

Pushcart Players

STUDY GUIDE TO PRODUCTION & ACTIVITIES



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Introduction

Rooted in the belief that the arts are basic to many aspects of education, Pushcart Players is delighted to present "Happily Ever After," based on the classic tale, "Cinderella." Pushcart was drawn to this enduring story for many reasons. Its origins are informed by the universal longing to overcome adversity and it speaks to all of us who have a vision or a dream yet to be fulfilled. And, we never grow tired of its central themes of goodness, generosity and compassion.

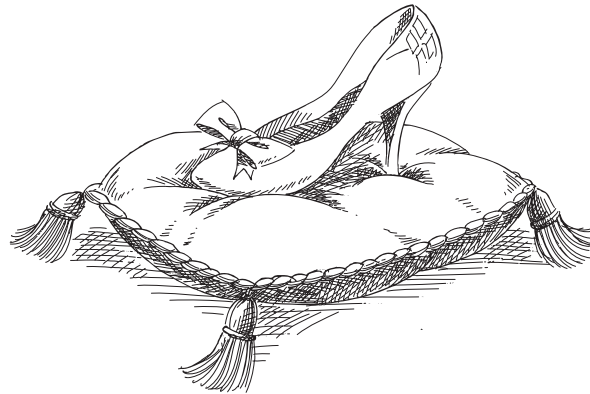
While it is filled with beauty, grandeur, magic and wonder, these components provide the backdrop for significant and timeless learning opportunities for today's kids and adults. It is no wonder that this tale has been told and re-told around the globe over many centuries (its earliest known telling dates back to Ninth Century China.) More than a thousand years later this beloved story continues to tell us about ourselves, our yearnings for transformation and a happily ever after conclusion.

And so we look forward to presenting "Happily Ever After—A Cinderella Tale" which will take young and family audiences on that sometimes happy, sometimes sad – but always compelling journey fueled by inner beauty, courage and kindness as they triumph over greed, arrogance and bully behavior.

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This study guide is designed to assist teachers, parents and group leaders in preparing students for the presentation. It also offers suggestions for discussion, art and values tie-in activities following the program. It is our hope that the material suggested in this guide will be tailored to the age and interests of your students and presented in a nurturing and supportive classroom, recreation or home setting.



Happily Ever After - A Cinderella Tale

Summary

This production begins with a spoken Prologue set to music that provides an overview of the characters and events that come together to form the Cinderella tale. The story itself begins with Cinderella at a breaking point, suffering from the verbal abuse and demands of her stepmother and stepsisters. Exhausted and overwhelmed, we see her sobbing quietly. Her barnyard friends hear her and quickly come in to help her. The play moves forward in song and story following the classic sequence in the following scenes and musical numbers:

- Ella becomes Cinder-ella, working day and night to serve the needs of her Stepfamily
- Announcement of A Ball at the Palace for the Prince to find a Bride
- The Step Sisters and Stepmother prepare and then leave for The Ball
- A Godmother appears, Cinderella is magically transformed and goes to the Ball.
- Cinderella dazzles everyone, especially the Prince, at the Ball
- The clock strikes 12 and Cinderella runs home. All is as it was before.
- The Prince finds a glass slipper and is determined to find the person who wore it.
- The slipper is tried on many maidens, but it fits none, until Cinderella comes forward.
- Justice triumphs and dreams come true. Cinderella leaves for the Palace with the Prince.
- Epilogue – also spoken to a musical underscore, this segment tells of what happened after Cinderella is escorted to the Palace to become the Bride of the Prince.
- Finale - The Epilogue segues to a Finale that celebrates the story and the concept of reaching for a Happily Ever After conclusion.

The Cinderella Story

Read a simple, classic version of the Cinderella story to your class. Or present an old fashioned oral telling of the tale with group participation. At various intervals, ask “who knows what happened next?” Build the story through the additions supplied by students.

Following is a quick version of Pushcart Players’ telling of the story:

“Once Upon A Time.... There lived a young girl who’s name was Ella. She was a happy child and loved most everything and everyone around her. But sadly, her mother died when she was still quite young and after a short

time, her father re-married. He was away from home much of the time and her new stepmother and stepsisters were mean and bossy. Ella tried as hard as she could to please them, but they were jealous of her sweetness and beauty and the harder she tried the more they demanded of her.

Because she spent so much of her time cleaning, cooking and tending to the fire, she soon became covered with cinders and ashes. Her stepsisters laughed at her and called her Cinder-ella. Cinderella didn't mind, and was comforted by her animal friends and sweet dreams that some day a prince would rescue her from this cruelty and would take her to a beautiful place where they would live happily ever after.



Time passed and one day there was a proclamation from the Royal Palace saying that there was soon to be a Royal Ball at the Palace so that the Prince could meet fair maidens from the Kingdom and choose one of them to be his Bride. There was great excitement throughout the Kingdom as everyone prepared for the Royal Ball. Cinderella helped her stepsisters and stepmother powder their noses, do their hair and put on their gowns. She waved good-bye as they left, wishing that she too could go to the Ball. Suddenly a kind and loving person – her Godmother – appeared. The Godmother put Cinderella to work, finding mice and frogs and a pumpkin, which she magically changed into horses, footmen and a golden coach. With one last wave of her wand, she dressed Cinderella in a beautiful gown, a diamond tiara and glass slippers, and sent her off with final instructions to return when the clock strikes 12 at midnight.

Music and dancing was already underway at the Royal Ball – but a hush fell over the crowd when Cinderella entered the Royal Hall. The kind and handsome Prince was immediately drawn to her and they danced as though they had known each other all their lives. But when the clock began to chime at midnight, Cinderella remembered her Godmother's instructions, excused herself and ran as fast as she could to get home before the 12th chime. The Prince ran after her, but all he could see were mice, frogs and a kitchen maid, carrying a pumpkin. As he turned to go back to the Palace, he noticed a glass slipper on the Palace stairs. He vowed to find the beautiful person to whom this shoe belonged.

The next day, the Prince and his Couriers went from house to house throughout the Kingdom, trying the glass slipper on every eligible young maiden's foot. It was either too small or too large or too narrow or too wide. Just as they were about to give up, the Prince heard the voice of a young woman behind a locked door as she spoke gently to her barnyard friends. He insisted on seeing who was locked up and of course, when Cinderella came forward, not only did the shoe fit, but she also had the other shoe in her apron pocket. There was no doubt that the Prince had found his soul mate and that Cinderella had found hers.

Puzzled and amazed, the stepsisters and stepmother watched as Cinderella packed a small bag and left for the Palace with the Prince and his Couriers. There was a grand wedding and celebration in which Cinderella looked more beautiful than ever in a satin gown trimmed with gold. And because she was sweet and kind and forgiving, she invited her stepsisters and stepmother to attend the wedding and to come and visit anytime. There was much joy throughout the Kingdom and they all lived happily Well, almost – happily ever after.

CINDERELLA STORY DISCUSSION

There are an infinite number and variety of discussion points and activities that can be encouraged from the telling or viewing of "Happily Ever After – A Cinderella Tale." Here are a few areas you may wish to explore.

- **Talk about Folk Tales and Fairy Tales**

Read other fairy tales and look for similar formats. Discuss similarities and variations.



Most folk/fairy tales have the following similarities:

Different cultures, similar stories all reflecting human needs and behavior

Told through the ages, passed down from story-teller to story-teller

All have some common elements such as taking place in a fanciful setting, often with royalty present. (Kings, queens, princes).

There are often magical elements such as a witch, a fairy (or godmother) elves, giants, animals that talk, etc.

There is always a problem to be solved and the story contains good and not so good (evil) characters.

Ordinary people can become something extraordinary, rising in status and are successful in fulfilling a dream or wish.

Happy endings. Justice is served.

- **Talk about the history of and variations in different versions of the Cinderella story.**

Use the Internet to find more details about the various versions of Cinderella.

Some points of interest are:

The story has appeared in many versions – the earliest known to be from China around 850 A.D.

The first written story is found in a German sermon in the 16th Century.

An Italian folk tale appeared in the 17th Century and then came our current version from Charles Perrault (also 17th C) and the Brothers Grimm (19th C).

Each version introduced yet another element such as the stepsisters, stepmother and the fairy Godmother.

- **Talk about values and behavior of the characters, conforming to common fairy tale structure, in the Cinderella story.** Here are some sample questions:

Who are the villains in the story?

Who are the hero-heroines? Why?

Is there magic in this story? When does this happen and how?

Are there bullies and victims in this story? Who are they? How do they change?

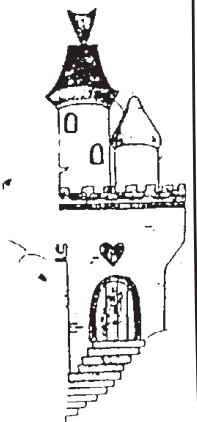
Who is kind and generous? Who is mean and selfish? What did they do or say to make you think so?

Is there a problem to be solved in the story? What is it and how is it solved or resolved?

Are there promises broken in the story? By whom? What are the consequences?

What are some of the contrasts you noticed in the story (i.e. rich/poor, beautiful/ugly, gentle/rough, happy/sad, generous/demanding, hardworking/lazy, graceful/clumsy, modest/vain, etc)? Discuss the values of the positive attributes and how to achieve them.

Is there a happy ending and has anyone changed or been transformed? Who and how?



- **Talk About reactions and impressions after seeing (or while doing) the play.**

What do you remember most about the play?

Who was your favorite character and why?

What made you happy? What made you sad?

What was exciting? What was scary? Funny?

Did your favorite character change in anyway over the course of the story? How? What did he/she learn?

- **Music, Costumes and Acting**

How did the music make you feel in different parts of the play? Can you give examples of different feelings in different parts? (For example: When Ella was sad and lonely at the beginning? When her animal friends came in to help her with her chores (work song)?)

Did the music help you to know what was happening or going to happen? How?

How did the music help you know the difference between the stepsisters' dreams and Cinderella's dreams in the song, "When I Move Into The Palace?" How were the songs the same? How were they different?

What did the costumes tell you? How and why? (Talk about use of color, i.e. silly combinations for step-family and pretty colors for Cinderella, crowns and rich fabrics for royalty, hats that suggest an occupation for some of the other characters etc)

How did you know what the characters were feeling? (Talk about acting out the parts of the story – saying things the way the person in the story would say them, reacting to what's happening in the play as an actor, movement according to what's going on etc)

- **Cinderella At The Ball**

Cinderella was radiant when she arrived at the Ball. Do you think her radiance (shining beauty) was because of what she was wearing? What else helped to make her so attractive and appealing? (Talk about inner beauty stemming from kindness, gentleness, a ready smile, innocence, generosity and thoughtfulness)

Do you think everyone has inner beauty? What helps us to know about that?

To see it?

What would the Stepmother and Stepsisters have to do to be "radiant?"

- **When The Clock Struck 12**

How did you feel when the clock began to strike 12 times?

How did the music change? Compare that music to the beautiful, dreamy waltz the Prince and Cinderella had been enjoying together.

Why was this a "dark" moment for Cinderella? For the Prince?



Discussion Points: Keeping promises, being responsible, respecting guidelines and rules set for us.

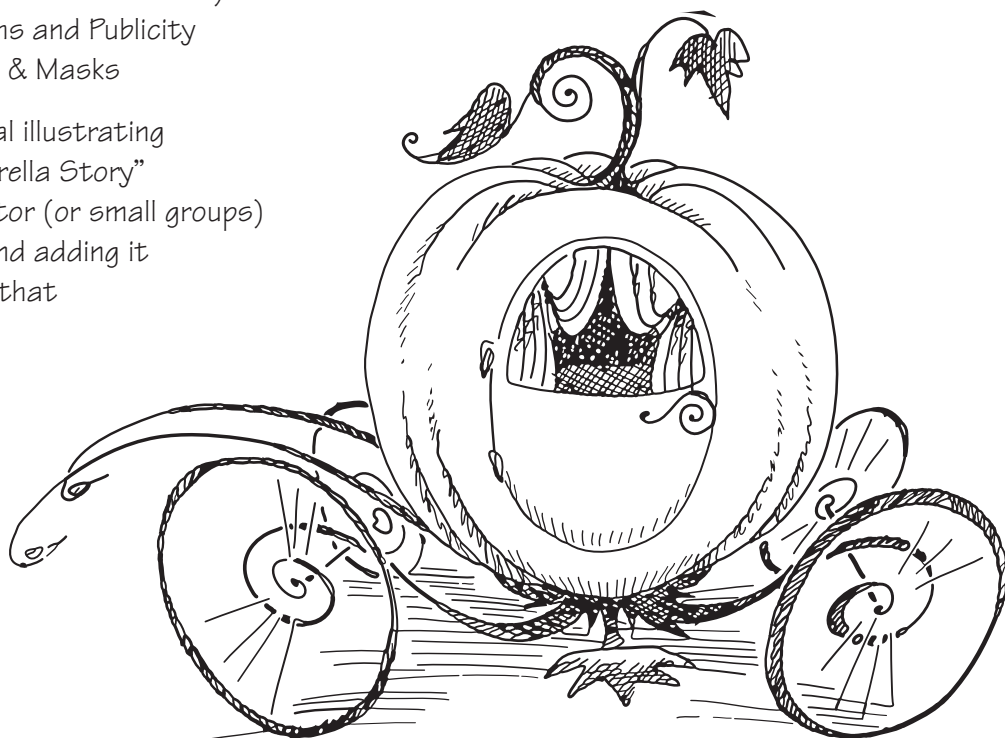
Cinderella had made a promise to her Godmother (To be home when the clock strikes 12). Whatever the reason for the rule (or test or challenge) Cinderella got distracted and failed. What similar situations can you think of in your life today? (i.e. Being told to not ride a bike in the street or to be home from a friend's house by a certain time or other safety guidelines and "house rules")

For older students: Going to a party or prom and being instructed not to drink (or use other substances even if others are doing so) – obeying curfews, not going to certain places or hangouts that are "off limits."

For all ages: Talk about being responsible by keeping bargains and promises – no matter how "swept away" we might be by the moment. Respecting the wisdom and instructions of our parents, teachers, guardians. Talk about "consequences" for ignoring these responsibilities.

Cinderella Story Activities

- Write or tell about a dream that you can remember having that finally came true
- Write or tell a story about something that happened to make you feel changed or different.
- Draw a picture (or write a story or poem) about something in the play that made you feel happy. Sad. Angry.
- If you were friends with one or both of the stepsisters, what advice would you give them?
- If you were friends with Cinderella, what would you recommend to her when her stepsisters and step-mother were bossing her around? -- When she was left behind and not allowed to go to the Ball? -- When she was locked in the kitchen and not allowed to try on the slipper?
- Plan a party or event in your classroom, school or as a cast party after the production using the Royal Ball as your theme. Assign groups to be responsible for various components of the party: 1) Posters & Invitations 2) Decorations 3) Refreshments 4) Music and Entertainment 5) Photographs and Publicity (News Articles) 6) Costumes & Masks
- Create a class (or cast) mural illustrating "Happily Ever After – A Cinderella Story" by having each student or actor (or small groups) take a section of the story and adding it to a large roll of brown paper that can be hung on a wall in the hallway or entrance to the auditorium. This can also be done on smaller squares of paper or cloth and then be put together as a "Happily Ever After..." Quilt or wall hanging.





One of the most exciting ways to prepare students of all ages to view live theatre or bring an academic concept or lesson to life is to give them the experience of what it feels like to be an actor or in a given situation or circumstance. Creative Drama provides an excellent vehicle toward fulfilling this objective. There are many exercises that are easy to implement and encourage using the students' whole instrument, including imagination, voice, movement, senses and emotions. The entire class participates at the same time so there is little opportunity for self-consciousness to inhibit creativity.

Following are some simple exercises, suitable for all age groups. No prior drama experience is required of students (or teachers!) Exercises can be done in the classroom if desks can be moved to the side. This can be accomplished quietly and efficiently by making a game of it. A sample scenario might be to encourage students to imagine an earthquake fault line under the room. It is the students' responsibility to move the desks to the side of the room to reinforce the walls. This must be done silently so the fault line will not be disturbed. [Note: If it is not possible to move the desks, however, most exercises can be done with students standing behind or near their desks.]

Warm-Up Exercises

Freeze and Move

Using a percussion instrument (small drum or tambourine) or a piece of lively music, ask students to move while the music plays and freeze when it stops. Ask students to move isolated parts of their body (i.e. "now just move your leg, now your head, etc.") If you are using a drum, it can be exciting to vary the speed of the movement by changing the tempo of the beat.

Simple Stretches

Lead students in stretching their bodies. The use of visual images or characters helps make stretching fun. For example, tell students to reach for a silver thread hanging from an imaginary cloud above their head. Tell them to hold on tight and imagine they are swinging high above the neighborhood. Sometimes the strings might disappear. Students should then drop, loosely. Repeat this several times. Students can then stretch out wide like a big tree, swivel like a snake, stretch their necks long like a giraffe's, make their bodies small like a tiny mouse, etc.

Grooming The Senses

In place, encourage students to isolate each sense and focus on it. For example, tell them to close their eyes and listen attentively, first to sounds in the room, then sounds in the hallway. Finally have them send their hearing out as far as it will go. Ask them to share what they have heard. A similar exercise can be done with sight. Ask them to look around the room, noticing colors and shapes. Ask them to see each object and then have each object see them. Turn to a partner and see the partner and have each partner see them. Ask students if they can tell the difference between being the see-er and the seen and what each feels like. To practice heightening the sense of touch you can pass around a paper bag with an object in it. Have each student feel and describe it without the sense of sight. Students can be encouraged to experiment with smell and taste in the lunchroom and at home.

Movement: A Mirror Exercise

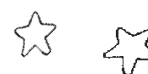
To help students focus, lead the class in a simple "follow the movement" exercise to slow, pleasant music. Make simple movements with your arms, head, face and legs. Encourage students to mirror these movements at the same time you are making them. Then, if you can arrange students in a circle, choose one student to leave the room and one student to lead the class in simple slow movements. The student chosen to leave is now invited back to try to guess who is the leader. A more advanced version of this exercise involves grouping students in pairs and having them mirror each other in turn. Music is helpful here. Remind students that the face moves too and that laughter and giggling can be mirrored also.



Sound

Sound Effects Story: Pick a simple story that has many opportunities for added sound effects (i.e. stories in cities, bad weather, haunted houses, etc.). This story can be made up in advance, improvised on-the-spot or read from a book. Practice with the group, encouraging students to make the sound of the wind using their voices, doors slamming using their feet, etc. Then control the volume of the sound using a wand, a pencil or any conductor like object. When your hand is high, the sound is loud, when your hand is lowered the sound diminishes and then stops. Use this volume control tool throughout the story. For added excitement, tape the story and play it back for students – they love to hear their voices. And knowing that they will be taped will heighten motivation and focus.

CREATIVE DRAMA RESOURCE LIST



Development through Drama

By: Brian Way
Humanities Press 1967

Games for Actors & Non-Actors

By : Augusto Boal
Routledge, 1992

Impro

By: Keith Johnstone
Eyre Methuen Ltd., 1981

Improvisation for the Theater- a Handbook of Teaching and Directing Techniques

By: Viola Spolin
Northwestern University Press, 1963

Playmaking-Children Writing and Performing their own Plays

By: Daniel Juda Sklar
Teachers and Writers Collaborative, 1991

Teaching Drama to Young Children

By: Mem Fox
Heinemann, 1987



Creative Dramatics in the Library

By: Nancy Pereira
New Plays for Children, 1976

Multiple Intelligences

By: Howard Gardner
Harper Collins, 1993

Creative Drama Resource Book (Grades K-3 & 4-6)

By: Ruth Beall Heinig
Prentice-Hall, 1987

200 + Ideas for Drama

by: Anna Scher/ Charles Verall
Heinemann, 1992

Drama Anytime

By: Jill Charters and Anne Gately
Primary English Teaching Association, 1986

Structuring Drama Works: A Handbook of Available Forms in Theater and Drama

By: Jonathan Neelands
Cambridge University Press, 1990

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The Prudential