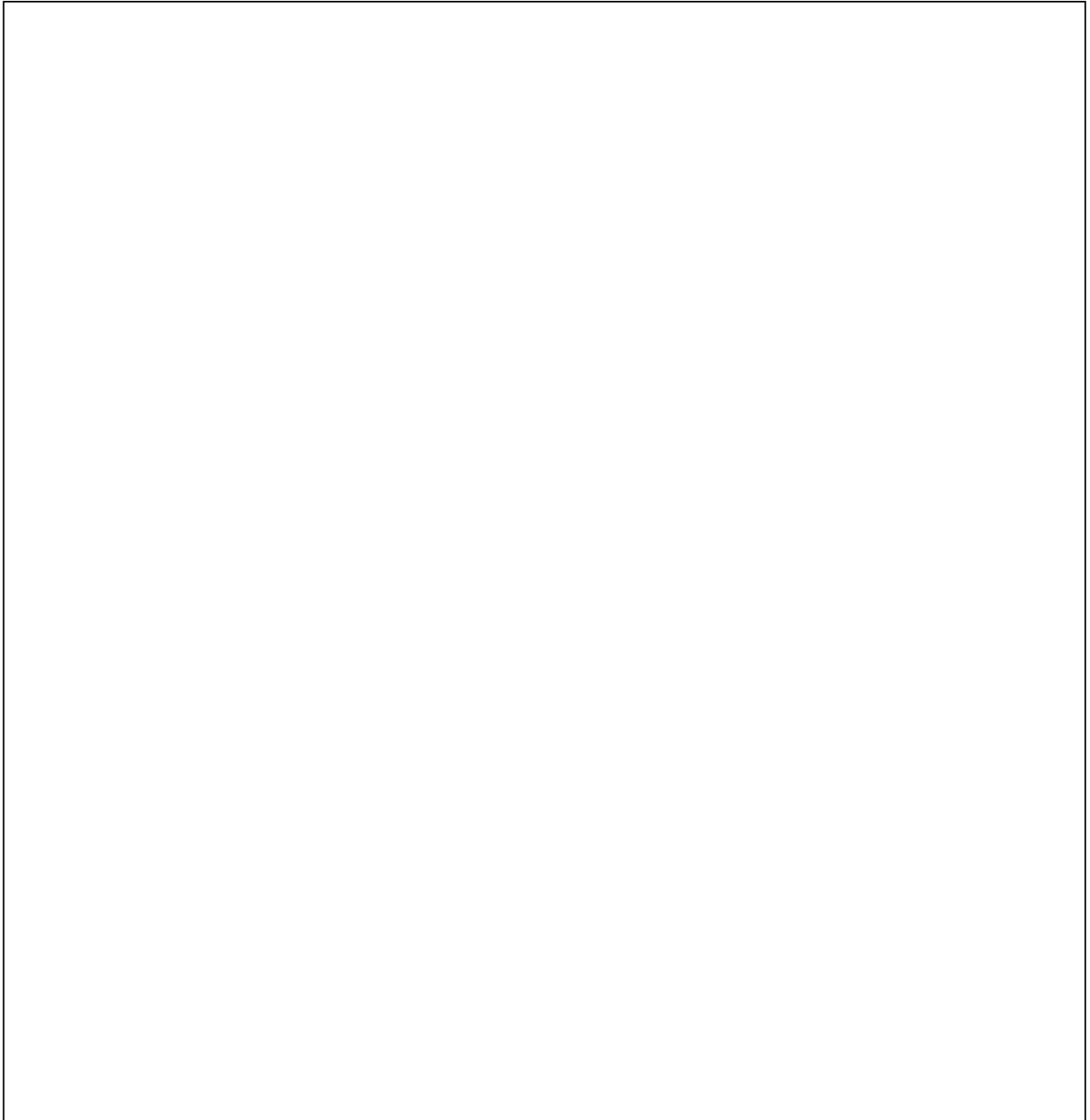
As the Velveteen Rabbit considers her fate, and thinks back on how marvelous it has been to be loved so much, and become real... she begins to transform into a real animal bunny! Like the friends she met before! She finds the other real rabbits, and runs into the woods.

Finally, one day the boy sees her again, and feels her familiarity, even though she is an animal now and not a toy. They lovingly and quietly say goodbye, and go on their separate life paths.

# The Perfect Toy

The Boy in *The Velveteen Rabbit* has many toys, but The Velveteen Rabbit is his favorite. Do you have a favorite toy? Is it a stuffed animal? A car? A robot? A doll or dollhouse? If you don't have a favorite toy, try building the perfect toy with your **imagination**. You can draw the toy of your dreams!

**Draw your perfect toy in the box below.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing a toy.

# MY FAVORITE THING

In the play, the boy becomes so close to the Velveteen Rabbit that he cannot imagine being apart from his bunny. Maybe you have a favorite toy now, and maybe you love all your toys the same. But when you were younger, like 3, or 4, or 5 years old, did you ever have something that you loved so much you couldn't imagine living without it? What was that favorite thing? Describe it here. Write about it looked like, what was special about it. Where is it now? Is it still as special as it used to be?

My favorite thing when I was younger was....

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It was special because....

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Now, I keep it....

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# WHAT ARE TEXTURES?

In *The Velveteen Rabbit*, we learn a lot about the different toys that live in the playroom, and the different ways that they FEEL. The Velveteen Rabbit is very SOFT and warm feeling; the skin horse is LEATHERY feeling, the toy soldier is HARD, the toy boat may have a ROUGH bottom. The way that something feels when you touch it is the kind of TEXTURE it has.

See if you can match the thing on the left to the texture it might have on the right!

A FROG	sharp
A PORCUPINE	scratchy
ICE CREAM CONE	soapy
SANDPAPER	furry
GLUE	bumpy
KNIFE	slimy
BATH BUBBLES	sticky
TOAD	prickly
KITTEN	cold

# SEEING REAL and NOT REAL

In *The Velveteen Rabbit*, the toy bunny learns about “becoming real”.

When he meets real bunnies he sees many differences between the two of them.

What makes some things look real and others not look real?

Here is a picture of a toy bunny and a picture of a real bunny.

Can you see why the toy bunny doesn't look real but the real bunny does look real?

Color them in as you wish.

ONE WAY THE TOY BUNNY DOES NOT  
LOOK REAL IS...

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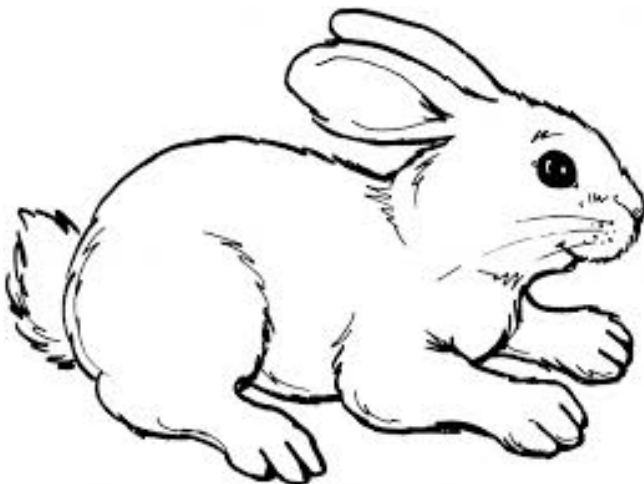
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ONE WAY THE REAL BUNNY DOES  
LOOK REAL IS...



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# FURTHER CLASSROOM ADVENTURES

## Drama Games relating to *The Velveteen Rabbit*

*Once back in the classroom, we encourage you to maximize your students' experience at Lifeline by using drama to teach drama! In our residency program, 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 story.*

### Magic Toys (for the toys coming to life)

Ages: All Ages

Number of Players: Full Group

**How to Play:** One person is chosen to be The Boy (or Girl!). Just as the toys in *The Velveteen Rabbit* can never be seen moving or talking by their owner, the rest of the students must remain still when The Boy/Girl is looking. Once the "human" is chosen have the students spread out all over the room and become toys. The chosen student walks around the room weaving between the toys. When he looks at them they must freeze, otherwise they can move around. In later rounds, if the person is spotted moving, they are out. You can play elimination style until only two toys are left. Once a round is done pick a new human and start again! To advance the game, have the students invent their toy character. Are they a stuffed bear? A lion? How would that lion move when their human isn't watching? If needed, remind the kids of a familiar, similar premise—Toy Story! This can also be a fun exercise in students connecting the play to other stories based on the same thing—toys coming to life!

### All The Children Were Sleeping (for imaginary landscapes)

Ages: K- 3rd grade

Number of Players: Half Group

**How to Play:** Split the students up into 2 or 3 groups (depending on space and time). Each group will get to perform and observe. Put on music in the background (drumming is a good choice). The performers stand in the playing space, and when you call out "All the children were sleeping," the kids lie down on the floor like they are sleeping. The teacher says, "And when they woke up they were..." You can choose whatever character or action you want the performers to be and have them move around the entire playing space as that character or action. Animals are great choices to start, then you can diversify your ideas, going to different places real and magical. After a while (30 seconds to a minute), you say "All the children were sleeping" and the students go to the ground and sleep exactly where they are standing. The game continues until the music ends.

### Be It Or Use It (for the state of "realness" or objects becoming animated)

Ages: All Ages

Number of Players: Full Group

**How to Play:** Before beginning, discuss with students the difference between *using* something and *becoming* it with our bodies. In an open space with room to move, have the students mime "using a stapler," and then use their bodies to "become a stapler." Explain that you will play music, during which they will have the option to use or be whatever objects are called out by the facilitator. When the music stops, they must freeze. Call out objects, turn on music, and say: "A \_\_\_\_\_! Be it or use it!" When you cut the music, the students will freeze until you turn it on again and call another prompt. With kindergarten and first graders, it is helpful to specify using or being for them: "Show me how you use a washing machine!" Then, "Great! Now, use your body to be a washing machine!" Other object ideas: umbrella, cell phone, spaghetti, vacuum, bicycle, blender.

# Student Review of *The Velveteen Rabbit*

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 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

Please fill out as much of this comment form. Then either: 1) mail it to Lea Pinsky, Education Director, Lifeline Theatre, 6912 North Glenwood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60626; or 2) fax it to 773-761-4582. If your students have completed review sheets, please mail them or drop them off with this form. Thank you.

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, and how did they benefit from those activities? (If possible, please give specific examples.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are there any other books you would like to see Lifeline adapt? Which books?

\_\_\_\_\_

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