



**Study Guide
For Pre- K-5th Grade**

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Artist/Ensemble Information

Artist/Ensemble Name: Sean Driscoll "Storymaker"

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About The Program

"The Circus King"

Sean Driscoll, combines musical theater, comedy, puppets, magic, music and animation into an extraordinary live performance. Onstage is a large video screen showing the story animated as Mr. Driscoll tells the story. A baby lost at sea, survives a storm, and is found by a baboon. The monkey takes the boy away to a fantastic circus by the sea. The young boy is raised by a circus of misfits. It's a journey of self-discovery as the audience and cast of characters help the boy discover his destiny.

The show explores key character development traits such as tolerance, persistence, cooperation, pride, and compassion. In addition, this performance has a wonderful language arts component that focuses on reading comprehension. Teachers can download a companion book to share with the students. Assessment questions are included in this study guide to see how much information students retain. Pre-performance discussion questions will also help to spark lively debates and help children learn educational objectives.

Artist Bio

Mr. Driscoll performs hundreds of shows throughout the United States each year in theater, television, school, concert and festival settings. He has performed educational programs since the age of 15 for over thirty years. His performances combine technology, video, music, animation, magic and theater into unusual theatrical experiences.

In addition, Sean conducts numerous Artists in Residency programs in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. During these residencies he

develops Audio CDs and CD Roms with students. Sean takes students through the process of creating scripts, developing acting skills, recording voice-overs and recording sound effects. He brings a complete recording studio to the school so children may experience the recording process first hand.

He has also released several Audio CDs including, "Critter Tales" (Storytelling.) and "Kindred Spirits" (Classical Guitar). His stories have been heard throughout the world on the World Space Radio Network and the Internet.

Background On Art Form

Mr. Driscoll is a pioneer in children's educational performances and is one of the first performers in the world to combine animation, video, music and live theater into an educational show. He began his studies in classical music at the age of six. Throughout high school and college, he studied composition and mastered the art of theatrical and musical performance. After college, Mr. Driscoll began teaching at Armstrong Atlantic University. It was during his time as a college professor, that he started teaching himself video editing and animation techniques. He now owns Storymaker Studios in Savannah, GA where he and his team of artists produce live performances and Audio CDs of music and storytelling.

Technical Requirements

2 grounded outlets, 1 chair, one table 6'X2', performance space 25'X 25' with a clean floor.

Set Description

The set includes a giant interactive video screen with animated characters and puppets that interact with the audience. The stage is also full of magic props and musical instruments that audience members will use to help Sean tell the story.

Program Objectives

Through listening to the story and interacting with the animated characters and puppets, the students observe certain character flaws and understand the following character values as positive personal traits: patience, cooperation, perseverance, courtesy, kindness, compassion, creativity and pride. The post-performance questionnaire focuses on reading comprehension and character education standards. Pre and post-performance discussions and activities are strongly suggested for students to get the most out of the performance experience.

Pre-performance Discussion Questions (Teachers please be sure to download the “The Circus King” book and read it with your students before asking the discussion questions in class.)

What personal problem did the boy in our story have to overcome?

What problems did Ella the Elephant face? How about Sarah the Seal or The Lazy Lion?

When faced with the problem of how to fit in, do you think the boy in our story persevered or kept trying in different ways?

Did the boy have patience?

Did the boy use compassion and kindness to help the other circus members overcome their problems?

Did the boy use courtesy to suggest helpful ideas to the other circus members?

Was the circus boy creative in thinking of ways to help the other circus members overcome their problems?

Did the circus members cooperate with the circus boy to help overcome their own problems?

Do you think the circus members were proud of their accomplishments at the end of our story as they performed for the audience?

Did the boy use self-control to overcome his fears of speaking and stuttering problems?

Was the boy brave?

Do you think he should be proud of his accomplishments?

Vocabulary

Perseverance- steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.

Diligence - careful and persistent work or effort.

Virtue - behavior showing high moral standards

Self Control – the power to restrain one’s own emotions

Compassion - sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others

Kindness – the quality of being friendly, generous and considerate

Courtesy - the showing of politeness in one's attitude and behavior toward others

Generosity - the quality of being kind and generous

Patience - the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset

Honesty - the quality of being honest or tell the truth

Cooperation - the process of working together to achieve the same end

Pride - a feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements, the achievements of those with whom one is closely associated, or from qualities or possessions that are widely admired

Productivity - the state or quality of producing or making something

Creativity - relating to or involving the imagination or original ideas

Curriculum Connections and pre or post performance activity suggestions.

Arts: Have the students create their own circus story with one of the character development traits listed above. Create puppets and a puppet show to tell the story of the “Circus King” .

Music: Listen to examples of circus and big band music. What moods does this music bring to you? Create a percussion ensemble to accompany the circus music.

Character Ed: Review the character development terms listed above before the show and discuss what they mean. Be sure to have a study group discussion asking the questions listed above after the performance.

Language Arts: Download “The Circus King” book and read it to your class. You can also project the story using a LCD projector so your students can see the illustrations better. Use the lesson guides found at <http://www.storymaker.com/residencies.html> to create your students own story with a circus theme. During the planning and writing process be sure to identify character traits in each character.

Support materials

“Circus”

By Lois Ehlert

ISBN: 0-06020252-4

“Last Night I Dreamed of a Circus”

By Maya Gotfried

Random House Children’s division

“See the Cricus”

By H.A. Rey

ISBN: 0395906954

“Emiline at The Circus”

By Margorie Priceman

ISBN: 0679876855

Websites

<http://www.dltk-kids.com/crafts/circus/>

<http://www.momsnetwork.com/kids/coloring/circus/index.shtml>

<http://www.circusofthekids.com/>

<http://www.ringling.com/>

“The Circus King” Assessment Questions

Directions. Answer the following multiple choice and discussion questions to see what you have learned from “The Circus King” show.

Last Name:

First Name:

School:

Teacher’s Name:

1. What does persevere mean?

- Keeping at something even though it is very hard to do
- Save someone from drowning
- Eat everything on your plate
- To be kind and honest

2. What does compassion mean?

- To not care about others and just take care of your own needs
- To be happy all the time
- To tell everyone the truth
- To show pity and concern for the suffering of others

3. What does cooperation mean?

- To tell the truth
- To hold a grudge
- To work together to achieve the same goal
- To be mean

4. What problem did the little boy have to overcome in our story in order to find his place in the circus?

- Limping
- Stuttering
- Drooling
- Spiting

5. What character flaw did the lion have?

- Lazy
- Nosey
- Mean
- Slow

6. What suggestion did the boy make to the lion tamer to help the lion overcome his problem?

7. Was the story in the book and on the video screen a poem or prose? Are there periods at the end of each line in the story as it appears on the video screen? What other punctuation marks did you see?

8. What would you have done if you were the stuttering boy and the circus actors asked you to be the ringleader?

9. What would the circus be like if the boy had said no he didn't want to be the ringleader?

10. Why was the boy afraid of becoming the ringleader? Was he brave to try?

11. Do you think the boy felt proud of speaking without stuttering in front of a large crowd?

12. Did the boy have creative suggestions to help the circus actors overcome their problems?

“The Circus King” Assessment Answers

Directions. Answer the following multiple choice and discussion questions to see what you have learned from “The Circus King” show.

Last Name:

First Name:

School:

Teacher’s Name:

1. What does persevere mean?

X Keeping at something even though it is very hard to do

Save someone from drowning

Eat everything on your plate

To be kind and honest

2. What does compassion mean?

To not care about others and just take care of your own needs

To be happy all the time

To tell everyone the truth

X To show pity and concern for the suffering of others

3. What does cooperation mean?

To tell the truth

To hold a grudge

X To work together to achieve the same goal

To be mean

4. What problem did the little boy have to overcome in our story in order to find his place in the circus?

Limping

X Stuttering

Drooling

Spitting

5. What character flaw did the lion have?

X Lazy

Nosey

Mean

Slow

6. What suggestion did the boy make to the lion tamer to help the lion overcome his problem? [To tickle the lion rather than whip it.](#)

7. Was the story told by the text on the big video screen a poem or prose? Are there periods at the end of each line in the story as it appears as words on the video screen? What other punctuation marks did you see? *It was a poem, and yes, there were periods at the end of sentences even though it was a poem.*

8. What would you have done if you were a stuttering boy and the circus actors asked you to be the ringleader? *I would have practiced and practiced until I could say my lines without stuttering.*

9. What would the circus be like if the boy had not become to be their ringleader? *There would not be shows or people to see the shows.*

10. Why was the boy afraid of becoming the ringleader? Was he brave? *He didn't want to stutter in front of a large group of people. Yes, he was brave to try and try until he could do it. He was brave to speak in front of the large crowd even when he was scared.*

11. Do you think the boy felt proud of speaking without stuttering in front of a large crowd? [Yes, I am sure he did.](#)

12. Did the boy have creative suggestions for the circus actors to overcome their problems? [Yes, when he suggested using a feather instead of a whip.](#)