



Performing Arts
FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

CLASS STUDY GUIDE

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Ferdinand the Bull

Adaptation and lyrics by Karen Zacarias • Music by Debbie Wicks La Puma
Based on the book "The Story of Ferdinand" by Munro Leaf and Robert Lawson



Welcome to The Rose Theater, where we strive to enrich the lives of children through live theater and arts education. We are pleased you have chosen to make The Rose a part of your students' learning experience, and we will do our best to make it both meaningful and educational. This study guide has been created to help identify themes and lessons from the show, so they can be moved into the classroom for further development through discussion, activities, and assignments.

Pre-Show Activities

Vocabulary Statues

IN- AND OUT-OF-CHAIR ACTIVITY • 10-15 MINUTES

Objective: Students will learn basic Spanish vocabulary by using their bodies to form statues.

Discussion: The show is set in Spain and the script incorporates some basic Spanish words. To better understand the story, we are going to learn some of the words used in the show.

Vocabulary:

Hijo = Son (Stand with your hands on your hips)
Nunca = Never (Cross your hands in front of you)
Feliz = Happy (Smile with your arms in the air)
Mariposa = Butterfly (Cross your thumbs together to make a butterfly)
Amigo = Friend (Put both of your thumbs up)
Miro = Looks (Put your hands above your eyes like you're searching)
Flores = Flowers (Put your hands above your head and make a circle)
Zambomba = Wow (Put your hands out and open with surprised face)

Modeling: Write the Spanish words on the board with their English translations. Read each word and ask the class to repeat after you. Repeat the list again, this time assigning a statue pose to each.

Activity: Ask the class to stand and practice saying each Spanish word while making the appropriate statue. When it appears most of the class has mastered the lesson, then turn it into a game. Divide the class in half and ask Group A to pick a pose they can demonstrate to Group B. It's Group B's job to guess the word that Group A is trying to communicate. Alternate so each group gets to take a few turns posing and guessing. Challenge the class to guess both the Spanish and English word for each pose.

Theater Etiquette

IN-CHAIR ACTIVITY • 10-20 MINUTES

Objective: Students will actively explore good theater etiquette.

Discussion: How should you act when watching a play? Would you act the same way when watching a movie or playing at recess? Is it okay to laugh during a play if you think it's funny?

Brainstorming: Develop a list of good and bad theater behaviors.

Modeling: Ask a volunteer to act out both a good and behavior. Compare. What makes each behavior good versus bad?

Activity: Ask the class to act out a series of good and bad behaviors. Discuss each. Stress that bad behavior should not be glorified or portrayed as "cool." Conclude with the class acting as a good theater audience.

CAST & CREDITS

Ferdinand the Bull

Adaptation and lyrics by Karen Zacarias
Music by Debbie Wicks La Puma
Based on the book "The Story of Ferdinand" by
Munro Leaf and Robert Lawson

Artistic Team

Director James Larson
Choreographer..... Sue Gillespie Booton
Music Director..... Jerry Brabec
Scenic Designer Ronald L. Wells, Jr.
Lighting Designer..... Jennifer A. Kreitz
Costume Designer..... Sherri Geerdes
Production Stage Manager..... Dani Taylor

Cast

Duque Dodo -
A very combative duke
who lives in Spain..... Ryle Smith

Duquito Danilo -
Duque Dodo's sweet son
who wants to be a dancer Walter Shatley

Ferdinand -
A large, gentle bull
who loves flowers Sara Kaus

Cochina -
Ferdinand's star-struck
pig friend Samantha Shatley

Production Credits

Production Manager..... Jennifer Collins Hard
Technical Director..... Michael Scroggs
Audio Visual Supervisor..... Kyle L. Toth
Properties Master..... Ronald L. Wells, Jr.
Scenic Charge Artist..... Teena Sauvola
Master Carpenter Dominic Torres
Audio Engineer Kyle L. Toth
Fly Rail Operator Aaron Steward

Originally produced by Imagination Stage, Bethesda,
Maryland. *Ferdinand the Bull* is presented by arrangement
with Graham Agency, New York (grahamacynyc@aol.com)

Behind-the-Scenes Spotlight on Scenic Design

An interview with Scenic Designer Ronnie L. Wells, Jr.

Q: What does a scenic designer do?

A: A scenic designer brings a script to life on stage by developing the environment in which the script takes place. The first step is to read the script. Next, the scenic designer sketches some initial concepts and ideas as to what the set designs might look like. To fully develop his/her ideas, the scenic designer attends lots of meetings in order to talk with the director and other designers. It's important that everyone collaborate in order to produce a "world" for the show that is fully developed and cohesive.

Q: Where did you go to school and what did you study to become a scenic designer? How has your education helped you to succeed?

A: I have an Associate of Arts degree from Indian Hills Community College in Southern Iowa, where I discovered my true passion for theatre and designing. Next, I transferred to the University of Northern Iowa, where I studied Theatre, Design, and Production with an emphasis in Scenic Design and Scenic Art. My education opened many doors of opportunity and helped me meet a ton of new friends.

Q: How does a scenic designer help to tell the story of a play?

A: A scenic designer designs scenery that helps to convey to an audience the location of a scene/play. They also help to guide the audience towards the experience of a particular mood or feeling.

Q: What do you love most about being a scenic designer?

A: I really love creating fantasies on stage. Sometimes, I enjoy creating realistic worlds on stage, too. With fantasy worlds, though, I feel like I'm creating places that people can only visit in their dreams or through a book, so it's exciting to bring the joy and excitement of that experience to life for an audience. I also really love taking audiences for a journey to another place, whether I do it with colors, shapes, moods, visualizations, etc. It's the joy of being able to offer people something they wouldn't necessarily get to experience in everyday life that excites me.

Q: Where did you turn for inspiration when creating the set designs for "Ferdinand the Bull"?

A: I looked at Spain's traditional architecture and discovered lots of wrought iron, beautiful lines, and colors. The script also gave me inspiration, as I was struck by the pressure that Ferdinand and Duquito Danilo endured as others tried to tell them who they should be and what they should grow up to do. That aspect of the script made me want to show people the softer side of life. Wrought iron is usually seen as a very tough and rigid material, but I wanted to bring a softer look to it for the production. To do this, I designed the wrought iron panels to include vines and flowers that would connect with and exemplify the beauty and simplicity of Ferdinand and Danilo's desire to just be themselves.

Q: Is there any part of your design that you are particularly excited about?

A: I am really excited about the overall layout of the stage - the ground plan. I've designed a stage extension that will change the general look of the stage in an everyday setting. In doing this, the panels that will be attached to the front of the stage extension will be able to be lit from behind which should change the mood and overall feeling of the show as it progresses from scene to scene.

Q: What has been your favorite part of working on "Ferdinand the Bull"?

A: My favorite part of working on "Ferdinand the Bull" was the chance to revisit the story with a new set of eyes. I remember the story from when I was a kid and when I heard that I would be designing the show, I looked up the old Disney cartoon online and watched it. As soon as I began watching it, I knew that this project was going to be a lot of fun.

Q: What do you hope audiences will gain from your scenic design?

A: My hope is that the audience will get a sense of the storytelling. My design is very simple, but very beautiful. The floor is open with a few platforms arranged in a triangular shape. It will be fun to watch the characters introduce the elements of each scene as the story unfolds.

Post-Show Activities

The Set Is Alive!

OUT-OF-CHAIR ACTIVITY • 10-15 MINUTES

Objective: Students will use their acting tools (body, voice, and imagination) to create the environment of the story.

Vocabulary:

Scene - A section of a play that usually takes place during one time period in one place.

Set - The backdrops used on stage for a scene.

Discussion: During one of the scenes from “Ferdinand the Bull,” Ferdinand walks around the garden smelling the flowers. The garden is full of flowers, plants, and fountains. What kind of sounds are in the garden? What does it look like? We are going to use our bodies, voices, and imaginations to make the plants and sounds.

Brainstorming: How can our arms be used to look like the vines and flowers? What sound does the breeze make? How does the breeze move the plants? What kind of animals and insects would live in the garden in Spain? What noises would they make?

Modeling: Ask for two student volunteers to come to the front of the classroom. Ask one student to suggest a plant in the garden and then ask them to make that plant with their body. Ask the second student to act as the breeze. Urge the first student to react to the breeze as their plant would react.

Activity: Ask for student volunteers who would like to pretend to be a plant, animal, or insect in the garden. Have them come to the front of the room and stand like their chosen garden inhabitant. Encourage the students to explore different heights and angles. How does each student (as their chosen garden inhabitant) react to the other plants, animals, and insects in the garden?

Side Coaching: How does a breeze affect the way each garden inhabitant moves? How can each student use his/her knees, spine, ears, and fingers to respond to the breeze in character?

Bulls Are Great

OUT-OF-CHAIR ACTIVITY • 15-20 MINUTES

Objective: Students will learn the importance of listening, which is an important tool that actors use to get into character and interact with the other actors on stage.

Discussion: Why is it important for actors to listen to each other on stage? If an actor doesn't listen to the other actors onstage, what might happen?

Modeling: Ask the class to stand in a circle around you. Explain that after each statement you make, the class is to respond by pumping their fists into the air and saying, “Yes!” Next, say “Bulls are great” and follow it up with any true statement that comes to mind. For instance, you might say “Bulls are great because the carpet is dark blue!,” “Bulls are great because I like to talk to my friends,” or “Bulls are great because it's almost time for recess.”

Activity: Ask a volunteer to step into the circle after you. Explain that they can say anything that comes to mind, as long as it is appropriate and starts with “Bulls are great.” Remind the circle that they must say “yes” to every idea the person in the middle says. If the student in the middle starts to wander or cannot think of anything to say, one of the other students should jump in and rescue their teammate. Play until everyone has had a chance in the middle.

Scene Sculptures

IN AND OUT-OF-CHAIR ACTIVITY • 15-20 MINUTES

Objective: Students will work together to use their bodies to create a frozen image from one of the scenes from the show.

Brainstorming: Make a list on the board of the scenes that took place in “Ferdinand the Bull.” Examples could include Ferdinand exploring the garden, Duque Dodo coming to town to choose a bull, Ferdinand getting stung by a bee, and Cochina explaining that she wants to be a star.

Modeling: Select one scene from the list on the board as the scene that you will “sculpt” in front of the class. As a class, list all the characters from that scene, and then ask one volunteer to come to the front of the room for each character. These volunteers will be your clay for the project.

Begin sculpting your scene by asking the volunteers to move and bend their bodies in ways that will help reveal the scene. For example, you could ask them to bend at the knees, point his/her index finger into the air, put a finger on each side of their heads, etc. Note that you do not have to touch the volunteers. You only have to use your voice to sculpt the scene.

Ask if any of the seated students would like to take your role as the sculptor. After two volunteers have sculpted, ask the class what worked well? How did they know what the characters were feeling? How do the characters feel about each other? How can you tell that by looking at their body placement?

Activity: In front of the class, create each of the scenes from the play that the class brainstormed earlier. Have new volunteers come up to the front of the room to be the clay and the sculptor. One student works as the sculpture and the other students pretend to be the clay. Encourage students to create statues whereby each character is fully engaged with the characters around him. After each sculpture is complete have the class comment on what went well and why.

Side Coaching: Make sure you include details about where the scene takes place. Make sure you include other characters in the scene. How can you create levels (low, medium, and high)? How can your shoulders, eyes, spine, and mouth be used to convey a feeling? How will the audience know where the scene takes place? Can details be added?

Extension: Working in larger groups, urge the students to create a group picture without words. Go around the room and share your sculptures.

Bring The Rose to Your Classroom

The Rose Theater offers a variety of classroom workshops, residencies, and touring productions! For your next engagement with The Rose, please consider one of the following:

- **The Big (Not-So) Bad Wolf**
Students will be transfixed by the jolly-not-so-scary Big Bad Wolf portrayed by a professional teaching artist from The Rose. This show features stories about wolves that have a “wolfish” edge to them. These stories are a fun way to explore themes regarding honesty, trust and good behavior.
- **The Wonderful World of Dr. Seuss**
The world of Dr. Seuss comes to life when The Cat in the Hat arrives to share the places he’s been. The show features beloved songs and stories such as Green Eggs and Ham, The Sneetches, The Grinch, and of course, The Cat in the Hat. Students of all ages will open their imaginations as they participate in this Seuss-tastic experience!
- **The Bully Show**
The Bully Show was selected for The Kennedy Center’s prestigious New Visions/New Voices program. The play takes place at the taping of a new game show, YOU WANNA BE A BULLY!, with the kids acting as the studio audience and contestants. It challenges students to reconsider their assumptions about bullies, victims, and spectators.

Three- to five-day curriculum based workshops are also available! Topics include Bringing Literature to Life, Acting & Characters, Tall Tales, and more!

For more information, please contact James Larson at (402) 502-4618 or jamesl@rosetheater.org.

Please feel free to contact us!

Letters may be written to:

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Omaha, NE 68102

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James Larson at
jamesl@rosetheater.org
or (402) 502-4618

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Bibliography

Web Sites

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2878.htm>

This is a great website for students that’s hosted by the US Department of State. It features a vast amount of information about Spain: its people, history, government, economy, political conditions, foreign relations, etc.

<http://scienceprojectideasforkids.com/2010/ferdinand-the-bull-activity/>

This web site offers a fun science project for kids that is based on the Ferdinand story.

<http://www.liveoakmedia.com/client/guides/91550.pdf>

Teacher will want to visit this web site for great cross-curriculum activities. It offers language arts, geography, science, culture, and art tie-ins that relate to the show.

Books

“The Story of Ferdinand” by Munro Leaf and Robert Lawson

This book was written in 1936 and is the basis for the show “Ferdinand the Bull.” The book is a worldwide bestseller that has been banned several times due to its pacifist message.

“The Story about Ping” by Marjorie Flack and Kurt Wiese

Ping is the name of a duck who lives on a riverboat on the Yangtze River in China. It’s a sweet and funny book with wonderfully rich and colorful illustrations.

“The Little House” by Virginia Lee Burton

This story is about a little country house that is unhappy when the city, with all its buildings and traffic, grows up around it.

“Corduroy” by Don Freeman

Have you ever dreamed of being locked in a department store at night? The endearing story of Corduroy paints a picture of the adventures that might unfold (for a teddy bear at least) in such a situation.

“The Snowy Day” by Ezra Jacks Keats

This book is a 1963 Caldecott Medal winner. It is the simple tale of a boy who wakes up to discover that snow has fallen during the night.

