Pre-Show Materials

For Use With Step on a Crack
By Suzan Zeder
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To Use This Packet
Treehouse Troupe has put together a collection of information about us, our play, and education-based activities you can do with your students to prepare them for the production.

Meet Our Team!
Ellie Murphy…………………………………….Sarah Maxwell
Max Murphy…………………………………….Daniel Short
Voice………………………………………Rebecca Winebrenner
Lucille Murphy………………………………Kaleigh Jones
Lana………………………………………..Trina Friedburg
Frizbee………………………………………Ryan Albrecht

Director………………………………………Aimee S. Reid
Stage Manager…………………………………Chase Will

About the Playwright—Suzan Zeder

Suzan Zeder has been recognized nationally and internationally as one of the leading playwrights for young and family audiences in the United States. Her plays have been produced in all 50 states by professional, university and community theatres. Her work has also been seen in Canada, England, France, Switzerland, Greece, Israel, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Dr. Zeder is a four-time winner of the Distinguished Play Award by the American Alliance of Theatre and Education and has served as a panelist and site reporter for the National Endowment for the Arts and Theatre Communications Group. In 1998 she was inducted into the College of Fellows of the American Theatre and in 2002 she was elected to the Academy of Distinguished Teachers at the University of Texas at Austin. In 2004 she co-authored a book, The Spaces of Creation: The Creative Process of Playwriting, with her husband, movement specialist, Jim Hancock.

In addition to her writing, Dr. Zeder heads the playwriting program at the University of Texas at Austin where she holds an Endowed Chair in Theatre for Youth and playwriting and teaches with the James A. Michener Center for Creative Writing. Her newest play, The Edge of Peace, completes a trilogy of plays including Mother Hicks and The Taste of Sunrise, spanning 30 years of her writing life.

(From the Dramatic Publishing website)
Theatre Etiquette

A live theatre performance can be very exciting. Since this may be some of our audience member's first show, please go over the following prior to the performance:

- Arrive at the performance on time.
- Please stay seated during the performance. After the play is over, remain seated—the actors will be conducting a brief talk-back.
- Visit the restroom before the performance begins.
- The use of cell phones (phone calls or texting) and recording devices are not allowed during the performances at any time.
- Please do not talk to your neighbor during the performance. If you like something you see, go ahead and applaud for the actors—it lets them know you like what they’re doing!

Questions To Ask Before The Performance

- Have you ever had imaginary friends? Describe them.
- What is your favorite thing to do with your parents?
- Have you ever thought about running away from home?
- What do you do when you’re angry with someone?
- Have you ever won an award? For what?

Questions To Ask After The Performance

- Who was a better parent, Max or Lucille?
- Define “compromise.” When did Ellie and Lucille compromise?
- When didn’t they?
- If you had to tell Ellie that Max and Lucille were going to Hawaii, how would you have done it?
- Ellie was really good at taking things Lucille thought was junk and making it into a costume, or a brand-new object. Have you ever transformed an object?
Step on a Crack Word Search

O J D Z S X S B G R E I L L E P
T R E E H O U S E T R O U P E E
J N I V H U P T N A E I F D S H
L A N A N P C B D Q B M U V K M
B E N G W A I G N I G N I S O L
M O O R R U O Y N A E L C N U D
G C F A J Z K Z M A X E V S L C
Y P H Q C I N D E R E L L A O J
A C V L U C I L L E Y U F S M S
W L Z G F X W N R M W F T V K F
A X E E B Z I R F U P U Z D T N
N Q D J K X V X S F M R D F V N
U N G N I L W O B E Q H O R Z K
R L P W I O L A S L I V U P Z I
S R H O S O I R E T S Y M K S C
I A L Y V D R F N T X O B Y O T

Ellie
Max
Run away
Treehouse Troupe
Props
Clean your room

Lana
Lucille
Bowling
Singing
Character

Frizbee
Mysterioso
Cinderella
Costumes
Toy Box

Sarah Maxwell as Ellie

THT Fall 2012  Photo by Aimee Reid
Lesson Plan: Playing By The Rules

Target Grades: 2-6

Lesson Overview: Students will create a parent/child scenario to explore rule-making and the rationale behind rules and laws they encounter in their lives.

Length of Lesson: 30-45 minutes

Drama Standard
Responding/Reflecting. Grade 4. 2: Apply creative and critical reasoning processes to make personal connections to the drama material they encounter.

Social Studies Standard
Government. Rules and Laws. Grade 4. 18: Laws can protect rights, provide benefits and assign responsibilities.

Instructional Plan

Framing:
♦ Split the class into small groups of 3-5 students each. Tell the groups they are now families—remind them that a family can mean many different things (ie, not only Mom/Dad/kids).
♦ The groups must create three frozen, silent pictures (tableau) of the family—a family picture. The first picture is the ideal family photo. The second shows a problem the family might encounter. The third shows how the family solved the problem.
♦ Allow the groups to rehearse their tableau for a time, then have them share with the rest of the class. When they present, consider pantomiming a snapshot with your hands, counting down “5, 4, 3, 2, 1...click!”
♦ Encourage the class to observe and guess the family members, the problem, and how it was solved.

Main Activity:
♦ Split the class in new groups of 3-5 and ask students to find their own space in the room, standing with their groups. Two of the students should be parents, the others are children.
♦ Give the parents a few minutes to think of 3 rules for their children. These can be anything from bedtime to chores (set restrictions as you see fit, to maintain appropriate behavior).
♦ Narrate a day in the lives of these parents and children, starting with waking up and including meals, school/jobs, recreation, studies, bedtime, etc. If the children break the rules, parents must decide what the punishment will be. Enforce the responsibilities that the parents have (making dinner, paying bills, checking homework, etc).
♦ Wake everyone up and create a forum where parents and children have to collaborate on what the rules are. Emphasize to the parents that they want good health, education, and lives for their children and emphasize to the children that they ultimately do need to listen to their parents. Facilitate the collaborative process, making a list of these agreed-upon rules.
♦ Once the list is agreed upon, ask the students to get up and shake off their characters (signifying that they should respond as themselves, not their characters) and go to their seats.

Closing Activity:
♦ Discuss with the class why they think parents make the rules they do. Brainstorm other rules, laws specifically, they know about and consider why those exist.
♦ Split the class in half and line up, so the two halves of the class are facing each other, making a tunnel. Ask for a volunteer student, who will walk through the tunnel as a parent character. One line will give reasons why the parent to allow the children to stay up late, the other side will give reasons why the parent should enforce an earlier bedtime.
Want to Read? Here Are Some Books Like Step on a Crack...

**My Bonus Mom!** By Tami Butcher. For Grades 2 and up.

**Sarah Plain and Tall.** By Patricia McLaughlin. For Grades 3 and up.

**“Calvin and Hobbes”** by Bill Watterson. For Grades 4 and up.

**Getting Rid of Katherine.** By Betty Ren Wright. For Grades 3 and up.

**My Family (Middle School Series).** By Kurt Johnson. For Grades 6 and up.

**Imagine Harry.** By Kate Klise. For Grades 2-3.

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**Step on a Crack Post-Show Art and Drama Activity**

**Materials Needed:** coloring items, paper

**Activity:** Ask the students to brainstorm their idea of the best imaginary friend ever, as well as their idea of the best bedroom they could ask for. Instruct them to design a poster or picture depicting this imaginary friend and room. They should use specific colors, shapes, and different types of lines (straight, wavy, etc) to show how this room and friend really reflects them. If people are comfortable doing so, ask students to share their drawings and have the rest of the class discuss their use of line/color/shape.

**Content Standard:**
Fine Arts. Grade 4. Responding/Reflecting. 1: Identify qualities that contribute to the design and meaning of their artworks and the works of others

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Left to right: Rebecca Winebrenner as Voice, Trina Frieburg as Lana, Sarah Maxwell as Ellie, Ryan Albrecht as Frizbee

THT Fall 2012  Photo by Aimee S. Reid
We’re looking forward to coming to your school!

Treehouse Troupe 2012

Back row, left to right: Kaleigh Jones, Chase Will, Ryan Albrecht, Sarah Maxwell
Front row, left to right: Trina Friedburg, Daniel Short, Rebecca Winebrenner