



# KidSeries Season 2016-17



## EDUCATOR STUDY GUIDE

Thumbelina (Fall 2016)  
Fable-ous! (Winter 2017)  
Giggle, Giggle, Quack (Spring 2017)

**Lifeline Theatre \* 6912 North Glenwood \* Chicago, Illinois 60626 \* 773-761-4477**

© 2016 by Lifeline Theatre and Julie Ganey. This study guide is only to be used in conjunction with performances at Lifeline Theatre in Chicago, Illinois. Any other use is strictly forbidden.

# Fable-ous!



Inspired by Aesop's Fables  
By Chris Hainsworth  
Directed by Heather Currie

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 Introduction to the Student Matinee Program
  - How to Prepare for your Field Trip
  - Traditional Plays vs. Literary Adaptations
  - Jobs in the Theatre
- 6 Synopsis of the Play
- 7-11 Activity Pages
  - Antonyms!
  - Facing Fears Writing Activity
  - Tortoise and the Hare Maze
  - Friendship Drawing Activity
  - Write Your Own Fable
- 12 Further Adventures: Drama Games relating to *Fable-ous!*
- 13 Student Review Sheet
- 14 Teacher Comment Form

# Introduction to the Student Matinee Program

Lifeline Theatre's award-winning adaptations of children's literature inspire a love of reading that will activate your students' imaginations and stay with them throughout their lives. Every year, Lifeline Theatre's KidSeries Student Matinee Program serves over 3,000 students, 40 schools, 129 classrooms, and 222 teachers with school-day performances of our season productions.

We encourage you to use this study guide to enrich your students' experience of *Fable-ous!* and enhance the educational value of the production. Please let us know what parts are helpful to you and where you would like additional materials. There is a teacher feedback form and student survey to copy for your class, and we hope you will take the time to let us know what you thought of both the show and the study guide. We do this work for you and your students, and we want to make it beneficial and user friendly!

---

## PREPARING FOR YOUR FIELD TRIP

### *Before the Play: Discuss Appropriate Behavior*

Have a discussion with your students about proper theatre etiquette. For example, it's okay to clap and laugh, but it's not okay to talk to your neighbor. Have students compare and contrast the difference between watching a movie and watching a play. Ask if students have been to a play before. If so, what play? What was the experience like? Talk about the concentration that performing in a play requires, and ask the students what they find distracting when they are trying to accomplish a task in front of people. How can they help the actors succeed and do a good job? Let students know that in plays, actors sometimes play several different characters, and change roles by simply swapping out costume pieces and altering their voices and bodies.

### *After the Play: Reflect on the Experience*

Ask students if they enjoyed the play. Based on this experience, would they like to see other plays? If they've seen plays before, how did this play compare? What happened that they weren't expecting? How was seeing a play a different experience than seeing a movie?

Have the students write a review of the play. Encourage students to be specific about why they enjoyed a certain part of the play. If they liked a scene because it was funny, have them explain *why* it was funny, what the characters *did* or *said* that was funny, etc. Have the students draw a picture or make a collage of their favorite scene or character. Have them show their picture to the class and explain why that scene or character was their favorite. We invite you to send the reviews and pictures to Lifeline – we enjoy reading them and learn from student feedback.

## TRADITIONAL PLAYS VS. LITERARY ADAPTATIONS

Lifeline Theatre's KidSeries productions are often musical adaptations of picture books and short stories for children. We encourage you to discuss the elements of each version and compare/contrast the two both before and after you see the play.

### *Before the Play: Get to Know the Original Story*

Read the story to your students, or have them read the book themselves, before the production. After reading the book, discuss it with your students, using these questions as launch pads:

- Who are the characters in the story?
- What happens in the beginning of the story? The middle? The end?
- Is there a character in the story you don't like?
- What makes you dislike this character?
- How do you think he/she might be portrayed in the stage version?
- What do you think you will see on stage as the actors tell this story?
- How might the play be different from the story? How might it be the same?

### *Beginning, Middle and End*

To encourage sequential thinking, have students act out the beginning, middle and end of the story. Split the students into three groups (or more, depending on the number of students in your class) and have one group enact the beginning, another group enact the middle, and the final group the end. Have the students watching the performances help the group to remember any parts they may have left out. Give the groups the chance to redo their performances, including any elements suggested by their classmates.

### *After the Play: Compare/Contrast the Story to the Play*

- How were the book and the play different?
- How were the book and the play the same?
- What elements of the play surprised you?
- Which did you enjoy more, reading the book or watching the play?
- What was your favorite part of the play?
- Was that your favorite part of the book too?
- Were there any characters in the book that were not in the play, or vice versa?
- Why do you think the playwright added or subtracted certain parts?

## **JOBS IN THE THEATRE: BEHIND THE SCENES**

### *Before the Play: Prepare Your Students to Observe All Aspects of the Production*

When we create a play at Lifeline, we have a community of artists working together to make a complete production. Ask students to be particularly observant during the performance for the parts of the show that are done by the various people listed below:

**Playwright/Adaptor/Author** – writes the play

**Composer** – writes the music for the show

**Lyricist** – writes the words (or “lyrics”) for the songs in the play

**Director** – directs the play - makes decisions about costumes, lights, sets, and what the actors do onstage

**Choreographer** – creates and teaches the actors the dances in the show

**Lighting Designer** – designs and hangs the lights for the show; designs lighting effects

**Set Designer** – designs and builds the scenery and props for the show

**Sound Designer** – designs and records the sound effects for the show

**Costume Designer** – designs and finds or makes the costumes for the show

**Stage Manager** – helps the director during rehearsals; sets props and scenery before each performance; runs the sound and lights during the performance

**Actors** – perform the play

### *After the Play: Discuss the Students' Observations*

Ask the students what they noticed about the “behind-the-scenes” jobs:

- How did the costume designer make the actors look like the characters they were playing?
- What about their costumes helped you to know what kind of people or animals they were?
- Did you have a favorite costume in the show? Which one? Why was it your favorite?
- If there were animal costumes, how did the costume designer create them so that they would look more like animals than people?
- What are some of the locations the play took place in?
- How did the set designer make the settings look realistic?
- What sound effects did you hear in the play? How did those sound effects help you to know what was happening in the play?
- Why do you think the composer chose the styles of music he did? What sorts of music would not make sense with the story?

## ***Fable-ous! Synopsis***

An old Tortoise recounts memories of the race she famously won against the Hare in her youth by being “slow and steady.” She explains that the actual events were very different from the story most of us know, and she takes us back to that time.

The Tortoise, now a young fan of the Hare, asks him for an autograph. A Mouse slyly gets the Hare bragging that he wins every race, and then suggests that the Hare race the Tortoise. The Hare scoffs at the idea, since he would easily win. The Tortoise replies that the Hare would *probably* win, but nothing is certain. The Hare is angry that the Tortoise will not admit certain defeat, and the Mouse capitalizes on this to get the Hare to make a bet: The Tortoise and Hare will race, and if the Hare wins, he gets the Mouse’s prized Harriet Longstrider jersey. If the Tortoise wins the race, the Mouse gets part of the Hare’s race earnings for the rest of his career. The Mouse sees controlling the Hare as a way to get the respect she so desires. Determined that the Tortoise will win at any cost, the Mouse asks the Wolf to catch the Hare during the race to slow him down. The Wolf is busy with a young boy who keeps crying “Wolf, Wolf!” when he is not in danger, so he sends the Mouse to the Fox for help instead.

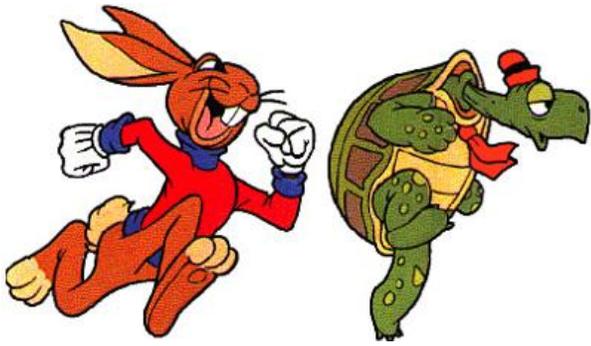
On the day of the race, the entire forest comes to cheer for the Tortoise, teasing the Hare for racing someone so slow. The Hare is angry because if the Tortoise would just admit that there is no way she could win, they wouldn’t have to race at all. But the Tortoise knows that unlikely things happen, and is eager to participate in the event. When the race begins, the Hare is off much faster than the Tortoise.

Ahead on the path, the Mouse plots with the Fox to stop the Hare. Once the Fox is alone, he becomes distracted by a bunch of delicious-looking grapes hanging from a tree. As the Fox tries to reach the grapes, the Hare enters, and stops to help him reach the grapes. The Hare is surprised by the good feeling he gets from helping someone else. As the Hare races off, glad to have a new friend, the Fox realizes that he had agreed to detain the Hare, so he follows, still eating grapes. By now, though, the Mouse has a new plan and is setting out thorns to deter the Hare. A passing Lion gets one stuck in his paw. The Mouse removes the thorn, and blames the Hare for leaving them on purpose to trap the Lion. Furious, the Lion teams up with the Mouse to catch the Hare.

The Hare and the Tortoise meet on the path. The Hare is conflicted about the bet: losing is too humiliating to allow, but winning will make him a bully for racing such a slow animal. The Tortoise shares that she likes to move slowly - she can take in the world, meet people, and make friends. The Hare admits that people only like him because he is fast, but the Tortoise points out that if he slowed down enough to meet people, he might have real friends who appreciated who he really is.

The Mouse has set traps for the Hare, but both the Fox and Lion get caught in them, along with the Hare. While the three are stuck, they become friends and realize that the Mouse, not the Hare, set the thorns on the path. When the Tortoise arrives, she is angry to see that the Mouse cheated, and frees the Hare. But rather than run off to the finish line, the Hare urges the Tortoise to finish the race, and he stays back to free his new friends. The Tortoise crosses the finish line, and when the Hare catches up, he tells the crowd that he lost because he was so arrogant that he stopped to nap. Hare announces his retirement from racing, infuriating the Mouse, who now does not get the Hare’s future race winnings.

Flashing forward in time, the old Tortoise explains that she and the Hare became great friends, helping others to discover the fun of running, and also the fun of slowing down enough to notice things and make friends.



# ANTONYMS !

*Antonyms are **opposites**, such as “fast” and “slow.” Using the word bank, fill in the correct antonym for each sentence below.*

tall

soft

float

deep

messy

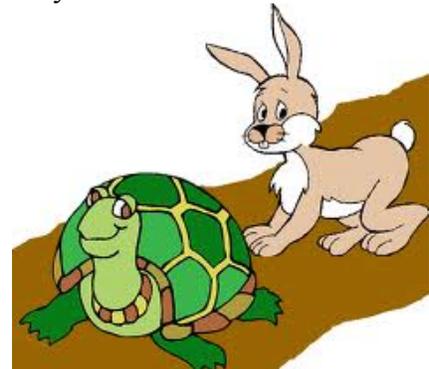
false

silly

narrow

wrong

1. My mother would like me to keep my room **neat**, but it’s actually quite \_\_\_\_\_.
2. In the bathtub, my plastic toys \_\_\_\_\_, but the soap tends to **sink**.
3. My grandfather is usually very **serious**, but when he’s with me he’s \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I will go swimming if the water is **shallow**, but not if it is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. If you say something that is \_\_\_\_\_, it cannot also be **true**.
6. I hoped I was going the **right** way to the park, but it turns out it was \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Marshmallows should be \_\_\_\_\_, but this one was **hard**.
8. The entrance to the cave was **wide**, but it soon became very \_\_\_\_\_.
9. People come in all sizes. It’s okay to be \_\_\_\_\_, and it’s okay to be **short**.



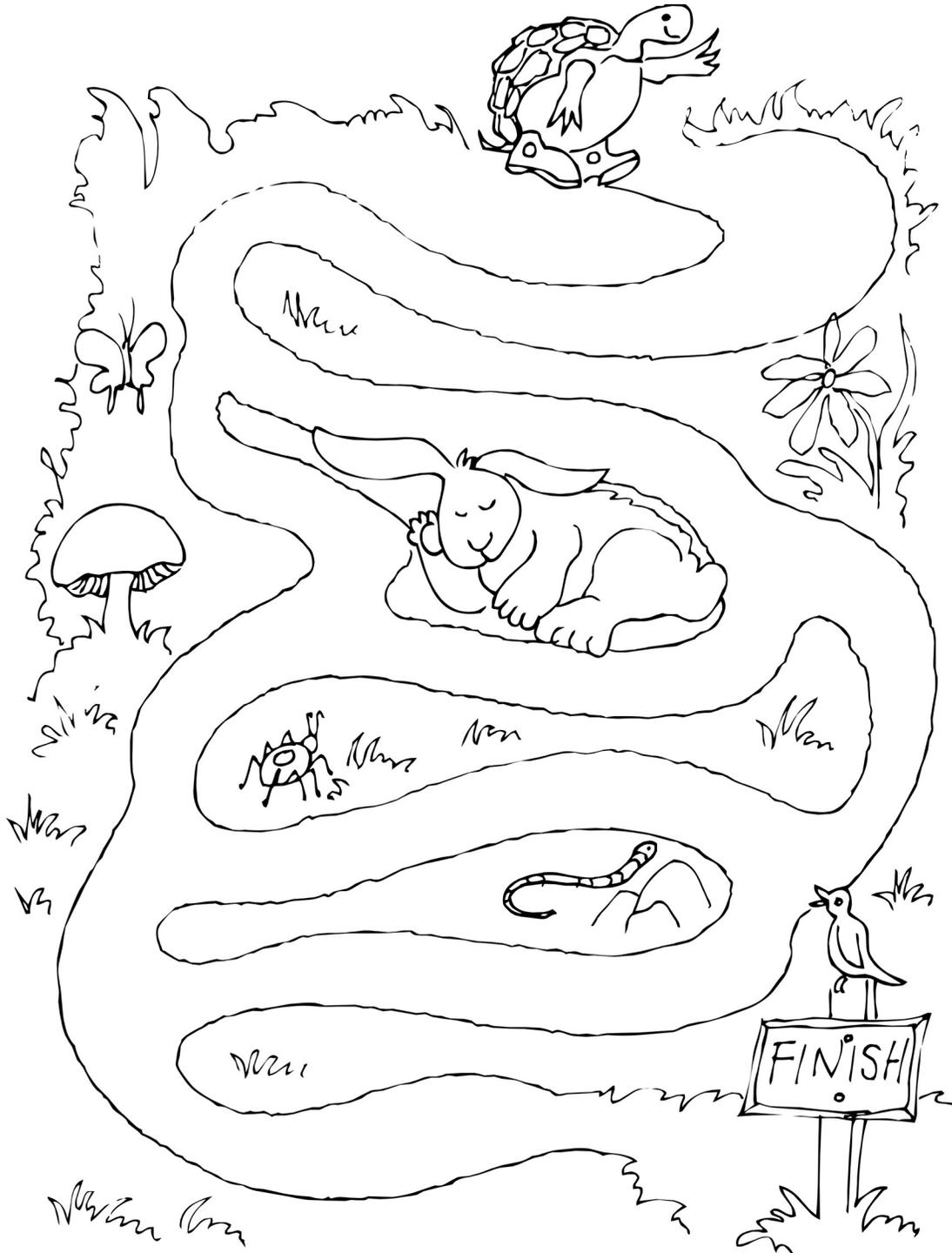
# FACING FEARS

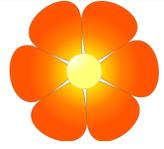
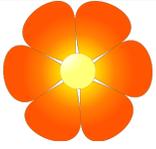
In FABLE-OUS, the Hare is afraid to stop winning races because he thinks no one will like him if he isn't the fastest. When he finally tries slowing down, he makes new friends and notices the world around him. Write about a time when you did something you were afraid of. Why were you afraid? What happened when you finally tried it?



A large rectangular area with a decorative, wavy border containing 18 horizontal lines for writing.

# Help Tortoise Reach the Finish Line!





## Friendship

The moral of Aesop’s original fable called “The Hare and the Tortoise” is: **Slow and steady wins the race.** The play *Fable-ous!* invites us to think about different ideas, like the advantages of slowing down and noticing things, and the value of friendship. Below, draw a picture of one (or a few!) of your friends.



## **FURTHER CLASSROOM ADVENTURES**

### **Drama Games relating to *Fable-ous!***

*In our Lifeline residencies, we use theatre games to not only teach the basics of performance, but also to explore themes in the student matinees. Below are some games you can play with your class that touch upon some of the concepts conveyed in the production.*

#### **Pace Game** *(to explore rates of speed)*

**Ages:** K and Up

**How to Play:** With students in their own self-space, talk about animals that they consider to be the fastest in the animal kingdom. Choose one (maybe “cheetah”) and have students run in place at “cheetah pace.” Then talk about animals that generally move at a more moderate pace (maybe “humans”) and have students run or walk in place at “human pace.” Then talk about the slowest animals, and choose one. (Perhaps “sloth”) Have students move in place at “sloth pace.” (The group may have chosen 3 different animals: gazelle/raccoon/snail, or whatever.) The leader calls out the paces and the students run or walk in place: “Human pace! Sloth pace! Cheetah pace!” The next, more advanced, step is for the leader to call out activities to be pantomimed: “Building a sand castle – sloth pace!” “Making a sandwich – cheetah pace!” Make sure students are still doing each specific movement of the task, even when moving at cheetah pace.

#### **Character Interview** *(to explore point of view)*

**Ages:** 3rd and above

**How to Play:** Focusing on a specific character from *Fableous*, ask a volunteer to come up and “be” that character for a Q&A with the class. The student is asked to consider not only the physicality of their character, but also the words and feelings he or she might use in such a setting. The class speaks to this actor as the character and asks them questions about how they felt at certain points in the play. For instance, different characters will have different answers to the question: “Who were you rooting for to win: the Tortoise or the Hare?” “How do you like to spend your free time?” “Do you have any words of wisdom for our audience?” Kids can choose to be minor characters, too: “Fox, what made those grapes so special?” “Boy, why did you say there was a Wolf when there was nothing there?”

#### **Animal Sculptures** *(to explore working together)*

**Ages:** K and up

**How To Play:** Put students into teams of two, and demonstrate the exercise with one of the pairs first. Explain that each duo is going to choose an animal, and then together create one frozen sculpture of that animal, trying to capture each of its parts. Ask the model pair of students what animal they would like to create, and commend them for coming to agreement quickly. Then coach them, asking, “If you’re going to create a lion, what’s one part that you’d want to show? The head and the mane? How can you create that?” Help them physicalize that. Then ask the other student what remaining parts he/she will create with their body, and make sure the two are touching and connected, so that they look like one animal. Give all the pairs a few minutes, and then let each group show their animal to everyone, letting students guess which animal has been created.

#### **Emotion Chairs** *(to explore our feelings)*

**Ages:** 2<sup>nd</sup> and up

**How to Play:** Put four to five chairs up on stage. Assign each chair an emotion that will not change. Some of the emotions could be things like “desperate,” “terrified” or “joyful.” Invite students to come up and sit in the chairs. There are several ways to assign lines: You can give each chair a specific line to say or you can give each child a specific line to say no matter which chair they are on or you can give all the students the same line, etc. The audience can come up with the lines if you are working on a particular story. The point is that each child in a chair says a line with the emotion of the chair they are sitting in. Go down the row with the students saying their lines. Then have the students switch chairs and say the lines with a different emotion.

# Student Review of *Fable-ous!*

By: \_\_\_\_\_

I give this play a (circle the number of stars): ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

My favorite part of the play was \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My favorite character was \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If I had to choose what I liked best, I would choose (circle one)

the story      the characters      the music      the costumes      the scenery

because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **KidSeries Teacher Comment Form**

We'd love to hear from you! Please fill out this comment form, and get it back to us one of two ways: Either mail it to Julie Ganey, Education Director, Lifeline Theatre, 6912 North Glenwood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60626, or email it back to us at [julie@lifelinetheatre.com](mailto:julie@lifelinetheatre.com). If your students have completed review sheets, we'd love to see those too!

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_\_\_ Number of Students: \_\_\_\_\_

Show your class saw: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you attended a Lifeline KidSeries show before? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

If yes, which one(s) have you seen?

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you read your class the book before coming to see the show? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

What was the strongest part of the show for you, or what did you like best?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What was the weakest part of the show for you, or what did you like least?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you bring your students to another performance at Lifeline? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which activities in the study guide were most beneficial to your students?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us about any other books you would like to see Lifeline adapt:

\_\_\_\_\_

(optional) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_