



# KidSeries Season 2013-14



## EDUCATOR STUDY GUIDE

Click Clack Boo! A Tricky Treat (Fall 2013)  
The True Story of the Three Little Pigs (Winter 2014)  
Lyle Finds His Mother (Spring 2014)

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

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# Lyle Finds His Mother



Based on the book by Bernard Waber  
Adapted by Jessica Wright Buha • Music and lyrics by Michael James Brooks  
Directed by Dorothy Milne

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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 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.

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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 to them, 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 2013-14 SUPPORT**

Lifeline Theatre’s programs are partially supported by Alphawood Foundation; The Arts Work Fund; Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation; CityArts grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; The Richard H. Driehaus Charitable Lead Trust; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; The Rhoades Foundation; The Polk Bros. Foundation; S&C Foundation; The Saints; The Service Club of Chicago; and the annual support of businesses and individuals.

## SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY

Lyle, a talented juggling crocodile, lives with the Primms. Mrs. Primm, Mr. Primm, and their son, Joshua, have become a family to Lyle. Before living with the Primms, Lyle performed with Hector P. Valenti (star of stage and screen!). But performing life was not the life for Lyle; he wanted a family.

After Lyle left the act, Hector began having trouble finding work. Nobody wanted to see him perform by himself, they wanted Lyle! Hector had to think of something quick, for he was running out of ideas, and out of money.

Of course! Lyle's crocodile mother! Hector would write Lyle a note, saying he could help him find his crocodile mother! Surely he could convince him to perform again if he could just get him away from the Primms...

When the note arrived for Lyle, he began to wonder what it would be like to meet his crocodile mother. Mrs. Primm thought Hector must be up to his old tricks, and did not want Lyle to go near him. But Lyle couldn't stop thinking about his crocodile mother. Mrs. Primm tried to distract him with her political campaigns. Mr. Primm tried to distract him with gardening. Joshua and his friends tried to get Lyle to play with him. It was no use - Lyle HAD to meet his crocodile mother.

Mrs. Primm finally allowed Lyle to go with Hector to find his mother - with snacks! When Lyle asked about his mother, Hector tells him they have no way to get to Land of the Crocodile without money. Lyle agrees to perform with Hector again to get the money for their trip.

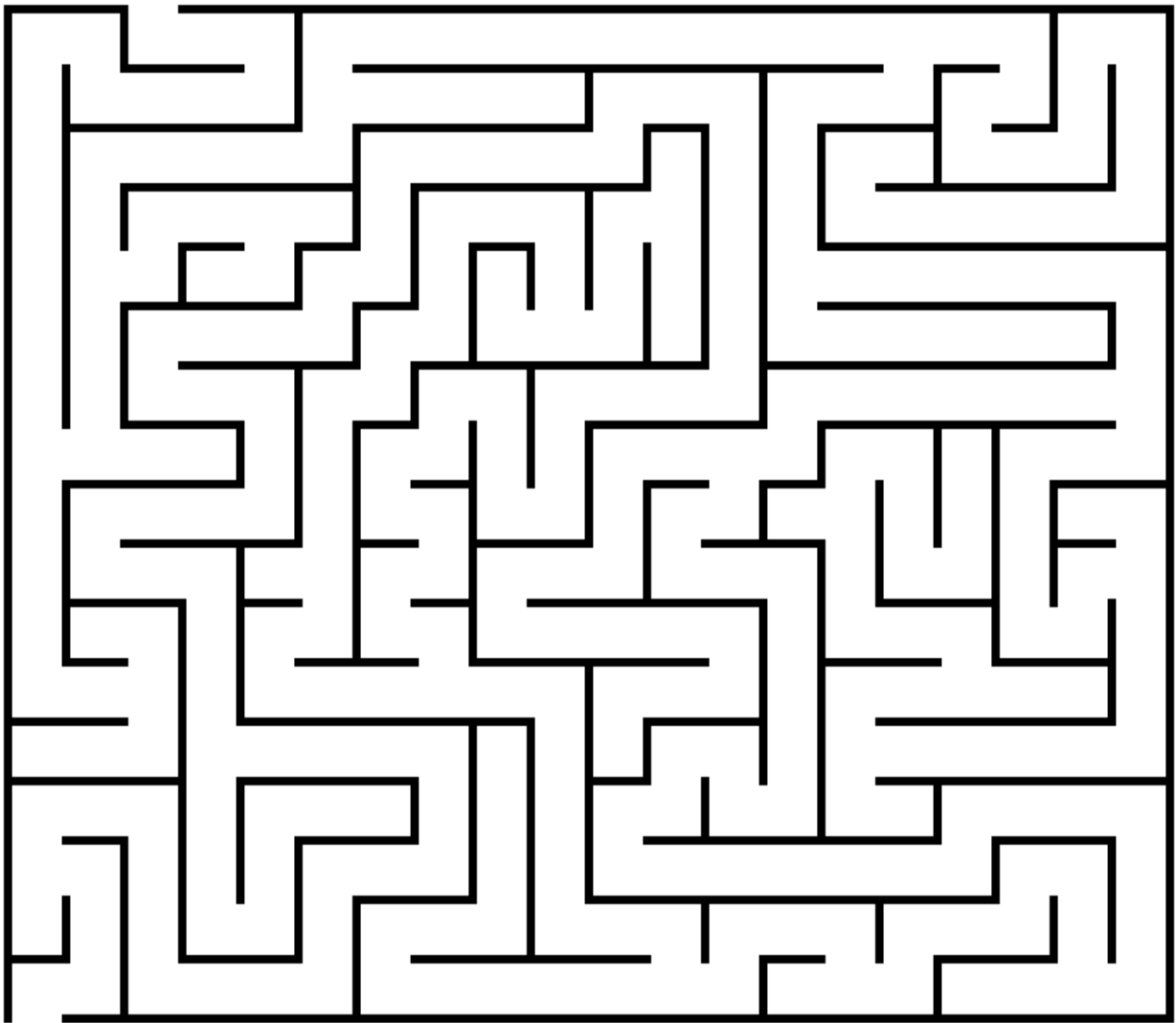
After performing at several shows, Lyle reminds Hector they're going to the Land of the Crocodile. Hector agrees, but keeps putting the trip off. Finally, Lyle has had enough. He refuses to perform any more until Hector promises they're going to the Land of the Crocodile after this performance.

Once they cross quick sand, and avoid poachers, Hector and Lyle arrive to the Land of Crocodile. Hector points to the first crocodile he sees and tells Lyle it's his mother, then tries to get Lyle to leave.

But the crocodile WAS Lyle's mother! After meeting, Lyle brings his mother back to the Primms. The Primms welcome Lyle's crocodile mother to the family, and make peace with Hector. Lyle has learned the true meaning of family!



HELP LYLE FIND  
THE PRIMMS!



You made it! Great job!

# FAMILY PORTRAITS

Lyle lives with the Primms and is proud to call them his family.

Who are the members of your family? Can you draw a picture of them here?



BARRY MELANE

**MY FAMILY:**



# Where are Lyle's Friends And Family Hiding?

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

## Words to Find:

BROTHER

MRPRIMM

CROCODILEMOTHER

MRSPRIMM

FATHER

ROSIE

HECTOR

THERESA

JOSHUA

ZACH

MOTHER

# Practice Makes Perfect

Lyle is great at juggling – but it took a lot of practice.

When have you had to practice something? Write about something that you have gotten good at by practicing it over and over. What was hard about learning how to do that thing? What did you do to get better at it?

Something I learned to do by practicing it over and over is \_\_\_\_\_

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# FURTHER CLASSROOM ADVENTURES

## Drama Games relating to *Lyle Finds His Mother*

*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.*

### Family Portraits (for the theme of family)

Number of Players: Small Groups

Objectives: Physicality, Imagination, Character

How to Play: 5-8 students are brought to the front of the room, facing the audience. The teacher explains that they are going to be a family who is getting a group photograph taken. When the teacher says "1,2,3, click," the students must create a family pose with levels, making sure all faces can be seen, etc. Then ask students to use their imaginations to create family portraits using thematic prompts that will be given, such as: "The Sick Family! 1,2,3, Click!" or "The Paranoid Family! 1,2,3, Click!" Other ideas: The Sad, Terrified, Circus, Daredevil, Artistic, Exhausted, Bully, and Zoo Families.

*Curricular Connection: Can be used to perform any characters from literature read in class.*

### Mirror (for the performed act between Hector and Lyle)

Number of Players: Partners

Objectives: Physicality, Focus, Listening

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.

### Traveling Through The Door (for the traveling adventure)

Number of Players: Small Groups

Objectives: Ensemble, Environment, Physicalizing

How to Play: Slips of paper with names of environments need to be made in advance, which can be done with the class. Students are split into three groups, each led by a teacher. Each group draws a piece of paper with a secret location that they will travel through as performers for the audience. Examples: Edge of a volcano, dark scary cave, New York City, etc. The students have two minutes to practice performing their given environment together (can be just physical, or with vocalizing, too), then they perform group by group for each other. Remember not to over rehearse. The point of this game is to react in the moment of a given environment. Each performing group must enter the environment they are traveling through by opening an imaginary door in unison. Students should be encouraged to play people, objects, and elements of their selected environment. After each performance, the audience members will have the chance to try and guess where the students were and why they thought that was so.

*Curricular Connection: Can be used to play out any environments in fiction and non-fiction texts studied in class.*

# Student Review of *Lyle Finds His Mother*

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 songs      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 \_\_\_\_\_