Teacher Guidebook

2015-16 SEASON for YOUNG PEOPLE

EGG
presented by CAHOOTS NI

Sponsored by Regions
For over 130 years Regions has been proud to be a part of the Middle Tennessee community, growing and thriving as our area has. From the opening of our doors on September 1, 1883, we have committed to this community and our customers.

One area that we are strongly committed to is the education of our students. We are proud to support TPAC’s Humanities Outreach in Tennessee Program. What an important sponsorship this is — reaching over 25,000 students and teachers — some students would never see a performing arts production without this program. Regions continues to reinforce its commitment to the communities it serves and in addition to supporting programs such as HOT, we have close to 200 associates teaching financial literacy in classrooms this year.

Thank you, teachers, for giving your students this wonderful opportunity. They will certainly enjoy the experience. You are creating memories of a lifetime, and Regions is proud to be able to help make this opportunity possible.

Jim Schmitz  
Executive Vice President, Area Executive  
Middle Tennessee Area
Dear Teachers~

We are so pleased to bring this performance of Egg by Cahoots NI all the way from Ireland! It is an engaging production about being together and growing up. Students will identify with the little birds as they go through their daily routine and then discover something new and exciting.

The show does not include spoken language, but the rich communication of physical theatre, props, music, and sound effects tell its delightful story.

The activities in this guide target pre-school age children, but they can easily be adapted for kindergarten and first grade by adding advanced vocabulary and more detail to discussions.

Enjoy!

TPAC Education

Sensory Friendly Performances

TPAC Education is happy to be presenting some Sensory Friendly Performances of Egg. These performances are designed to create a safe, non-judgmental, and nurturing environment for individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other individuals with sensory sensitivities.
Cahoots NI is a professional children’s touring theatre company based in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The Company was formed in 2001 by Paul Bosco McEnaney and Zoe Seaton. The Company combines the visual potential of theatre with music, magic, and illusion as essential ingredients to create entertaining and inspiring theatre for children. Each production is at the centre of a body of outreach work designed to maximise artistic potential, customise the individual theatre experience and extend the imaginative life of the piece beyond the actual event.

Cahoots NI continues to strive to be a major contributor to children’s arts experience through its productions and outreach programme. Each year Cahoots NI delivers an ambitious, innovative and challenging programme and since its creation has interacted with 152,909 children and their families.

The aims of Cahoots NI are:
- to develop audiences of young children from all sections of society.
- to develop meaningful links with the communities in which the company works.
- to provide inspiring theatrical experiences for young children, expanding the imagination and stimulating artistic creativity.
**Egg**

The story of *Egg* is told through the medium of physical theatre, illusion, and music. It is a sad, funny and delightful tale exploring the theme of “flying the nest”. This theme resonates as strongly with the adults in the audience as it does with the children, and this fact gives *Egg* its real emotional power. The production is a magical experience, which draws children in close to the life of the little bird characters in their nest and telling them a story of friendship and wonder and tender loving care. A tale of three birds...and an egg!

“Directed with exacting precision by Paul McEneaney, *Egg* combines technical excellence with literal flights of imagination … sophisticated light and sound, combined with cleverly-conceived props (to) weave an enchanting story.”  
*Irish Theatre Magazine*, October 2011

“*Egg* is a wonderful piece of children's theatre, a thoughtful and creative 40 minute show that was a joy to watch.”  

“[This] atmospheric and symbolic 40-minute-look at the cycle of life through the eyes of a family of newly hatched birds is captivating, thrilling ride.”  

“There's a great dollop of Cahoots magic which is performed without words but with immense clarity and precision.”  
*Belfast Telegraph*, November 2011
The set for Egg is a large bird’s nest. Explore with children the creativity and variety of different types of birds nests. Make science and engineering connections learning how and where the nests are constructed and with what materials. For fun, google “unusual places birds nest.” Your students will be tickled at the results!

Mockingbirds build their nests of heavy twigs on the outside and line them with soft grass, moss, and animal hair on the inside.

Chimney Swifts build their nests of twigs and special, sticky saliva on the side of walls.

Baya Weavers weave their nests out of grass in a sewing motion.

Bald Eagles build giant nests made of branches called aeries. They are placed high in trees, and some are big enough for a man to sit in.

Sociable Weavers build massive nest apartments of grasses and twigs that can house up to 100 nesting pairs of birds.

Hummingbirds attach their tiny nests to branches with spider webs. They use the webs to bind together the nest material of moss, lichen, and other soft plant matter.

With thanks to ~
Top left: bluebirddiary.wordpress.com
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Bowerbirds build their nests of twigs on the ground and then add fantastic decoration to impress the female bower bird.

Red Ovenbirds build new nests on top of old ones, of mud and grass that make a kind of clay adobe.
Growing up happens in distinct stages for birds and people. Children can create simple charts that show the sequence from egg to hatchling, nestling, fledgling to adult bird. These photographs can be copied and cut out for children to arrange, or if line drawings would be more clear for your students to understand, Scholastic has a simple option on their site education.scholastic.co.uk/ - just search “life cycle of a bird.” Older students can also chart a person’s stages of growth with pictures they find in a magazine like Nashville Parent.

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**Exploration One: At Home**

**Introduction:** The action of *Egg* takes place in a giant nest with three actors playing baby birds as they go about their daily routine. The bird characters in the play are personified in an imaginative way that suits a young child’s sense of pretend.

**Objectives:**
- Students will compare the homes of real birds and people.
- Students will dramatize a pretend scenario that introduces birds to what people do in a human home.
- Students will communicate without words.

**Materials Needed:** pictures of different bird nests and interiors of houses; a baby or an adult bird - either a small plastic or stuffed animal or a puppet (a picture of a cute fledgling on a popsicle stick can also be used.)

**Beginning Discussion:**
- Begin by discussing the differences between where birds live and where people live. Encourage the children to make basic comparisons like same and different.
- Spur ideas with questions that might cover whether nests have windows or if houses are made of sticks.
- Ask children to think of activities they can do in their homes that a bird could not do in the nest.

**Activity Instructions:**
- Tell the children you have a guest today who has come to find out what people do in their houses.
- Bring out the bird and explain that she only understands bird language so they must show her with gestures or movements what they mean. You will be able to coach the students and encourage them to think of what they do every morning at home (or at school.)
- Bring the bird to life. It can “whisper in your ear” to gain more information, and you can tweet to it if you need to tell it something as the children act out different daily tasks. Making the bird “nod” and move as the children show it how to perform certain actions enhances the imaginative play.
- After you have gone through several actions, tell the children the bird has to go now, but wants to thank them for helping her understand people. Let the bird go around and give a thank-you “kiss” to each child. (With a stuffed animal, you can actually touch the beak to the child’s forehead; with a picture on a stick, all you have to do is bend it towards the child and make a kissing noise.)
**Introduction:** In *Egg*, three baby birds go about their same daily routine, but big changes are in store. One by one they discover their desire to fly and leave the nest.

**Objectives:**
- Students will identify changes that come with growing up.
- Students will listen and respond to imagination and movement prompts.
- Students will pretend they are baby birds and mimic their movements.

**Beginning Discussion:**
- Encourage children to name changes that happen as babies grow up.
- Review the changes that happen in birds as they grow-up and how quickly they become adults compared to humans.

**Activity Instructions:**
Begin a set of prompts like the example below for the children to guide them in a pretend sequence of learning to fly and leaving the nest in steps.

**Imagination/ movement Prompt Guide:**
- We are going to play pretend. I’m pretending that you are all my baby birds in a nice warm nest. You are starting to grow up and soon you will learn to fly! You have fluffy feathers and a big beak. What sound do you make? Notice that some of your feathers have gotten longer and stronger. What color are your feathers?
- Test your wing muscles. Can you make your wings move? Flap them a little bit to see how the air feels against your feathers.
  - All that movement made you tired! Oh my, you’re getting sleepy and have to take a nap. Curl your little wings against your body and tuck your head in tight. (Take a silent pause.)
  - Now you wake up; you are hungry! Let me give you a little worm! (Give a pretend worm to each “bird.”)
- Try your wings again. This time give a little hop and see if you can start to fly. Stretch your wings all the way out try to get them working; they can’t get you off the ground yet.
  - All that movement made you tired again! Oh my, you’re getting sleepy and have to take a nap. Curl your little wings against your body and tuck your head in tight. (Take a silent pause.)
  - Now you wake up; you are hungry! Let me give you a little worm! (Give a pretend worm to each “bird.”)
- You’re getting big enough to catch some little bugs by yourself and eat them. You need more energy to start flying. There they are! See if you can catch them in your beak as they fly by.
- Try your wings again. Flap as hard as you can!!
- Oh! Some of you are off the ground. Wow! I see (child’s name) flying right out of the nest. There goes (two children’s names) and they are flying out of the nest.
- All the birds are flying now! Look down and see the trees and the fields. Feel the air under your wings.
- Well you have just learned to fly!
  - Now you are getting tired after all that work!
  - Find a tree branch to land on to rest. In the morning, you can fly again and look for a place to make your own new nest.

Once all the students have “roosted,” ask them to shake off all their feathers and become children again.
Introduction: In the play, the last baby bird in the nest finds an egg. He must be careful with it and take good care of it, especially protecting it from a surprise visitor.

Objectives:
✧ Students will share what they know about caring.
✧ Students will pantomime gentle, careful movements.
✧ Students will problem solve safe places for different kinds of babies.

Materials Needed: pictures of all kinds of babies, animals and people (optional) It is helpful for children to picture the baby they will imagine.

Beginning Discussion:
Discuss with students the following questions.
✧ What does it mean to be careful?
✧ Why are we careful?
✧ What does it mean to take care of someone?
✧ Why do we take care of animals and people, babies especially?

Activity Instructions:
✧ Play the “Carefully, Carefully!” game. Students will practice holding or patting imaginary babies.
✧ Begin by telling students you have a box of imaginary baby bunnies. Pantomime handing each child a bunny to hold and pat very gently. Coach them in petting the ears carefully with just a fingertip. Take around the box (strangely enough, you can use a real cardboard box for this and it works in the imaginary world), and ask students to slowly put their bunny back in the box so that the bunnies can be safe.
✧ Ask students to think of different kinds of babies they would like to care for and repeat the activity as many times as suits your class, tailoring the actions for each particular baby. For example, a baby elephant could not be held, but the children would still need to pet and talk to him gently. End each sequence encouraging the children to figure out where the class needs to put or send the baby for it to be safe, and then pantomime that action.
✧ Make a birds the last babies you “take care of”, and use physical eggs. Tell the children that when birds first come out of their egg, they are too delicate for a person to even touch, so you will care for the eggs. Children still have to be careful not to shake the baby birds inside or crack their egg before they are ready to come out.
✧ End the activity by carefully passing from child to child a plastic egg or for older children, a real egg. This may also be a good time to clarify that the eggs we eat do not have baby birds inside so that children are not worried.
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