

STUDY GUIDE



Dear Teacher:

This study guide is for your use to enhance your students' theater experience with this new production - **GREEN TEAM**. In order to make the experience more meaningful and to tie it in with the curriculum, it has proven helpful to have teachers discuss the play and its content with their students before and after the production. This play is appropriate for children from grades preschool through sixth grade and these ideas need to be adjusted accordingly.

This performance is based on the book *It's Not Mean To Be Green* written by children's author Jamie Kleman and is a musical created by a group of talented writers and musicians. There will be 2 actors who will play the role of the characters, a narrator who will explain the action and speak as a character, and minimal props will denote a change in time or place or character.

It is suggested that you read the book (available online at www.abiggerboat.org) and have your students research the concepts and lessons that will be learned about "being green" as well as discuss the adaptation of a book into a play. Many of the activities will easily be incorporated into the curriculum since "going green" is such a timely and significant topic in society and education.

Summary:

Like the book, *Green Team* traces the mental journey of young Michael McDurth from his first encounter with that odd phrase "going green"; through some very strange dreams where he encounters weird green beings; and finally to discovering the things that a child can do to help Mother Nature lead the "**GREEN TEAM**."

The musical format allows Jamie and her gifted collaborators to emphasize the educational and entertainment values of the book in ways not possible for the print medium. Using stick puppets in this musical version, the panoply of weird green beings will interact with your students during Michael's dreams, and a little musical interlude will express the puppets' frustration at being misunderstood! The vampire, typically o-punionated, vows, "It's enough to drive me batty!"

The Setting:

Characters: Michael, his mom - Mrs. McDurth, and a narrator who quotes Michael's sister Issie and explains the action

Scenes: Michael outside playing
Inside the McDurth's kitchen
In Michael's bedroom
A walk in the neighborhood
Back in Michael's bedroom
Outside the house

Theme:

“It is a good thing (not mean) to be Green.” We all can be players on the GREEN TEAM and do our part to “make a difference in the world.”

Curriculum Connections:

Family Relationships, Nature Awareness, Earth Day, Environmental Concepts, Ecology, Conservation, Rhyming, Literature, Science, Music, Reading, Imagination, Organizing, and more!

Activities:

Through the use of rhyming and clever illustrations, the book unravels the confusion of a young boy named Michael who misunderstands the concept of going green. What does he think it means initially? How does he react to this? How could these monsters be portrayed on the stage?

Incorporate a “Green Team” into your school curriculum or make it an elective club activity using the following suggestions as your guide:

1. Select members and leaders and establish regular meeting times
2. Identify a Green fundraiser to provide funds for your Green program
3. Set up a Recycle program in a location which will reach the whole school
4. Set up a Reusable program and encourage the re-use of a variety of items
5. Set up a program for Reducing the use of energy
6. Set up a carpool program for school activities that will reach the parents
7. Utilize online communication for announcements and incorporate the whole school and families
8. Set up a monitoring system and offer rewards for Green achievements
9. Explore Green community offerings and set up field trips, guest speakers, or family opportunities for getting involved
10. Create a schoolwide project, such as a garden, a water test, a school clean-up, or a beautification project

Based on the importance and recognition of the concept of ecology and the greening of the environment, your students should have a wide range of ideas and familiarity with “going green.” Help them to develop these ideas and become ingrained with them.

- Brainstorm a list of ways to clean up and save the environment.
- Do research on activities that the classroom can participate in and that families can do to help the local community.
- Make a bulletin board of these suggestions and keep a chart of the successful accomplishments. Suggest that parents do the same.
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – how does this apply to the play? How does it apply to your classroom? How does it apply to your homes? What programs can be set up in the school? For example, check water, lighting, and heating systems.
- Discuss alternative transportation such as buses, bikes, walking, and consider buying locally.
- Search the internet to find activities and projects that are about going green. Utilize social programs such as Facebook and Twitter and refer to websites such as www.earthday.org
- Identify green monitors to keep track of ways they are helping and create a point system to reward individuals, classes, grades, and schools.
- Learn about “green gatherings” in the community which support “going green”. Visit local gardens, farms, nature preserves, farmers’ markets, high school and college programs, etc. that are already environmentally attuned. Invite speakers such as forest rangers, park representatives, EPA agents, horticulturists, green business owners, energy company representatives, farmers, government organizations, or nature center educators to speak at a schoolwide function.

- The “Monsters” can be used to represent different areas of the ‘GOING GREEN’ process – explain why this is so -
 - Vampire – sustainability – making the earth last forever
 - Frankenstein – reducing, reusing, and recycling
 - Witch – alternative modes of transportation – carpooling, biking, walking, public transportation, etc. Keeping the environment clean and beautiful
 - Vader – conserving energy and using alternative energy sources
 - Swamp Monster – conserving water and keeping it clean

Theater Etiquette:

- Prepare your students for the event by explaining that they are coming to see a **LIVE** performance.
- Groups need to stay in a relatively straight line as they leave the bus and enter the performance space.
- An usher may be guiding patrons to their seats. Please be courteous and respectful to these persons.
- While they are waiting for the show to begin, everyone is welcome to chat with their neighbors. This is a good time to use the rest rooms, if necessary.
- How will they know when it is time for the start of the performance? The lights will dim and an announcement will be made.
- At this time, proper theater etiquette must be enforced. No talking. No feet on the seats. Try to remain in your seats until the show is over.
- A live performance requires a certain amount of audience reaction and this is important to the actors. Explain that clapping, laughing, responding to questions – when appropriate – is acceptable. Spontaneity and enthusiasm are an essential part of the theatrical experience.
- After the show is over, wait in your seats until an announcement is made giving directions to your group.

Theater Conventions:

A play offers the audience a chance to “suspend disbelief” and pretend that the stage, action, and characters are all real. This requires an understanding of certain theater conventions that are accepted in the theatrical arena.

- *The Play is a musical* – characters sing songs that tell stories and reveal their inner thoughts.
- *Characters speak their thoughts out loud* – it sometimes becomes necessary for a character or a narrator to speak to the audience to provide background information and comments on characters and events.
- *The stage is “split”* – two different scenes may be set up at one time.
- *One person may play more than one role* – in this play the narrator both narrates the story and speaks for Issie, Michael’s big sister.
- *Time is compressed* – a change in scene often denotes a time change.
- *Adult actors play children* – this is often necessary with a busy school day schedule of performances.

Post Theater Activities:

It is a foregone conclusion that your students will gain much more perspective and insight into the theatrical experience as well as the educational impact of the environmental theme if they encounter post theater activities.

- Compare the play to the book.
- Discuss the theme of the play and how it was presented.
- Discuss the characters and their roles in the mission of educating the audience.
- Write a letter to tell the actors and producers what you thought – did you like or dislike the performance? How did it effect you? Did you identify with any of the performers? What was your favorite part? Did the music stick with you and did you find yourself humming the tunes?
- Start a **Green** Team in your school, church, neighborhood, or Scout troop

Resource Suggestions:

Books:

1. *50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth* by the Earthworks Group
2. *Earth Book for Kids: Activities to Help the Environment* by Linda Schwartz
3. *Recycle: A Handbook for Kids* by Gail Gibbons
4. *Where Does the Garbage Go?* By Paul Showers
5. *Ecoart!: Earth-friendly Art and Craft Experiences for 3 to 9-Year-Olds* by Laurie Carlson
6. *Why Should I Save Water?* By Jen Green
7. *Earthways: Simple Environmental Activities for Young Children* by Petrash, Donald Cook (Illustrator)

Websites:

1. Ehow.com
2. ivillage.com
3. earthday.net
4. playhousedisney.com/EarthDay
5. epa.gov/kids
6. childrenoftheearth.org
7. kids.niehs.nih.gov/home
8. greenyour.com
9. peachygreen.com

Museum:

Delaware Children's Museum – www.delawarechildrensmuseum.org - The Delaware Children's Museum builds imaginative minds through play and math-, science- and technology-based playful learning. 555 Justison St in Wilmington, Delaware

Send or e-mail your letters and comments to our website (www.abiggerboat.org) or to:

Green Team
c/o Jamie Kleman
128 Pau Nel Drive
Landenberg PA 19350

A core value of the Kennett After-School Association's After-The-Bell program is an appreciation for volunteerism. After-The-Bell provides a supervised after-school program of recreational, social, and academic skill-developing activities for Kennett Middle School students. The program is led by community volunteers and provided without charge. The Kennett After-School Association (KASA) harnessed that community volunteer spirit in the creation of an environmental classroom. Students of the Kennett Middle School and the After-The-Bell program now have a brand new environmental classroom in which to learn thanks to the collaboration of many school and community partners. Kennett Middle School students were introduced to the environmental classroom in October during Red Ribbon Week, a school wide campaign to encourage students to "Say No to Drugs".

The theme for the week was to "Rock the School." Every student was given a donated rock to sign demonstrating their commitment to living a healthy, drug-free life. All students were taken outside during science classes to place their rock in the collection which encircles the environmental classroom. The students will use this unique classroom for many purposes notes Carr, "The Language Arts classes will go out to work in literature circles and reflect on a book or article as a group or in small groups. At the end of this school year, several Language Arts classes went to the environmental classroom. They reported that the change of environment from the more traditional classroom to the open air pastoral setting of the outdoor environment had a significant impact on the students." The seventh grade science teachers created an Outdoor Ecology Lab during the first year the school was built. This new environmental classroom enhances their current stream and forest ecosystems study. Science teacher Tony Bowling notes, "The classroom is perfectly located on the lower edge of the forest, not invasive, which keeps the integrity of the natural ecosystems that we study. This location also allows other classes to share in the beauty of the forest and outdoors without putting undo stress on the internal natural habitat of the forest. The seventh grade science teachers very carefully plan and calculate each year how to get all 300+ seventh grade students through the forest with as little negative impact as possible on the forest. The addition of the classroom and its location outside the forest helps us protect the internal habitat of the woods from overuse and damage." The KMS teachers have great plans to use the new classroom during the upcoming school year.

Similarly, the After-The-Bell students will utilize the space for a variety of after-school activities.

According to Hrenko, “This environmental classroom project exemplifies the community spirit and dedication to volunteerism which has made the After-The-Bell program so successful. We strive to instill this spirit in our youth and congratulate Colin Harmer, Justin Rivera and the Troop 53 boy scouts who serve as positive role models for giving back.” The Kennett After-School Association also wishes to thank John Carr, Burt Rothenberger, the E. Kneale Dockstader Foundation along with the many school and community partners who provided their wisdom and support for this project. Recruitment is underway for the upcoming ATB Fall Cycle: September 27- November 3, 2011. For more information or to volunteer please call the After-The-Bell office (610)268-5889 or visit www.afterthebell.org