



Preview Guide for Parents and Teachers
to Childsplay's Production of
A Year With Frog and Toad

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.

A Year With Frog and Toad

Music by **Robert Reale**
Book and Lyrics by **Willie Reale**
Based on the Books by **Arnold Lobel**
Directed by **David Saar**
Music Direction by **Alan Ruch**
Choreography by **Michael Barnard**
Scenic Design by **Edie Whitsett**
Costume Design by **Karen Ledger**
Lighting Design by **Rick Paulsen**
Sound Design by **David Temby**
Projection Design by **Jeff Miller**
Assistant Director: **Adam Burke**
Stage Manager: **Sam Ries**

The Cast:

FrogD. Scott Withers
ToadJon Gentry
Bird Chorus..... Dwayne Hartford
Bird ChorusLeslie Law*
Bird Chorus..... Katie McFadzen

*Member of Actors' Equity Association
9/4-10/3, Herberger Center Stage
10/23-10/31, Pima Community College
Center for the Arts, Tucson

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Arizona ArtShare
Arizona Commission on the Arts
Bashas'

City of Tempe/Tempe Municipal Arts Commission
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Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture
Tucson/Pima Arts Council

The Story

Friendship is the secret to a happy life in this 2003 Tony-nominated musical that celebrates our differences with fun, flair and ... amphibians. *A Year With Frog and Toad* is a combination of adventures from Arnold Lobel's prize winning beginning reader series *Frog and Toad Are Friends*, *Frog and Toad Together*, *Days With Frog and Toad*, and *Frog and Toad All Year*. Meet Frog and Toad: best friends and COMPLETE OPPOSITES in just about every way. Follow them and their other friends through the year as they wake up from hibernation, plant seeds, go swimming, bake and eat cookies, fly a kite, rake leaves, tell stories, go sledding, celebrate Christmas and go into hibernation all over again! A truly charming story that celebrates diversity and what it takes for true friendship.

A Bit 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 pointers 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 people in the audience by not talking during the performance.
- ◆ Appropriate responses such as clapping or laughter are always welcome!
- ◆ Please, please, please turn off all cell phones and remember photography of any kind is not permitted in the theater!

**The only way to have a friend is to be one
--Ralph Waldo Emerson**

Things To Talk About Before Seeing the Show...

Read the books! Read *Frog and Toad Together*, *Frog and Toad Are Friends*, *Frog and Toad All Year*, and *Days With Frog and Toad!* Assign the books as homework or read out loud in class.

Talk About

Arnold Lobel (1933-1987): During his 27 year career, Arnold Lobel wrote and illustrated over 100 books. His drawings of cats, mice, pigs, and other animals are favorites of children everywhere. Arnold Lobel grew up in Schenectady, New York, where he lived with his grandparents. He loved to draw pictures and tell stories to entertain his classmates. Checking books out from the library was one of his favorite things to do. He got many ideas for his illustrations from cartoons he used to watch as a child. When he graduated from art school, he married Anita Kempler, and they moved to New York. He and his wife had two children, Adam and Adrienne. Adrienne became a scenic designer and produced and designed the Broadway production of *A Year With Frog and Toad*. Her husband, Mark Linn-Baker, starred as Toad in that production.



Page to Stage: *A Year With Frog and Toad* was adapted for the stage by Robert and Willie Reale. Reading the books, it's hard to imagine how they could be translated to the stage because the characters appear as cartoon illustrations *and* they're animals! A team of designers worked with the director to create the world of the play. When you see the play, you won't see the characters dressed in creature costumes. Instead, the costumes will give suggestions of the creature by using color and texture (for example, green for frog and feathers for the birds). Because Frog and Toad are very human characters and are played by human actors, their costumes, movements and voices will be very human! The designers used the art deco style from the 1930's for inspiration.

What are the differences between seeing a play and a movie? A play happens live in front of an audience. The

actors need to recreate the same play over and over again giving the audience the illusion that it is the very first performance. Since theater happens live, each performance may be a little bit different than the next. When a production closes, the play is no more than a memory. In movies, a performance is captured on film, can be accessed any time and becomes a part of history.

How is a musical different than a play?

The characters sing thoughts and feelings that are too strong for words. They reveal information about themselves and others through song. Lyrics and melodies that make up songs often stay with you long after you've heard them. Can you think of a song from a movie, musical or even a commercial that has stayed stuck in your head?

Talk About Friendship:

Frog and Toad are the best of friends. They spend a lot of time together, do a lot of things together and sometimes irritate each other. They are very different from one another. Often times this type of combination makes for the best friendships. How are you similar to your friend? Different? Do you always get along with your friend? What is it about your friend that you like the most?

Talk About Frogs and Toads:

Frogs are amphibians, animals that spend part of their lives under water and the remainder on land. They spend their lives near water because they must return to the water to lay their eggs. When the eggs hatch into tadpoles, they breathe with gills and swim using tails. As they mature, they lose their tails, and they develop lungs for breathing air. In harsh climates, frogs bury themselves in sand and mud and hibernate (sleep very deeply) through the cold winter. Frogs eat insects, catching them with their long, sticky tongues. They also eat small fish and worms.

***Ranidaphobia** is the fear of frogs

***Bufofobia** is the fear of toads



What's the difference between frogs and toads?

Toads actually ARE frogs. There are more than 300 species of toads. Toads are characterized by:

- stubby bodies with short hind legs (for walking instead of hopping)
- warty and dry skin (usually preferring dryer climates)
- poison glands behind the eyes
- they lay eggs in long chains.

There are more than 400 species of frogs. They have the following characteristics:

- two bulging eyes
- strong, long, webbed hind feet that are adapted for leaping and swimming
- smooth or slimy skin (generally, frogs tend to like moister environments)
- they lay eggs in clusters

Froggy Facts:

- the earliest known frog appeared during the late Jurassic period, about 190 million years ago
- most frogs have teeth (in the upper jaws only) but toads do not have any teeth
- a hibernating frog needs so little oxygen that it breathes through its skin
- the longest frog jump on record measured 33 feet 5.5 inches.
- when a frog swallows a meal, his bulgy eyeballs close and go down into his head! This is because the eyeballs apply pressure and actually push a frog's meal down his throat!
- Did you know that frogs can launch themselves over 20 times their own length? If you were a frog, you could jump 100 feet!

Things to Talk About After Seeing the Show...

- ◇ How many characters can you remember from the play? Which was your favorite and why?
- ◇ How was the play similar to the books? How was it different?
- ◇ Turtle and others made fun of Toad in his bathing suit. How did it make him feel? Have you ever had your feelings hurt because someone made fun of you?
- ◇ When Frog is late on Christmas Eve, Toad's imagination gets the best of him and he thinks the worst has happened to Frog. Can you think of a time when your imagination ran wild? Was it a daydream (where your mind just wanders for no reason) or was it based on something that happened?
- ◇ Which songs stayed with you after seeing the show? What did you learn about a character (who they are or how they feel) through a song?

Things to Do After Seeing *A Year With Frog and Toad*

The Arts:

Music:

There are several different musical styles in *A Year With Frog and Toad*. Sometimes a certain melody is associated with a particular character and it becomes their "theme music" (*Snail With the Mail*, for example). What is your "theme music"? Find or create your own theme music.

Dance:

There is an underwater ballet in the play. In groups, choose a sport and create your own ballet that uses slow motion movement. Imagine that you are underwater. How would it affect the way you move? Set to music and share with the class.

Visual Art:

Make a Kite: Create kites to hang in your classroom or to fly! For a great kite making site go to www.skratch-pad.com/kites/make.html.

Origami Frogs: A great site with step-by-step instructions on making origami frogs is www.froggyville.com/origami.htm Make several in different sizes and colors and have a jumping contest!

Theatre/Creative Drama:

Play a Scene: Divide into groups of 2 or 4 and choose one of the stories from one of the books that is not in the play. Talk about people, place and problem, then decide on who will play the characters. Next, play out the story making sure it has a beginning, middle and end. Run through the story a few times and then share with the class or another audience!

Social Studies:

Map Making: Create a map of Frog and Toad's world. Include where their houses are located, where Snail lives, where they sled, swim, fly a kite, or anything else you remember from the play! Display the maps on a classroom or hallway wall.

Frog and Toad Timeline: As a class, make a monthly timeline graph of Frog and Toad's year starting and ending with hibernation. Make a list in order of what happens, then divide into groups. Assign each group an event to document on the timeline. Use pictures, drawings, words or whatever!

Tadpole Taskforce: The Phoenix Zoo is trying to save the Ramsey Canyon Leopard Frog from extinction. Go to www.phoenixzoo.org/zoo/animals/leopardfrog.asp to see how you can help!

Language Arts:

Snail Mail: Send someone a letter in the mail. It might surprise them and make them feel good. After you write a letter, go to www.usps.com and see how much it will cost to mail it and how long it will take for the letter to get there!

Shivers! Frog tells a scary tale to Toad. When Toad asks "Did this really happen?" Frog says, "Maybe it did and maybe it didn't." Write a scary story based on something that really happened or on something that might have happened. Share the stories with the class. Now, try and guess which stories are real and which are made up!

Friendship Tales: Frog and Toad are dear friends. Write a story about one of your friends. What do you like about your friend? What do you do together? If you could do anything in the world for your friend, what would you do? Share your story with your friend and with the class, if you like.

Older Students: The *Frog and Toad* series are beginning reader books. Read the books. Create two characters that you can write about. Choose 20 vocabulary words that you can use to write a story for younger students. Divide into groups and choose a chapter title/subject. Write a chapter remembering to give it a beginning, middle and end. Now, illustrate the chapter, put the chapters together, and present to lower grades levels!

Science:

Grow Seeds, Grow! Plant seeds and see how long it takes for them to grow. Chart their growth by measuring the seedlings every day for at least a week after they sprout. Compare your growth chart with others in class.

Seasons and Climates:

Compare seasons with another part of the country or world. When it is winter in AZ what season is it in Australia? What parts of the world tend to have the most extreme climates (hot or cold)? Where is it the rainiest? The driest? The sunniest?

Math:

A Year With Frog and Toad takes place over the span of one year. How many days are in a year? How many days are there in each month?

How many hours are in a year?
How many seconds are in a year? If Frog and Toad spend 5 days together, how many hours is that? How many days are there in a *leap* year?

Here's a great way to remember how many days each month has! "30 days has September, April, June, and November all the rest have 31 except for February which has 28."

Foreign Language:

En español, por favor:

Find translations for the following words in Spanish: Frog, toad, summer, kite, leaves, snail, turtle, cookies, theater, bird, friend, year, fall, winter, spring, and bathing suit. As a class, read *Sapo y Sapo Son Amigos* (or another Spanish version of a Lobel book) and see how many words you can understand!

Technology/Computers:

Frog vs. Toad: Using the internet, research frogs and toads! How are they similar? How are they different? How many endangered frogs and toads can you find? There are over 700 different species of frogs and toads. How many pictures can you find and print? Create a mural with frog and toad pictures.

Workplace Skills:

Frog and Toad work together as a team on several occasions: to fly a kite, ...to sled. Talk about cooperation and why it is important at school, at home, at work and at play. "Who Started the Motion?" is a great way to practice cooperation. Start by standing in a circle. 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.

Health/P.E.:

Frog and Toad eat a whole lot of cookies. Compare two brands of cookies and record fat, sugar, carbs, calories, etc. NOW, figure out how long it would take to burn the *calories* from 2 cookies if you were to: walk, run, bike, swim, etc. Go to www.primusweb.com/fitnesspartner/jumpsite/calculat.htm for a great calorie calculator program!



Photo By Tara Sprankle

Frog and Toad Booklist

Prepared with the help of Tim Wadham, Youth Services Coordinator for the Maricopa County Library District

Other Books Written and Illustrated by Arnold Lobel:

The Book of Pigeonicks *Owl at Home*
Small Pig *Ming Lo Moves the Mountain*
On Market Street *Uncle Elephant*
Mouse Soup *Grasshopper on the Road*
Mouse Tales *Fables*

*Several of Arnold Lobel's books are available in Spanish!

Curriculum keys:

Friendship

Nice New Neighbors by Franz Brandenburg
Four Friends in Summer by Tomie DePaola
Pinky and Rex and the Spelling Bee by James Howe
George and Martha Round and Round by James Marshall
Molly the Brave and Me by Jane O'Connor
Elizabeth and Larry by Marilyn Sadler

Problem Solving

Three Smart Pals by Joanne Rocklin

Seasons

Linné's Almanac by Christina Bjork
Four Stories for Four Seasons by Tomie DePaola
A Book of Seasons by Alice Provensen
Snowy Flowy Blowy: A Twelve Months Rhyme by Nancy Tafuri
Seasons by Charlotte Zolotow

Self-esteem

ABC I Like Me by Nancy Carlson
I'm Gonna Like Me: Letting Off A Little Self-Esteem by Jamie Lee Curtis

Small Animals and Birds

A Year at Maple Hill Farm by Alice and Martin Provensen
A Year of Beasts by Ashley Wolff
If You Hopped Like A Frog by David M. Schwartz

Storytelling

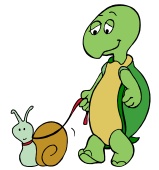
The Story-Tellers by Ted Lewin
Gooney-Bird Greene by Lois Lowry
Three Up a Tree by James Marshall



Internet Sites of Interest:

About Frogs, Toads, Snails, Etc.

www.kiddyhouse.com/snails
<http://octopus.gma.org/turtles>
<http://cgee.hamline.edu/frogs/science/faq1.html>
www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eek/index.htm
www.allaboutfrogs.org
www.kidskonnnect.com (search for turtles and frogs)
www.exploratorium.edu (search for frog or toad and many links will come up including frog myths across cultures)



About Arizona Critters:

www.desertmuseum.org (Sonoran Desert Museum—awesome!)
www.phoenixzoo.org

About the Weather:

www.weatherwizkids.com
<http://kids.msfc.nasa.gov/Earth/Weather>



About Arnold Lobel:

<http://www.carolhurst.com/authors/alobel.html>
<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/arnoldlobel.htm>

Don't miss the rest of our 2004-05 season!

The Velveteen Rabbit

December, Scottsdale Center for the Arts

Go, Dog, Go!

January/February, Tempe Performing Arts Center
March, Pima Community College Center for the Arts, Tucson

Romeo and Juliet

March/April, Herberger Theater Center, Stage West

Interrupting Vanessa

April/May, Tempe Performing Arts Center

Old Jakes Skirts

May, Tempe Performing Arts Center

Call 480-350-8101 for ticket info or to book a school!

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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1-800-583-7831 (in-state)

Email us at: info@childsplayaz.org
Web Site: www.childsplayaz.org

Arizona Academic Standards:

Your visit to the theater as well as 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, a Math activity on creating Story Problems based on the play can fulfill standards in the areas of math, language arts and 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!