

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Pre-show Activities</i>	2
<i>Story Suggestions</i>	2
<i>Build a Platform</i>	2
<i>The Environment</i>	3
<i>Problem Solved</i>	4
<i>Critics Corner</i>	5
<i>Inside the Campaign</i>	6

Special points of interest:

- Information about Child's Play Touring Theatre
- An inside look at the Kids For President show.
- Write a letter to the next President of the U.S.A
- Build your own political platform.

KIDS FOR PRESIDENT!!

To the Teacher:

Child's Play Touring Theatre is celebrating the 2008 presidential election with a new show titled **Kids For President**. This study guide will help to prepare your students to see the show and will provide a variety of follow-up materials which may be useful to you as story starters, activities for class discussion, or as ideas for class projects.

About the show

For the past year, Child's Play Touring Theatre has been working with young writers across the country to involve them in the 2008 election. Thousands of children submitted stories, poems, songs, campaign speeches and essays. The show that you will see reflects the very best of the material we have collected.



Kids across the country weigh in on the issues facing our country!

The performance runs approximately 55 minutes and is comprised of several short plays and songs adapted by the company from children's writings. It is an attempt to give voice to children's feelings about

the challenges America and our next president will face. The show combines whimsy and political thought, backed up by live music, colorful costumes and backdrops based on children's art work.

CHILD'S PLAY TOURING THEATRE: WHAT'S THE STORY?

Child's Play Touring Theatre is a professional traveling theatre for young audiences that performs stories and poems written by children, transforming young writers works into plays, songs and dances. Every year, the company performs the works of hundreds of young poets, essayists, playwrights and

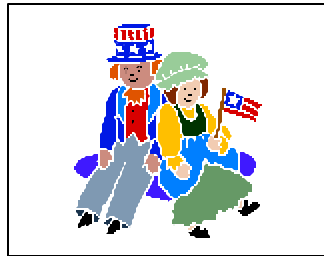
short story writers.

Child's Play Touring Theatre was founded in 1978 by Victor and June Podagrosi and is recognized as one of the outstanding touring theatres for young audiences in the U.S. Child's Play has performed at the Smithsonian Institution, Wolf Trap Performing Arts

Park, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Indianapolis Children's Museum, the Field Museum of Chicago, the Detroit Institute of Arts, Alaska Junior Theater, The Goodman Theatre, and in thousands of schools, libraries, museums and theatres in the United States and Canada.

STUDENTS GET READY FOR THE SHOW

As you prepare your students to see **Kids For President**, begin by using the description on the previous page to tell the children about the show and the company. Then discuss with them what kind of topics they think will be presented



Students prepare for the upcoming election.

in the performance.

Other activities include:

1. Discuss the current presidential election. Who do they think will win? Why? Discuss the role and responsibilities of the president.
2. In this guide you will find a form letter for children to write to the next president and express what they think the most important thing he can do for children. Make copies of the form and have your students bring their letters to

the performance.

These letters will be collected and sent to the winning candidate as part of the Kids For President project.

3. Listed below are the story suggestions that were sent to children to encourage them to write for this project. Read and discuss with your students what kind of stories and poems they think might be in the show. Have your students write their own stories or poems using one or more of these ideas.

“If Kids could be the president of the USA, you can bet that we would have a lot of things to say. With the problems that we face we really can not wait. Vote Kids in 2008!”

Anne Berry, 3rd grade

WRITING IS CHILD’S PLAY

STORY SUGGESTIONS FOR KIDS FOR PRESIDENT

“If I were the President, I would...” Write about the issues that are most important to YOU. What is a day in the life of a President like? How would you change the world? How would kids run America differently?

“What will the world be like when I am 35?...” You must be at least 35 years old to be

President. What will America be like then? How will today’s problems be solved and what new problems will we face? How can kids help shape America’s future?

“My advice to a new civilization...” What if the citizens of another planet came to you for advice on how to run things? What advice would

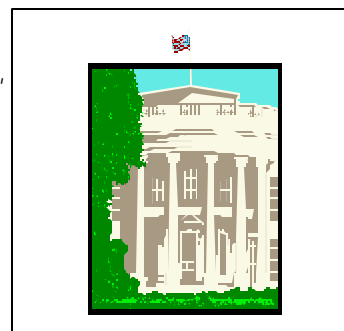
you give?

“It’s important to vote because...” Why is it important to vote? What would happen if Americans didn’t vote?

“I’m proud to be President because...” Why would you want to become the leader of our country? What made your family move to America?

CANDIDATES BUILD THEIR PLATFORMS

Kids For President follows the story of two young girls, Sally and Lucy, as they decide maybe they could be president one day. They quickly learn that there are a lot of issues facing our world that are important, not only to them, but an important part of being “in charge.”



Kids talk about the issues important to them.

Students can use the included worksheets to build their own platforms. This can be done with a variety of themes including class elections and issues important to their school, mayoral elections involving issues in their own community, or a presidential election with issues that effect the entire world around us.

ENVIRONMENT A TOP ISSUE WITH KIDS TODAY

One of the major issues discussed in the show is the environment, as presented in the plays **R-Man** and **River and Fish**. At Child's Play we have found that one of the most important issues to young people today is the fragile state of the world around us.

Sally travels on a journey to the future and sees what will happen if we don't recycle more effectively and Lucy is shown what can happen to some

of our most valuable resources today if we don't take better care of the world around us.

Sally and Lucy have the help of a superhero and a talking fish. What, or who do your students think would make people stand up and take notice of the environment around us? Do they have their own ideas about a recycling superhero or outspoken animal friend?

Discuss how the issue of



Young heroes determined to save the planet.

the environment was presented in the play. Have your students write their own issue oriented story and act it out in class.

CANDIDATES SAY, "PROBLEM SOLVED."

Lucy finds that she needs a lot of help to solve some of the problems facing our country. We all face problems in our day to day life, some big and some small. It's how we react to those problems and set about solving them that can define who we are.

Here are a few games that are geared specifically toward problem solution. **"What's**

Wrong Here?" A student is given a random "problem" out of a hat. (ie. The sink is clogged, or you can't find your keys) The student then silently acts out the problem and solves it while the audience tries to guess what's going on. **"SitProbSol"** The first student, or pair of students, establishes a simple situation on stage. (ie. Playing at the park) The second

set of students enters and creates a problem. (Bullies want the swings.) The final set of students comes in and solves the problem. (The parents call the bullies home.) **"Build What?"** As a group students try to build a "fort" using a variety of objects in the class, a parachute or sheet, chairs and, etc. The trick is they can't talk to one another during the game. That can be a problem.

CRITICS CORNER: AFTER THE SHOW

After the show is over have your students talk about their favorite parts of the performance. Why were they their favorites? What made them special?

What issues were not addressed in the show that your students thought should be there? How would they handle those issues if they were president?

At several points during the show the "candidates" present their ideas and campaign speeches. Have your students write their own campaign speeches. What issues would they want to discuss? What would people need to know about them?



What would you do if you were President?

What are some of the presidential privileges students might enjoy if they were president? A limo all the time, as much candy as they want? Have your students write their own fantasy about the finer side of being president.

"Down, down, down in the USA, we got a lot of pollution in the world today.

Too many things being thrown away. Yeah, yeah! We've got to solve these problems. Solve them, right away!"

Todd Long, 4th grade



Child's Play Touring Theatre

Performing stories and poems written by children.

Phone number: 773 235-8911
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"I think the President of the United States has to be aware of America's children. We are the next generation and the future is in our hands."

Mary St.Jean, 6th grade

We're on the web
At www.cptt.org

The Child's Play Touring Theatre Mission:

"To share, encourage and validate the creativity of children by presenting original works of theatre, music and dance adapted from their literature and artwork."

Special thanks to our contributing authors for Kids For President:

President Lucy by Becky Sheppard, a 5th grader from Chicago, IL.

Rush, Rush, Rush by Anne Berry, a 3rd grader from Chads Ford, PA.

Softball Girls by Darren Mooney, a 2nd grader from Wilmington, DE.

R-Man by Christopher Bultink, a 6th grader from Glenview, IL.

In the USA by Todd Long, a 4th grader from Bethlehem, PA

The River and the Fish by Jhanteus Davis, a 6th grader from Chicago, IL.

Class President by Brian Stute, a 4th grader from Darien, CT.

If I Were President by Roxanne Amaro, a 4th grader from DesMoines, IA.

Soldiers by Breanna Brayerton, a 6th grader from Wilmington, DE.

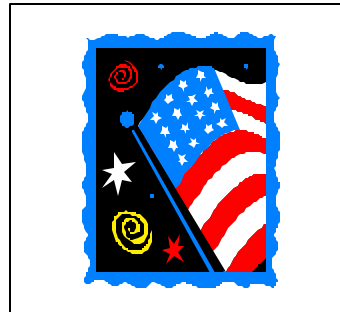
CAMPAIGN GETS UNDERWAY

Kids For President: A Class Simulation Game

This game is designed to give students in the third through sixth grade experience in creative problem solving and decision making with a group, persuasive writing, public speaking and dramatization. Feel free to adapt any or all of the lesson play for your classroom.

Day 1—Identify the issues
Brainstorm with the class to find out what they feel are the most important issues affecting them in their own lives. They might discuss issues which impact upon their neighborhoods, school, the environment, or the larger community. List problems or situations that the class feels candidates for public office should do something about. Write "Dear Candidate" or "Dear President" letters. The class may share these ideas.

Day 2—Establishing Parties
Divide the class into four political parties, with each party choosing its own name and mascot. Each party holds a "primary" to elect a candi-



The children are our future.

date. (A vote can be done most tactfully by drawing a name from a hat. The selected person may then choose a running mate.) Ask the kids to think about the issues and problems discussed the previous day. Suggest that each party select a priority issue. The party then needs to determine ways of addressing this issue in a positive way. Party members can suggest various methods of solving the problem or improving the situation. Ideas can be practical or outrageous, serious or whimsical.

Day 3—Political Commercial
Ask each party to create a skit or "political commercial" to

illustrate the issue or situation decided upon yesterday. Skits should include all members of the party in some way.

Day 4—Position Papers

Students now write a "position paper" explaining how their candidate will address that issue if elected. Students take turns reading the position papers to their party members and listening to suggestions for revising and expanding. The group's papers become the Official Party Platform. (All students have a vested interest in its effectiveness.)

Day 5—Election Day

Holding a Press Conference
On this final day, each candidate will read her/his platform to the class who, as "members of the press", are invited to ask questions at the end of each presentation. After closing statements by the candidates and their running mates an election by secret ballot takes place. All class members then can write an Exit Slip describing what they had learned from this campaign week.



Dear Mr. President,

My name is _____ . I am _____ years old.

I think the most important thing the President can do for American children is:

SIGNED _____

Name of School _____

School Address _____ City _____

State/Zipcode _____



Child's Play Touring Theatre
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Build a Platform

If you were to run for President, it would be important to be able to say what you believe in. It's important to be able to tell what you think would be good for people, for our country, for our world.

What are some things that you believe are important? Write a few of your ideas down.

I think _____

I think _____

I think _____

I think _____

I think _____

If you were running for president, each of these beliefs would be called a "plank", just like a plank of wood. And when you put all of your ideas, or planks, together, you have a "platform".

Just like a platform made of wooden planks supports you, a platform of ideas supports who you are!



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