

KidSeries Season

2019-20



Educator Study Guide

Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile (Fall 2019)
Bunny's Book Club (Winter 2020)
Neither (Spring 2020)

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

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NEITHER



A world premiere based on the book by Airlie Anderson
Adapted by Bilal Dardai, Emilie Modaff, Oly Oxinfry, & Jeff Trainor
Directed by Oly Oxinfry
Music and Lyrics by Emilie Modaff

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 Introduction to the Student Matinee Program
 - Preparing for your Field Trip
 - Traditional Plays vs. Literary Adaptations
 - Jobs in Theatre
- 6 Synopsis of the Play
- 7 Activity Pages and Resources
 - Neither Word Search
 - What is Gender?
 - Becoming an Upstander Writing Activity
- 11 Further Adventures: Drama Games relating to *Neither*
- 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 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 *Neither* 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!

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. 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. Sometimes the playwright is very faithful to the source material, and sometimes the original book is simply inspiration. 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* (see p. 6!)

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?
- 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?
- How would you describe the style of music in the show?

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?

Neither **Synopsis**

It's Hatching Day in The Land of This and That. GOVERNOR BIRD and GOVERNOR BUNNY are kicking off a day of festivities and games. As all wait for the new eggs to hatch, they are reminded of the Three B's: Be Kind, Be Friendly, and Be Welcoming. Everyone celebrates as a blue egg hatches a Bunny (a This) and a yellow egg hatches a Bird (a That). As everyone is about adjourn to games, another egg is discovered. The egg is not yellow or blue, and when it hatches, BOTH emerges, who looks to be *both* This *and* That.

BOTH is curious, joyful and amazed at the world. GOVERNOR BUNNY and GOVERNOR BIRD are very confused, and don't know what to make of this new being, which they declare not a This and not a That. The GOVERNORS call for the Great Dictionary, and begin paging through it to discover what BOTH might be. Ultimately they declare him "Neither," though the GOVERNORS cannot agree on the pronunciation of the word. The Governors urge BOTH to decide whether they will be a This or a That, and everyone is dismissed to games: hopscotch for the Bunnies and badminton for the Birds.

BOTH approaches a hopscotch game, but the Bunnies are clearly uncomfortable with their presence, and find ways to exclude them. The Bunnies suggest BOTH be in charge of gathering pebbles for the game, and declare that BOTH is not "Bunny enough" to actually play the game. They say they don't want them to get hurt. One CURIOUS BUNNY tries to include BOTH, but ultimately is pressured otherwise by the group.

BOTH then tries to join some Birds in their badminton games, but they announce that badminton is played in groups of three, so BOTH cannot join in. BOTH suggests groups of four, two playing against two, but the Birds declare BOTH's ideas weird, and tell them they cannot just go changing rules. The Birds tell BOTH that they are not "Birdy enough" for badminton and suggest that BOTH be in charge of retrieving the badminton shuttlecock in the game.

When BOTH inquires if there are other games they could play, they are told that these are the only games in the Land of This and That. BOTH asks, "Why are these the only games you play?" Everyone is stunned and does not understand the word "why." BOTH explains that *why* is like asking "What is the reason?" But the GOVERNORS explain that in the Land of This and That, where everything is perfect and everything fits, there is no need for *why*. BOTH tries to ask more questions, and it's clear that all of the Bunnies and Birdies are uncomfortable with the idea of any change. The GOVERNORS ask for The Answer Box, which contains two costumes, a Bird-like costume and a Bunny-like costume. The GOVERNORS demand that BOTH definitively choose whether they will be a This or a That. BOTH does not want to, and asks, "Why do you need me to be somebody else?" The GOVERNORS state that there is no room for "Neithers", and it is suggested that BOTH go Somewhere Else.

BOTH is heartbroken, but is soon amazed to discover they can fly. In flight, BOTH finds amazement, joy and confidence. When BOTH lands, they discover EITHER, a creature that appears to be both cat and butterfly. EITHER teaches BOTH how to play a few games, Thunder Scream, and Raise Your Paw (or Wing), and they have a wonderful time getting to know each other. Soon, BOTH is introduced to a blue hippo-unicorn named WHATNOT, a Stegosaurus Cat-Bird, named SORT OF, and a Scorpion Bee, called MIX. They explain that BOTH has found themselves in The Land of All.

At that moment, CURIOUS BUNNY arrives with a suitcase, though they now go by the name NEITHER. NEITHER reveals that they have a feathery wing, and some bird-like features, and ultimately apologizes to BOTH for not standing up to the other Bunnies in the Land of This and That. BOTH and NEITHER revel in their new home, the Land of All, where everyone fits.

NEITHER Word Search

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

THUNDER SCREAM	HATCHING DAY	HOPSCOTCH	LAND OF ALL
BELONGING	BAMINTON	FLIGHT	WHATNOT
EITHER	BOTH		

Neither is a play about belonging and making room for difference. One lens through which we can view the play is that of gender.

Here is a helpful resource for discussion!

What is Gender?

Most people think that they understand gender—but it is more than boy/girl. What is the difference between someone's body parts and their gender? Who they love or how they dress? Here is a simple guide for kids, families and teachers.



WHO ARE YOU? Our gender identity is our own idea of **who we are** and how we see ourselves. We can identify as a boy, girl, neither or more than one, and call ourselves he, she or they. This can be the same or different from what is expected based on our body parts.



YOUR BODY: Babies can't talk to tell us their gender identity so doctors make a guess based on **what body parts we have**. Babies come in all shapes and sizes. Doctors usually guess Male (boy) or Female (girl) at birth.



YOUR EXPRESSION: We can use our clothing, hair, toys, activities and behavior to show the world our gender. **How we express** ourselves might be the same or different from what is expected.



SWEETHEART LOVE: When we grow up we can have romantic feelings for people with identities, body parts, and expressions that are different or the same as our own. This is **who we love**.



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Words Matter: Gender identities explained



CISGENDER: A person whose gender is the same as the doctor's guess is **cisgender**. Cisgender people might use *He/Him* or *She/Her* for their pronouns.



TRANSGENDER: A person whose gender is different than the doctor's guess is **transgender**. Transgender people might use *He/Him* or *She/Her* for their pronouns.



NON-BINARY: A person who identifies as more than one gender is **non-binary** or **gender-fluid**. Non-binary people may feel like both a boy/girl, neither a girl or a boy—or anywhere in between. Non-Binary people might use *They/Them* for their pronouns.



AGENDER: A person who does not identify as any gender is **agender**. Agender people might use *They/Them* for their pronouns.



LOVE & EXPRESSION: Every person is free to love who they love and to express themselves in their own way no matter what their gender. **Who we are, what we look like** and **who we love** are totally separate ideas.



HOW DO YOU KNOW?: If you don't know someone's gender you can just ask: **"What pronouns do you use?"** A person's pronouns (He, She, They or something else) will tell you their gender identity. Or they may prefer for you to just call them by their name.



For more info about gender visit: <https://www.genderspectrum.org/quick-links/understanding-gender/>
To learn about Thrive and creating affirming school policies visit <https://www.thrivekc.org/>
This resource is based upon Bruce Lawson's Genderbread person, and TSER's Gender Unicorn—please check them out!

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Becoming an Upstander

In the play *Neither*, we see Both excluded from hopscotch and badminton, and no one stands up for them. Later, though, the character Neither finds Both in *The Land of All* and apologizes for being too scared to do the right thing.

Bullying happens when someone hurts, scares or excludes another person on purpose, and the person being bullied is having a hard time defending themselves. An upstander is someone who stands up for a person being bullied, and there are lots of ways to do that.

Can you think of a time that you played a role in a bullying situation? Maybe you were excluded, or saw it happen to someone else. Maybe you were an upstander, or you weren't sure how to step in and help. What would you do differently next time? Write about it here:

FURTHER CLASSROOM ADVENTURES

Drama Games relating to *Neither*

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.

Raise Your Paw (or Wing)

How to Play: Have the group stand in a circle and use something uniform to mark their spots (chairs, shoes, mat, etc.). Begin the game with the teacher/leader in the middle of the circle. The leader says something true about herself, and also true for some in the group, such as "Raise your paw if you like ice cream," or "Raise your wing if you want to be famous when you grow up," or "I have seen the Atlantic Ocean," etc. Everyone who agrees moves and finds a new spot, including the leader. The last person without a spot ends in the center. **Warning:** Make sure as the game gets exciting that you verbalize: "No running, so no one gets hurt." You can alternatively make them walk in slow motion or tip-toe or hop, etc.

Always, Never, Sometimes

How to Play: In an open space, designate one end of the room as "Always" and the other end of the room as "Never." The leader then offers a prompt, such as "I like chocolate ice cream" or "I like to sing loud," and students move to one end of the room or the other, according to their preferences. Then, the leader introduces the concept of a spectrum, and indicates that the floor between the extremes will now be an area where participants can choose to stand. The prompts can become more personal, such as, "I am afraid of the dark," or "I like to be alone." This exercise is a wonderful jumping off point for a discussion around non-binary options and fluidity of choice.

Machine

How to Play: The leader invites one student to start a simple action that can be repeated for a few minutes, accompanied by a simple, repeatable vocal sound. Another student steps in and adds a movement and sound to the first student's. The leader should emphasize that each new movement must build upon a movement of another participant. They are to make connections with each other, without actually touching one another. Encourage students to use different levels and planes, and to be in relationship with others. This add-on continues until you have five or six students "creating a machine." Then ask the class what this created machine might be and see what they come up with: "a fidget spinner-making machine" or "a hat smasher," pointing out that we all perceive things differently, and that's okay.

Animal Mash-up

How to Play: In an open space, invite students to choose an animal that they would like to explore and physicalize. Let students explore and embody how that animal moves through space, its sounds, etc. Then put students into teams of two, and challenge them to combine their animals, coming up with a hybrid, perhaps an animal that is *both* cow and fish, or cat and butterfly. How would that animal move, sound, etc? Challenge students to incorporate as many characteristics of both animals as possible.

Student Review of *Neither*

By: _____

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

My favorite part of the play was _____

because _____

_____.

If I could be friends with any of the characters, it would be

_____ 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. 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 part of the show did your students respond to/enjoy the best?

What part of the show did your students respond to/enjoy to the 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 _____