

Penguins

Monday, March 30, 2020



Applause Series Inquiry Guide

The Inspiration



“...a beautifully boundless, ceaselessly charming concoction for children and adults alike.”

—Simon Fallaha, *The Big List*

Just like the other bonded animals at New York’s Central Park Zoo, these two male Chinstrap penguins walk, play, swim, and dance together. When the duo try to hatch a rock, the zookeeper gives them an egg instead. Eventually, they hatch a baby chick and start their adventure as a family.

Penguins is a unique and engaging show about love, identity, and the ever-evolving meaning of family. Inspired by the true story reported by the *New York Times* that touched hearts worldwide, this new non-verbal theater and dance production comes to life with delightful music and incredible movement and choreography.

The Story

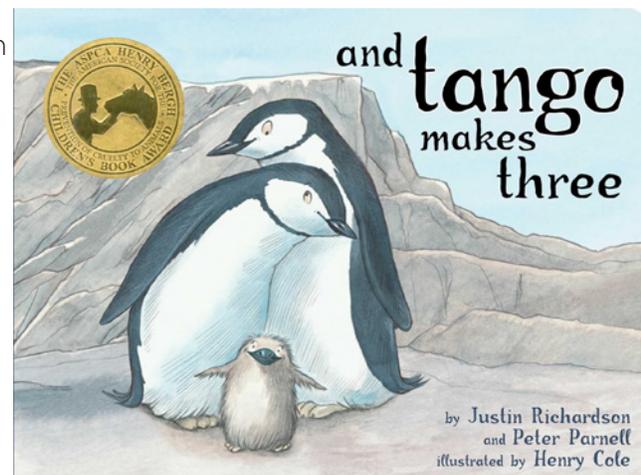


True Story!

Perhaps you've heard this story before... it's based on real-life events in New York's Central Park Zoo!

The story of Roy, Silo, their chick Tango and the Zookeeper, Mr. Gramzay, was first reported in the *New York Times* in 2004. Since then, Roy, Silo and Tango have gone on to inspire theater productions such as *Penguins* and the award-winning book, *When Tango Makes Three*, written by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell, illustrated by Henry Cole. This story is not an exact adaption of Roy and Silo's tale but draws inspiration from their adventure to create a new theater production with lots of dance, magic, and music.

Penguins is a show that celebrates being different, accepting each other's uniqueness through companionship and recognizing that children's families can be made in lots of different ways—love is what makes a family.



Reflection

Talk Back

Listen to music while responding to these questions in whatever format makes sense to you—writing, drawing, recording a video or a responding with technology.

What did you see? What was your favorite part?

What did you hear?

What did you imagine? What idea came to your mind?

What do you wonder about?

We love to hear from you. Please send any of your responses to the performance to us at education@dmpa.org. We'll share the responses with actors and Applause Series donors.

Use this chart to connect the elements of theater to what you see on stage. Choose one aspect to focus on or take some mental notes to reflect on after the performance.

THEATER GLOSSARY

THOUGHT

The big picture of the play

GENRE:

relating to a specific kind or type of drama and theater such as a tragedy, drama, melodrama, comedy, or farce

GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES:

the underlying actions and events that have happened before the play, story, or devised piece begins

FOCUS:

a commitment by a participant to remain in the scope of the project or to stay within the world of the play

IMAGINARY ELSEWHERE:

an imagined location which can be historical, fictional, or realistic

THEME:

the aspect of the human condition under investigation in the drama; it can be drawn from unifying topics or questions across content areas

THEATRICAL CONVENTIONS:

practices and/or devices that the audience and actors accept in the world of the play even when it is not realistic, such as a narrator, flashback, or an aside

ACTION

The events of a play; the story as opposed to the theme; what happens rather than what it means.

CONFLICT:

the problem, confrontation, or struggle in a scene or play; conflict may include a character against him or herself, a character in opposition to another character, a character against nature, a character against society, or a character against the supernatural

OBJECTIVE:

a goal or particular need or want that a character has within a scene or play

PLOT:

a narrative as revealed through the action and/or dialogue; traditionally, a plot has the elements of exposition, inciting incident, conflict, rising action, climax, and resolution or falling action

CHARACTERS

These are the people presented in the play that are involved in the perusing plot.

BELIEVABILITY:

theatrical choices thought to be true based upon an understanding of any given fictional moment, interpretation of text, and/or human interaction

CHARACTER TRAITS:

observable embodied actions that illustrate a character's personality, values, beliefs, and history

GESTURE:

an expressive and planned movement of the body or limbs

INNER THOUGHTS:

the underlying and implied meaning or intentions in the character's dialogue or actions (also known as subtext)

MOTIVATION:

reasons why a character behaves or reacts in a particular way in a scene or play

LANGUAGE

The word choices made by the playwright and the enunciation of the actors of the language.

DIALOGUE:

a conversation between characters

IMPROVISE:

the spontaneous, intuitive, and immediate response of movement and speech

SCRIPT:

a piece of writing for the theater that includes a description of the setting, a list of the characters, the dialogue, and the action of the characters

MUSIC:

Music can encompass the rhythm of dialogue and speeches in a play or can also mean the aspects of the melody and music compositions as with musical theatre.

SPECTACLE

The spectacle in the theatre can involve all of the aspects of scenery, costumes, and special effects in a production.

NON-REPRESENTATIONAL MATERIALS:

objects which can be transformed into specific props through the imagination

PRODUCTION ELEMENTS:

technical elements selected for use in a specific production, including sets, sound, costumes, lights, music, props, and make-up, as well as elements specific to the production such as puppets, masks, special effects, or other storytelling devices/concepts

STAGING:

patterns of movement in a scene or play

Discuss

Use the glossary to select a few elements to focus on during the performance and then talk about what you saw on stage.

Enduring Understandings

Overarching (aka, “big”) ideas that are central to the core of the music discipline and may be transferred to new learning beyond the music.

Family can take many forms and appearances. There are many ways that people (and animals) can create supportive relationships with one another.

Though impossible to know exactly what the penguins in the Central Park Zoo were thinking or feeling, their story was a powerful one for many. An event can come to represent a deeper meaning than the one on the surface through the creation of a story and be meaningful for others. Sharing stories is a way that people connect.

See page i for some thoughts from the show’s creators on how to support children’s understandings of what makes a family and how educators can support tolerance and acceptance of others that then celebrates the students in your classroom as individuals.

Compelling Questions

Compelling Questions deal with curiosities about how things work; interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts; and unresolved issues that require students to construct arguments in response.



Inquiry 01

How do the stories of real-life penguins connect to the performance? What is added? What is missing? Why do you imagine the creators of the performance made the artistic choices they did?

Goals

Conduct Research

Make connections between texts and mediums

Interpret artistic choices and themes

Read

The New York Times article at the heart of the story. After reading, discuss with a small group how different parts of the story were represented in the performance.

Students can use a copy of the abridged article (page ii) to annotate how they remember the parts in the performance illustrated.

Watch

This [video](#) about another set of dad penguins in a zoo in Australia. How do the penguins on stage resemble the penguins in the video?



Inquiry 02

What else do we know about how animals form family groups in and out of captivity?

Do all animals create “families”? What is the purpose of an animal family?

Goals

Read about animal families

Share research about how different families work in the animal world.

Activity

From the time we are born, we all start the lifelong process of becoming bigger or “growing up.” For human children, the process takes around 18 years. That’s the amount of time we need before we are ready to be on our own. For many animal families, it is a much different experience. A lot of learning is packed into a short amount of time. Mama ducks, for example, teach their young all the lessons they have to learn in just two months. Then they are ready to fend for themselves. A young elephant will stay with her mother for an average of 16 years. That is almost as long as human children. Growing up in the animal world varies greatly from species to species, but one thing is constant: babies need parents to guide and teach them.

Some animal families are similar to human families, with parents to care for their young and teach them things they will need to know. There are also lots of ways in which animal families are different from each other as well as their human counterparts.

Encourage students to compare and contrast animal families using the Venn Diagram on page iii

Watch

 This National Geographic Video **about Animal Families**

 This PBS Video **about Animal Families**

Extension

Connect to self and others

Ask students to draw a portrait of who they think of as their family. They may include anyone they’d like including cousins, friends, community members, even pets might make the picture. Emphasize that family, even if your family doesn’t look just like everyone else’s, can be many different shapes and sizes!

“We are different and we are safe in our class together. What a great class this is. Imagine a class where every child was the same and how boring that class would be. In the zoo, lots of different animals live together with different skin, different noises, different shapes, and sizes. In our class, we ‘live’ together and we say it’s ok to be different and that’s good! We all have different skin and hair, our bodies work in different ways, some of us have different religions and we have different families but we live together and we work together in our class; we like being different!”

Students may share their families with each other or display them in the classroom.

Resources

Guide Adapted from Cahoots NI

Penguin Web Links

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

<https://seaworld.org/en/animal-info/animal-infobooks/penguin/reproduction>

<https://www.livescience.com/27434-penguin-facts.html>

<http://animals.mom.me/penguins-kiss-9585.html>

Penguin Literature and Nonfiction

Video of Penguins by Gail Gibbons

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4WapB7Wzx8>

Link to Penguin books for kids

<https://thekindergartenconnection.com/must-have-penguin-books-for-kids/>

Reclaiming radical ideas in the classroom: Preparing young children for life in modern Britain
by Andrew Moffat, Ben Cain, Bhavik Parmar and Linda Jones

Andrew Moffat is the founder of www.equalitiesprimary.com helping schools to teach equality and diversity with confidence and author of:

No Outsiders in our school: Teaching the Equality Act in primary schools

Family, Diversity and Identity (REFER TO PAGE 6)

A note from Cahoots Northern Ireland

Educators of young children should be confident in how to deliver messages of equality and diversity in schools and pre-school settings. There are children in our schools who are being brought up in families that are different; some children have both a Mom and Dad; some children have either a Mom or a Dad; some have two Daddies or two Mommies; some have a Step Mom or a Step Dad; some live with Grandparents or in a foster family and some children could be adopted.

Every child deserves to be taught that their family structure is ok and accepted. Furthermore, every child deserves to be prepared for life in the 21st Century where they are going to meet people who have different ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, abilities or disabilities, gender and gender identity. Schools should prepare children to accept and celebrate difference as they grow up.

How do we teach about this?

We make sure there are examples in our curriculums of different family models and we make sure when we talk about family we use a variety of models. We use resources that support diversity and picture books that include different people.

Some adults and some parents may object on religious grounds to schools teaching that “equality” must include Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender equality, or to children being taught that some people are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender in our communities. Everyone is allowed their opinion and it is healthy for children, as they grow up, to understand that there are different views in the world. There are also different people and we want our children as they become citizens in our communities, to be able to live and work alongside anyone, regardless of their ethnicity, faith, gender or sexual orientation.

Our advice is that schools should teach equality for all sections of the community. School Governors or Trustees should be looking for ways to deliver equality in the school curriculum and school policies will reflect the need to safeguard all children, regardless of background. Many schools hold a “Diversity Day” where the school celebrates difference in their community. This is a great start, but a more effective strategy is to submerge the ethos into the fabric of the school and build an understanding over time.

The aim is to enable children to understand diversity and difference is a part of everyday life, something to celebrate and something they can relate to that affects everybody; we are all different in some way and we all belong.



Excerpt from New York Times Article

(REFER TO PAGE 7)

Love That Dare Not Squeak Its Name

By Dinitia Smith

Roy and Silo, two chinstrap penguins at the Central Park Zoo in Manhattan, are completely devoted to each other. For nearly six years now, they have been inseparable. They exhibit what in penguin parlance is called "ecstatic behavior": that is, they entwine their necks, flap their fins, and they vocalize to each other.

At one time, the two seemed so desperate to incubate an egg together that they put a rock in their nest and sat on it, keeping it warm in the folds of their abdomens, said their chief keeper, Rob Gramzay. Finally, he gave them a fertile egg that needed care to hatch. Things went perfectly. Roy and Silo sat on it for the typical 34 days until a chick, Tango, was born. For the next two and a half months they raised Tango, keeping her warm and feeding her food from their beaks until she could go out into the world on her own. Mr. Gramzay is full of praise for them.

"They did a great job," he said. He was standing inside the glassed-in penguin exhibit, where Roy and Silo had just finished lunch. Penguins usually like a swim after they eat, and Silo was in the water. Roy had finished his dip and was up on the beach.

Roy and Silo are hardly unusual. Milou and Squawk, two young males, are also beginning to exhibit courtship behavior, hanging out with each other, billing and bowing. Before them, the Central Park Zoo had Georgey and Mickey, two female Gentoo penguins who tried to incubate eggs together. And Wendell and Cass, a devoted male African penguin pair, live at the New York Aquarium in Coney Island. Indeed, scientists have found these animal pairs throughout the animal world.

Notes

Venn Diagram (REFER TO PAGE 8)

