



TREEHOUSE
SHAKERS®

The Littlest Cove
STUDY GUIDE



TREEHOUSE
SHAKERS®
Presents

**The Littlest
Cove**

FOR AGES 3 - 6
An Immersive Experience Play
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#thelittlestcove

THE PERFORMANCE

The Littlest Cove **An Immersive Discovery Play**

For Ages 3-6

Told Through Music, Dance, and Story

The Littlest Cove is an immersive discovery play for the very young, ages 3-6. The play follows the lives of 3 unusual humans, who reside on the edge of a small coastal inlet, off an island, that no one in the entire world has ever discovered before. Audiences, who are seated in a large boat, soon discover that they too, are a part of this enchanting world and are immersed in the storytelling through play, exploration and community interactions with the set, props and performers.

Conceived, written and directed by Mara McEwin, and choreographed by Emily Bunning, The Littlest Cove has audiences explore everyday activities with the creatures set up in different areas of the theater. At the fishing hole, there is a place to engage with the puppetry fish. The audience also gathers the wood for the fire, which are created as soft pillows. There is an area of gardening made up of soft felt vegetables, and another area where audiences can “make” the food from the garden vegetables and fish and cook it over the newly made fire. In one area the audience weaves tiny baskets, and in another they make up a tiny song, where one of the crew members also teaches a tiny dance. All the while, the creatures and sea captain mingle in and out of the play space, with songs, dance and interactions. Full of wonder, visuals, tactile and interactive experiences, and oftentimes funny, The Littlest Cove strives to create a culture of inclusiveness, kindness and adventure.



BEFORE SEEING THE PERFORMANCE

AGES 3-4

- ❑ This Age loves learning about Life in the Sea.
- ❑ Introduce different creatures who live in and by the Sea.
- ❑ Have your students make the sounds of each sea creature animal (whale, fish, crab, sandpiper, seagull.)
- ❑ Ask how each animal moves.
- ❑ Play a dance game: Turn on music and have your child move like a specific sea animal, or an animal who lives on the seashore, and then stop the music and have them change animals.
- ❑ Discuss jobs by the Sea: Fisherman, Captain, Skipper, Marine Scientist, Scuba Diver
- ❑ Explain where our water comes from.
- ❑ In the Littlest Cove, young people have the chance to plant a pretend garden. Plant a seed and watch it grow; discuss what the seed needs to grow.
- ❑ Talk about where our food comes from.

Resource Books:

Over and Under the Pond by Kate Messner

We Are Water Protectors by Carole Lindstrom

Swashby by the Sea by Beth Ferry

Swimmy by Leo Lionni

Big Book of the Blue (The Big Book Series) by Yuval Zommer

Mister Seahorse By Eric Carle



AGES 5-6

- ❑ Introduce different creatures who live in and by and in the Sea.
- ❑ Talk about different jobs by the Sea. Fisherman, Captain, Skipper, Marine Veterinarian, Scuba Diver, Marine Scientist
- ❑ Talk about the different shapes you find on the Sea; Stars, Curvy Lines, Straight Lines. Make an art project using Sea Shapes. And salt to the paper and make the watercolor have textures like the ocean.
- ❑ Show Different Images of Coves
- ❑ Talk about what a Cove is. In the Littlest Cove, the play takes place in a cove.
 - A cove is a small type of bay or coastal inlet. Coves usually have narrow, restricted entrances, are often circular or oval, and are often situated within a larger bay.
- ❑ Visit a local aquarium.
- ❑ In the Littlest Cove, audiences have a small garden they have a chance to plant. Talk about the cycle of food, and what foods come from the ground.

- ❑ Plant a seed and watch it grow: Discuss what the plant needs to grow.
- ❑ Garden Yoga: Plant a garden with your body: In Child's Pose, you are the seed. Grow tall to standing. Lift one leg to balance in Tree Pose. Pretend to water the Tree Poses and give sun with a Sun Salutation. Maybe someone could even sit under the Tree's shade!

Resource Books:

The Ocean Calls: A Haenyeo Mermaid Story by Tina Cho

We Are Water Protectors by Carole Lindstrom

A Busy Day at The Farm By Doreen Cronin

The Farm Alphabet Book by Jane Miller

The Little Red Hen by Paul Galdone

Hello Lighthouse by Sophie Blackall

AGES 6 & UP

- ❑ How is food grown? Discuss food cycles with your class.
- ❑ Have each child plant a seed and watch it grow in class.
- ❑ Watch a video about life in the ocean. Or better yet take your class to the aquarium and explore the different sea creatures.
- ❑ Have your class act out a short poem about the ocean. Nursery rhymes or finger tales are simple, but can be acted out in numerous ways. Multiple students can play one character at a time.

Resource Books:

Ocean Animals for Kids: A Junior Scientist's Guide to Whales, Sharks and Other Marine Life by Bethanie Hestermann and Josh Hestermann

Port Side Pirates by Oscar Seaworthy



AFTER SEEING THE PERFORMANCE

1. After seeing **The Littlest Cove**, discuss it with your class.
2. Talk about community. In the play, the three humans work together to make their lives easier. How? They chop wood, make food, fish, tell poems, songs and dance.
3. Begin to introduce the concept of community. What are some communities we can name. Start small and build on this concept, depending on the age.
 - ❑ **Social community** - the community of your peers and teachers you have at school.
 - ❑ **Urban community** - lots of people living in a small area or neighborhood like New York City.

- **Suburban community** - small cities or villages with fewer people living in an area.
- 4. Who were the characters in **The Littlest Cove**?
 - a. Who was their favorite character and why? Talk about the movement. How did the actor's use movement to help tell a story.
- 5. Talk about what happened in the play.
- 6. What instruments was the Skipper and the Sea Captain playing during the show? (Bell chimes, Kazoo, Pitch Pipe, Voice)
- 7. In *The Littlest Cove*, the three humans who live on the Cove, Oishen, Murin & Eire, all have unique walks. Can your students make up a specific walk for themselves?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. (Age 3 & up) Have students create their own Sea Tales. You can have them sit in a circle and each make up a part to the story. It's okay if the story doesn't make sense; just encourage students to use their creativity.
2. (Ages 5 & up) Have children create their own story about life in a Little Cove. They could create this together as a group or as individuals. They could write or draw their stories, tell the stories out loud, draw their stories or put on a play based on their stories.
3. (Ages 3 & up) Act out a story from the Sea. You could choose a common song or nursery rhyme that involve the sea The teacher can narrate and choose students to be different characters. You can have many students play the same part if more than one wants to act out a role. This could be a long project or even a ten-minute project. Tell the story to the students and then have them act it out around the classroom.
4. (Ages 3 & up) Learn a song. This is a variation on Row, Row, Row Your Boat
 Row Row, Row Your Boat
 Fun to sing as an action song, invite pairs of children to sit facing each other holding hands. They can 'row' back and forth as they sing.
 Row row, row your boat,
 Gently down the stream,
 Merrily merrily, merrily, merrily,
 Life is such a dream.
 Row row, row your boat,
 Gently down the stream,
 If you see a crocodile,
 Don't forget to scream!
5. (3 & up) Ask your students to imitate the body movements of different Sea Animals. After they have mastered their animal movements, have them add sounds, or even abstract dance. What happens when two or more of the "sea creatures" meet each other? You can take this exercise further by creating masks to further enhance the animal characters.
6. (3 & up) Enjoy food from the farm. Invite students to study different vegetables or fruit that is grown on the farm and make these then into foods for snack time.
7. (3 & up) Make a Fish Puppet with your class. You will need: White Paper Plates, Construction Paper, Popsicle sticks, Crayons, Tissue paper (optional), Glue and tape. Use the Paper Plate as the background, you can color it like the ocean, or use tissue paper and make a mosaic collage, once that is dry, use fish cut outs on

construction paper, and have your students make their fish with construction paper and crayons. If older students have them create the fish entirely. For younger students, or for a faster project, have the fish pre-cut and students decorate. Glue the popsicle stick to attach to the paper plate (might also need a piece of strong tape to secure), then glue the fish to the water background. For older kids have them glue on googly eyes to their fish. Have your class make up a story about their fish.

For More Puppet Making Ideas, contact us at contactus@treehouseshakings.com



THE LITTLEST COVE RESIDENCIES AND WORKSHOPS

Ages 3-6

Treehouse Shakers offers several residencies and workshops in conjunction with **The Littlest Cove**, connecting young students to the performance they are about to experience. Students are exposed to movement, storytelling, creative drama, and puppet making. Treehouse Shakers takes pride in tailoring our curriculum to your students' needs.

OPTION 1

3-Day Workshops: Students are given one-day introduction workshops (spread out over 3 days) that include puppet-making with household objects, storytelling and creative drama based on world farm animal folktales, and creative movement. Each workshop lasts 45 minutes for 4-6 and tailored specifically with each age in mind. Age 3 workshop lasts 30 minutes.

OPTION 2

3-Day Workshops: gearing up to the performance of **The Littlest Cove** that are either in storytelling/creative drama, or creative movement.

OPTION 3

6, 9, 15, 20-Day Residencies: Students spend 6-20 days (can be once or twice a week) with the teaching artist in creating their own farm animal puppet, creating a farm play of their own, or in creative movement.

OPTION 4

15-Day Performance Residency: Older students create a dance-play of their own with creative movement, storytelling and puppets. Two teaching artists for each class are provided. 45 minutes.

MORE ABOUT TREEHOUSE SHAKERS

ABOUT TREEHOUSE SHAKERS

Treehouse Shakers, Inc., a non-profit dance and theater company, was co-founded in 1997. Treehouse Shakers has created and performed 19 original dance-plays for young audiences and adults in many established performance venues, including theaters, festivals and schools across the nation. Most recently the company was awarded Creatives Rebuild New York for our LGBTQIA+ initiatives. We also received a commission from Performing Arts Center at SUNY Purchase under the leadership of Executive Director, Seth Soloway. The company has received the CUNY Dance Initiative, Flushing Town Hall 2015-2022 Space Grant, selected artists for the New York State Presenters Network Roster, and were chosen to participate in the prestigious BAM Professional Development Program in association with the DeVos Institute of Arts Management for the 2014-2015 cycle. Treehouse Shakers created and performed the dance programming for the Television show, **Alex & The Kaleidoscope**, which won an Emmy. In partnership with UOutlook and Star America Preschools, they began leading drama camps in Shanghai and Beijing, China and surrounding provinces in 2019.

Currently, Treehouse Shakers has several original performances for young audiences on a rotating tour across the nation including: **Let's Talk About IT!**, a piece for teens. **Let's Talk About IT!** incorporates the vocabulary of dance, world folklore, real-life stories, and video interviews of everyday teens. **Hatched**, for the youngest viewers ages 0-6, is about baby animals and their life on the farm. **Under the Tangle**, is about an orphaned young girl who becomes trapped in an enchanted labyrinth, for ages 8 and up. **Olive & Pearl**, for the very young, ages 2-5, follows the story of a young girl Olive and her grandmother. **The Boy Who Grew Flowers**, based on the book of the same name, is about diversity, empathy and celebrating individualism. Our new show for babies, **Flutter**, is for ages 6-18 months. **Pillow Fort**, is our 9 part web-series for ages 3-7, and **Dance Break** an interactive dance series for classrooms. **The Deepest Breath**, for ages 9-13, premiered Spring 2023, alongside **The Littlest Cove**, an immersion performance for the very young, ages 3-6.

Since 2004 Treehouse Shakers has dedicated itself in providing free and low-income tickets and residencies to underserved, low-income and differently abled communities. We offer Title One schools tickets to the performances and have created strong relationships with organizations across NYC to reach these disadvantaged communities. Many of the students we serve not only live in poverty, but they have also never left their NYC neighborhood or experienced a live professional performance in a city that prides itself on being a cultural capital. Treehouse Shakers also offers **Relaxed Performances in our New York City Seasons**. These performances are part of our commitment to making our work accessible to all. Relaxed Performances are designed to welcome audience members who will benefit from a less restrictive audience environment, including (but not limited to) those with sensory processing conditions, Autism, and learning or intellectual disabilities. Everyone is invited to these performances. Children with the tools of imagination are more likely to imagine themselves into a better set of circumstances as adults.

We would love to hear from you!

Send us your drawings from *The Littlest Cove*, or your activities from the study guide.

We will post on our website and blog.

Thank you!

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