

presents



## AESOP'S FABLES

### STARRING JIM WEST

#### Study Guide

**AESOP**, the Father of the Fable  
(approx. 620-560 BC)

Aesop was born a slave in either Egypt or Turkey (historians are not sure) and found favor at the court of King Croesus (King of Lydia, an ancient kingdom in West Asia Minor). Aesop told stories about animals because people, and kings in particular, didn't like to see themselves being foolish. However, we can all laugh and learn watching animals make the same mistakes as ourselves. In fact, King Croesus freed him because he liked his stories so much. As a free man, Aesop eventually settled in Greece.

The first written record of the fables dates from 300 A.D. Aesop himself never wrote his stories down. The first English publication came in 1484 and in 1593 the fables were published in Japanese! People the world over have known and loved Aesop and his fables for a long time.

## BEFORE THE SHOW

### Exercise #1

The harpsichord was the forerunner of the piano. When its key is struck, a little quill plucks the string. No matter how hard you hit the keyboard, the sound is always the same. With the invention of the piano in the 18th century, when the key is struck, a felt hammer strikes the string and thus you can play loudly or softly. It was originally called a pianoforte, which means "soft-loud" in Italian.

In the section, THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE, a piano will be heard playing a short Scarlatti sonata followed by the sound of a harpsichord playing the same piece. Suggest to the children beforehand that they listen for the difference in sound between the two.

## Exercise #2

Get a recording of Beethoven's 3rd Symphony. Play the third movement (Scherzo) when the children come to class in the morning. Repeat this for at least three days prior to the show. Do not make any fuss as to it being "great" Beethoven. Just let it be there. If questioned by the children, simply suggest, "It's a nice way to start the day." Doing this exercise will enable the children to recognize the music when they hear it in the show.

# AFTER THE SHOW

Review the fables in the show and discuss the various ramifications of the morals.

1. **THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE** (performed with a paper bag and cardboard cut-outs)

*Music:* Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) Sonata in C

*Moral:* Slow and steady is sure to win.

2. **THE STAG AT THE POOL** (Paper bags and cardboard box)

*Music:* Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) Symphony No. 3 The Eroica. Third Movement: Scherzo

*Moral:* Things are the way they are for a reason.

3. **THE FOX AND THE GRAPES** (Hand shadows)

*Moral:* Only a fool laughs at something he can't have.

4. **THE FOX AT THE WELL** (Hand shadows)

*Moral:* Look before you leap.

5. **THE WIND AND THE SUN**

*Music:* Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)

Waltz in C# Minor, Etude in A= Major (Aeolian Harp)  
Etude in A Minor (Winter Winds)

*Moral:* It's much stronger to be gentle and kind than to be a loud and forceful bully.

6. **THE LION AND THE MOUSE** (Newspaper puppets)

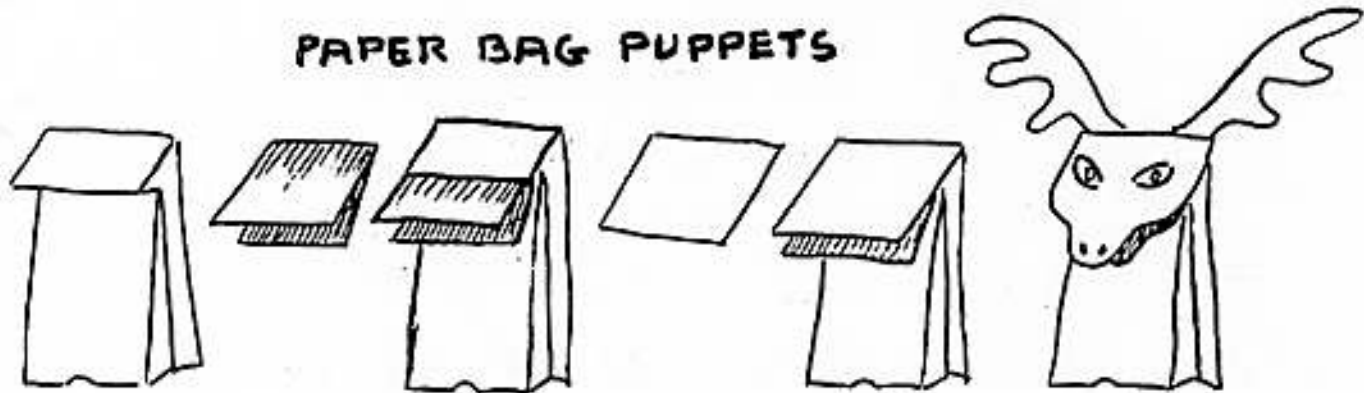
*Moral:* Don't make fun of little things.

7. **THE CAT AND HER TAIL** (Re-named "Warble Twinky" by Jim West)

*Music:* Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868) Overture to Cinderella (the last third of the piece)

*Moral:* Go forward. Don't look for happiness behind you.

## PAPER BAG PUPPETS



1. Cut a piece of construction paper the same size as a paper bag. Fold in half and paste into the fold of the paper bag.
2. Paste a piece of paper on top of the bag and cardboard. Cut into a shape and add ears, antlers, horns - whatever. Use tissue paper or construction paper strips for hair, feathers or general collage decorations.

## HAND SHADOWS

Use slide or overhead projector to create a shadow light and have children take turns practicing shadow puppets to act out one of the stories. Encourage the students to create their creatures using the two illustrated below as examples.



## NEWSPAPER MOUTH PUPPET

### STEP 1

Fold a cardboard circle in half. (About the size of a dinner plate - red, if possible.)

### STEP 2

Bunch up a couple of pieces of newspaper. Wrap a smooth piece of newspaper around them, forming a neat bundle.

### STEP 3

Using Scotch tape, attach neat bundle to one half of the cardboard circle.

Do not tape along fold so you can insert fingers under bundle.

### STEP 4

Repeat steps 2 and 3 on other half of circle. Again, do not tape along fold.

### STEP 5

Decorate as desired. Tape on small bundles of paper for eyes or paint them with tempera. Use tissue paper or newspaper strips for hair. Have fun!

