

The Old Creamery's Theatre for Young Audiences proudly presents...



**A Teacher's Study Guide**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Background Information</b> .....	3
Our mission	
Annual writing contest	
The creators	
<b>Pre-show Discussion</b> .....	4
Have you ever seen a play?	
What's the difference between theatre and television or movies?	
What is proper theatre etiquette?	
<b>Story Synopses</b> .....	5
“A Wild West Mishap”	
“The Caring Rabbit”	
“Reading Cheater”	
“9/17/15”	
“Crazy Cats”	
“Jobs”	
“The Wifi Trauma”	
<b>Post-show Activities</b> .....	6
Find the Pillars	
Write a Story, Poem, or Song	
Express Your Thoughts	

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### OUR MISSION

The Old Creamery Theatre is proud to be the oldest professional theatre company in the state of Iowa. A nonprofit organization founded in 1971, The Old Creamery is committed to bringing high-quality, live professional theatre to the people of Iowa and the Midwest. The mission of the Old Creamery's Theatre for Young Audiences program is to provide children of varying ages with opportunities to experience, explore, and enjoy live theatre with the goal of instilling and nurturing a life-long appreciation of the performing arts. The company has always offered touring productions for children, but has recently added children's theatre productions to the Main Stage season along with the Camp Creamery program, a week-long theatrical workshop for young people.

### ANNUAL WRITING CONTEST

*Character Round-Up!* was created using stories submitted to the Old Creamery Theatre through the annual writing contest. Stories are adapted by the Old Creamery's professional artists, but remain faithful to the idea, purpose, and intent of the young person who wrote the story. The annual writing contest first began in 1991 and is open to all students in grades one through six. For instructions on how to submit a story for the 2020 competition, please visit the Old Creamery's website this fall for the contest rules and guidelines. Guidelines change each year, so please be sure to read the instructions carefully before submitting material. ([www.oldcreamery.com](http://www.oldcreamery.com))

### THE CREATORS

*Character Round-Up!* is an original production created by the professional artists at the Old Creamery Theatre. After reading stories from hundreds of students, they narrowed it down to a select few and began writing songs and dialogue, building sets and props, designing costumes, and putting together the soundtrack. *Character Round-Up!* premiered on February 18, 2019.

Director: Sean McCall  
Assistant Director: Jackie McCall  
Musical Director: Travis Smith  
Choreographer: Katie Colletta  
Sound Designer: Keegan Christopher  
Set Designer: Marianna Coffey and Kent Reynolds  
Costume Designer: Marquetta Senters  
Cast:  
Jacob Kilburg  
Maddie McKeown  
Michael Nicholas  
Allie Spengler  
Julia Waits

Stories Adapted by: Old Creamery Theatre staff and Cast Members

## PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION

Take time before the show to talk to students about the art form of theatre and prepare them for what will happen at the production. Make sure to emphasize what makes theatre different from other kinds of entertainment that they have experienced in the past. Help them realize what a special relationship the audience and the actors have with each other during a live performance.

### HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A PLAY?

Ask students if they have ever seen a play or live theatrical performance before. Discuss what they saw, what they experienced, and how that might compare to attending *Character Round-Up!* at their school.

### WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEATRE AND TELEVISION OR MOVIES?

- The audience is an important part of a live performance because the actors can see, hear, and interact with the people watching the play. Audience members can show their appreciation by giving the actors their full attention and by laughing and applauding at appropriate times, like at the end of a story or song.
- Movies and television shows are filmed. If an actor makes a mistake, the scene can be filmed again and corrected. Since theatre is live, unexpected things sometimes happen. This is part of the fun and excitement of live entertainment.
- Plays are performed by live actors. Although actors do their best to perform their part the same way each time they present a play, they can never make it exactly the same every time. Therefore each performance of a play is unique.

### WHAT IS PROPER THEATRE ETIQUETTE?

Explain what is expected of the students as audience members and discuss proper theatre etiquette as some of them may never have seen a live performance before.

- Make sure to remain seated and listen carefully during the performance. This will allow you and the people around you to enjoy the show without interruption. You will have plenty of time to talk to your friends after the show.
- Even though you may feel like saying something to the performers, keep your thoughts to yourself. You might disrupt the actors' concentration or disturb other people in the audience if you start talking out loud. Some plays are written for the audience to be a part of the show, but not all. You should participate if, and only if, you are invited to do so by the actors.
- Laughing and clapping are encouraged! If you think something is funny, laugh. If you like a story, clap at the end. This is how you let the actors know that you are having fun.

## STORY SYNOPSES

**“A Wild West Mishap”** by Aubree G. and Chloe W. 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, South Winneshiek Elementary

This mishap begins when Forgetful Freddy can't find his horse, Butterscotch. Freddy is sure that Bad Billie must have taken her. However, Billie claims he didn't do it; he's working hard to become a more trustworthy person. Helpful Harper and Caring Charlotte step in to solve this conundrum by encouraging Freddy to retrace the steps of his last ride with Butterscotch. As Billie, Harper, and Charlotte assist in searching for the missing horse, it becomes clear that Freddy hasn't been very responsible. When Freddy finally realizes his mistakes, he knows he needs not only to apologize, but to focus on his responsibility to look after his things and leave his forgetful ways behind.

**“The Caring Rabbit”** by Henry F. Grade 3, Shellsburg Elementary School

This story is about a Caring Rabbit who looks out for his friends. One day his friend Turtle is hurt by a Wolf who is big and bad. The Caring Rabbit helps his friend heal, but they soon run into the Wolf who hurt Turtle. Instead of holding a grudge and being mean, they show the Wolf kindness. Their kindness starts a chain reaction and the Wolf learns to be caring too!

**“Reading Cheater”** by Natalie P. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Sacred Heart School

Eliza couldn't be more excited about her school's reading contest. She's already read 13 books! But when “the” Opal Plymouth arrives at school the day the reading logs are due, proclaiming that she had her mom sign the form for books she did not read, Eliza is shocked by her disregard for the rules. To make matters worse, Opal deletes Eliza from the group chat after she points out that Opal's solution to winning the contest is not fair, it's cheating. With support and encouragement from her dad and best friend, Tammie, Eliza realizes that fairness is what will win in the end. If you want to win, try! Don't cheat.

**“9/17/15”** Naomi P. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Decorah Middle School

Storme has longed to play football ever since she was a little girl, but a lot of things have stood in her way over the years, like her father not allowing her to sign up for the team. Even though the obstacles seemed insurmountable at times, Storme never gave up on her dream and learned many lessons along the way including that sometimes fairness is more complicated than you'd think and trustworthiness is something you should never stop trying to build.

**“Crazy Cats”** by Ashton C. 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, West Delaware Middle School

When Mom suggests that they adopt some cats, Allie is overjoyed! However, when the cats don't turn out to be exactly the pets they were expecting, both mother and daughter have to learn a lesson about respect and accepting differences in others so that they can make a happy home for Moo and Oink.

**“Jobs”** by Avery S. 4th Grade, Lambert Elementary School

“Jobs” reminds us of the importance of citizenship. Part of being a good citizen is doing your part within your community and working hard, no matter how big or small your job may be. The poem features a lawyer, a yoga teacher, a firefighter, a movie star, and a librarian. When everyone does their personal best, the community as a whole gets better, whether that community is as small as a family or as big as a school or town.

**“The Wifi Trauma”** by Olivia M. and Lauren N. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Van Allen Elementary  
Felicia has been planning the best party ever for a long time, but disaster strikes when the power goes off just as the celebration is about to begin. What are the kids supposed to do now that they have no wifi?! Luckily Mom comes to the rescue introducing them to good, old-fashioned board games that don’t require electricity. Even though they are reluctant at first, Felicia, Becky, Alex, and Brian realize that Mom is right. It is possible to have fun without wifi, and you might just become better friends when you’re able to connect on a personal level, not just through social media.

## **POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES**

Now that students have seen a live theatrical performance, take the opportunity to expand upon the experience and increase their understanding of what theatre is and why it is important. Use the following activities to stimulate class discussions and exercises. Appropriate grade levels are suggested, but feel free to adapt the activities to fit students’ needs. The important thing is to have fun and be creative. For more information about CHARACTER COUNTS! visit [www.charactercountsiniowa.com](http://www.charactercountsiniowa.com).

**FIND THE PILLARS** (Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, Citizenship)

K-3

Discuss the various stories with students asking them to identify the pillars that were highlighted within each. Ask students to explain what the characters said or did to demonstrate the pillars or to go against them.

4-6

Discuss the various stories with students asking them to identify the pillars that were highlighted within each. Ask students to explain what the characters said or did to demonstrate the pillars or to go against them. Ask students to give examples from their own life experiences that also demonstrate the pillar.

## WRITE A STORY, POEM, OR SONG

K-6

Ask students to write their own story, poem, or song that solves a problem or teaches a lesson. Remind students that a good story has a beginning, middle, and end, and a problem or conflict that gets resolved. Encourage them to create imaginative characters and settings. What is the moral or lesson that is learned? How do the characters change?

K-3

Take some of the stories that students have written and turn them into a play. With the teacher serving as the leader, cast students (or take volunteers) to play the various parts. Work together as a group to stage the play. Be creative. You may choose to add dialogue, songs, dances, characters, anything that helps tell the story. You may want to show off your play to parents or other classes.

4-6

Take some of the stories that students have written and turn them into a play. Divide the class into small groups of about five or six students. Each group (or the teacher) chooses one student per group to serve as the group leader. Have each group pick a story. The group leader assigns the roles in the story and the group works together to stage the play. Be creative. The group may choose to add dialogue, songs, dances, characters, anything that helps tell the story. Each group can perform their story for the other groups. You may want to show off your plays to parents or other classes.

## EXPRESS YOUR THOUGHTS

K-3

Ask students to write or draw pictures about the things that they saw and experienced during the play. Encourage them to talk about what they learned, what they liked, what they disliked, etc. They can even send pictures and letters to the Old Creamery Theatre at 39 38<sup>th</sup> Ave, Amana, IA 52203.

4-6

Ask students to write a review of the play. Encourage them to talk about what they learned, what they liked, what they disliked, how the play made them feel, and what it made them think about. Beyond just retelling the plots and themes of the stories, encourage them to discuss other elements of the production like costumes, set, props, sound effects, etc. They can even send their reviews to the Old Creamery Theatre at 39 38<sup>th</sup> Ave, Amana, IA 52203.