Plan-B Theatre Company’s Seventh Annual Free Elementary School Tour
a world premiere by Morag Shepherd created specifically for grades K-3
running time 25 minutes + 5-minute pre-show + five-minute post-show

Contact Sharah Meservy, Education Coordinator, at sharah@planbtheatre.org or 801.297.4200
to bring this FREE assembly to your school October 2019-May 2020
(booking preference given to Title I schools)

Visit planbtheatre.org/fest for more information
as well as our free playwriting curriculum and script library
The mission of the Free Elementary School Tour (FEST) is to authentically connect what students see onstage with what they envision themselves creating as artists, expecting as patrons and supporting as citizens. Utah State Board of Education Arts Core Standards Strand 3 (Respond) and Strand 4 (Connect) are organically and thoroughly integrated into FEST. Additionally, simple, low-prep, pre- and post-assembly classroom activities are detailed in the Study Guide, incorporating Strand 1 (Create) and Strand 2 (Perform), as well as play-specific Core Standards, as outlined below.

This season’s Free Elementary School Tour is a humorous and heartwarming tale of foster care, the importance of the hive and the power of friendship, created specifically for grades K-3. FLORA MEETS A BEE by Morag Shepherd is the story of eight-year-old Flora, who has lived in six foster homes since the age of five. One day Flora meets Bee and their budding friendship changes everything. Bee understands Flora no matter what language she speaks or how much she avoids sharing her true feelings. Flora sees the kindness just below the surface of Bee’s rough, worker-bee exterior that most people may not take the time to see.

For the Teacher: Why FLORA MEETS A BEE?

More than 400,000 children are currently in the foster care system nationwide; 3,000 of those children are in Utah. Your students may never have met another child in foster care, or perhaps don’t know they have! Being placed in foster care is an emotionally fraught and confusing experience. School can play an especially valuable role in the lives of these children by offering them structure, boundaries, and a place to belong. Children in foster care are often resilient problem solvers and have frequently been forced to assume more responsibility than their peers. Taking extra care when discussing family structure and dynamics in the classroom while also seeking out ways to bring these students’ unique strengths and assets to our classrooms, will create a more inclusive and supportive school community for all students.

FLORA MEETS A BEE allows children in foster care to see themselves reflected on stage and challenges assumptions and stereotypes surrounding foster care, helping students develop empathy (rather than pity) for children like Flora.

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE: Preparing Students to See FLORA MEETS A BEE

General Vocabulary Words in English: Flora speaks English in the play, which Bee easily understands.
Nectar, pollen, allergic, suspicious, detective, risky, adorable, exhausted, squishy, cozy, hysterical, chatter (chatterbox), borrowing, lending, snapdragons.

General Vocabulary Words in Spanish: Flora also speaks Spanish in the play, which Bee easily understands.
Paleta (popsicle), azul (blue), madre (mother), te extrano tanto (I miss you so much), suerte (luck), centavos (cents).

Kindergarten Social Studies Standard 1: Similarities and differences in families.
Ask students, “What is a family?” Allow them to share their impressions.

Explain that sometimes families are together from the time they are born. Sometimes families can’t stay together and a new family has to be created. Sometimes these new families last a long time and sometimes they last for a short time. Have students think about the ways these families might be different and the ways these families might be the same.

Read aloud “Who’s in a Family?” by Robert Skutch - we are providing your school with a copy of this book!
Tell students that they are going to see a play that talks about a different kind of family - the kind of family that is created just like the family in the read-aloud.

**First Grade Speaking and Listening Standard 5: Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.**

Ask students, “What do you think of bees? What would happen if one flew in our window right now?” Students may comment that they are afraid of bees. Probe further, “Why do you think we are afraid of bees?” Discuss how people are afraid of bees often because they don’t know a lot about them. Share some helpful facts about bees such as: drone bees store more honey than they need which allows us to enjoy honey too; bees make it possible for us to enjoy flowers, fruits, and vegetables.

“Now that we know that bees are important, what would you say to a bee if you could?” Have students write or illustrate a comic illustrating a conversation they might have with a bee if this were possible.

Tell students that they will be hearing a conversation between Flora and Bee in the play they are about to see. Children can compare their conversations with that of Flora and Bee.

**Second Grade Science Standard 4, Objective 2: Identify basic needs of living things and their abilities to meet their needs.**

Tell students the play they are going to see features a bee. Have students share what they know and want to know about bees. Read an informational book about bees or a webpage designed for kids, such as [https://www.natgeokids.com/au/discover/animals/insects/honey-bees/](https://www.natgeokids.com/au/discover/animals/insects/honey-bees/). Have students communicate verbally and in writing how the physical characteristics of bees allow them to meet their basic needs.

Ask students “What do you know about foster care?” Tell students the play they are going to see also features a child in foster care.

**Third Grade Human Development and Relationships Standard 3: Understand and respect self and others related to human development and relationships.**

Foster care is a way for children who have been separated from their families to be safe and taken care of until they are able to be reunited with their families.

Discuss with students why children might end up in foster care: sometimes, parents are not able to care for their children and they need help from another family to do so; sometimes, children lose their parents and need to be raised by a family member or by another caring family; other times, children may not be able to stay with their families because of laws that determine who can legally live in the United States.

Discuss with students why a family might take in a child that needs a home. Why might this be important?

Read aloud a book such as “The Star: A Story to Help Young Children Understand Foster Care” by Cynthia Miller Lovell.

Tell students they are going to see a play where the main character, Flora, is living with a foster family temporarily until she can be reunited with her mother.
AFTER THE PERFORMANCE: Discussing FLORA MEETS A BEE

General Comprehension Questions (adaptable for any grade level - to be discussed or written about):
- Why does Bee take such a liking to Flora’s name?
- Why do you think Flora has such a difficult time with things that don’t belong to her?
- Why do you think Bee is so grumpy?
- How do Flora and Bee become such good friends? Does their friendship remind you of a friendship in your life?

General Discussion Questions (Adaptable for any grade level - to be discussed or written about):
- What is the difference between foster care and adoption?
- How are families alike? How are they different?
- Why is it important to talk about foster care?

Kindergarten Foundational Reading Standard 2a: Recognize and produce rhyming words.
Flora and Bee are very good at rhyming. Invite students to rhyme using some nonsense words like Bee does (relax, belax, chillax). Invite students to rhyme using real words like Flora does (knee, bee, three).

Kindergarten Writing Standard 1: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces.
Flora and Bee talk a lot about the fact that their favorite food is honey. Ask students, “What is your favorite food?” Allow sharing. Then provide a sentence frame for students to write their own sentence about their favorite food, with a picture. “My favorite food is ______.” Allow students to stretch out the words associated with their favorite foods and approximate the sounds they hear. Take time to share stories.

Flora sees a lot of things in the eyes of Bee. Have students use books as references to draw a picture of a bee with big eyes. Their bees can look like a cartoon if they would like. They can fill in something they think they might see in the eyes of a bee and then label their pictures with, “I can see ______ in the eyes of Bee.”

First Grade Writing Standard 3: Write narratives to recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.
Have students write a one-page play about an interaction with a bee. What would they say? What would the bee say?

First Grade Literature Standard 9: Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.
Invite students to compare and contrast the things Flora experiences in the play with their own experiences and with the experiences of characters in other stories they have read.

Second Grade Social Studies Standard 1, Objective 2b: Describe contributions of cultural groups to our state and nation.
Flora is from Mexico. Spanish is her first language. Spanish is spoken all over the world, all over the United States, and all over Utah. Many schools have Spanish-immersion programs. The population of the United States is 1/4 Latinx. The population of Utah is 1/7 Latinx. Discuss with students the contributions of Latinx immigrants to the United States and Utah (culture, foods, names of places, et cetera).

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To ensure the conversation doesn’t depend on or perpetuate stereotypes about Latinx immigrants, consider using materials from https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/collections/teaching-content/bring-hispanic-heritage-month-life-collection-resources/ or reading aloud “I Love Saturdays y domingos” by Alma Flor Ada and “Dreamers” by Yuyi Morales - we are providing your school with copies of both books!

**Second Grade Writing Standard 1:** Write opinion pieces.
Have students write an opinion piece about the value of immigrants to the United States generally and Utah specifically.

**Third Grade Informational Reading Standard 5:** Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.
Have students research bees using a variety of books and online materials. Emphasize how students can use informational text features and online search tools to research a topic related to bees efficiently.

**Third Grade Informational Reading Standard 3.3:** Describe the relationship between a series of concepts in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
Have students investigate how a bee makes honey and summarize their learning in sequential order or using a cause-effect graphic organizer.

**Third Grade Science Standard 2:** Organisms depend on living and nonliving things within their environment.
Have students observe interactions between living and non-living things in a flowerbed around the school. If unavailable, they could watch a YouTube video. Discuss the interactions between living and non-living things in a flowerbed ecosystem.

**Third Grade Writing Standard 1:** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
Have students write an opinion piece on why it is important to protect bees.

**Fun Honey Facts**
- Honey is mostly sugar and a little bit of water (82% to 18%).
- Honey bees are the only insects that make food for humans (thanks bees!).
- Honey’s flavor or taste is determined by where the hive is located, the flowers that are its source of nectar and pollen, and what is surrounding the hive. (If there are oranges nearby, this might change the taste and color of the honey!)
- Honey has been used throughout history to dress or cover wounds.
- If you don’t like eating spinach, tell your parents that you’d like some honey instead. Honey does a good job of keeping you healthy in the same way that vegetables and fruits do - it’s a super food! Use honey instead of sugar!
- The next time you have a cold, tell you parents that you’d like some honey in warm water - honey stops a cough better than cough drops or other medicines!

**Websites About Foster Care**
Talking to Kids About Foster Care: https://www.kidsmatterinc.org/get-help/for-families/talking-to-kids-about-foster-care/
Myths About Foster Care Adoption: https://davethomasfoundation.org/five-myths-about-foster-care-adoption/
Utah Foster Care: Learn more about foster care in Utah at https://utahfostercare.org
Foster Focus, a monthly magazine dealing exclusively and entirely with foster care: https://www.fosterfocusmag.com
Foster Club, an organization providing foster kids with a peer support network and resources: https://www.fosterclub.com
Books About Foster Care

“Maybe Days: A Book for Children in Foster Care” by Jennifer Wilgocki and Marcia Kahn
“Little Miss Spider” by David Kirk
“The Star: A Story to Help Young Children Understand Foster Care” by Cynthia Miller Lovell
“Kids Need to be Safe: A Book for Children in Foster Care” by Julie Nelson
“Hopper the Lonely Frog: An Adoption Story for Children” by Kimberly Lee
“Murphy’s Three Homes: A Story for Children in Foster Care” by Jan Levinson Gilman
“All Kinds of Families” by Norma Simon
“Families Change: A Book for Children Experiencing Termination of Parental Rights” by Julie Nelson and Mary Gallagher
“Finding the Right Spot: When Kids Can’t Live with Their Parents” by Janice Levy
“Let’s Talk About Living with a Grandparent” by Susan Kent
“Mama Bear Baby Bear” by Linda Silvas
“Robert Lives with His Grandparents” by Martha Whitmore Hickman
“Who’s in a Family?” by Robert Skutch
“I Miss My Foster Parents” by Stefon Herbert
“Zachary’s New Home: A Story for Foster and Adopted Children” by Geraldine Molettiere Blomquist, Paul B. Blomquist and Margo Lemieux

Creating FLORA MEETS A BEE and this Study Guide

Throughout the process of creating FLORA MEETS A BEE, playwright Morag Shepherd consulted with playwright/designer/actor Iris Salazar and Plan-B Theatre Company’s Board President/former Utah State Representative Rebecca Chavez-Houck to ensure cultural authenticity. She also consulted with Utah Foster Care’s Retention Services Specialist Tina Porter and licensed foster parent Becky Anderson Pickle to ensure the play is clinically sound and age-appropriate. It is also valuable to note that playwright Morag Shepherd and actor Brenda Hattingh (who plays Bee) are immigrants from Scotland and South Africa, respectively; director Jerry Rapier, who was adopted at the age of eight, is the son of a Japanese immigrant; and actor Ariana Broumas Farber (who plays Flora) is a licensed foster parent and the daughter of an immigrant from El Salvador.

This study guide was created by educator Jim Martin (a former elementary school principal and kindergarten, first, fourth and fifth grade teacher, currently teaching sixth grade) with input from Tina Porter, Retention Services Specialist, Utah Foster Care and two Plan-B Theatre Company staff members: Sharah Meservy, Education Coordinator and Jerry Rapier, Artistic Director.
Statewide Facts:
Children in Foster Care

In Utah, there are more than 2,800 children in foster care at any given time and some 1,450 licensed foster/adoptive families.

Children in foster care often have special needs due to neglect, abuse or separation. Substance abuse is a contributing factor in two out of three foster care cases.

In Utah, most children are in foster care for about 12 months; some children may stay in foster care for much longer. The length of time a child is in foster care varies depending on their family’s individual circumstances.

Two-thirds of children who enter foster care return to live with their birth parents or another relative. Foster families have the opportunity to mentor and support parents who are working to have their children returned to them.

Many children are adopted thru foster care. Last year (FY17), 603 children were adopted from foster care in Utah. Most are adopted by their foster parents.

Children in foster care are between the ages of 0-19. The greatest need is for families who are able and willing to care for children over age 8.

Most children enter foster care with brothers and sisters. Families are urgently needed for sibling groups of three or more.

Children in foster care come from all racial and cultural backgrounds. There is a need for families of all races and cultures to come forward. Children do better when placed with families who can help them maintain their cultural and racial identities.

Latino and Hispanic children are over-represented in the foster care system in Utah:

- In Utah, they make up more than one in every five children in foster care (21%).
- Culturally-sensitive placements can help to ease the trauma experienced by children who are removed from their homes and placed in foster care.
- It helps when families who are fluent in both Spanish and English care for Latino/Hispanic children—but it is not required. All foster families must be legal US residents.

In Utah, foster parents may be married or single. They may own or rent their homes. It takes 24 hours of in-class training, additional online classes, and the ability to pass a criminal background check to become a foster parent. Utah Foster Care and Utah’s Division of Child & Family Services provide ongoing training to foster and adoptive parents throughout the state.

Utah Foster Care is a private, non-profit organization contracted by the Division of Child & Family Services (DCFS) to find, educate, and support foster and adoptive families to care for the children in Utah’s foster care system.