

CHICAGO CHILDREN'S THEATRE



The
Hundred
Dresses

*We're just teasing
Having fun,
Got a hundred dresses, but she only wears one?*



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TEACHER STUDY GUIDE

Welcome to Chicago Children's Theatre's production of *The Hundred Dresses*. Soon, you and your class will come and see our production. This guide was created to help make seeing the show an educational and fantastic experience for everyone.

There are three sections to this guide.

- Section One: Information for teachers to share with students before attending the performance
- Section Two: Activities to facilitate in classroom
- Section Three: Worksheets to be given directly to students.

Please utilize what you can and enjoy!

We look forward to seeing you at the theatre!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Stan Davis, Dr. Dorothy Espelage, Dr. Marcia McEvoy, American Girl, The Pritzker-Pucker Foundation, The Helen Brach Foundation and Jacquie Amacher.

This Study Guide was created by Julia Beck, Education Associate and interns Briana Bower, Lisa Floran and Cynthia Bangert at Chicago Children's Theatre, 2009.

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WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING
A Synopsis of the Story
The Hundred Dresses *by Eleanor Estes*

Wanda Petronski sits in the corner of the room in the last row of Room 13. Her boots are caked with mud from the long walk all the way from Boggins Heights. Wanda has just moved to a new town and is going to a new school. She does not fit in with all of the other girls that attend her school, like Maddie Martin and Peggy Hawthorne. Peggy seems to have a new dress every single day. Wanda wears the same blue dress to school every day.

The girls in Wanda's class start waiting for her outside of school so they can tease her about her speech, her name and her clothes. One day, Wanda blurts out that she actually has one hundred dresses all lined up in her closet. This makes all the girls, especially Peggy, even more persistent in teasing her and the "dresses game" becomes a daily ritual.

Miss Mason, the teacher in Room 13, announces that the annual drawing contest will be coming up and all the children rush to enter. Peggy is positive she will win the contest for the third year in a row, and happily looks around to play the "dresses game" with Wanda for another day. But Wanda isn't there. In fact, Wanda doesn't come to Room 13 anymore. Miss Mason reads a letter from Wanda's father that explains that they moved away because Wanda was not fitting in and being teased. Ashamed of her behavior and that she did nothing to stop Peggy, Maddie writes Wanda a letter to apologize.

Will Wanda get Maddie's letter? Will she forgive her? Will Maddie stand up to Peggy? Who won the the drawing contest? You'll have to come see the show to find out!

THE MAKING OF
The Hundred Dresses *From Book to Musical*
By G.Riley Mills, playwright

The process of adapting a book or story into a stage play is a tricky one. On the one hand, an adaptor wants to be faithful to the original source material, but on the other hand he or she wants the play to stand on its own merits. While each adaptation process can be a little different, the adaptation Ralph and I did for Eleanor Estes' *The Hundred Dresses* was certainly a unique one. And long one. We have been writing, developing and work shopping this project with Chicago Children's Theatre for over four years!

Years before, Ralph had written a handful of songs inspired by the book, so, as I started the process of writing a first draft, I began by plugging in Ralph's wonderful songs. Next, since the dialogue in Estes original book was so beautiful and specific, I took all of the dialogue out of the book and simply dropped it into the outline in what I called a "dialogue dump." I used these songs and those snatches of dialogue as a starting point to begin writing that first draft of the play. And that's where the adaptation process started...

At the beginning of the book *The Hundred Dresses*, Wanda Petronski is already gone and then the story is told in flashback. Ralph and I decided early on that we would untangle the plot of the book and shuffle aspects of it as we built the stage play and tell it in a more linear way. Another difference between the play and the book involves the male characters. The book revolves almost entirely around the female characters of Wanda, Peggy and Maddie. In the adaptation process we wanted to bring the male characters to the forefront and make them part of the story in a more distinctive way. We also wanted to bring some humor to the stage version and the male characters really helped with that.

In the end, we hope we have done justice to Eleanor Estes beautiful and timeless book while creating an exciting piece of theatre that stands on its own.

BULLYING PREVENTION LINKS AND RESOURCES

Tips from Our Experts:

Stan Davis, Dr. Dorothy Espelage, & Dr. Marcia McEvoy

Bullying occurs in classrooms, on playgrounds and in homes all over the world. We must empower our children to identify bullying when it happens and give them the tools to stop it. These tips have been recommended by some of the leading experts in bullying prevention, specifically geared towards bystanders. Please go over these with your students and incorporate them into our activities.

- Shut down a moment by saying things like: “Cut it out,” “Calm down,” “Back off.”
- Distract the bully: Ask a question or change the subject.
- Make an excuse to get the victim away, by saying something like: “Hey, we have to go”
- Smile, play with, and listen to the targets in and outside of class. Be friendly.
- Encourage the victim to report bullying “You don’t have to put up with it.”
- Report it yourself to a teacher or adult that you trust.

Most importantly, a bystander shouldn’t spread gossip or join in on the bullying. He or she should be discreet about it, even when reporting a bullying incident.

Here are some strategies for students to use if they are ever the target of bullying.

- Ignore it. The bully is trying to make you upset. Show him or her that it’s not working by putting on your best bored face and walk away calmly.
- Practice some comebacks, such as “Good one,” “Whatever,” or “Big deal.”
- Stand up for yourself with a calm voice. Say something like “That’s getting old. If you do it again, I’m reporting it.”
- Report it to a teacher. It’s okay to ask for help! Tell a teacher or another adult who you trust: WHO did it, WHAT happened, WHEN it started, HOW LONG it’s been going on, WHERE it happened and who were the WITNESSES?

There is no right way to stop a bully. Use the tips that feel right to you.

BULLYING PREVENTION LINKS AND RESOURCES

Cyberbullying

Computers, cell phones and IMing are fixtures in the the hands of young people today. While it keeps friends and family more connected to each other than ever, it also presents a new frontier for bullying. Students can now find anonymous ways of harassing each other. While face-to-face bullying leaves no question about who is involved, screen names and email addresses can disguise the true bully from his or her victim. Here are some ideas to help students practice safe internet behavior and recognize online bullying when they come across it.

If you are being bullied on the internet, you can:

- Say you have to go and log off.
- Block the perpetrator.
- Turn off the computer.
- Tell an adult who can help.

If you are chatting with a person who is criticizing someone, you can:

- Change the subject and hope the bully takes the hint.
- Say you have to go and log off.
- Tell your friend you don't like what he or she is saying.

If you are angry and thinking about sending a message to someone about it, think before you hit "send," because once something is in writing, you can't take it back and it can be forwarded to lots of people you never wanted to read your message.

BULLYING PREVENTION LINKS AND RESOURCES

Further Resources

Below are some further resources to use when discussing bullying prevention.

WEBSITES FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS TO EXPLORE:

<http://stopbullyingnow.com/>
<http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/adults>
<http://www.charmmdfoundation.org/>
<http://www.pacer.org/bullying/index.asp>
<http://www.casel.org/>
<http://www.pbisillinois.org/>

WEBSITES FOR STUDENTS TO EXPLORE:

<http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/>
<http://www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org/>

BOOKS FOR ADULTS TO READ:

Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends, and Other Realities of Adolescence - By Rosalind Wiseman

BOOKS FOR KIDS TO READ:

Stand Up For Yourself and Your Friends: Dealing with Bullies, Bossiness and Finding a Better Way - American Girl

Stan Davis, a leading researcher in Bullying Prevention, will be conducting a research study based on asking students what really works to stop bullying from their own experiences. To learn more about the study and to participate in it, please visit: <http://stopbullyingnow.com/invitation%20to%20participate%20in%20bullying%20prevention%20research%20ofall%202009.pdf>

ADDRESSING BULLYING

What's Your School's Policy

Schools across the country are adopting more stringent and specific policies regarding the consequences for bullying. Research with your class what your school's policy is and how it could apply to them if they were in a bullying situation. Examine what would happen if they were in the role of the bully or in the role of the victim. If there isn't a policy for your school - brainstorm together and create a classroom Anti-Bullying code that includes a behavior contract and consequences for not following the code.

SCENES FROM MADDIE'S IMAGINATION

A Drama Activity

ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS: After Wanda moves away, Maddie realizes that she and Peggy didn't treat Wanda kindly. Maddie imagines scenarios in which she has the courage to stand up to Peggy and stop Peggy from teasing Wanda. Act out a scene in which Maddie stands up to Peggy. The person playing Maddie should use some positive anti-bullying tactics, examples of which are listed below. The scene can involve just Maddie and Peggy, or it can involve Maddie and other students like Jack and Willie, and even the teacher Miss Mason.

GOAL OF THE SCENE: The scene should come to an end when Peggy stops bullying Wanda.

TIPS: If you are in a class setting, divide the class into groups, and have each group act out a different scenario in which Maddie and the other students use the tactics listed below to stop Peggy's bullying. Remember, you can always switch parts so everyone gets the opportunity to play the characters they want! Make sure the actors are truthful to the characters and behave in a way their characters would behave. For example, Peggy would listen to a teacher, no matter what.

POSSIBLE CHARACTERS: Maddie, Peggy, Wanda, Jack, Ms. Mason

Remember to go over and encourage the actors to use the Bullying Prevention Strategies that we listed on the previous page!

THE HUNDRED DRESSES

A Drawing Activity

On the day the contest winners are announced, Miss Mason puts up the submitted drawings all over the room - and one of them could be yours! Have your students draw us either a motorboat or a dress based on the outlines provided - or make your own - and bring it with you when you come to see the shows. We'll have a box labeled for the kids to drop their pictures in at the theatre! During the show, some of the drawings will be selected to be hung onstage as examples of wonderful coloring and drawing work.

WANDA'S JOURNEY

A Day in the Life

In the book *The Hundred Dresses*, Wanda's family immigrated to America in the 1940s from Poland, a difficult time when many families were fleeing the country with the height Adolf Hitler's military campaign against Jewish Poles. Wanda, her mother, her father and brother probably took a boat from Poland to a port in the United States. We don't learn about the reason for Wanda's family leaving, but you and your class could research what Wanda's life must have been like in Poland before her family left. What would she have faced in the 1940s that would have persuaded her family to leave? What was it like to live in Poland? Once in America, Polish people of the time did not settle in communities together, they separated themselves from each other. Why would they choose to do this in a new home? What would it be like for Wanda to come to a new country where she doesn't speak the language? Create a "Day in the Life" of Wanda in Poland and then another for her new life in America. Which seems better?

HERITAGE PROJECT

Where did your family come from?

In *The Hundred Dresses*, Wanda's family makes the journey from Poland to Boggins Heights. Do you know how your family ended up where you live now? Where else has your family lived, and from where did your parents and grandparents originate? Use the map to chart your own course!

1. First, mark your current home with a yellow star.
2. Find out where your parents were born. Mark those places with a blue dot.
3. If you know where your grandparents were born, mark those places with a green dot.
4. Can you trace your family's course back farther? If so, mark a purple dot at the earliest place you know.

And now, in black, trace their routes. If they traveled by land (foot, car, wagon, or horse), trace the path with a dotted line. If they traveled by boat, use a wavy line. If by plane, use arrows. If you aren't sure, use a straight line...and be sure to ask someone in your family about it later! Maybe you'll even discover a food like kelbasa in your family history...

WHERE DOES YOUR FAMILY COME FROM??



MADDIE'S JOURNAL

A Writing Activity

Write a journal entry from Maddie's point of view about how she feels when Wanda moves away. How does it make her feel towards Peggy? Towards the other students? Towards Wanda? How does she feel about the way she and Peggy treated Wanda? What would she like to say to Wanda if she had the chance to see her again?

Dear Journal,
It's me, Maddie...

JACK'S JOURNAL

A Writing Activity

Write a journal entry from Jack's point of view about how he feels when the other students make fun of him. Why doesn't Jack stand up to the other students and tell them to stop?

Dear Journal,
It's me, Jack...

WHAT DID YOU DO AND WHAT CAN YOU DO?

A Quiz

Inspired by American Girl's Stand Up for Yourself and Your Friends

Determining how you already deal with bullying incidents around you can help you figure out how you can better help yourself and your friends in the future.

1. A GIRL IN YOUR CLASS INVITES EVERYONE TO A PARTY ON FRIDAY NIGHT – EXCEPT FOR ONE STUDENT. YOU...
 - a. Don't like the situation, but it's not your party – you can't really do anything.
 - b. Skip the party – going would show you support the plan.
 - c. Invite everyone, except the party planner, to your own party. You'll show her what it feels like not to be invited!

2. IN THE LUNCH LINE, A BOY BLATANTLY CUTS IN FRONT OF YOU. YOU...
 - a. Do nothing. You're annoyed, but he's not worth the trouble.
 - b. Say, "You could've asked. I would have let you in."
 - c. Shove him and angrily ask, "What do you think you're doing?!"

3. YOU BOUGHT A SODA FOR A FRIEND ONCE, BUT NOW SHE ASKS YOU TO BUY HER ONE EVERY DAY. TODAY, YOU SAY...
 - a. Nothing. After all, you started it by sharing money with her in the first place.
 - b. "Hey, I don't have any extra money today. I can only cover myself."
 - c. "Stop using me. Why don't you get your OWN money and buy your OWN pop."

4. ON THE BUS, SOME KIDS ARE MAKING FUN OF A BOY FROM YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD. YOU...
 - a. Feel bad and try to smile at him when he gets off the bus.
 - b. Invite him to sit with you.
 - c. Stick up for him by calling everyone else stupid jerks.

5. A GIRL IN YOUR CLASS TALKS WITH AN ACCENT AND SOMETIMES MISPRONOUNCES WORDS. YOU OVERHEAR SOME CLASSMATES MOCKING HER IN THE HALL, AND YOU...
 - a. Roll your eyes and walk away.
 - b. Change the subject of their conversation and try to get to know the girl later.
 - c. Vow to beat them up after school.

Answers:

MOSTLY a's: You try to steer clear of trouble, and you don't sweat the small stuff, even if it means not getting what you want. Sometimes this style works well. Other times, you end up letting people walk all over you. Finding your voice and letting others know how you feel is your challenge.

MOSTLY b's: You know how to get your needs met while considering the feelings of others around you. Many people will admire the honesty and kindness you bring to problem-solving. It's not always easy, but doing the right thing makes you a role-model – and a good friend.

MOSTLY c's: You have no trouble telling people how you feel, and nobody is going to take advantage of you – that's for sure. Trouble is, you may be pushing people away. Being mean in response to bullying just keeps the fight going. Work on standing up for yourself in a way that respects other people's feelings, too.

MY FAVORITE PART

Write Us A Review

Write your review on a separate sheet of paper, and mail it to us at:

Chicago Children's Theatre
Attn: *Hundred Dresses* Review
1464 N. Milwaukee Ave., 2nd Floor
Chicago, IL 60622

Don't forget to add a stamp and return address!

My Review of *The Hundred Dresses*
Headline
What's your name?
How old are you?
Where do you go to school?
Who did you see the show with?
What was your favorite part of the show?
Who was your favorite character and why?
What would you have done if you were in Maddie's situation?
What would you have done if you were in Wanda or Willie's situation?

SHARE YOUR STORY

Visit Our Blog

Never say nothing again! Send us an email at shareyourstory@chicagochildrenstheatre.org and tell us about a time you were confronted with a bullying situation.

Tell us about what happened. What did you do? What do you wish you had done? What would you do in the future?

We'll read the stories and post them online at <http://www.chicagochildrenstheatre.org/blog>

Come visit our blog to read other stories, including some from the cast and Ralph Covert! -17-



