



Preview Guide for Teachers and Parents to Childsplay's Production of

THE IMAGINATORS

We hope you find this guide helpful in preparing your children for an enjoyable and educational theatrical experience. Included you'll find things to talk about before and after seeing the performance, classroom activities that deal with curriculum connections and education standards, and resource materials.

THE IMAGINATORS

By Dwayne Hartford

Directed by
Jon Gentry

Scenic Design by
Kimb Williamson

Costume Design by
Kish Finnegan

Lighting Design by
Mike Eddy

Stage Manager
Samantha Ries

THE CAST

Tim. Clark Webb
Anne. Andréa Morales
Nina. Quetta Carpenter
William. Kane Anderson

**The production is supported
in part by:**

Arizona ArtShare
Arizona Commission on the Arts
Boeing ECF
City of Tempe/Tempe Municipal Arts
Commission
Cox Communications
Medtronic Foundation
Phoenix Arts Commission
Scottsdale Cultural Council
Tempe Diablos

The Story:

The power of imagination comes into play when three children turn their garage into a whole new make-believe adventure and do battle against the child-eating Mooklecratz! Siblings Anne and Tim have just moved into a new neighborhood. Tim is an incredibly imaginative younger brother and Anne is a self-conscious and somewhat insecure older sister who is quite concerned about making friends and being as smart as the "big city" kids. When Nina (that's Nina Frances Elizabeth Vanderhelden), a precocious and clever girl from next door, surprises Tim in the middle of one of his "adventures", the games begin! Nina and Tim have no trouble at all making up stories and playing them out. It is Anne who is apprehensive and would rather work on her computer. Nina coaxes Anne into going on a great make-believe adventure. Using moving boxes and other objects found in the garage, Nina creates the world of Garagenia complete with poetic language, creative images, royalty and monster. The three battle the child-eating monster, the Mooklecratz (which perhaps represents a of loss of childhood and imagination) and discover their own strengths and the value of cooperation as they figure out how to defeat the beast. The play encourages children and adults alike never to lose their sense of play and creativity. The performance runs approximately 50-55 minutes. The actors will conduct a short question/answer session following the performance, if time permits.

A Word About Theater Etiquette...

Whether going to the theater or having theater come to you, there are a few important things to communicate to your students before seeing a play. Since this may be the first live theater experience for some of your students, please take a moment to discuss the following prior to seeing the performance.

- ◆ Stay seated during the performance.
- ◆ Remember that the performers can hear and see the audience just like the audience can hear and see the performers. Be respectful to the performers and other students in the audience by not talking and staying in your own space.
- ◆ Appropriate responses such as clapping or laughter are always welcome!

IMAGINATION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN KNOWLEDGE ~ALBERT EINSTEIN

THINGS TO TALK ABOUT AND DO BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW . . .

The Actor Factor

When students ask questions of actors following a performance, they often wonder what it's like to be an actor. Here's an explanation from the Childsplay point of view: Being an actor can be a challenging job. Most actors do not make movie star salaries and are continually looking for the next job. In addition to acting jobs, many actors have to work another job in order to make ends meet. Childsplay has the unusual advantage of employing a resident acting ensemble, which means that you see many of the same faces throughout the season in different roles. The advantage for the actor is that Childsplay provides year-round employment and benefits. For Childsplay, the ensemble system ensures that we can retain our best actors, and that rehearsals tend to move along faster when the actors are familiar with each other and often, with the directors.

The Playwright:

Dwayne Hartford

The Imaginators is Dwayne's second production for Childsplay, the first being *Eric and Elliot*. Dwayne has been an actor with Childsplay since 1990 and has been in several plays including *Charlotte's Web*, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, *The Yellow Boat* and *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*. In addition, Dwayne has the responsibility of Artistic Administrator, which involves work with actor contracts and scheduling, the New Plays Program, and assisting the Artistic Director with planning. Originally from Smithfield, Maine, Dwayne was educated at Boston Conservatory and has a BFA in Musical Theatre Performance.

Behind the Scenes:

How does a play go from page to stage? Way before the rehearsals ever begin, a design team consisting of scenic, costume, props, lighting and sound designers is assembled to create the world of the play. At the first "production meeting", the director presents his or her vision for the play. Ideas are exchanged and preliminary designs are created. Over a period of several weeks or months, the designs evolve into what is the final production.

Meanwhile, about 3 or 4 weeks prior to the opening of the play, the actors go into rehearsal. The actors start by simply reading the script out loud (the first "read through"). The director spends some time discussing the play and the characters before putting it "on its feet." The director gives the actors "blocking" (where and when to move, sit, stand, etc.) and the actors are responsible for writing their blocking in their scripts in order to remember it. Once a play is blocked, it is rehearsed until it is ready for an audience. The actors have homework outside of rehearsal that consists of memorizing lines and blocking, and doing any research necessary for their characters.

While the play is being rehearsed and the sets are being built, the marketing team is working hard at publicizing and selling the play because, of course, you can't have a play without an audience!

Pre-Performance Discussion Starters:

► We all experience fear or excitement about events in our lives. Moving to a new neighborhood, going to a new school, a visit to the doctor's office or even losing the electricity during a storm can all cause anxiety. When have you felt anxious, excited or afraid? Try and identify what makes the

characters feel these emotions when you watch the play.

► Everyone has an imagination but some people use it more than others. When do you use your imagination? Do you think people lose their ability to imagine as they grow up? See if you can figure out why the play is called *The Imaginators*.

► Poetry is used to teach lessons, to tell stories, to create powerful images and in several styles of music. Share various forms of poetry with your class. Listen for the use of poetry when you see the play.

► We all know how important it is to have good friends and to be able to get along well with others. Talk about the idea of working together as a team to solve a problem or accomplish a goal. See if you can identify how the characters in *The Imaginators* use cooperation to solve a problem.

Post-Performance Discussion Starters:

► All plays have three P's: people in a place with a problem. Where does the play take place? Who are the people? What are the problems?

► Nina has a very vivid imagination and tends to stretch the truth or make things up all together. Was there ever a time that you made something up or stretched the truth a bit?

► Anne has fears about starting at a new school. She is concerned about being as smart as the other kids and about popularity. Have you ever felt popular? Unpopular? What makes someone popular?

Being popular isn't always positive; talk about negative ways people become popular.

► Of the many design elements, (costumes, sound, scenery, etc.) which was your favorite and why?

► If you could play any character in the play, which would you choose? Why?

THINGS TO DO AFTER SEEING THE SHOW. . .

Art

Monstrosity:

Nina uses her imagination to create the Mooklecratz. Design your own horrible monster. Draw it out in full color and give details about how it moves, what it breathes, what it eats, where it lives and how it survives. Share with the rest of the class and then create a bulletin board with all of the creatures in some kind of environment (the sea, outer space, the rainforest, etc.).

Social Studies

It's Not A Popularity Contest:

This game is a great springboard to discuss popularity and peer interaction. Using a regular deck of cards, hand a card to each student face down. Ask them not to look at the card. Explain that they will need to hold the card, face out, on their forehead for the entire game. Ask them to move about the group, looking at each others cards and ask them to interact with each student according to what's on their card. If someone is holding a King, they should be treated with great respect and if someone is holding a two they are treated as the lowest level of society. After the students have mingled for a bit, ask them to try and arrange themselves, WITHOUT TALKING, in a line according to what they think their level in this society is with the Kings at one end and the Aces at the other. See how accurate they are and then discuss the activity: How did people treat you? Did you figure out which card you were? How did you treat other people? Is any of the behavior you experienced similar to behaviors you've experienced in your life (for example, do kids from wealthy backgrounds get treated differently than those from lower income backgrounds)?

Writing/Literature

Di-Verse-ify!

In the play, Nina makes up a story and is able to rhyme on the spot! Create your own story poem! As a class, choose a topic (like "monsters" or "the magic kingdom") and write story poems. Use four lines per stanza (making sure every other line rhymes) and make sure it has at least 3 or more stanzas total. Read aloud to the rest of the class!

It's All in the Name:

Nina creates some imaginative names for Tim and Anne, like Timmerific. With a partner, come up with 5 different variations of your names (hint: try and add adjectives at the end of your name like Ninamazing) and then use 10 names in a short story about the two of you. Share with the class.

Creative Drama

Play it Out!

Divide into small groups and play out your story poems or a scene from the play! Decide which parts you'll play, what will happen and what you will say, and then rehearse your scene making sure it has a clear beginning, middle and end. Work through it a few times and then share it with the class!

Who Started The Motion:

Anne, Nina and Tim use teamwork to overcome the mighty Mooklecratz. Playing "Who Started the Motion?" is a great way to practice cooperation. Start by standing in a circle. Explain that in this game only bodies and imaginations are used, no voices. Ask one student to stand outside the door as you secretly choose one person in the circle to be the leader. The leader starts the motion and everyone else follows. The guesser is invited back and given three chances to figure out who the leader is. Encourage the leader to use slow, smooth, and

simple movements (from the waist up). The goal is to try and work together as a team so it appears there is no leader. Repeat with different guessers and leaders.

This Is Not A...

For this game you'll need several everyday objects like a cardboard box, an umbrella, a Frisbee or a plastic cup. Start with one object and say "this is not a box" (or whatever the object is). Then, ask for a volunteer to come up and make the object become something else by doing something with it (for example, sit on the box so we know it's a chair). See how many different ways you can use the object and then try it with a different object!

Math

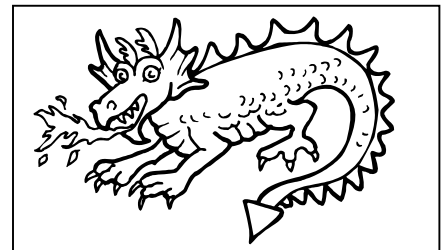
Story Problems:

In teams, create 3 story problems based on the characters and situations in *The Imaginators*. Then, trade with another group and see which group can solve the problems first! Example: Nina has 12 moving boxes. She gives 3 to Anne and 4 to Tim. How many does she have left?

Science

Creature Feature:

The Mooklecratz is an imaginary creature. There are so many different kinds of real animals and insects in the world. Some are very rare and hardly ever seen by humans. In pairs, look for the most bizarre and interesting animal or insect that you can find and collect at least 5 facts about it! Make sure you print out or draw a picture of your creature. Present your findings to the rest of the class!



The Imaginator s Book list

Prepared by Tim Wadham,
Children's Services Coordinator
and the Children's Services Staff of
the Maricopa County Library District



For Younger Readers

You are Here by Nina Crews
Go Away Big Green Monster by Ed Emberley
The House Across the Street by Jules Feiffer
I'm not Bobby! by Jules Feiffer
What Shall We Play? by Sue Heap
Walter's Magic Wand by Erick Houghton
Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson
The Trek by Ann Jonas
Roxaboxen by Alice McClearran
Edward in the Jungle by David McPhail
Edward and the Pirates by David McPhail
There's a Monster in My Closet by Mercer Mayer
Sam, Bangs and Moonshine by Eveline Ness
Mud is Cake by Pam Muñoz Ryan
Really Rosie by Maurice Sendak
And to Think that I Saw it on Mulberry Street by Dr. Seuss
Ship Ahoy! By Peter Sis

For Older Readers

The Gawgon and the Boy by Lloyd Alexander
Switchers by Kate Thompson



All materials are available through the
Maricopa County Library District
Check it out!

Inter esting Inter net Sites

Poetry Sites:

For teachers and kids! Lots of good ideas...
www.poetry4kids.com
www.42explore.com/poetry.htm
www.gigglepoetry.com



Creatures and Critters:

Great places to discover real and mythical creatures!
www.kidwizard.com/Glossary.asp
www.pbs.org/kratts
www.worldkids.net/critters

Cool Education Sites:

Sources for lesson plans and other neat stuff!
www.educationworld.com
www.childdrama.com/lessons.html
www.abcteach.com
www.crayola.com
www.educationindex.com



Every child is an artist. The
problem is how to remain an
artist once he grows up.

-Pabl o Picasso

About Childsplay. . .

Childsplay is a non-profit professional theatre company of adult actors, performing for young audiences and families.

Our Mission is to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, the hallmarks of childhood, which are the keys to the future.

We love to hear from our audience members! Send letters, drawings or reviews to:



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Call us at 480-350-8101 or
1-800-583-7831 (in-state)
Email us at:
info@childsplayaz.org
Web Site:
www.childsplayaz.org

Arizona's Academic Standards

Your visit to the theater and the preparation and follow up activities can involve many content areas from the Arizona Department of Education K-12 Academic Standards. Many of the suggested discussion topics and activities can be tied to several standards. For example, the Math activity on creating Story Problems can fulfill standards in the areas of math, language arts and the arts (theater).

To access the K-12 standards go to:
www.ade.state.az.us/standards/contentstandards.asp

We are always looking for ways to help you prepare your students for the theatre experience and at the same time fulfill curriculum and standards requirements. If you have any suggestions as to how we might improve in this area, please email Katie McFadzen at kmcfadzen@childsplayaz.org

We appreciate your input!