

The Children's Theatre OF CINCINNATI

TEACHER CURRICULUM & ACTIVITY GUIDE



CASPER THE FRIENDLY MUSICAL

October 12-21, 2019 at the Taft Theatre

Everyone's favorite friendly ghost and his three uncles live in the family mansion. Fifty years after their lives were cut short in a lightning storm, Magdalena, their former maid, re-enters their (after)lives! Now a celebrity TV Host, she is looking for the deed to the mansion... not because she wants the house, but because she believes there's a message on the back that will lead her to a "great treasure". As competition reality TV is all the rage, she hosts a live treasure hunt on Halloween. One lucky young contestant could win \$1 million if they find the deed! It is up to young Casper and his new friends, the contestants, to save the mansion from Magdalena, and discover the greatest treasure of all.

CURRICULAR TIES

LANGUAGE ARTS

LITERATURE/WRITING/LANGUAGE

Students can read, comprehend, and analyze the construction of the story's text, as well as its relation to the source material, and other representations of Casper throughout popular culture.

COMIC BOOKS AS LITERATURE

From their beginnings in newspaper comic strips, to current day of graphic novels, the perception of comic books has shifted. In the current environment of popular culture, characters and stories from their pages break box office records, and provide huge revenues for publishers.

FINE ARTS

MUSIC is studied and sung to tell a story. Aural learners will connect with the rhythms and melodies inherent to this project-based learning.

DANCE is brought to life through the show's choreography. Kinesthetic learners will embrace the movement of the show.

DRAMA is investigated through character work and storytelling. Linguistic and interpersonal learners will engage with the written word, and collaborative process.

VISUAL ARTS are explored through set and costume design. Visual learners will delight in the physical construction of the world of the play.



THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

CHALLENGING UNHEALTHY NORMS

As a ghost, Casper is expected to conform to the traditional role of ghosts: haunting houses, and scaring humans. Casper, however, actively challenges this norm by befriending humans at every opportunity.

APPEARANCES CAN BE DECEIVING

When people first encounter Casper, they are typically terrified and flee in fear based on their assumptions about the nature of Ghosts. Casper's friendly nature actively contradicts his ghostly appearance, reinforcing the longstanding cliché to "never judge a book by its cover."

ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE FRIENDSHIP

Casper embodies the value of true friendship, actively exhibiting kindness, generosity, and selflessness. In an age where friendship, for many, has become a passive relationship via social media, Casper represents a clear example for students of how to actively BE a friend in the truest sense.

DEATH AND GRIEF

Death and Grief are unquestionably difficult topics to discuss with children, but as death touches every life in one way or another, it's vital to consider just how to introduce that unfortunately necessary conversation. CASPER THE FRIENDLY MUSICAL sensitively and honestly deals with the details surrounding the passing of Casper and his family. In our "Suggested Reading" section, teachers will find tools to assist them in facilitating this dialogue with students. We leave it to the discretion of individual teachers to decide how and if this dialogue would benefit their students specifically.

SUGGESTED READING

FOR GRADES K-2

- CASPER by Laura M. Rossiter
- THE GOODBYE BOOK by Todd Parr

FOR GRADES 3-6

- SAVE ME A SEAT by Sarah Weeks & Gita Varadarajan
- THE MEMORY BOX: A BOOK ABOUT GRIEF by Joanna Rowland; Illustrations by Thea Barker

FOR GRADES 7-12

- MIDDLE SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL: REAL FRIENDS VS. THE OTHER KIND by Annie Fox; Illustrations by Matt Kindt
- WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? A DICTIONARY OF DEATH, DYING AND GRIEF FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN & THOSE WHO LOVE THEM by Harold Ivan Smith & Joy Johnson

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

GRADES K-2

ACTIVITY: Recognize and reward students for acts of kindness and friendship in the classroom.

Materials: Rewards (stickers/treats/certificates/special privileges, etc.)

1. Engage students in a discussion about friendship. Ask students to share with the class about their best friend(s), and why they're special.
2. Using Casper as an example of True (ACTIVE) Friendship, motivate students to actively exhibit acts of friendship and kindness in the classroom. Reward students for these acts.
3. Designate a "Friend of the Day" Award to recognize individual students for their acts of kindness, embodying the value of True (ACTIVE) Friendship.

GRADES 3-6

DISCUSSION: Welcoming New Students

1. Ask students to imagine themselves as the "new kid" in class.
2. Have students list some of the fears/emotions they might have entering an unfamiliar environment. Ask them to share their lists with the class.
3. Engage students in a discussion, urging them to offer suggestions on how to create a friendly and kind environment that welcomes new students.

GRADES 7-12

ACTIVITY: Students in teams collaborate to create a comic strip focused on the theme of Active vs. Passive Friendship

Materials: Art supplies (paper, pens, markers, etc. for the creation of comic strip style presentations)

1. Engage students in a discussion about friendship, focusing on the difference between active friendship and passive friendship.
2. Divide the class into teams of 2-3; instruct them to utilize the art supplies provided to craft an illustrated comic strip story, focused on their understanding of passive vs. active friendship.
3. Compile all strips into a book for the class to read/keep.
4. Ask students to reflect on how they embodied Active vs. Passive Friendship throughout the process of collaborating to create their various comic strips.