

Salsa Cinderella



Teacher's Study Guide

Think of a place.

A land inside your salsa jar where fruits and vegetables live together in a blend of smoky flavors; a lively place of spoon-mixed colors and textures.

Inside the savory dance lives a lonely girl, two overbearing stepsisters and a Prince who's stuck in his ways...

--Opening narration of **Salsa Cinderella**

ABOUT SALSA CINDERELLA

Our newest production, **Salsa Cinderella**, uses Grey Seal's trademark approach of whimsical storytelling and exquisite puppet design to tell this classic tale of love and footwear with a spicy twist! Come with us as we take a cilantro-fresh look at the story of Cinderella—re-imagined with south of the border flavors. With an original Latin score, dazzling puppets and fiesta-style staging, this show is sure to delight the salsa fan in everyone! Pass the tortilla chips, please!



OUR APPROACH

Salsa Cinderella is a retelling of the classic story of Cinderella. The word salsa in the title is carried through the story in two ways: one, in that the story takes place in a Latin American setting, and two, because all the characters in the play are salsa ingredients.

When deciding on a new production, we ask ourselves if the piece under consideration meets several requirements. The most important requirement is that the production justifies the use of puppetry. Is this a story that can benefit from the use of puppetry, or could human actors tell the tale better? Clearly puppetry is the perfect vehicle for a story like **Salsa Cinderella**.

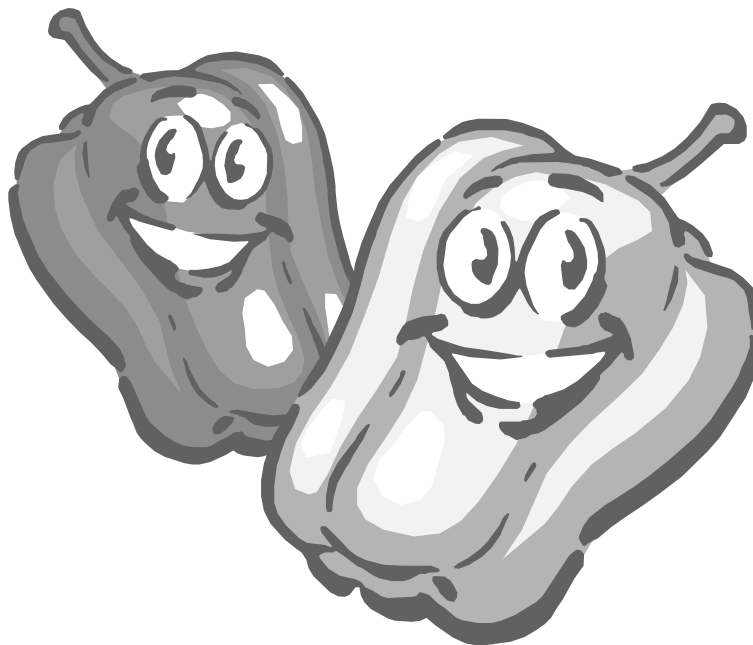
The use of peppers to represent the Prince and Cinderella implies that they have “spicy” personalities, while the garlic and onion that comprise the stepsisters provide a humorous way to show their “pungent” character.

Another important element in ***Salsa Cinderella*** is the music. Salsa music is integral to the Latin culture. The term “Salsa” is often used to describe several styles of music, including mambo, chachacha, and rumba. Salsa music has its origins in Cuban and Caribbean music, and is also called “Latin Jazz.” The score of ***Salsa Cinderella*** was composed by Charlotte area musician John Alexander.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

A lot of the charm of ***Salsa Cinderella*** comes in the creativity of the characters themselves. The puppets used in this show are hand puppets and rod puppets (see p. 5).

This one-person show is performed on a 6-foot tall stage. The puppeteer is hidden by the puppet stage for the entire performance. The puppeteer manipulates the puppets overhead. The puppeteer wears a microphone and provides voice characterizations and various sound effects. The puppeteer starts and stops the original music score and controls the stage lights by using a dimmer board located in the backstage area of the puppet theatre.



VOCABULARY

Some of the language in Salsa Cinderella may be unfamiliar to children. Before the performance, review the following terms with your students.

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| Abode- | Taco says that Cinderella sweeps all day in her “adobe abode.” (Taco pronounces abode ah-boad-ee.) Abode is another word for home. |
| Adobe- | An adobe is a home made out of clay. |
| Chip- | Taco pronounces this word “cheep,” but he really is just talking about tortilla chips. |
| Endive- | Endive is a kind of leafy green vegetable. |
| Fiesta- | A fiesta is a party! |
| Garlic- | A root vegetable that has a pungent odor. |
| Gaspacho- | A cold vegetable soup with a tomato juice base containing a variety of raw vegetables. Usually has no meat. |
| Mango- | A kind of fruit that is often used to make fruit salsa. |
| Onion- | Another root vegetable with a strong odor. |
| Pepper- | A vegetable used often in Latin cooking. They come in all sizes and colors and range from mild to very hot! |
| Recipe- | Instructions for cooking. |
| Salsa- | A sauce made from tomatoes, onions, peppers, garlic, and herbs that is traditionally served with all kinds of Latin food. |
| Sandal- | A shoe with straps that leave the foot exposed. Cinderella’s ball sandals are made from tortilla chips! |
| Shallot- | A kind of onion. |
| Tango- | A traditional Latin dance. |
| Zapato- | The Spanish word for shoe. |

Themes to Discuss and Develop

Before the Performance

Before the performance, introduce your students to the theater experience and to theater etiquette.

LIVE THEATRE VERSUS TV AND THE MOVIES

Attending live theatre is very different from attending a movie or watching TV. Many people think nothing of eating or drinking or even talking while a movie or a TV show is playing. After all, the actors aren't really there in front of us. They're on film or tape, and even if they are "live," they are thousands of miles away. But in the theatre, the puppeteer is working very hard and they are only a few feet away. Eating or talking distracts the puppeteer and prevents other members of the audience from hearing and enjoying as well. And of course, such behavior is considered inappropriate and impolite for the theatre. Attending the theatre should be considered a very formal but fun occasion, like going to a wedding or a fancy restaurant. You may even want to wear something special that day.

AUDIENCE GUIDELINES

- Eating and drinking should not be permitted.
- Talking should not be permitted. Even whispering should be limited.
- Restroom trips should be limited to before and after the performance if at all possible.
- Taking photographs during the performance is extremely distracting to the puppeteer and to the rest of the audience. The puppeteer will be glad to pose for photos after the performance.
- Please turn off all cel phones and pagers during the performance.

Explain to your students that in *Salsa Cinderella* they will see stories performed by puppets. Describe the play the students will see as "puppet theatre." Explain that the puppeteer will tell stories using hand, or moving mouth, puppets.

A performance by Grey Seal Puppets provides an opportunity to explore first-hand the magic of the stage. For a short time we enter another world, a world of fantasy and exaggeration. We hope you enjoy taking this journey of the imagination with us.

After the Performance

Recall the story of *Salsa Cinderella*. Discuss the story with your students.

Salsa Cinderella develops concepts that can be useful in classroom activities after the performance. For each concept an activity is suggested to explore its ramifications. Very young children may have difficulty in expressing feelings that may be generated. For them, puppets may provide the voice for newly discovered values and beliefs. For older children, script writing for their own productions may help to reinforce what they have learned.

Activities

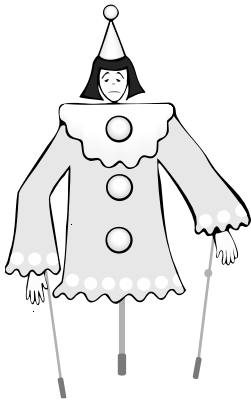
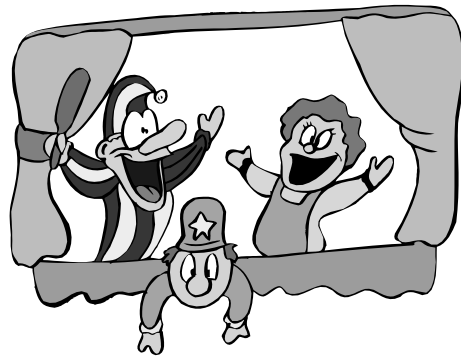
Puppetry

Puppetry is perhaps the most unique of all art forms. It incorporates aspects of both the visual and performing arts--from music and dance, to painting and sculpture, to theatre and mime--yet it remains a distinct art form unto itself. Making and using puppets is an excellent way to acquaint students with the medium and to provide them with tools to use in the post-performance discussions.

There are many different types of puppets. Explain to the classroom that when we say a “type” of puppet, we don’t mean a dog or a cat, or other character that a puppet can be. The type of puppet is determined by how the puppeteer controls, or manipulates, the puppet. Here are just a few of the types of puppets:

HAND PUPPETS

A hand puppet is a puppet that fits over the performer’s hand. The performer’s first finger goes into the head, while the performer’s thumb and little finger go into the arms to control the hands. Two of the most famous puppet characters in history, Punch and Judy, are hand puppets (pictured here).



ROD PUPPETS

A rod puppet is controlled by a stick (or rod) that is attached to the puppet. The rods are usually made of wood or metal. The puppet can be made of any kind of material, including fabric, wood, foam, or papier mache.

MARIONETTES

Marionettes are puppets that are controlled by strings from above. The strings are attached to the puppet’s head, hands, and feet, and are controlled by the puppeteer using a wooden control at the top called an “airplane control.”



Create A Puppet

Language and dramatic arts objectives:

- To describe the good character traits depicted in the play
- To recognize puppetry as a way to illustrate good character traits to children
- To create a puppet that represents a good character trait, strength, or virtue
- To analyze the action of the character through a puppet

Grade level:

Two sets of instructions are included for making puppets. Finger puppets will have more appeal for kindergartners and children in lower grades. Bag puppets are fun for all levels. Both require little preparation and few materials. Time required: 3 class sessions of 45 minutes each.

Materials:

Parents are a valuable resource for puppet-making supplies. Felt scraps, buttons, sequins, yarn, cotton balls and sewing trim are transformed into features with the help of scissors and paste. You will notice that all of the characters in *Salsa Cinderella* have distinct appearances and personalities. Stress to your students to be imaginative in creating unique and individual characters as they construct their puppets.

Procedure:

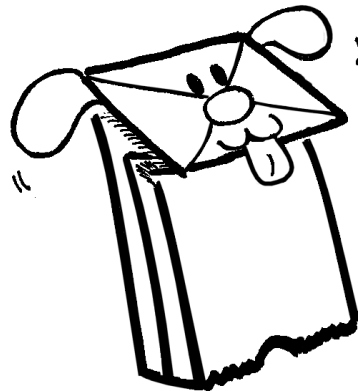
1. Discuss good character traits such as courage, honesty, and loyalty. Why is it important to practice them? How does it help others? How does it help you? Discuss the benefits of practicing good character traits.
2. Discuss the puppets in the performance. What types of puppets were used? (Rod puppets) How did each work? How did they display emotions? Was each puppet effective?
3. Have the students make finger puppets or bag puppets and use them act out scenes where good character traits are illustrated. These could be scenes that illustrate the benefits of practicing a good character trait, or the consequences of bad actions. Make these shows an ongoing class event to reinforce the importance of knowing and practicing good character traits.

Finger Puppet



To make little animal finger puppets, use pinking shears to cut off the top three inches from the fingers of old brown, black or tan gloves. Attach eyes and felt noses and mouths, and appropriate ears to make different types of animal finger puppets.

Paper Bag Puppet



For hand puppets, choose bags just large enough that the bottom fold can be easily moved up and down with fingers inserted. Indicate the tiny button placement of facial features on the bottom of the bag.

Meet Grey Seal Puppets

Founded in 1976, Grey Seal Puppets is well known nationwide. The company performs over 250 shows a year from New York to Hawaii, from Canada to Mexico. Their repertoire consists of familiar fairy tales (*The Emperor's New Clothes*), classic folk tales (*Tangle of Tales*) and original stories (*Bathtub Pirates*). Grey Seal travels to theatres such as The Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta, The Detroit Museum of Art and The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

In addition to live performing, Grey Seal also performs regularly on television, with clients such as The Reimler Agency (Bojangles), WTVI-Channel 42 (local PBS affiliate), the Muppets, Silver Burdett Ginn, and the International Mission Board. Grey Seal Puppets also custom designs and creates mascot characters for sports teams and corporations such as Blimpie Subs and Salads, New Orleans Hornets, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, and Lowe's Motor Speedway.

The company has garnered a number of awards including a "Citation of Excellence" for their adaptation of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and their original story called *Bathtub Pirates*. They were also awarded the North Carolina Theatre Conference's Award for leadership in theatre arts and The Puppeteers of America President's Award for outstanding accomplishment in the art of puppetry. Their television work also has been honored with several awards in the industrial and broadcast categories including a prestigious Beacon Award and the ITVA Silver Reel of Excellence.

Grey Seal puppeteer Drew Allison has co-authored two books on polyfoam puppet construction, *The Wit and Wisdom of Polyfoam Puppet Construction* and *The Foam Book*.

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