

The Children's Theatre Company

Building Character Onstage!

YERTLE THE TURTLE by Dr. Seuss

Music & Lyrics by Lory Lazarus

Yertle the Turtle, a ferocious dictator decides that he needed to rule more and so he commands the other turtles to climb back-on-back to build him a throne, higher and higher, "For I am the ruler of all that I see!" A little turtle named Mack is the first brick of his throne, pleading with his majesty to let the turtles free. In this infamous children's story, the Children's Theatre Company will delight children and families with a musical depiction of the greedy tyrant. In humorous relief the story offers a wealth of ideas for rumination and discussion; why do the turtles obey the king? Why does the king feel the need to rule more?



Social Studies Objectives – Get Students talking about: Human Rights, Revolution, Historical Tyrants & Dictators, How Change is Brought About

Character Education/Resilience Skills Objectives – Get Students Talking about Greed, Power, Meekness, Humility, Weakness, Cooperation, Consultation

Exercises -

Teacher In Role

Aim: Encourage class to look at Human rights from a personal standpoint

Teacher in Role – calls together meeting of class to inform them she is now supreme ruler – delegate ridiculous responsibilities (rubbing feet, polishing nails, fetching coffee, etc...) – leave class to discuss new rules

1. Encourage class to talk about what is fair and what isn't
2. Discuss how new rules should be dealt with (strike/revolution/etc...) lead into class writing their own bill of rights.

Follow the Hand

- Aim: Encourage class to explore the concepts of Power and Weakness
 1. Students get into pairs and take turns – One student leads the other around the room with their hand – palm facing their face. The other student must follow (It is helpful to tell the pair to imagine they are connected from palm to tip of nose.
 2. Discuss how it felt to be the one being led around the room and how it felt to be the one doing the leading.

Card of Power

- Aim: Encourage class to explore the concept of Power and why we accept it without question
 1. Each student is handed a card from an ordinary deck (an easier version of this is to only use 1,2, Queen and King) and licks the back and sticks it to their forehead without seeing what the card is
 2. Teacher informs everyone that the 1's and 2's are the lowest group in the land and the Queens and Kings are the highest. Students must figure out which group they are in by how others react to them. Once Students have gotten into their respective groups Teacher informs them that she was mistaken and that 1's and 2's are the highest whilst Queens and Kings are the lowest. Look for reaction.
 3. Discuss why we accept that Queens and Kings are the highest without questioning it. Talk about people who are powerful in good and bad ways

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Dear Educators,

Our Building Character Study Guides have been created to enhance your students' experience of each of our performance showcases and to extend their themes into your curriculum. We know your classroom time is precious, but we hope you will find some of the included activities valuable to your students. These are simply suggested activities, and you should feel free to adapt them to best fit your grade level and curriculum.

It is our belief that theatre arts are basic to education. We hope that, you'll find these activities both educational and entertaining.

Sincerely,

Mehr Mansuri
Executive Director

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