

# Catapult Thyself into Theatre!

A Multidisciplinary Unit on How Theatre Comes Alive

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This unit of study is designed to complement The Children's Museum of Indianapolis' exhibit *Onstage and Behind the Scenes* and the Lilly Theater production of *Young King Arthur*.

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
Content Areas and Grade Levels .....	4
Enduring Idea: How does theatre come alive? .....	4
Key Concepts and Questions: .....	4
Unit Outline .....	5
Central Lesson I – Pre-production Learning .....	6
Experience 1 – The Riddle .....	8
Experience 2 – Book of Days: Creating Your Personal Medieval Journal.....	11
Experience 3 – Book Share .....	13
Experience 4 – “Who Art Thou?” .....	15
Central Lesson II - Backstage Learning .....	17
Experience 5 – Props: Designing and Constructing Coins.....	19
Experience 6.1 – Character Development: Using Questions as Leads.....	22
Experience 6.2 – Character Development: Role Playing .....	25
Experience 6.3 – Character Development: Thoughtshots.....	26
Experience 7 – Music and Sound Effects.....	28
Bonus Huzzah! – Special Effect Props: Catapults .....	31
Central Lesson III - Onstage Learning.....	33
Experience 8 – Improvisation and Movement on Stage.....	34
Experience 9 – Setting the Stage.....	37
Experience 10 – Rehearsal and Festival Preparations .....	39
Central Lesson IV – Performance Learning.....	43
Experience 11 – Role Play for a Day: A Medieval Festival .....	43
Handout Manuscripts .....	47
Medieval Chronology and Notes .....	56
Theatre Terminology .....	58
Medieval Terminology .....	60
Indiana State Standards — Grade 4 .....	61
Indiana State Standards — Grade 5 .....	64
Teacher Resource Books.....	67
Children’s Books .....	68
Theatre Resource Sites.....	70
Middle Ages Resource Sites .....	71
Other Media Resources .....	72

## Introduction

What child does not love to pretend play? Whether it's playing dress up, telling a story in song, pretending with action figures or mimicking a favorite television character, children have a natural interest in making drama. This unit, as well as The Children's Museum's exhibit *Onstage and Behind the Scenes*, capitalizes on children's innate attraction to theatre and answers the question **just how does theatre come alive?** Using the Middle Ages as a context, children are "catapulted" across time and culture to explore the elements needed to produce theatre and experience how to work in partnership to create a dramatic presentation.

But why have a unit on theatre? Class time is precious; aren't there more important things to study than theatre? Why go to The Children's Museum to see an exhibit on theatre? There are multiple reasons:

- 1) The study of theatre can bring enormous excitement to the learning process. Clearly, the language arts (specifically reading, writing, and talking about a topic of personal relevance) can promote intellectual adventurousness in children. Why not further nurture the excitement of inquiry by having children perform what they have learned? Through performance and the study of theatre, students enhance their written and oral communication skills, demonstrate their understandings and expand their intellectual horizons.
- 2) Theatre can be an enchanting vehicle to time travel and experience history. Throughout this unit, students have a chance to experience theatre from a medieval perspective. As a result, children increase their appreciation for diverse ways of life, gain recognition of self and others, feel more connected with humanity, and live life more deeply and abundantly.
- 3) A strong message in the museum exhibit and this unit is that theatre is a collaborative process. The act of making theatre (with its interconnected elements such as developing a character, writing a script, and designing sets and costumes) helps children to develop a spirit of cooperation, perseverance, self-esteem and self-discipline, and to add another tool to their repertoire of self-expression. These are skills that contribute to a successful life.
- 4) The notion of putting on a show is so universally appealing to children, why not make the most of those desires by integrating lessons in social studies, literature, writing, math and science with theatre? In this unit, theatre is blended with the rest of the curriculum and the results are entertaining as well as educational. With increased interest comes increased competence and enhanced expectations for learning more.
- 5) Lastly, there is an intrinsic value to studying theatre. As an audience member or as a participant, theatre can be a transcending experience that we can feel intensely, yet barely describe. Children too can make a valued contribution expressing themselves and dramatizing with a playwright's vision to make enchanting theatrical experiences.

## Medieval Festival Performance

What sets this unit apart is that students choose what best suits their interests and skills and as a result they become more deeply immersed in the topic. Many of the unit's learning experiences are left open-ended, including choices relating to their final dramatic presentation given in the context of a medieval festival. By combining theatre with language arts and history studies, learners research and create their own medieval characters complete with sketches of their character (costume renderings), written description of their characters' goals and life challenges, and original stories based on their characters. Some students may be intrigued with the life of a traveling troubadour and write a song to perform, while another may be fascinated with castle design and choose to be a stonecutter, or a group of students could decide to write and perform a puppet play. Whether a student is a falconer or friar, mapmaker or midwife, in this unit students discover the hard work and the exhilaration of making theatrical enchantments happen!

## Content Areas and Grade Levels

This unit is targeted for children in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades to use in conjunction with or independently from the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis’ exhibit *Onstage and Behind the Scenes* and the museum’s theatre production of *Young King Arthur*.

Integrating learning episodes in the fine arts, language arts, social studies, math and science, “Catapult Thyself into Theatre!” encourages the development of self-expression and the development of communication skills by inspiring individual creativity through writing, acting, speaking, storytelling, and designing.

## Enduring Idea: How does theatre come alive?

Telling stories through theatre is an art found across cultures and time. A variety of artists and craftspeople are needed to make theatre happen. People work collaboratively and make many choices regarding characters, drama, action, scenery, costumes, props, lighting and special effects.

### Key Concepts and Questions:

- **Historical and Social Context** — celebrating humanity using drama as a stimulus. Through the study of theatre, how did people live in other times and cultures, and what does this say about life and us today?

Students journey back in time to explore the lives of medieval people — their work and pastimes, their challenges and hopes. Students use this information as a basis to develop characters that they will portray at a medieval festival. In addition, students examine current day connections in this unit’s “Past and Present” discussion questions.

- **Production** — creating as a means to communicate with others — to express ideas, to teach lessons and to entertain. What skills and knowledge are necessary to create a theatrical production? Who are the people that make theatre happen?

Throughout this unit students study the elements that are necessary to make theatre come alive (this includes character and script development, music and sound effect choices as well as costume, prop, and set design). Students put their learning into practice by creating their own dramatic presentations/performances at a medieval festival.

- **Aesthetics** — discovering and understanding the meanings and values in student’s own work, and other’s creative endeavors. What are the elements of a good story or dramatic production? In what ways does theatre contribute to our shared storehouse of culture? What is the value of one-of-a-kind beauty?

In this unit of study, exposing children to the best in children’s literature and medieval art nurtures sensitivity to creative work. Read-aloud experiences, respectful examination of medieval manuscript illuminations and exercises in dramatic story writing are some examples of how this is achieved.

- **Criticism**—responding to and making judgments about students’ own work along with other’s contributions. What makes this an interesting story to me? How does theatre enliven and enrich my life?

Daily opportunities are provided for students to reflect on their own work and other’s through class-wide and small group discussions and by writing in their journals (their *Books of Days*). Students are also encouraged to fill out self-evaluation rubrics on their final festival presentations.

## Unit Outline

Throughout this three-week unit, students become acquainted with the processes that are involved in creating theatre using the Middle Ages as a context culminating with a medieval festival and feast where students play medieval characters.

The unit is divided into four lessons: (1) Pre-production Learning refers to planning and organizing the people and procedures that are involved in making a theatre production so that the remaining activities go smoothly. (2) Backstage Learning involves many of the design elements such as props, costuming, music and sound effects as well as character and story development. (3) Onstage Learning refers to actor's preparations and stage design. (4) And finally, Performance Learning corresponds to the day students assume their roles. Each of these hands-on, multidisciplinary lessons takes students closer in preparing their theatrical event — a medieval festival where students play the roles of medieval characters that they have researched and developed.

Within this framework, each learning experience begins with a “Mental Joust” that identifies the essential question(s) for that experience. Background information is provided for easy reference, along with an estimate of the time it will take to complete the experience. (When necessary, most experiences can be easily adjusted to accommodate your teaching schedule.) “Worthy Words” is a vocabulary list specific to the experience, and “Past and Present” offers discussion options for making historical connections with today. “Exhibit Connections” provides information on the correlated learning opportunities that are available at The Children’s Museum exhibit *Onstage and Behind the Scenes* and the museum’s theatre production of *Young King Arthur*.

Ongoing assessments take place throughout this unit in several forms. Students create their own versions of a medieval journal called their *Book of Days*. The first half of their *Book of Days* is devoted to their medieval character development. The second portion documents students’ work on “challenges” (in-class assignments that are related to this unit, but are not directly associated with character development). Students are also evaluated through participation in class discussions, the completion of challenges, and final dramatic presentations. Students’ self-evaluation will be evidenced through their *Book of Days* entries, and their presentation evaluations.

A motivational aspect of this unit is for students to earn points in the form of coins enabling them to be knighted by the teacher-king/queen and achieve the title of sir or dame. These coins are also used to purchase food at the festival feast that occurs at the end of the unit. Coins are awarded at the discretion of the teacher, but it is suggested that coins go to the entire class whenever a learning experience has gone well. This way every student who participates is ensured of experiencing success.

## References and Resources:

Dobbs, Stephen Mark. *Learning in and through Art: A Guide to Discipline-Based Art Education*. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Trust, 1998.

Wilson, Brent. *The Quiet Evolution: Changing the Face of Arts Education*. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Trust, 1997.

## Central Lesson I – Pre-production Learning

**Objectives:** To develop an understanding of the pre-production preparations that go into creating theatre. To establish a means for students to document their learning.

Pre-production is a film and theatre term that refers to the earliest preparations for a production. This involves a great deal of planning to ensure the later stages of production go smoothly. Money must be raised to fund the production. A cast and crew need to be hired. A place to practice and put on the theatre production must be found and scheduled. The script needs to be developed or chosen. A time line is delineated for when certain activities are accomplished. In other words, pre-production lays the groundwork for the workings of many people to come together to put on a theatre production.

However, in this unit students do not need to find funding for their production, find a stage or hire a cast and crew. Instead, pre-production is laying the groundwork for learning as students begin a theatrical journey — a journey that culminates with the creation of a distinctive dramatic production of their own in the context of a medieval festival.

Not all students find meaning in the same way. The following pre-production experiences prepare students for learning by introducing them to this unit in a unique and compelling way, capturing students' attention and engaging them in ways that make use of students' multiple intelligences:

1) To heighten students' interest in the upcoming unit, a mysterious suitcase (or box or envelope) is delivered to the classroom. Inside are some objects or photographs that suggest medieval times, along with a riddle. Students use the clues and try to guess the answer to the riddle to discover what journey they will be embarking on. (Interpersonal Learning)

2) Medieval history is used as a vehicle for students' learning about theatre. Students consider what they already know about the Middle Ages and are prompted to ask their own questions about what they would like to learn. This way, the teacher can gauge students' current understanding of the Middle Ages and learners shared responses are used to spark additional thoughts from classmates. (Interpersonal Learning)

3) Some students' interests in character or story development may be ignited in a read-aloud book experience from children's literature. (Verbal/linguistic intelligence) Books can be a deeply enriching and enchanting experience for children. They bring lessons in history, society and culture to life while providing excellent examples of character and story development.

4) Students create their own versions of a medieval journal (*Book of Days*) that will chronicle their learning throughout the unit. This provides a tool for assessment and a means for self-expression. When students are engaged in creating, the process of documentation can help them reflect on experiences in a more compelling and personally salient way. (Intrapersonal learning)

5) Students design and build their own version of medieval coins. (Visual/spatial learning) These coins will be used as a motivation tool toward becoming a knight (earning the title of sir or dame) and will be used as a theatrical prop to purchase food at the medieval feast that will occur on the last day of this unit.

6) Learners join in a game that encourages them to consider medieval character options for their final festival performance. (Bodily/kinesthetic learning) Through this playful and nonthreatening guessing game, students learn about class structure and medieval occupations that are important in developing their character.

**Indiana Standards for 4<sup>th</sup> Grade that are addressed in Pre-production Learning:**

English/Language Arts Standard 1 – Reading: Word Recognition, Fluency and Vocabulary Development

Social Studies Standard 2 – Civics and Government

Visual Arts Standard 1 - Responding to Art: History

**Indiana Standards for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade that are addressed in Pre-production Learning:**

English/Language Arts Standard 1 – Reading: Word Recognition, Fluency and Vocabulary Development

Social Studies Standard 2 – Civics and Government

Visual Arts Standard 1 - Responding to Art: History

## Experience 1 – The Riddle

Pre-production refers to the most preliminary preparations for a theatre production. In this unit, pre-production relates to the initial preparations for students' learning. Using the Middle Ages as a vehicle for studying theatre, students' attention is captured with a curious and unusual event.

A mysterious suitcase (or box or envelope) with a riddle is delivered to the classroom. Students try to guess the riddle to discover what journey they will be embarking on and begin asking their own questions about the Middle Ages. How do we use this information in our pre-production preparations?

**Mental Joust:** What is the answer to the riddle? What theatrical journey are we embarking on? What do you know about the Middle Ages? What do you want to know? How do we use this information in our pre-production preparations?

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** a suitcase (or box or envelope) addressed to the class with a variety of articles inside that relates to the Middle Ages (such as a Robin Hood-type hat or jester's cap, a crown, a picture of a castle and a quill), photocopies of the three "Huzzah" riddle letters in separate envelopes marked "Open me first," "Open me second" and "Open me last" (These letters are located in the Handout Manuscripts section at the end of this unit).

**Worthy Words:** huzzah, Middle Ages, medieval, The Plague

### Riddle Procedure:

- 1) Someone from the school office delivers a suitcase (or box or envelope) with the name of the class clearly printed on top and says, "Here's a special delivery for your class."
- 2) Ask, "What do we have here? Does anyone know what this is about? Should we open it?"
- 3) Inside is an assortment of items and three envelopes. "Can anyone identify any of these items? How might these go together?"
- 4) Open and read each of the three letters in order and ask, "What do you think this means? What do you think *huzzah* means?" (*Huzzah* meant *hurray* a long time ago.) What's The Plague? (Rodents from ships spread a devastating disease, the Black Plague, when the fleas from the rats infested people.) Does anyone know the answer to this group of riddles?
- 5) Explain to the class that they will be going on a theatrical journey back to the Middle Ages. Ask, "What do you know about the Middle Ages? Have you learned anything about the Middle Ages from movies, TV or books? How about Robin Hood or King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table? What might you want to learn about the Middle Ages?"
- 6) Provide an overview to the class describing that in the next few weeks they will be studying medieval times, culminating with a festival and feast where they will each play the part of a medieval character.

**Tips to the Teacher:**

If finding objects relating to the Middle Ages is a problem, photographs or drawings of items in a large envelope along with the three riddle letters will work.

You may want to draw a KWL chart on bulletin-board paper as a reference for your class with the headings: What do you know, what do you want to know and what have you learned? Students could also create their own personal KWL charts to be completed later in the unit for self-assessment purposes.

The first day of this unit would be an ideal time to begin a read-aloud experience from children's literature for 15 to 30 minutes each day. Some delightful age-appropriate books with medieval characters and themes are listed below.

Branford, Henrietta. *Fire, Bed, and Bone*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 1998.

Cushman, Karen. *Catherine Called Birdy*. New York: Clarion Books, 1994.

Cushman, Karen. *The Midwife's Apprentice*. New York: Clarion Books, 1995.

De Angeli, Marguerite, *The Door in the Wall*. New York: Doubleday, 1949.

Fleishman, Sid. *The Whipping Boy*. Santa Barbara, CA: Cornerstone Books, 1986.

Gray, Elizabeth. *Adam of the Road*. New York: The Viking Press, 1942.

Hodges, Margaret. *St. George and the Dragon*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1984.

Hodges, Margaret. *The Kitchen Knight*. New York: Holiday House, 1990.

Pyle, Howard. *Otto of the Silver Hand*. New York: Dover Publishing, 1967.

**Tip to the teacher:**

The following books are specifically utilized in this unit. It is highly recommended that you make arrangements now, through your library, to ensure that they will be available to you at the necessary time.

Aliki. *A Medieval Feast*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1983.

Beckett, Wendy. *The Duke and the Peasant: Life in the Middle Ages*. New York: Prestel, 1997.

Cushman, Karen. *The Midwife's Apprentice*. New York: Clarion Books, 1995.

Fleishman, Sid. *The Whipping Boy*. Santa Barbara, CA: Cornerstone Books, 1986.

Hodges, Margaret. *St. George and the Dragon*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1984.

## **Experience 2 – Book of Days: Creating Your Personal Medieval Journal**

Theatre companies document their pre-production activities with written contracts and accounting books of how money is spent. Continuing our pre-production preparations for our theatrical journey, each student builds a personal *Book of Days* to help document his progress throughout this unit. The first half of each student's book will be devoted to the development and analysis of a medieval character that the student will portray during the final festival presentation/performance. A strong focus of the *Book of Days* will be developing a story from their character's life. The title of the first half of the Book of Days will be "A \_\_\_\_\_'s Quest," depending on the character's occupation or a name the student selects. In the second half of their *Book of Days*, titled "Challenges," students will maintain a running account of their experiences with in-class assignments. This will document each student's progress in becoming a knight (sir or dame), serve as an individualized assessment tool for the teacher and as a self-assessment tool for the student. When students are engaged in creating, the process of documentation can help them reflect on their experiences in a more personally salient way.

Books in the Middle Ages were rare and precious. Only very wealthy or scholarly people owned any. Every book was made by hand starting with parchment (thinly stretched skins of goat, sheep, or calves that were dried and scraped clean). Scribes and monks then wrote the text by hand, using quills or reeds as pens. During the late Middle Ages people began to enjoy reading adventure stories about great legends. Other books marked the changing months or the accounts of an estate. Some nobles kept a *Book of Days* filled with daily prayers and/or stories to help mark the passage of time — a medieval version of the modern diary.

**The Mental Joust:** What were medieval books like? How are they different from today's books? What is a *Book of Days* and how do you make one? What would your life be like if you never learned to read? What is the importance of your *Book of Days* in the pre-production preparations for the medieval festival?

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** a roll of brown package paper, standard-size typing paper, raffia or thin string or yarn, scissors, glue sticks, a push pin or awl, felt tip markers, colored pencils and pens

**Worthy Words:** calligraphy, parchment, illuminated, Psalter, manuscripts, quill, monk, scribe

### **Procedure:**

- 1) Show students photographs of books from the Middle Ages. (See reference list for suggestions.)
- 2) Discuss: How are these books different from what we have today? What makes these books so special and beautiful? (Point out how pages are illuminated around the edges and often have the first letter on the page ornamented.) What are medieval books made of? How do you think they were made? Who would have owned a book like this? What do these books say about what life was like in the Middle Ages? What do you think a scribe's daily routine was like? What would be good/not good about this job?
- 3) Describe how *Books of Days* were medieval versions of our diaries. Explain that students will be making their own *Book of Days* to document their work during this unit.

### **How to Make a *Book of Days***

- 1) Fold 8 sheets of standard photocopier paper in half to make the text sheets.
- 2) Use brown paper to simulate leather for the cover. Measure and cut the cover sheet 1/2 inch taller and wider than the text paper and fold in half.
- 3) With an awl or pushpin, poke several holes down the fold line.
- 4) Match up the holes and thread raffia or thin string through the pages and tie in a knot or bow.
- 5) Decorate cover using colored markers, pens, and pencils.
- 6) Write the heading "Challenges" on the center of the page, half way through the *Book of Days*. Decorate the "C" in medieval fashion and illuminate the edge of one or more pages.

### **Past and Present:**

In medieval times, there were few books and most people could not read or write. If they did, it was in Latin (which would not have been the native language, but was the language of the Church and learned people). What would life be like without books? Is it possible to live today and not know how to read or write? There actually are people who have not learned these skills. How would it affect your life and your family if you never learned to read? What problems would you encounter?

**Tip to the Teacher:** Have students respond to the above questions in the second half of their Book of Days under the heading "Challenges."

### **References & Resources:**

Beckett, Wendy. *The Duke and The Peasant: Life in the Middle Ages*. New York: Prestel, 1997.

Howarth, Sarah. *What Do We Know about the Middle Ages?* New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1995.

Jordan, William Chester. *The Middle Ages: A Watts Guide for Children*. New York: Grolier Publishing, 1999.

Langley, Andrew. *Medieval Life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.

LaPlantz, Shereen. *Cover to Cover: Creative Techniques for Making Beautiful Journals and Albums*. Ashville, NC: Lark Books, 1995.

Oakes, Catherine. *Exploring the Past: The Middle Ages*. New York: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1989.

Wright, Sylvia. *The Age of Chivalry: English Society 1200-1400*. New York: Warwick Press, 1988.

### Experience 3 – Book Share

Now that students have made their *Books of Days*, the next step in the pre-production process is for students to consider what medieval characters they would like to research and play in their festival presentations/performances given on the final day of this unit. Picture books provide a wealth of information about the various occupations and roles that people had during the Middle Ages. This experience helps students to identify and define their character options and to think about some character choices that match their particular interests.

**Mental Joust:** What occupations did people of the Middle Ages have? What are some character options for my festival performance? How are occupations in the Middle Ages different or similar to people's professions today? What role will my character play in our festival?

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** a variety of books relating to the Middle Ages or medieval times (suggested titles are listed at the end of this experience under References and Resources), paper and pencils, a large sheet of paper, wide felt-tip markers, photocopies of the rubrics for the final presentation and *Book of Days* and of the handout titled "Hear ye! Hear ye! Calling all mummers, drummers, and monks" (Copy-ready handouts are located at the end of this unit under Handout Manuscripts.)

**Worthy Words:** bailiff, barber-surgeon, blacksmith, cobbler, court jester, falconer, friar, herald, knight, magistrate, merchant, midwife, miller, monk, mummer, nobleman/woman, nun, page, peasant/serf, peddler, spinster, squire, stonemason, troubadour/minstrel

#### Procedure:

- 1) Pass out a variety of books about the Middle Ages or medieval times to students divided into small groups.
- 2) Point out books or pages that give information about some of the "want to know" topics the class previously discussed.
- 3) After students have reviewed their books, ask them to make a list of occupations or roles that people from the Middle Ages had.
- 4) Write the list on the large paper and define the occupations students are unfamiliar with.

#### Tip to the Teacher:

To help students consider their options for developing a medieval character for their final festival presentation, give each student a photocopy of the list of medieval characters (titled "Hear ye! Hear ye! Calling all mummers, drummers and monks!") provided at the end of the unit under Handout Manuscripts. Rubrics used in evaluating students' presentations and their *Books of Days* are also provided under Handout Manuscripts and can be given to students to help guide their planning process.

**Past and Present:**

What medieval occupations on the list are no longer found today? What happened to those occupations? What occupations today do you think may disappear in the future? What occupations do you think are best for men/women? Is a woman less feminine if she is a soldier? Is a man less masculine if he takes care of children?

**Exhibit Connection:**

You can see how a theatre production is made at The Children's Museum's exhibit *Onstage and Behind the Scenes*; and you can see an actual play, *Young King Arthur*, in the museum's Lilly Theater.

**References and Resources:**

Howarth, Sarah. *What Do We Know about the Middle Ages?* New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1995.

Langley, Andrew. *Medieval Life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.

Oakes, Catherine. *Exploring the Past: The Middle Ages*. New York: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1989.

Steel, Philip. *Knights*. New York: Kingfisher, 1998.

Weisberg, Barbara. *The Big Golden Book of Knights and Castles*. Racine, WI: Western Publishing Company, 1993.

Wright, Sylvia. *The Age of Chivalry: English Society 1200-1400*. New York: Warwick Press, 1988.

## **Experience 4 – “Who Art Thou?”**

### **A Game about Medieval Occupations and Social Class**

Pre-production preparations for students' learning continue with a game that helps students to define the character options that they will develop for their final festival presentation. Students are introduced to the feudal and class systems that so influenced people's lives in the Middle Ages. Knowing how people ranked in medieval society provides important clues as to how people lived, their fears and hopes, the challenges they faced, what they looked like and even how they moved. (For example, a noble person would likely have divergent aspirations in life from a peasant farmer and would dress, walk and act quite differently.) This kind of information assists students in thinking about their historical character choices for their festival performances.

**Mental Joust:** How was society organized in the Middle Ages? What is the feudal system? How is the feudal system similar or different from our democracy today? What medieval role do I want to play? Why is this important in our pre-production preparations?

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** cardstock, scissors, thick felt-tip pen, masking tape, chalk and chalkboard

**Worthy Words:** feudal system, social class

#### **Before the game begins:**

- 1) Using cardstock, construct a large triangle out of nine smaller triangles. (See diagram.)
- 2) With a broad felt-tip marker, write an occupation in large letters on each triangle. Five triangles should have occupations from the lowest class (people who worked), three triangles should have occupations from the middle class (people who fought) and one triangle should list an occupation from the highest class (people who prayed).
- 3) Draw an outline of the large triangle and the interior nine triangles on the chalkboard as a template.

#### **How to play “Who Art Thou?”**

- 1) Eastern European society during the Middle Ages had three distinct classes. Who do you suppose was at the top? Who was at the bottom? Who was in the middle? There were many more people at the bottom than the top. What kept the classes in place was the feudal system. Pledging your loyalty to your lord, count, duke or king meant you had to serve them by giving up part of your crop, money or even your life if war broke out — and that happened a lot during the Middle Ages!
- 2) Tape a triangle to a volunteer's back without showing the student what is written on it.
- 3) The class asks, “Who art thou?” The student turns around so the rest of the class can see what is printed on the triangle.
- 4) The student asks the class a series of yes or no questions and tries to guess what occupation he or she represents. The class cannot give clues, but can only answer with yes or no.
- 5) When the student correctly guesses who he is, the student removes the triangle from his back and places it in the appropriate social level on the large triangle template.
- 6) The game is repeated until the large triangle is completed.

**After the game:**

- 1) Ask students to write down three things they learned about people from the Middle Ages and their occupations in the second half of their *Book of Days* under "Challenges."
- 2) Ask each student to write down three medieval character choices, one from each social level, in their *Book of Days* under "Challenges."
- 3) The teacher reviews each student's choices as a means of assessing his or her understanding of the medieval social system and encourages development of one of the three. Doing this will help ensure a broad representation of characters within the classroom. Consideration may be given to students who wish to work in small groups for their final performance.

**Note:** Only the teacher can play the king or queen. Additionally, no students at this time can be a knight and hold the title of sir or dame. Those titles will be given after students' final presentations at the medieval festival.

**Past and Present:**

Which class from the Middle Ages has the most people in it? Why do you suppose the lowest level has so many people and the top level has so few? In a feudal system people at the top were thought to be more important than the individuals at the bottom. Whatever the king or Church leaders said, everyone had to obey! How is this similar or different from our democracy?

Many family names have come from the Middle Ages. In medieval times, a man could be known by his trade (John the miller), by his relationship to others (David, Will's son), or by a special characteristic (James the hunter). Do you have a medieval name? As you think about some medieval characters you may want to play, what name suits you best?

**References and Resources:**

Cairns, Trevor. *The Middle Ages*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications. 1975.

Hart, Avery and Paul Mantell. *Knights and Castles: 50 Hands-on Activities to Experience the Middle Ages*. Charlette, VT: Williamson Publishing. 1998.

Langley, Andrew. *Medieval Life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.

Wright, Sylvia. *The Age of Chivalry: English Society 1200-1400*. New York: Warwick Press, 1988.

## Central Lesson II - Backstage Learning

**Objectives:** To develop an understanding of the backstage collaborative processes involved in bringing theatre to life, specifically, developing a character, designing props and costumes, and selecting music and sound effects.

Now that much of the pre-production planning is in place, we can move forward with the extensive tasks of designing, developing and selecting elements that will enhance our theatre production. Actors begin developing their characters and skilled artists and craftspeople design and construct costumes, make-up, props, and scenery. Sound effects and music are also developed to support the performance. This takes a great deal of time, research, creativity and collaborative work on the part of many people in the cast and crew.

In this lesson, students sample the processes and the decisions that are involved in creating props, selecting music and sound effects, making a costume rendering and developing a character that they will role play during a medieval festival at the conclusion of this unit. These are not trivial tasks. From these first-hand experiences of how a theatre production is achieved, students can better develop a spirit of cooperation, perseverance, self-esteem and self-discipline. All are vital proficiencies in making a contribution to life.

The study of theatre also adds another tool to students' repertoire of self-expression so that they can more fully participate in the richness of life. Whether making a presentation of momentous proportion or simply reading a bedtime story to a child, the ability to make effective drama lends inspiration to life.

In the following backstage learning experiences, students continue their research for their medieval festival production. What did the Middle Ages look like and, equally important, what did life in the Middle Ages feel like? What were the daily challenges medieval people faced to survive? What were their hopes? Students examine paintings, books and music from the period to help capture what it was like to live in the Middle Ages. Additional probing discussion questions are found in the Past and Present sections of each experience to further prompt students to consider what they have learned and to help answer just how did people live in other times and cultures, and what does this say about life and us today?

At the end of this lesson is an optional experience, a Bonus Huzzah, where students design, build and test catapults. Although this can be classified as an example of a special-effects prop, this experience is not necessarily critical for the understanding of theatre. What this experience does provide is a means of incorporating a science and math experience in an exciting thematic way that naturally makes use of students' multiple intelligences.

**Indiana Standards for 4<sup>th</sup> Grade that are addressed in Backstage Learning:**

English/Language Arts Standard 5 – Writing: Writing Applications

Visual Arts Standard 9 – Creating Art: Production

Science Standard 1 – The Nature of Science and Technology

Math Standard 5 – Measurement

Music Standard 8 – Understanding music in relation to history and culture

**Indiana Standards for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade that are addressed in Backstage Learning:**

English/Language Arts Standard 4 – Writing: Writing Process

Social Studies Standard 4 – Economics

Science Standard 1 – The Nature of Science and Technology

Math Standard 5 – Measurement

Music Standard 8 – Understanding music in relation to history and culture

## **Experience 5 – Props: Designing and Constructing Coins**

Backstage in a theatre production, designers and craftspeople are creating props, sets and costumes that will enhance the play. In this backstage experience, students will be designing and constructing coins as a prop for their medieval characters to use. These coins serve as points toward becoming knighted sir or dame and are used to purchase food at the medieval feast. (Awarding coins is left to the discretion of the teacher whenever a learning experience goes well. It is preferable to give coins to the whole class to ensure that all students feel success.)

### **Coins**

Props are objects that actors use on stage. These items help actors “feel” their roles and provide a sense of authenticity to dramatic productions. Hand props are objects carried by an actor (e.g., a sword, book, cane, handkerchief or coins), dressings are items that help decorate a stage (e.g., a candlestick, framed painting or rug) and furnishings are articles of furniture (e.g., a table or throne).

Prop designers are clever at making their props look real to the audience. A sword might be made out of papier-mâché that is painted to look like metal, a goblet could be a plastic wineglass painted silver with fake jewels hot glued on it and bread could be the real thing coated in shellac to keep it from spoiling. Props and scenery together are called the stage set.

**The Mental Joust:** Why do actors need props? What are the different types of props? How are props made? What is important to include in the design of a medieval coin? What is the value of our class coins? How will we use the coins during our festival?

**Time:** 30 minutes (not including drying time)

**Materials:** pencils, paper, poster board, glue (such as Tacky Glue), scissors, clear fingernail polish (optional), thread spools, buttons with a relief design (optional), modeling clay (cornstarch, baking soda and water), rolling pin (or the side of a bottle), wax paper, plastic film canisters, mineral oil, paper towels, tray, newspaper and bronze, silver and gold spray paint

**Worthy Words:** bargain, barter, dressings, furnishings, hand prop, prop, relief, set

### **Procedure:**

- 1) Before class, mix clay according to the recipe found at the end of this experience.
- 2) Discuss: What images can be found on coins today? What is the meaning of these symbols? Look at examples of coins from the Middle Ages in books. (See the “Resources and Reference” list.) What significance do the images on medieval coins have? What symbols might be appropriate for our class coins?
- 3) Explain: Students will be creating their own coins to be awarded when a learning experience goes well. Coins will be used as points toward achieving knighthood and as a prop for when their character purchases food at the medieval feast at the end of the unit.
- 4) Have students draw some simple coin designs that fit a circle 1-1/4 inches in diameter.
- 5) To make a stamp, cut shapes out of poster board. Glue the shapes to a disk of poster board, 1-1/4 inches diameter, and let dry. Dribbles of glue, string or some buttons with a relief or raised pattern can make an interesting stamp as well.

- 6) Glue the back of your relief on a spool. For a more durable stamp, coat your dried stamp with clear fingernail polish in a well-ventilated area.
- 7) Roll clay between two sheets of wax paper to about ¼ inch thickness.
- 8) Cut clay discs with a plastic film canister. Rub some mineral oil on the cutter if it sticks.
- 9) Dab some mineral oil on your stamp with a paper towel and press the stamp into clay.
- 10) Place coins on a tray lined with wax paper and let clay dry overnight. Less time is needed if you place the coins in the sun.
- 11) Spray paint the coins gold, silver and bronze in a well-ventilated area.
- 12) What values should our coins have? For example: four bronze could equal one silver and two silver equal one gold.

### **Past and Present:**

Coins might be used in the towns, but in the country bartering or trading goods was far more common. People used animal products (such as wool, meat, or hides), weapons (like swords, shields, armor and warhorses), and food (like grain and cheese) as we use money today. Think of something you would like to have. What do you presently possess of equal value that you could offer as a fair trade?

In the Middle Ages, clothing did not have sewn-in pockets. People carried coins, handkerchiefs, aromatic herbs or combs in little bags that hung from their belts. In addition to a purse, some people carried an almoner, a sock-like pouch that contained alms or money for beggars. What do you carry in your pockets? (Use graphic organizers, such as a Venn diagram to compare items from medieval times and today.)

### **Clay Recipe:**

Ingredients: 1 cup cornstarch, 2 cups baking soda, 1-1/4-cups water

- 1) Combine ingredients in a saucepan.
- 2) Cook over low heat stirring constantly until the mixture resembles mashed potatoes.
- 3) Remove from the stove and let mixture cool.
- 4) Keep clay in an airtight container until you are ready to mold it. Clay will air dry overnight. Recipe makes about 140 coins.

### **Writing Extension:**

In the second half of the students' *Book of Days* under the heading "Challenges," students draw a diagram of a coin they designed with an explanation of the significance of their design.

### **Exhibit Connection:**

See examples of props at The Children's Museum including a theatrical suit of armor, a medieval-style chair, and a knight's sword and shield. Also, see examples of how props reveal important clues about a character.

**References & Resources:**

Carlson, Laurie. *Days of Knights and Damsels*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press. 1998.

Hart, Avery and Paul Mantell. *Knights and Castles: 50 Hands-on Activities to Experience the Middle Ages*. Charolette, VT: Williamson Publishing. 1998.

Langley, Andrew. *Medieval Life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.

Wright, Sylvia. *The Age of Chivalry: English Society 1200-1400*. New York: Warwick Press, 1988.

### **Experience 6.1 – Character Development: Using Questions as Leads**

Backstage, actors do research to get ready for their roles. In preparation for their festival presentation, students begin exploration of their character's physical surroundings and inner thoughts through a series of writing experiences. When actors comprehend their character's environment as well as how their character thinks and feels, they will better understand how to move and speak.

The following experiences in developing a medieval character utilize writing techniques described in Barry Lane's book, *After the End*. Students practice writing about the physical world of their medieval character in close detail called "snapshots." Students also learn how to write "thoughtshots" by reflecting and interpreting the world through the thoughts and feelings of their medieval character. This intellectual and creative journey is based on the art of asking questions that lead students to develop a more convincing and compelling medieval character of their own creation.

In this lesson, students examine books and period art to study what medieval dress was like and design a costume appropriate for their character in a rendering or sketch. Costume design helps to create the mood for a play and can reveal a great deal about a character. Costumes provide visual clues about characters' station in life, where they are from, the time period of the play and even what characters belong together. Clothing also influences how characters feel and move. Designers consult with the director of the play to decide if the costumes should be realistic or just to suggest an article of clothing. Some costumes can be hired or borrowed while others are made from scratch. Costume designers research suitable clothing from books and paintings and then draw costume renderings and attach fabric swatches. Makeup, wigs and accessories (like jewelry, gloves, hats and shoes) help complete the look.

Being an actor is difficult work. First, there are more actors than there are parts to play. Many actors have other jobs to earn money to live on while they go to auditions. Actors are very lucky if they have an acting job even one third of the year. Once actors get a part, they must research their character, learn their lines, spend all day in rehearsals, perform under sometimes nerve-racking and exhausting conditions, and when the play has finished its run, actors must look for work all over again. Acting takes talent, luck and discipline, but for those who genuinely love the theatre, the hard work is worth it. Fortunately, for people who do not want to become professional actors, there are many opportunities to act in community groups. Many schools also put on plays to give students a chance to make theatre.

**The Mental Joust:** How do actors prepare for their roles? What questions can I use as leads to help me develop my medieval character? What are my character's name, occupation, age, physical appearance, family situation, goals, and life challenges? What else do I need to know to develop my medieval character?

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** *The Midwife's Apprentice* by Karen Cushman, *Book of Days*, pens, a variety of picture books with examples of medieval clothing and colored felt-tip markers, pens, or pencils.

**Worthy Words:** character development, costume, leads, snapshot

### Snapshot Procedure:

- 1) I have a survival story to tell you. It's a great adventure story! A long time ago there was this young girl. She was cold, she was alone and she had to find a place to sleep. She found a warm, but very dirty place. Then a woman came and took her away. Okay, that's it. Any questions? Would you like to know more?
- 2) Encourage students to ask many questions and write them quickly on the board. (Why was she alone? Doesn't she have a home to go to? How old is the girl? Exactly where did she sleep? Who was the woman? Was the woman good or evil? Why did she take her away?)
- 3) Every story (and play) begins by answering questions for the reader/viewer. Some questions make the reader want to read more and the writer want to write more. For writers, the best questions are leads (or interesting ideas) for what comes next.
- 4) Read the first chapter of *The Midwife's Apprentice* by Karen Cushman to the class. Ask students to listen for answers to their questions and identify what other questions emerge. Great writers have a way of answering reader's questions while posing more questions that beg you to read on.
- 5) What do we know about the young girl? (Her name is Brat. She is homeless. She lives during the Middle Ages. She is hungry, cold and desperate. She is frail and small. When she sleeps she looks like she could be alive or dead. She is 12 or 13. Boys tease her. She is resourceful, smart, and is a survivor even to the point of sleeping in a dung heap.)
- 6) What questions can we ask when developing our medieval characters? Write the questions on the blackboard. Name? Occupation? Age? Physical appearance? (What color are your skin, eyes and hair? Is your body strong or frail? Are you clean or dirty? Do you wear a smile or frown? Do you walk straight or slightly hunched over?) What are your character's likes and dislikes? What is your family situation? (For example, are you an orphan or do you have a family? Are you married or single? Do you have children? Do you have any special friends that take the place of family?) What are your goals/ambitions/hopes? What are the problems in your life? (Are you hungry, sick, lonely, lost or misunderstood? Are you trying to help someone who is hungry, sick, lonely, lost or misunderstood?)
- 7) Have students write "A \_\_\_\_'s Quest" at the front of their *Book of Days*. (The blank could be their character's occupation or name.) This section of students' *Book of Days*, is devoted to the development and analysis of the medieval character that the student will portray during the final festival presentation. Ask students to record at least ten characteristics about their character that answer some of their questions.

**Tip to the Teacher:** You may suggest that students begin their list on the second page and reserve the first page of their *Book of Days* for a drawing of their character.

- 8) In teams of two, have students read each other's list of character descriptions. Ask teammates to write down at least five more questions that occurred to them from reading the list.

**Tip to the Teacher:** Encourage students to ask "What" questions rather than questions that begin with "Is" that can be answered with yes or no.)

- 9) Students circle those questions that make them want to write more and use the questions as leads to add more details to their character descriptions.

10) **Optional Challenge:** Costume design can reveal much about a character. Have students look through picture books of medieval life for examples of clothing. Be sure to include actual art from the period. Have students draw a picture (a costume rendering) of their character in costume in their *Book of Days*. Students can draw more than what they wrote about and then add extra details to their character list.

11) **Assignment:** Brainstorm problems that people faced in medieval times and write the possibilities on the blackboard. Ask students to think about and write down a problem their medieval characters need to overcome. Then, in class, write a description of that problem in their *Book of Days*.

**Tip to the Teacher:** Assure students that they can change characters with the teacher's permission. Developing a character is a process and some ideas prove to have more potential than others.

### **Past and Present:**

Shoes with long, pointed toes were fashionable for medieval men. Some toes were so long, they needed to be tied to the legs so people didn't trip over them. A 1420 law stated that poor men were not permitted to wear long-toed shoes, but a prince could wear shoes 24-inches long. For women, it was fashionable to pluck out their eyebrows and shave the front of their hairline to emphasize a very high forehead. What unusual fashion statements do we have today?

### **Exhibit Connection:**

Try on some costumes at The Children's Museum and design one using a computer program. Learn how costumes can make acting easier or harder.

## **Experience 6.2 – Character Development: Role Playing**

It is important to give characters a life of their own. Backstage, actors can explore and learn about their characters through role playing and improvising. Actors make up dialogue as they go along. It takes some quick thinking with little advance preparation, but the results are fun as well as informational.

Students use their work on their character's development (and their character's problem or conflict) as a basis to write a story. A story map in the form of a coat of arms is provided under Handout Manuscripts to assist students in planning their stories. (A coat of arms is a family emblem that is worn on a knight's tunic and shield, to help identify people during battle.)

**Mental Joust:** How do I develop a story around my character? What conflict does my medieval character encounter? How is the problem resolved in my story? What conflicts do we encounter today? How should we resolve today's conflicts?

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** *Book of Days*, pens, photocopies of the coat of arms story map

**Worthy Words:** improvisation, role playing

### **Procedure:**

- 1) Ask a volunteer to go to the front of the class and role play (become) his character. The student introduces himself and describes his problem to the class.
- 2) The class asks questions of the character.
- 3) When finished, the student returns to his seat and continues to write what he learned about his character.
- 4) The process is repeated with a few other character interviews in front of the class.
- 5) Divide the remaining students into small groups to continue the interviewing and writing process.
- 6) Ask students to use the graphic organizer provided at the end of the unit (titled "Coat of Arms Story Map" under Handout Manuscripts) to help them develop a story around their character's problem. Then write their stories in their *Books of Days*. Students may need to have this as a homework assignment if class time is short.
- 7) Have students swap stories with a partner and write five questions that will add detail. Encourage students to ask questions that will illicit more than a yes or no response.
- 8) Students select the questions that make them want to write more and turn those questions into leads for further writing.

### **Past and Present:**

Peasant children and noble children would play together until the age of seven. Noble boys then had to leave to be raised by another noble family. It was believed that too much kindness would spoil a noble child for the harshness of life. A noble child also began school at this time where the teachers could punish him in whatever fashion they wanted to. On the other hand, peasant children did not attend school. This left them with time to play for a few more years. However they were to face a hard life of intense farm labor. If you could be only one, which life would you prefer: noble or peasant?

### **Experience 6.3 – Character Development: Thoughtshots**

In this backstage experience, students continue the process of developing a medieval role for themselves and practice seeing through the eyes of that character, called “thoughtshots.”

**Mental Joust:** What are thoughtshots? What might the dragon slayer be thinking in the story, *Saint George and the Dragon*? What is my character thinking and what thoughtshots can I add to my medieval character’s story? How do thoughtshots help me develop my medieval character?

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** *Saint George and the Dragon* by Margaret Hodges, pens, *Book of Days*, scissors and glue sticks, photocopies of character summary sheet (found in Handout Manuscripts)

**Worthy Words:** thoughtshot

#### **Procedure:**

- 1) Ask students to jot down everything they are thinking right now. (Random thoughts are OK. It doesn’t have to be appropriate and students can throw it out after they have written it.)
- 2) Ask if anyone wants to share what he or she has written. Thoughtshots can be just a sentence or two in length, but reveal much about what a character is thinking and feeling. Talk about the power that writers have to reveal the thoughts of the characters they create.
- 3) Read the passage that describes the dragon in *Saint George and the Dragon*. (Page15)
- 4) Read the description the second time, but this time stop at various parts, point to a student and say one of the following: You are the dragon slayer, tell me what you are thinking now. What might you be thinking at this moment if you were a famous champion dragon slayer? What might you be thinking at this point if this was the first dragon you had ever seen?
- 5) Discuss how thoughtshots can differ widely depending on the circumstances of the character.
- 6) Have students look at their stories of their medieval characters. Insert a thoughtshot or two.
- 7) Ask students to complete the Character Summary Sheet, cut off the right hand portion and glue it into the first half of their *Book of Days*.

#### **Past and Present:**

Because most medieval people didn’t live very long, boys could marry when they were only 14 and girls at 12! At what age do people marry today? What would your life be like if you were to marry before you turned 15?

#### **Exhibit Connection:**

At The Children’s Museum, you can talk with real actors to find out what process they use to develop characters. Also, learn basic stage-fighting techniques. It looks real but no one gets hurt!

**References & Resources:**

Cushman, Karen. *The Midwife's Apprentice*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995.

Hodges, Margaret. *Saint George and the Dragon*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 1984.

Lane, Barry. *After the End: Teaching and Learning Creative Revision*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1993.

## perience 7 – Music and Sound Effects

In this experience, students practice making sound effects in a dramatic reading from children's literature. Students explore how music is used to help create a setting and mood in a theatrical production. Students listen to recorded examples of medieval music and consider how music and/or sound effects can enhance their own festival performances given at the end of the unit.

Music and sound effects can add tremendous emotion to a dramatic production. The sound crew must meet with the director to discuss what music and sound effects are needed in the play. The crew has three choices. (1) They can make their own recording of sounds (and music) to be played back at the right time during the play. (2) They can use commercially produced music and sound-effects recordings or (3) they can produce music and sounds "live" during the actual performance. Foley artists make sound effects that complement the visual components to a theatrical production. They often use their imaginations to find creative ways to simulate sounds and exaggerate those sounds for dramatic effect. (For example, snapping celery to mimic a bone breaking, crumpling videotape to sound like someone walking through dried leaves or adding loud thuds and slaps to a fight scene.) Other more complicated sounds such as a train whistle or rainstorm are easily found on sound-effects recordings.

**The Mental Joust:** What purpose do music and sound effects serve in a play? What were the sounds and music like during medieval times? How are sound effects created for a play? How can music and sound effects enhance our class' dramatic reading and festival performances?

**Time:** 45 minutes each of two days

**Materials:** tape recorders (optional), commercial sound-effects recordings (optional), recordings of medieval music, a CD or tape player, the children's book *The Whipping Boy* by Sid Fleishman, photocopies of chapter 19, various items for making sound effects.

**Worthy Words:** ballad, flute, Foley artist, lute, minstrel, plainchant/plainsong, secular, sound effects, troubadour

### Procedure:

- 1) As you step out of your doorway at home, what sounds do you hear? Now you are a medieval boy or girl stepping outside your medieval hut. What sounds do you hear? Any animal sounds? Any oxcarts rolling by? What sounds come from a smith, cobbler or stonemason's shop? What sounds do people make on the street? What might a town crier sound like?
- 2) Now picture yourself in a grand medieval cathedral. On the stone walls there are beautiful paintings and sun is streaming through stained-glass windows. This place seems like paradise compared to the dusty streets outside. What sounds might you hear now? Choirs chanting sacred music? Priests reading from illuminated Bibles and prayer books? Shuffling feet and the rustling of long robes? Sound effects and music help create a setting and set the mood for a play. Selecting the right sounds for a story can bring a play to life.
- 3) Introduce *The Whipping Boy* by Sid Fleischman. This is a story of a medieval orphan boy, Jemmy, who takes the punishment for Prince Brat whenever the prince misbehaves. Some noble households in the middle ages really did have whipping boys that endured the punishments that were due noble children! Both boys are unhappy and run away. In this chapter, the children try to escape the clutches of two murderous villains in the sewers underneath the town. Read Chapter 19 to the class. As you read, ask students to jot down the sounds they hear in the story.

- 4) What sounds do you remember? Make a list on the board (running on wooden docks and stone steps, the tide, sloshing in water, walking through mud, rats squeaking and running, dripping water, a breeze, huffing and puffing, the banging of a bird cage on tunnel walls).
- 5) What characters do you remember? Make a list on the board (narrator, Jemmy/The Whipping Boy, Prince Brat, Hold-Your-Nose Billy, Cutwater and Ratcatcher).
- 6) Tell students that tomorrow they will read the story again. This time they will add sound effects and students will read the parts. "What are some of the ways we can reproduce or simulate these sounds for our dramatic reading?" Let students brainstorm many creative answers. (Dripping water in a metal bucket, pushing thumbtacks through the fingertips of an old glove can be used for scratching noises, a milk jug partly filled with water for sloshing noises, or a plunger for stepping in mud.) Sound effects could also be recorded ahead of time and played back during the performance.
- 7) Music also helps create a mood. Play some musical selections from the Middle Ages. Medieval music falls into two categories: (1) religious music such as plainchants (songs sung in unison using only a few notes) and (2) secular music such as songs that minstrels and ordinary people sang and danced to. "How would you describe the mood of a holy plainchant as compared to a jolly secular tune? What kind of music do you think would enhance the mood of our scene in the dark sewer?" Ask students to read a selection from the chapter and tryout different types of background music. (If you choose some contemporary music as your background music, be careful to identify it as such, so as not to confuse time periods.)
- 8) **Homework:** Pass out copies of chapter 19 from *The Whipping Boy*. Ask for student volunteers to prepare a character's part and the remaining students to be responsible for making sound effects. Allow some class time for students to work in small groups to plan how sounds could be reproduced and to practice reading their lines. Remind students that sound technicians must be careful to not only use the right sounds, but also the correct volume. They do not want to overpower the dialogue of the characters. Also, characters need to consider voice projection and changing the tone of their voices to match their roles.
- 9) The following day, students perform a dramatic reading (Chapter 19, from *The Whipping Boy*) complete with background music and sound effects.
- 10) Ask students to make notes in their *Book of Days* regarding any appropriate sound effects or music that might enhance their final festival presentation.

**Tip to the Teacher:** The entire book, *The Whipping Boy*, very naturally lends itself to this study of how sound contributes to creating a setting and mood. Students could be divided into small groups so additional chapters (in particular chapters 4 and 14) could be performed as a reader's theatre experience with sound effects.

#### **Past and Present:**

Troubadours were travelers who entertained through songs. If the troubadour was especially talented, he might be invited to dine with a noble family, and thereby "sing for his supper." Drinking songs, songs of love and songs with rowdy choruses were popular. More serious chants were used in the Church. When do you listen to music? What type of music do you prefer to listen to?

#### **Exhibit Connection:**

Try being a sound technician. Practice with a variety of sound effects and music for a play at The Children's Museum.

**References & Resources:**

Evans, Cheryl and Lucy Smith. *Acting and Theatre*. London: Usborne Publishing, 1992.

Haycock, Kate. *Plays: Media Story*. Ada, Oklahoma: Garrett Educational Corporation, 1990.

Howarth, Sarah. *What Do We Know about the Middle Ages?*. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1995

Jordan, William Chester. *The Middle Ages: A Watts Guide for Children*. New York: Grolier Publishing, 1999.

Langley, Andrew. *Medieval Life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.

Macdonald, Fiona. *How Would You Survive in the Middle Ages?* New York: Franklin Watts, 1995.

Malam, John. *Theater: From First Rehearsal to Opening Night*. Chicago: Peter Bedrick Books, 2000.

May, Robin. *Exploring the Arts: Looking at Theatre*. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 1989.

Pryer, Nick. *Putting on a Play*. New York: Thomson Learning, 1994.

### **Bonus Huzzah! – Special Effect Props: Catapults**

This is an optional exercise for teachers who want to include a math and science lesson in their unit. Students design, build and test catapults for accuracy and power. The challenge is to hurl a predetermined object a required distance to hit or knock down a targeted structure.

Plays sometimes use special-effects props. These props typically look real from the audience's perspective; however they may be smaller in scale, or function differently than the real thing, — like a knife that dribbles “blood” when the blade is depressed or a castle wall that collapses during a battle scene.

In medieval times, catapults were one of a number of war devices used in a castle siege or attack. Sometimes an army would surround a castle, keeping food and other supplies from entering, and then wait for the inhabitants to starve or give themselves up. Since that could take years, soldiers would attack with machines, such as catapults. Catapults could knock down walls or hurl objects over castle walls.

**The Mental Joust:** What are special-effects props? How can we build our own special effects prop? What design elements are required for a catapult to hit or knock down a target? How do we measure the power and accuracy of our catapults?

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Suggested Materials:** cardboard boxes, cardstock, rubber bands, cardboard tubes, tape, glue, toothpicks, craft sticks, plastic spoons, staples, flexible rulers, large marshmallows, ping-pong balls, tape measure, scissors, hole punch, felt tip markers, *Book of Days*.

**Worthy Words:** catapult, siege

#### **Procedure:**

- 1) Does anyone remember what a prop is? Not all theatrical props work like the real thing. Sometimes they only look real. Can anyone think of an example?
- 2) We are going to be building our own special-effects prop — a catapult. Does anyone know what a catapult is? What is its function? Show photographs of catapults. See resource suggestions at the end of this lesson. There are basically two ways catapults work. Can you explain how they might work (by counter weight or by tension)?
- 3) Ask students to decide how they will test their finished catapults. What should be our catapults' target? What object should our catapults hurl? A ping-pong ball or a marshmallow would work. How far away should our catapults be from the target? How many tries should be given to each catapult?
- 4) Divide the class into small groups. Give each group the same variety of supplies to work with. Ask students to discuss various ways they could build a catapult. Students build their designs. If necessary, below is an example of how to build a simple but effective catapult; however, it is preferable for students to explore ways to build their own designs.
- 5) Ask each group to describe how their design works. Test each design given the parameters the students decided upon. Was your catapult powerful, but lacking accuracy? Was your catapult accurate, but lacking power?
- 6) Ask students to sketch their design and record what they learned about their catapult's capabilities (or lack of capabilities) in their *Book of Days*.

## **An Example of a Catapult Design**

**Materials:** A sturdy and narrow cardboard box (such as a shoe box), two rubber bands, a plastic spoon, scissors, Exacto knife (optional), masking tape, a ping-pong ball or marshmallow.

- 1) Cut two vertical slits about 3/4 inch down and 1/2 inch apart along the top and near the center of the long sides of a cardboard box with scissors. (Figure 1.)
- 2) Cut two more vertical slits below the original ones in the center of the long sides of the box. Cut one additional horizontal slit connecting the bottoms of the two slits you just made, so the cuts form u-shaped slits. (Figure 2.)
- 3) Slip the ends of a rubber band around each of the u-shaped slits so the rubber band is stretched across the box. Tape the rubber band securely in place. (Figure 3.)
- 4) Slip the ends of a second rubber band around the slits in the top of the box and tape the ends of the rubber band. (See figure 4.)
- 5) Place the handle of a plastic spoon through the top rubber band and twist it around several times until the spoon is held securely in the center of the box. (Figure 5.) Make sure that the direction you twist creates a forward tension on the concave side of the spoon.
- 6) Place the handle of the spoon against the lower rubber band to create tension and a springing action. (Figure 6.)
- 7) Pull back the spoon, place a ping-pong ball inside, and release!

### **Past and Present:**

Catapults are identified by various names, like mangonel and trebuchet. Some were powerful enough to hurl boulders weighing as much as 200 pounds the length of two football fields! To intimidate and spread disease to the enemy, dead horses and the heads of prisoners were sometimes catapulted over the castle walls. People throughout time have had disagreements and sought power over one another. How do we handle disagreements today and what strategies should we use to resolve differences and negative feelings?

### **Exhibit Connection:**

See examples of "fake" props (props that look like the real thing from a distance, but are made out of styrofoam and other materials) at The Children's Museum.

### **References & Resources:**

Gravett, Christopher. *Eyewitness Books: Knight*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993.

Jordan, William Chester. *The Middle Ages: A Watts Guide for Children*. New York: Grolier Publishing, 1999.

Macdonald, Fiona, *How Would You Survive in the Middle Ages?* New York: Franklin Watts, 1995.

### **Central Lesson III - Onstage Learning**

**Objectives:** To better understand the onstage processes involved in putting together a theatrical production (i.e., planning movements on stage, designing a set and rehearsing).

Now that we have covered many of the activities that occur backstage in a theatre production, it is time to turn our attention to the preparations that happen onstage. The experiences in onstage learning further reinforce the notion that theatre is a highly collaborative and structured endeavor that takes much preparation and creativity to make happen.

Students continue to get ready for their final festival presentations by practicing stage directions from the director/teacher in a simple Simon Says-type game. The experience also illustrates how movements (in particular gestures, posture and walk) help define character.

The set design is one of the first things people notice about a play. It reveals a great deal about the tone for the whole production. Depending on the style of the production, a set could be quite realistic or impressionistic by just suggesting forms and colors. Set designers must research the play's locations, time period and even the personalities of the characters in order to reflect the right mood and theme.

In the second onstage experience, students paint backdrops that will enhance their final festival performances. Students study medieval landscapes and interiors by examining medieval art, then design and paint backdrops for their final dramatic presentations. This lesson helps students develop a sense of style and appreciation for medieval art, discover more about what life was like during the Middle Ages and create their own scenic design.

Feasts during the Middle Ages were elaborate occasions even by today's standards. Food was flamboyantly decorated and presented. As part of the setting for their festival, students make the preparations necessary for their own version of a medieval feast the following day.

Practicing one's skills is a required element of theatre production. Near the end of onstage learning, students are given time to rehearse their roles for their festival performances.

#### **Indiana Standards for 4<sup>th</sup> Grade that are addressed in Onstage Learning:**

English/Language Standard 7 – Listening and Speaking: Listening and Speaking Skills, Strategies and Applications

Visual Arts Standard 1 – Responding to Art: History

Visual Arts Standard 8 – Creating Art: Production

#### **Indiana Standards for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade that are addressed in Onstage Learning:**

English/Language Standard 7 – Listening and Speaking: Listening and Speaking Skills, Strategies and Applications

Visual Arts Standard 1 – Responding to Art: History

Visual Arts Standard 8 – Creating Art: Production



- 5) The director says, "Downstage you nervous peasants!" Students respond with a few forward steps in character.
- 6) The director continues to give directions moving the participants around the stage. Occasionally the director just says how to move and leaves out the words, "Director says." Students who move must then sit down.
- 7) The game continues until only a few students are left or as long as time permits. This exercise can be done as a warm-up activity and repeated until all students are familiar with stage directions.

Here are some examples of commands:

nervous peasants, angry servants, bored lords, joyful dancers, disorderly soldiers, lazy ladies, nervous tight-rope walkers, confused mummies, reckless jugglers, shy children, flirty knights, annoyed ladies, humble farmers, old monks, dreamy pages, kindly princesses, self-absorbed princes, sad squires, energetic musicians, macho noblemen, impatient noblewomen, excited children, disgusted singers, sickly soldiers, crazy jesters.

- 1) After the game, ask students to describe how their characters (that they are developing for their final festival presentations) would walk and move in their *Book of Days*. What is their posture like? Do they move with self-assuredness or are their movements more tentative? Do they have any health issues that affect their movements? Does their costuming affect their movements?

#### **Tips to the Teacher:**

To help prepare the students for the game, discuss how gestures can be used to signify various emotions. Ask the students to act nervous, angry, bored or joyful. Use some of the same adjectives that you will be using in the game. Point out some of the most effective gestures.

Once it becomes clear that students have grasped the five basic directions, the teacher/director could include some diagonal directions such as: upstage-right, upstage-left, downstage-right, and downstage-left in the game.

Use the teachable moments that arise during this exercise to point out specific examples of how movement can build characterizations. For example, how can posture denote status? How would a prince's posture be different from a peasant's? How can the speed of movements denote power, age or health of a character? What happens when you walk stiff legged or wobbly legged? What type of character might move that way?

#### **Past and Present:**

The life expectancy of a peasant in the Middle Ages was 25 years. There were plenty of deadly diseases or they literally worked themselves into an early grave! What is the life expectancy of people today? To what might we attribute this change?

#### **Exhibit Connection:**

Practice taking stage directions on a stage at The Children's Museum.

**References and Resources:**

Bany-Winters, Lisa. *On Stage: Theatre Games and Activities for Kids*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1997.

Evans, Cheryl and Lucy Smith. *Acting and Theatre*. London: Usborne Publishing, 1992.

Malam, John. *Theater: From First Rehearsal to Opening Night*. Chicago: Peter Bedrick Books, 2000.

Pryer, Nick. *Putting on a Play*. New York: Thomson Learning, 1994.

## Experience 9 – Setting the Stage

In the following onstage experience, students investigate medieval landscapes and interiors by examining medieval art, then design and paint backdrops for their final dramatic presentations. This lesson helps students to develop a sense of style and appreciation for medieval art, discover more about what life was like during the Middle Ages, and experience creating their own scenic design.

Book illumination was a leading form of art in the Middle Ages. One of the most exceptional books of this period is *Tres Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, a Book of Hours made for a very wealthy brother of the King of France. Duc de Berry commissioned three brother artists, Pol (Paul), Jehanequin (Johnny) and Hermann Linbourg, to paint the exquisite illustrations for his book. Book of Hours contained prayers for every third hour of the day, but the most noteworthy pages are of a calendar. Each month has a painting that depicts the changes of nature integrated with the human activities of the season. These calendar paintings have been reproduced in the children's picture book, *The Duke and the Peasant: Life in the Middle Ages* by Sister Wendy Beckett. Throughout these paintings, there is an abundance of detail that will delight children, and provide a wealth of insight about the life and attitudes of medieval people.

The use of backdrops is a traditional method scenic designers use to help create a setting. Backdrops are painted fabrics that hang at the back of the stage. Fabric that is stretched on a rigid wooden frame is called a flat. A fabric backdrop that you can see through is called a scrim. The scenery, the backdrops, furniture and props together are called the set. Designing and painting backdrops takes a keen sense of design and artistic skill. Sometimes backdrops are painted to look like realistic landscapes or use faux finishes to mimic the look of brick, wood, marble or some other material. Other times, backdrops just suggest the setting with more abstract patterns and colorings. In this lesson, students use the Linbourg brothers' paintings as inspiration to paint their own backdrops for their final festival presentations.

**The Mental Joust:** How do stage designers and the stage crew create scenery for a play? What can be learned from examining medieval paintings? What stories do we want to tell in our backdrop paintings? How do we create backdrops for our feast and festival?

**Time:** 1 – 2 days

**Materials:** *The Duke and the Peasant: Life in the Middle Ages* by Sister Wendy Beckett, felt-tip makers or colored pencils, sketch paper, bulletin-board paper, tempera or acrylic paints, brushes, painting smocks or shirts, newspaper, containers of water to rinse brushes in, tin pie pans or the bottom half of milk jugs to mix paint in.

**Worthy Words:** backdrop, *Book of Hours*, calligraphy, faux finish, flat, illumination, scrim, set

## Procedure:

- 1) Use the painting of “January” as pictured in the children’s book, *The Duke and the Peasant* as a basis for discussion: We’ve been learning quite a bit about medieval times. I wonder what more we can learn by studying medieval paintings? What do you make of this painting? The artists who painted this picture are telling us a story. What do you think this story is about? Can you tell who is the most important person in this painting? (For example, who is wearing the richest clothing? Who is the only person seated? Who has the most distinguished looking face? In fact, most of the other people have the same rather plain face! Look closely; the fireplace screen even makes sort of a halo around his head. This is a very important man indeed!) Who do you suppose he is? He is the brother of the King of France. He is the person who owns the fine book this painting is originally found in. (Point out that the medieval book that this painting is originally found in was not a printed reproduction of a painting, like our books today, but actual paintings were painstakingly painted by hand into a hand-made book.) He would have to be very wealthy to own a book with such beautiful original paintings in it. What are these people doing? Can you tell what they are eating? They seem to be eating a lot of meat at this feast off of gold plates. What is hanging on the walls? Castles are drafty places. Heavy tapestries helped keep the room warmer inside. What do you make of the little dogs standing on the table and the sporting dog underneath? If this is a celebration, I wonder why the duke isn’t smiling? What do you think the artist is telling us about the personality of the duke?
- 2) This painting is one of many paintings from a medieval book. The original book contains prayers and a calendar. Every month has a painting that tells us something about what life was like during that month. The painting we just discussed represents January. What do you think the duke and his friends are celebrating in January? (New Years) The artists who made these paintings were three brothers, Paul, Johnny, and Hermann Linbourg. Today, we sometimes take books for granted; it is so easy to go to the library or the store to get books. Can you imagine how special it was in medieval times to own a one-of-a-kind book with all hand-painted lettering and pictures?
- 3) Let’s look at another painting from the same book. (Show the painting “October.”) What is the story the artists are telling here? What do you think of the gothic castle in the background? (We can tell it is gothic in style because some of the windows are pointed on top.) What can you say about the man sewing the seeds? What do you suppose this man is thinking about? How does his life differ from the duke’s that we just saw in the last painting? (How is their clothing different? How do they spend their days differently? How are their eating habits and health similar or different?) There is a scarecrow dressed like an archer, but the birds still eat the peasant’s seeds. Do you think the artist is effective in making us feel sorry for the peasant? There is a big imposing wall between the world of the castle and the world of the peasant farmer. Why do you think the artist did that? What purpose does it serve?
- 4) Divide students into small groups of three or four students. Using the medieval calendar paintings as inspiration, ask the students to sketch some ideas for their festival backdrops. Do you want your backdrop to be an interior or landscape? How do paintings create depth? (Some objects are close and others are far away.) What are some details that can add interest to your backdrop? (Birds, dogs, sheep, cattails, dragons and finely drawn trees and tapestries) What are the colors and textures like? (Colors are often pure and bright and there is a richness of texture.)
- 5) When each group has a sketch, fold the sketch so that the fold lines make a grid on the sketched design. The grid should look similar to very large graph paper.
- 6) Lightly draw a larger grid pattern on a large sheet of bulletin-board paper. Be sure you have the same number of squares (across and up and down) on both the sketch and large paper.
- 7) Have students replicate their sketch on the large paper one square at a time. Put on painting smocks or shirts and spread out newspaper to catch the drippings; then, have fun painting!
- 8) Describe what story you want your backdrop to tell in your *Book of Days*.
- 9) Use your backdrops to set the scene for your final dramatic festival performances.

### **Past and Present:**

People in the Middle Ages did not have a lot of choices in their lives. Typically, they lived close to where they were born, children grew up in the social class of their parents, and they worked, married and behaved according to traditions. What choices do you have in your life today? In what ways do you not have choice? How is having a lot of choice good/bad?

Duc de Berry was highly unusual. He collected a total of fifteen prayer books (Books of Hours), which means he was extremely wealthy and liked the arts. He had to hire artists to handprint the lettering (called calligraphy) and to hand decorate the edges of the pages (called illuminations). It's hard to believe that the paintings we just looked at were entirely made by hand and are in one of the duke's books rather than hanging on a wall. Books must have been among the duke's most prized possessions. What do people collect today? Do you collect anything that is precious to you?

### **Exhibit Connection:**

See scale models of sets and try out some faux painting techniques at The Children's Museum. Also, play a game moving stage scenery in between the scenes of a play. It takes teamwork and efficient movements!

### **References and Resources:**

Beckett, Wendy. *The Duke and the Peasant: Life in the Middle Ages*. New York: Prestel, 1997.

Evans, Cheryl and Lucy Smith. *Acting and Theatre*. London: Usborne Publishing, 1992.

Janson, H.W. *History of Art*. New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc. 1974.

Malam, John. *Theater: From First Rehearsal to Opening Night*. Chicago: Peter Bedrick Books, 2000.

### **Experience 10 – Rehearsal and Festival Preparations**

Practicing one's skills is a required element of theatre production. In this onstage experience, students rehearse their parts and prepare food for their medieval festival and feast.

Rehearsals for theatre can take several forms. Typically, the first rehearsal is a read-through where actors sit around a table and the director leads the cast as they read aloud the entire script. Blocking rehearsals map out the actors' movements on stage. Next, actors tryout various approaches and polish their performances in working rehearsals. Technical rehearsals occur for the sound, lighting, props and scenery crews. And lastly, dress rehearsals are full staged performances, but without the audience.

Feasts were elaborate occasions in medieval times. Drums and trumpets sounded and servers paraded out with platters of impressive food. Elaborate castle or ship sculptures were made out of bread dough. Roasted peacocks could be decorated with some of their original feathers. Fruits and vegetables were carved into unique shapes. And for dessert, delicate treats called subtleties were molded out of multiple colored jellies, pastry or ground almond paste (marzipan). If food looked too ordinary, the guests felt insulted!

**The Mental Joust:** How do actors perfect their performances? What happens in a rehearsal? What preparations are needed for a medieval feast? How can we prepare the setting for our medieval feast and festival?

**Time:** 1-1/2 hours

**Materials:** *A Medieval Feast* by Alikei, *Book of Days*, plastic gloves, plastic wrap, wax paper, trays, defrosted bread dough, shortening, 'wiggers' gelatin, whole carrots, celery stocks, food grate, paring knife, bowl of ice water, cookie cutters, sliced bread, sandwich spread, knife to spread with, a variety of garnishes for sandwiches (e.g., thin slices of tomato or olives, mustard, cheese, herbs, or decorative toothpicks), pickling cucumbers, small dark beans, pumpkin-carving kit (or paring knives), gum drops, rolling pin, unfrosted cup cakes, a variety of colored frostings and cake toppings, the book *Play with your Food* by Joost Elffers (optional), honey, nutmeg, orange or lemon, pitcher.

**Worthy Words:** feast, subtleties (sut-ul-tees), trencher

**Procedure for Rehearsal:**

- 1) We have learned that it takes the talents of many people working together to make a theatrical performance happen. Every element is planned. The scenery, props, costumes, script, music, sound effects and characterizations are carefully coordinated in order to make theatre come alive. Today, you are going to finish writing and rehearsing your performances.
- 2) Explain: First you will need to introduce yourself as a medieval character to the king/queen and then make your presentation in character. You could say something like, "Good morning, your majesty. I am \_\_\_\_\_, a humble stonemason. I would like to share with you the latest in castle design. Let me show you a model of what I could build for you. This is the best castle design for your safety and comfort even during a siege! Notice the rounded corners that hold up far better than square corners against catapult stones ..."

Or you may want to entertain the king/queen. Again, introduce yourself or your whole group, as your medieval character. "Your majesty, we are honored to be performing for your pleasure today. We call ourselves the 'Porridge Puppeteers' because we perform for our supper. I am \_\_\_\_\_, and this is \_\_\_\_\_. We are puppeteers who have traveled far to bring you a story of adventure and comedy ..."

- 3) Ask students to record their introductions in their *Book of Days*.
- 4) Ask students to pair up and practice performing their introductions for each other. (If students are making presentations in small groups, have each group member practice making the introduction.)

**Feast Preparation Procedure:**

- 1) Read *A Medieval Feast* by Alikei to the class.
- 2) What do you remember about how food was prepared and presented? The cooks had to make the food look impressive and decorative, or else the guests would think they had not gone to enough trouble. What can we do to make our feast's food look ornamental?
- 3) Discuss ways the class can make a feast for the following day's celebration given the supplies the students have brought in.
- 4) Set up stations where students can prepare food. Each station will need at least one adult helper to ensure safety and cleanliness. When a group of students is finished at one station they can rotate to the next station. The following are some examples of food stations:

**Station #1** uses thawed bread dough to make bread sculptures and/or pretzels. Grease cookie sheet with shortening. Divide dough into manageable pieces for students to shape into various forms. For pretzels: Roll each lump between your hands to make a thin rope, about 18- to 20-inches long. Arrange the rope on the cookie sheet in the shape of a pretzel. Cover with paper towels and let bread rise for at least an hour. Bake about 15 minutes in 370-degree oven for pretzels. (Thicker bread sculptures may take a longer baking time.)

**Note:** Pretzels were rewards given to children who learned their prayers. Two children would make silent wishes on pretzels by holding onto the loops and pulling. It was believed whoever pulled the largest piece would get his or her wish!

**Station #2** makes multicolored “wigglers” gelatin. Cut shapes out of hardened gelatin with cookie cutters. Arrange shapes on a tray. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.

**Station #3** creates celery and carrot curls. Clean whole carrots and celery stalks. Use the slicer portion of a food grater to cut curled slices of carrots. Then place carrot curls in cold water to keep fresh. Cut celery stalks into sections about 3-inches long. Cut one end of the celery lengthwise into thin strips (figure A and B) and place in ice water to make the frayed end curl. Refrigerate.

**Station #4** carves cucumber critters. Wash cucumbers thoroughly. Pickling cucumbers can be used as well as the larger varieties. Carefully carve away sections of the cucumber to leave four legs, a tail and a head (figure C and D). The tools in a pumpkin-carving kit are safer than using a paring knife to carve with. Use beans as eyes. Place on a tray, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.

**Station #5** makes finger sandwiches. Cut the centers of bread slices with cookie cutters. Apply sandwich or cheese spread on the bread, and decorate the tops of the sandwiches. Decorations could be made from parsley, sliced tomato, sliced olives, mustard, cheese or a decorative toothpick. Place on a tray decorated with lettuce, cherry tomatoes, edible flowers like pansies or flowering herbs like dill and thyme. Refrigerate.

**Station #6** decorates cup cakes. Have unfrosted cupcakes ready to be decorated by students using a variety of frosting colors and pastry toppings. Students could also roll gumdrops flat with a rolling pin between two sheets of wax paper. Flattened gumdrop “petals” can be pinched together to make candied flower subtleties. Cover with plastic wrap.

#### **Mock Mead Recipe:**

Mead was a sweetened alcoholic drink, but here is a mock mead version.

Ingredients: 2 quarts cold water, 1/2 to 1 cup honey, 1 lemon or orange, nutmeg, ice cubes.

Mix honey and water in a pitcher to taste. Wash lemon or orange, slice it, and add to mead. Sprinkle with nutmeg and chill with ice cubes. In medieval times people did not have sugar, only honey; and spices were extremely valuable, so only the wealthy could enjoy them.

**Tips to the Teacher:** *Play with your Food* by Joost Elffers provides a wealth of whimsical examples for making healthy food playful and interesting.

#### **Past and Present:**

The art of storytelling was an important source of entertainment in the Middle Ages. Stories from the Bible, along with tales of Robin Hood and King Arthur are not only told today, but were popular in medieval times as well. What popular stories of today may be told hundreds of years from now?

Some props were really played up on the medieval stage. For example, dummy figures were used to simulate torture and death. If a character was to be burned at the stake, a dummy stuffed with animal bones and internal organs would be tossed into the flames, giving off a realistic stench! This would seem excessive in terms of what the audience would need to experience, however in what ways is violent entertainment still a concern today?

**Exhibit Connection:** Learn make-up techniques at The Children’s Museum’s exhibit *Onstage and Behind the Scenes*.

**References & Resources:**

Aliki. *A Medieval Feast*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1983.

Carlson, Laurie. *Days of Knights and Damsels: An Activity Guide*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1998.

Elffers, Joost. *Play with your Food*. New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 1997.

Howarth, Sarah. *How Do We Know About the Middle Ages?* New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1995.

Langley, Andrew. *Eyewitness Books: Medieval Life*. New York: Dorling Kindersley, 2000.

Oakes, Catherine. *Exploring the Past: The Middle Ages*. New York: Gulliver Books, 1989.

Peterson, Lenka and Dan O'Connor. *Kids take the Stage*. New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1997

Steel, Philip. *Castles*. New York: Kingfisher, 1995.

**Central Lesson IV – Performance Learning**  
**Experience 11 – Role Play for a Day: A Medieval Festival**

**Objective:** To understand and experience a live theatrical performance — to see how the design elements come together and to feel the excitement of making theatre happen.

In order to make theatre come alive, a combination of elements must be carefully coordinated. Throughout this unit, students have explored the functions that props, costumes, sound effects, music, setting and character development play in making theatre happen, and have chronicled their journey in their *Books of Days*. Students' backdrops and props are in place, costumes have been constructed or rendered, music and sound effects are selected, and characterizations are prepared. Now, in a culminating activity, students follow their own special interests and abilities to offer a distinctive medieval festival performance given in character for the king/queen-teacher. During this festival celebration, students use coins to purchase food at a medieval feast and receive the title of sir or dame for their loyalty and hard work.

Festivals took place only once or a few times a year and could last from one day to several weeks. Merchants would come to trade and sell their wares. Dancers, contortionists, gymnasts, acrobats, puppeteers, jugglers, play actors, musicians and stilt walkers would perform at festivals. Boxing, wrestling and soccer games were played, but the sports became so violent (and were a source of gambling) that the Church attempted banning some activities. Jousting tournaments and mock battles also occurred during festivals and could lead to serious injuries or death. The winners, however, might make a name for themselves, find a profitable marriage or get the armor and horse of their opponent (and hold it for ransom).

**Indiana Standards for 4<sup>th</sup> Grade that are addressed in Performance Learning:**

English/Language Standard 7 – Listening and Speaking: Listening and Speaking Skills, Strategies and Applications

Visual Arts Standard 9 – Creating Art: Production

Music Standard 1 – Singing alone and with others

**Indiana Standards for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade that are addressed in Onstage Learning:**

English/Language Standard 7 – Listening and Speaking: Listening and Speaking Skills, Strategies, and Applications

Visual Arts Standard 9 – Creating Art: Production

Music Standard 1 – Singing alone and with others

**The Mental Joust:** What is it like playing a role in a theatrical production? Did I use my voice, movements, props, sound effects, dialogue and costume to help make my medieval character come alive? What was it like at a medieval feast and festival? What have I learned about theatre and what it takes to put on a production?

**Time:** One school day

**Materials:** photocopies of the Festival Presentation Rubric and the Knighting Certificate (located in Manuscript Handouts), CDs or tapes of medieval music, a CD or tape player, feast food prepared the day before, cups, plates, napkins, medieval coins made by the students.

**Procedure:**

- 1) Stagger student presentations throughout the day with the medieval feast occurring near the middle of the day and the Knighting Ceremony at the end of the day.
- 2) Use the rubric for evaluating students' festival presentations. Students could also fill out the rubric on their own presentation.
- 3) To further break up the day, below are some diversions based on medieval pastimes.

**Hoodman's Blind** (known as Blind Man's Bluff today)

Blindfold one person. The other players stand in a circle around him or her. One of the players gently taps the blindfolded person and says in a disguised voice, "Dost thou knowest me?" The blindfolded person tries to guess who did the tapping. If he guesses correctly, the players switch places and the game continues. If he guesses incorrectly, then other players take turns tapping the blindfolded person.

**Hunt the Slipper**

One player (the Slipper Soul) holds a shoe in his or her hands and stands in the center of a circle of children. The players that make up the circle pretend to be cobblers hammering and sewing leather shoes. The Slipper Soul hands the shoe to one of the cobblers, closes her eyes, and says, "Cobbler! Cobbler! Mend my shoe! Fix it up as good as new! One, two, three, four stitches will do!" While the Slipper Soul is saying this rhyme, the cobblers pass the shoe around their backs. When the Slipper Soul is finished, the cobblers hum and pretend each of them has the shoe. The Slipper Soul tries to guess who has the shoe. If she is correct, the cobbler and the Slipper Soul trade places. If she is incorrect, the Slipper Soul tries again.

**Bob for Apples**

Fill a bucket or sink with water. Float some apples in it and let people take turns trying to get a bite of an apple without using their hands.

**Bocci** (BAH-chee)

Use at least two sets of balls in two colors (such as a yellow and white tennis ball and a yellow and white golf ball). Toss the golf balls (the Bocci) in the lawn and then take turns rolling the other balls toward the Bocci. Each player gets two tries. The player who rolls their ball closest to the Bocci is the winner.

**Note:** If you play indoors, try tossing some Nerf balls instead.

**Alquerque** (all-kwair-kay)

Pair up students. Have each group draw the square diagram. (Figure A) Cut out 12 game pieces for each player, using two colors of paper, and set up the game board as shown. (Figure B) Each student takes turns moving pieces diagonally, one square at a time. If you move one of your game pieces on a corner that has one of your opponent's game pieces on it, then you may "capture" his or her piece by replacing it with your game piece. When one of your game pieces makes it to the opposing edge, then it can move forward or backward as well as diagonally. The winner has the last game piece left on the board.

### **Fox and Geese**

Pair up students. Draw the game board (figure C) and place the game pieces on the board. (Figure D) One player moves the dark game pieces (the geese) and the other player moves the light game piece (the fox). The fox and the geese can move in any direction. Players take turns moving the game pieces. When the fox jumps over a goose, the goose is removed from the board. The geese cannot jump over the fox. The object is for the geese to get into a position where the fox cannot move in any direction.

### **Nine Men's Morris**

Pair up students. Draw the game board like the one shown. (Figure E) Cut out nine game pieces for each player out of different colored paper. Players take turns placing a game piece on the dots. The object is to make a "mill" (where three game pieces form a line). When a player makes a mill, he removes one of his opponent's game pieces off the board. When all nine of a player's game pieces are on the board, then the player may use his turn to move one of his game pieces to the next dot. (Game pieces can only move along a line.) The game ends when one of the players is left with only two game pieces.

### **Maypole Dance**

May Day was a festive occasion in the Middle Ages. People would gather flowers for garlands and crowns. They would tie colorful ribbons on a tall tree or pole and then dance and sing. Try making your own Maypole with string, then sing, "Here we go round the merry maypole, the merry maypole, the merry maypole. Here we go round the merry maypole on this festive May Day!"

- 4) During the feast, play festive medieval music and ask students to pay for their food using the coins they have earned throughout the unit.
- 5) For the Knighting Ceremony, ask each student to kneel in front of the king/queen who says, "I dub thee knight. Arise Sir/Dame \_\_\_\_!" Then present a personalized copy of the Knighting Ceremony certificate to each student (provided at the end of this unit).

### **Past and Present:**

Bible stories were often the subject of dramatization. However, these performances eventually moved from the churches to the streets, where comedy was interjected within the biblical tales. The Church frowned upon taking liberties with the biblical text. This is one reason why a ban on drama lasted approximately 400 years during the earliest part of the Middle Ages, sometimes referred to as the Dark Ages. Performers still carried on the tradition of theatre with simple sketches and dances, but these individuals were looked down upon, placed in the same category as thieves, outcasts and beggars. What are some examples of things that have been banned in our society today? Are there any bans today that help protect our environment?

After the Church lifted its ban on theatre, cycle plays were popular. An elaborate parade of wagons, called pageant wagons, would roll down the streets. Each wagon would depict a scene within the play. Actors and the audience would move from wagon to wagon as the drama unfolded. Sometimes simultaneous action took place on more than one wagon. These dramas could last up to 12 hours and go on for days, but this was considered worth the commitment, as this was a rare and spectacular event. These pageants might come to town only once a decade! What event in your life might you consider a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity?

## **Evaluation**

Ongoing assessment takes place throughout this unit. Students are evaluated through participation in class discussions, *Book of Days* entries, completion of “challenges” and final dramatic presentations. Student self-evaluation will be evidenced through their *Book of Days* entries and presentation self-evaluation. The attainment of coins and the title of sir or dame should be awarded to every student who participates to ensure all students experience success.

## **Exhibit Connection**

Besides learning all about what goes into making a theatrical production, you can see a real play that takes place in medieval England at The Children’s Museum. *Young King Arthur* is playing in Lilly Theater.

## **References and Resources:**

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Hart, Avery and Paul Mantell. *Knights and Castles: 50 Hands-on Activities to Experience the Middle Ages*. Charlotte, VT: Williamson Publishing, 1998.

Tanaka, Shelley. *In the Time of Knights*. Toronto, Canada: Madison Press Books, 2000.

Sitarz, Paula Gaj. *The Curtain Rises: A History of Theatre from Its Origins in Greece and Rome through the English Restoration*. White Hall, VA: Shoe Tree Press, 1991.

Steel, Philip. *Knights*. New York: Kingfisher, 1998.

Jordan, Chester, ed. *The Middle Ages: A Watts Guide for Children*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1999.

## **Handout Manuscripts**

Huzzah! Huzzah!

Solve this riddle and thou shall see  
where thy studies will take thee! Huzzah! Huzzah!

Now, don't you moan.

Some ages are stone.

Some ages are ice.

The Plague was spread by mice!

Huzzah! Huzzah!

Have you guessed the riddle?

Here's another clue.

Some ages are ice.

Some ages are stone.

Some ages have no beginning or end.

Now, don't you moan!

Huzzah! Huzzah!

Now, have you guessed the riddle?

Here's your answer!

There have been Ice Ages

and there have been Stone Ages.

It's not the Beginning Ages or the Ending Ages,

but it's the Middle Ages!

Hear ye! Hear ye!

Calling all mummers, drummers and monks!

You are hereby invited on a medieval quest! Over the next few weeks, you will be journeying back in time to explore the days of knights, castles and glorious feasts. A central part of your journey will be researching and developing a medieval character complete with a costume (or a sketch of one), props, backdrops, music and possibly sound effects! On the last day of our study, we will have a medieval festival and feast with **you** acting the part of your medieval character. During the festival you will give a presentation to the king/queen (your teacher) and, if all goes well, you may be knighted sir or dame! Presentations should be under five minutes in length, and you may work individually or in small groups.

The king/queen has the final say, but here is a list of some of the roles and projects you could perform. Start thinking about who you want to play!

1) A Trade-related Presentation — For example, a stonemason, cobbler, blacksmith, cook, miller, spinster, shipbuilder, barber-surgeon, midwife, falconer, peddler, merchant, map maker, weaver, goldsmith or scribe. You could talk about your craft, show an example of your work and even offer your services to the king/queen. You could also tell a story to the king/queen about your life.

2) An Artist's Performance — Pantomimes, plays, puppet theatre and storytelling were important sources of entertainment. You can write and perform a dramatization with a medieval theme.

Laughter is timeless. Court jesters and fools were the comedians of the Middle Ages. You could research and develop a comedy routine reflecting the life and times of the medieval era. Performances could include juggling, acrobatics, magic and jokes.

Music plays an important role in any festival. You could compose a variation or create an original song to perform. As a troubadour, you could use voice, recorders, drums or other appropriate instruments.

Dance accentuates the joy and playfulness of a festival. Maypole dances were common at this time. You could create your own choreography and perform a dance.

3) A War-related Presentation — For example, a page, squire, foot soldier, archer, Crusader or war-machine engineer. In medieval times, weaponry and fighting were part of survival. Research and report on the art of fighting (armor, pageantry and weapons) with the possible reenactment of a jousting tournament or a castle siege.

4) A Peasant Farmer's Presentation — You could describe your life and make a case for changing the feudal system, or tell a story about your life.

5) A Nobleman or Noblewoman's Presentation — You could describe what it is like going on a hunt, how you govern your property or talk about your elaborate costuming. You could also tell a story about your life.

6) A Holy Person's Presentation — For example, a bishop, nun, friar or monk. People of the Church were typically near the top of the social system and some were very powerful. You could tell a story about devoting your life to helping the poor or show examples of the manuscripts you have illuminated.

Huzzah! Huzzah!

The honorable

\_\_\_\_\_

hereby declares that worthy servant,

\_\_\_\_\_

has been duly knighted

Sir/Dame \_\_\_\_\_

for hard work and loyalty  
on this festive day of

\_\_\_\_\_

## Medieval Festival Presentation Rubric

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Character \_\_\_\_\_

Scale:

- 1 – Unsatisfactory
- 2 – Below expectations
- 3 – Meets expectations
- 4 – Exceeds expectations
- 5 – Clearly outstanding

Character Development	1	2	3	4	5
Is your character believable?      Is your character appropriate to medieval times?					
Evidence of Research	1	2	3	4	5
Have you studied and thought about your character?					
Creativity	1	2	3	4	5
Does your presentation reflect original or inventive thinking?					
Movements	1	2	3	4	5
Are your movements consistent with your character?					
Voice	1	2	3	4	5
Is your voice consistent with your character?      Did you project your voice well?					
Props, Sound Effects and Music	1	2	3	4	5
Have you appropriately used props, sound effects or music?					
Costume	1	2	3	4	5
Is your costume or costume rendering appropriate for your character?					
Appropriate Use of Time	1	2	3	4	5
Is your presentation under five minutes in length?					

**Clearly Outstanding:** A very complete presentation with thorough and accurate information, clear organization, efficient time management, creative thinking and appropriate characterization (using suitable voice, movement, posture, dialogue and costuming). Shows evidence of going beyond minimal requirements and evidence of personal best.

**Exceeds Expectations:** A complete presentation with thorough and accurate information, clear organization, efficient time management, some creative thinking and appropriate characterization, but little evidence of going beyond minimum requirements. Close to personal best.

**Meets Expectations:** A relatively complete presentation with adequate information, organization, time management, creativity and characterization. May have a few minor inconsistencies in characterization.

**Below Expectations:** All elements of the presentation are there, but information is nominally understood and characterization is minimally developed. Personal best and effort are not consistently evident. Needs some improvement.

**Unsatisfactory:** Presentation is incomplete, unorganized and/or lacking in necessary content.

## Book of Days Rubric

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Scale:

- 1 – Unsatisfactory
- 2 – Below expectations
- 3 – Meets expectations
- 4 – Exceeds expectations
- 5 – Clearly outstanding

Content	1	2	3	4	5
Are the assignments complete? Is all the information relevant and accurate?					
Evidence of Research	1	2	3	4	5
Is there evidence you have you thought about and studied your character?					
Creativity	1	2	3	4	5
Does your book reflect original or inventive thinking?					
Spelling & Punctuation	1	2	3	4	5
Are words spelled correctly? Are capital letters and ending punctuation used appropriately?					
Sentence Structure	1	2	3	4	5
Are ideas presented in complete sentences?					
Followed Directions	1	2	3	4	5
Did you follow the specific directions for the assignments?					
General Appearance	1	2	3	4	5
Is your book neat and interesting?					

**Clearly Outstanding:** Thorough and accurate documentation of experience, showing good understanding. Clearly organized, neat and creative. Story is well developed. Shows evidence of personal best and going beyond minimal requirements.

**Exceeds Expectations:** Complete documentation with thorough and accurate information. Clearly organized, neat and shows some creative thinking, but little evidence of going beyond minimum requirements. Close to personal best.

**Meets Expectations:** Relatively complete documentation demonstrating some understanding. Adequate story development, organization, neatness and creativity. May have a few minor spelling and language-usage errors.

**Below Expectations:** Documentation of experience is there, but information is nominally understood and story is minimally developed. Personal best and effort are not consistently evident. Needs some improvement.

**Unsatisfactory:** Documentation or story is incomplete, unorganized and/or lacking in necessary content.

Hear ye! Hear ye!

Calling all Parents and Guardians!

You are hereby invited on a magical medieval quest with your son or daughter! Over the next few weeks, we will be journeying back in time to explore the days of knights, castles and glorious feasts. A central part of our journey will be researching and developing a medieval character, complete with a costume (or a sketch of one), props, backdrop, music and possibly sound effects! On the last day of our study, we will have a medieval festival and feast, with your son or daughter acting the part of a medieval character.

Can you help prepare our feast or come on festival day? Or can you help with any of the items that we will be collecting to prepare for our feast?

**Gear:** plastic gloves, plastic wrap, wax paper, trays for storing food, food grate, mixing bowls, cookie cutters, decorative toothpicks, pumpkin-carving kits, rolling pins, pitchers, paper plates and cups

**Food:** frozen bread dough, shortening, 'wiggles' gelatin, whole carrots, celery stalks, sliced bread, sandwich spread, a variety of garnishes for sandwiches (e.g., thin slices of tomato or olives, mustard, cheese, herbs), regular or pickling cucumbers, small dark beans, gum drops, unfrosted cup cakes, a variety of colored frostings and cake toppings, honey, nutmeg, orange or lemon.

We look forward to seeing you and hope that as many members of your family as possible will participate. Come one, come all — back to the age of feast and festival!

Feast Preparation occurs on \_\_\_\_\_.

Festival and Feast Day is on \_\_\_\_\_.

-----

Here's what I can do to help with the medieval festival and feast.

My name is: \_\_\_\_\_

I can help with:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Coat of Arms  
Story Map**

When  
(time)

What problem?  
(conflicts)

Who?  
(characters traits)

Where?  
(place)

Why?  
(story themes)

How resolved?

## Medieval Chronology and Notes

The Middle Ages occurred between the great Roman and Greek Empires and the Renaissance (from about A.D. 500 to A.D. 1450). A time line of some medieval events with historical notes is included as an additional resource.

A.D. 614 The great library at Alexandria burns, marking the decline of Greek scholarship.

742 – 814 Charlemagne, the greatest king of the Middle Ages, becomes King of the Franks in 768 and conquers much of Europe. His reign was noted for brutal warfare and for introducing feudalism (a political and military system that lasted many years). He was devoted to improving education and culture as well as the law and good government.

1096 – 1291 The Crusades were a series of holy wars. When Muslim Turks blocked the traditional pilgrimage routes to the Holy Lands, Christian armies from Europe attempted to capture the Holy Land in Palestine from Muslims. The pope promised that everyone who joined the Christian army would have all their sins forgiven. *Crusade* means *cross* in Latin and refers to the cross worn on the soldiers' uniforms. Ultimately, many people died and the Crusades were unsuccessful in keeping control of the Holy Lands; however, there was one positive outcome. The Crusades increased the exchange of ideas and products that greatly enriched both regions.

1100s Stories about a great ruler, King Arthur, and his Knights of the Round Table are written in France. The legend may have been based on real people, but the stories are not historically accurate. The folktale begins with a young boy, Arthur, who is unaware that he is the son of a king. Arthur pulls a sword known as Excalibur out of a stone where it had been lodged for many years. This proves Arthur is of royal blood and he is declared King of England. He lives in a castle called Camelot, marries his queen, Guinevere, and assembles a group of noble knights around a round table where all are considered equal.

1200 The Inquisition begins. The Inquisition was a religious court that investigated and tried people accused of heresy. (Heresy is any belief that is different from what is generally accepted by the Church.) Rewards were given to people who would give the court names of heretics. If anyone tried to help a friend who was accused, they could be punished too.

1271 Cultural exchanges between East and West begin when Italian explorer, Marco Polo embarks on his travel to China. He returns 24 years later with fascinating stories about unusual people and places. Even Christopher Columbus was captivated by tales of Marco Polo's travels, which helped inspire him to explore nearly 200 years later.

1300s Was Robin Hood a real person? No one knows for sure, but at about this time, minstrels began singing about the adventures of an outlaw who lived in the woods and stole from the rich to give to the poor.

mid 1300s to – 1700 Magic was viewed as dangerous witchcraft by the Church. People (mostly women) who were accused of witchcraft were frequently tortured until they confessed. During this period it is estimated that over 100,000 women were burned at the stake for witchcraft.

1340 Geoffrey Chaucer, a much-loved writer of the Middle Ages, is born in England about this time. Chaucer wrote *Canterbury Tales*, a series of clever and delightful stories about a diverse group of travelers making a pilgrimage.

1347 – 1351 Thousands all over Europe die from the Black Death also known as the plague, a deadly and extremely contagious disease. Diseased rats from merchant ships brought Black Death to Sicily and then the rest of Europe. Bacteria in the rats infected fleas that spread to people. The disease also caused millions to die in Russia, North Africa, the Near East and even as far as Greenland. People thought that Black Death was God's way of punishing them, so they became even more religious. As farmers and craftspeople died with no one to take their places in their fields and shops, shortages arose. This caused an increase in price and a higher demand for workers. Those who survived were paid more so their standard of living increased, thus helping bring an end to the Middle Ages.

1412 – 1431 Joan of Arc was born during the Hundred Years' War between France and England. She heard the voices of saints instructing her to help Charles, the oldest son of the King of France to become king. She was only 13 years old, but she was able to convince Charles and the Church that her calling was true. Joan dressed in armor and led the French army to an important victory (which was quite uncommon for a girl). Joan was later captured by the enemy, convicted of heresy and burned at the stake.

1450 Johannes Guttenberg invents the printing press. Before the printing press, books were written one at a time by hand, using quills or reeds and ink. (In fact, the word *manuscript* is Latin for *written by hand*.) But this process changed forever with the printing press. Now books could be produced faster and made available to more people. This is one of the events that played a part in ending the Middle Ages and beginning the Renaissance (along with the conclusion of the 100 Years' War, The Plague, the invention of guns and increased travel and trade).

## Theatre Terminology

- actor: a person who performs in a play
- backdrop: a large cloth (or paper) that is painted and hung as scenery
- blackout: when all lights are simultaneously turned off to indicate the end of a scene
- blocking: a plan that indicates where an actor stands and moves
- “Break a leg!” a theatre expression meaning “Good luck!”
- cast: the actors in a play
- center stage: the middle portion of the stage floor
- character: a person in a story that an actor plays
- choreographer: a person who plans and teaches movements — like dances and fight sequences — to actors
- costume director: a person who designs and makes the costumes actors wear
- cue: a signal that tells an actor when to speak or move
- curtain call: actors gather on stage at the end of a performance to receive applause
- director: the person who interprets the play and provides direction to the actors and designers
- downstage: the area of the stage that is closest to the audience
- dress rehearsal: the last rehearsal before a play opens with actors in full costume
- Foley artist: a person who creates sounds for film or theatre using a variety of objects to enhance the sound effects
- giving focus: an actor on stage does not move or talk so that audience attention is drawn to another actor who is moving or talking
- improvisation: a drama that is not scripted, but is made up as you go
- lighting designer: a person who plans what lights are used and when they are used to help create a setting
- makeup designer: a person who makes actors faces resemble the characters they are playing
- mime: an actor who performs without words
- monologue: a scene when only one actor speaks
- offstage: the area of the stage that is not seen by an audience
- onstage: the area of a stage where actors perform
- pantomime: a story performed without words
- producer: the person who arranges the financing of a play
- prop: short for properties. Any object used by an actor.
- proscenium: a decorative frame that arches around the stage’s acting area
- script: a play in written form
- set: the acting area including props and scenery
- set designer: the person who designs the scenery for a play
- sound designer: the person who selects the music and sounds used in a play
- stage crew: people who set up scenery and change it between scenes of a play

stage directions: instructions given to actors to tell them when and where to move on stage  
stage left: the area of stage that is on the actor's left  
stage manager: the person who makes sure a performance runs as planned  
stage right: the area of stage that is on the actor's right  
taking focus: the actor speaks confidently and makes intentional movements in a way that gets the audience's attention  
theater: movie show  
theatre: on a stage, live, with actors  
upstage: the back of the stage or the area that is the farthest away from the audience

## **Medieval Terminology**

banquet: an elaborate meal or feast given by kings and nobles in the great hall of a castle.

bishop: a religious leader of noble rank, above a priest, administers from a cathedral.

catapult: a giant war machine that could hurl a heavy rock against the wall of a castle or town.

coat of arms: the family emblem that is worn on a knight's tunic and shield that identifies what family he belongs to.

chivalry: the qualities and conduct that ideal knights should have. These included being courteous to women, keeping their word, being respectful of the Church, having pity for the poor and being brave in battle.

Dark Ages: the first part of the Middle Ages. The period of time between the fall of the Roman Empire to the end of 10th century characterized by war and disorder.

feudal system: a social system where kings gave noblemen grants of land in exchange for noblemen's pledges to provide soldiers for the king. Nobles could then divide their land among knights and lower lords who would fight for their nobleman in times of war. The peasant farmers were at the bottom of the feudal system and worked the land for the lord of the manor.

heresy: A belief that is different from what is commonly accepted as Christian teachings of the Church. A person who was accused of heresy was called a heretic and could be punished with a fine, a long jail term, banishment or even torture and death.

illuminated

manuscripts: hand-printed books and documents that had hand-painted decorations.

joust: a battle or mock battle between two knights who would charge each other and attempt to knock each other off their horses by hitting with a lance or long pole.

knight a soldier who fought on horseback for a king or lord.

lord: a powerful and wealthy ruler of land who rented land to peasants.

manor: an area of land that was owned by a lord.

medieval: the time roughly from the fifth century to the end of the 15th century (A.D. 400 to A.D. 1400); also known as the Middle Ages. The period of time between classical ancient Greece and Rome and the Renaissance.

monk: a religious man who lives a secluded life and takes vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

page: a boy from 7 to 13 years old who is in training to become a squire and then possibly a knight.

parchment: thin animal skin used as paper.

peasant/serf: a person at the lowest level of society who worked the land for nobles.

squire: a boy over 14 years of age who assisted a knight.

tapestry: a woven wall hanging that decorated castle walls and helped keep drafts out.

tournament: a competition between knights.

trencher: a slab of stale bread used as a plate.

troubadours: traveling entertainers who recited poems, sang songs, and told stories.

## Indiana State Standards — Grade 4

The unit addresses the following English/Language Arts Standards:

### **Standard 1 – Reading: Word Recognition, Fluency and Vocabulary Development**

Students understand the basic features of words. They see letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics, syllables, word parts and context clues. They apply this knowledge to achieve fluent oral and silent reading.

### **Standard 2 – Reading: Reading Comprehension**

Students read and understand grade-level appropriate material. They use a variety of comprehension strategies, such as asking and responding to essential questions, making predictions and comparing information from several sources to understand what is read. Students read a variety of expository texts, reference materials and online information.

### **Standard 3 – Reading: Literary Response and Analysis**

Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children’s literature. They identify and discuss the characters, theme (the main idea of a story), plot (what happens in a story) and the setting (where a story takes place) of stories that they read.

### **Standard 4 – Writing**

Students write clear sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea.

### **Standard 5 – Writing: Writing Applications**

Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Writing demonstrates a command of standard English and the drafting, research and organizational strategies of the writing process.

### **Standard 6 – Writing: Written English Language Conventions**

Students write using standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

### **Standard 7 – Listening and Speaking: Listening and Speaking Skills, Strategies, and Applications**

Students listen critically and respond appropriately to oral communication. They speak in a manner that guides the listener to understand important ideas. Students deliver brief oral presentations that are organized around a coherent thesis statement.

The unit addresses the following Social Studies Standards:

### **Standard 2 – Civics and Government**

Students explain citizenship rights and responsibilities; investigate civic and political issues and problems; use inquiry and communication skills to report findings.

### **Standard 5 – Individuals, Society and Culture**

Students examine the interaction between individual and group behavior in state and community life and analyze the roles and relationships of diverse groups of people.

The unit addresses the following Visual Arts Standards:

**Standard 1 - Responding to Art: History**

Students understand the significance of visual art in relation to historical, social, political, spiritual, environmental, technological and economic issues.

**Standard 3 – Responding to Art: Criticism**

Students describe, analyze, and interpret works of art and artifacts.

**Standard 5 – Responding to Art: Aesthetics**

Students reflect on and discuss art theories and aesthetic issues concerning the meaning and significance of art.

**Standard 8 – Creating Art: Production**

Students understand and apply elements and principles of design effectively in their work.

**Standard 9 – Creating Art: Production**

Students develop and apply skills using a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional media, tools and processes to create works that communicate personal meaning.

**Standard 10 – Creating Art: Production**

Students reflect on, revise, and refine work using problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

**The unit addresses the following Science standards:****Standard 1 – The Nature of Science and Technology**

Students, working collaboratively, carry out investigations. They question, observe, make accurate measurements, increase their use of tools and instruments, record data in journals and communicate results through chart, graph, written and verbal forms.

**Standard 2 – Scientific Thinking**

Students use a variety of skills and techniques when attempting to answer questions and solve problems. They describe their observations accurately and clearly, using numbers, words and sketches, and are able to communicate their thinking to others. They compare, explain and justify both information and numerical functions.

**Standard 5 – The Mathematical World**

Students apply mathematics in scientific contexts. Their geometric descriptions of objects are comprehensive. They realize that graphing demonstrates specific connections between data. They identify questions that can be answered by data distribution.

**Standard 6 – Common Themes**

Students work with an increasing variety of systems and begin to modify parts in systems and models and notice the changes that result. They question why change occurs.

**The unit addresses the following Math standards:****Standard 5 – Measurement**

Students recognize that measurement has applications in science, social studies, home economics and other subjects.

## **Standard 6 – Statistics, Data Analysis, and Probability**

Students organize, represent and interpret numerical and categorical data and clearly communicate their findings.

**The unit addresses the following Music standards:**

### **Standard 1 – Singing alone and with others**

Students sing alone, on pitch, and in rhythm, with proper timbre, diction, posture and with a steady tempo. Students sing expressively, accurately, with good breath control, alone and in small groups.

### **Standard 2 – Playing an instrument alone and with others**

Students perform on one instrument independently, alone and in groups; perform easy rhythmic, melodic and chordal patterns accurately and independently and perform independent instrumental parts while other students sing or play contrasting parts.

### **Standard 3 – Reading, notating and interpreting music**

Students read music notation in simple meters and write down musical ideas in standard music notation.

### **Standard 4 – Improvising melodies and accompaniments**

Students improvise rhythmic and melodic accompaniments to a known melody and improvise short melodies over given rhythmic accompaniments.

### **Standard 5 – Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines**

Students create and arrange music to go with readings or dramas; create short songs, variations or instrumental pieces and use a variety of sound sources when composing.

### **Standard 6 – Listening to, analyzing and describing music**

Students identify simple music forms when heard; discuss and describe aural examples of music of many styles and cultures and respond through movement to selected musical events while listening to music.

### **Standard 8 – Understanding music in relation to history and culture**

Students identify examples of unknown music by historical period and compare the roles of musicians and their performing conditions in several cultures.

### **Standard 9 – Evaluating and critiquing music and music performances**

Students develop criteria for musical quality and explain personal preferences for musical works and styles, using proper music terminology.

## Indiana State Standards — Grade 5

The unit addresses the following English/Language Arts Standards:

### **Standard 1 – Reading: Word Recognition, Fluency and Vocabulary Development**

Students use their knowledge of word parts and word relationships, as well as context clues to determine the meaning of specialized vocabulary and to understand the precise meaning of grade-level-appropriate words.

### **Standard 2 – Reading: Reading Comprehension**

Students read and understand grade-level appropriate material. They describe and connect the essential ideas, arguments and perspective of the text. Students read a variety of grade-level-appropriate narrative (story) and expository (informational and technical) texts, including classic and contemporary literature and online information.

### **Standard 3 – Reading: Literary Response and Analysis**

Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children’s literature. They identify and discuss the characters, theme (the main idea of a story), plot (what happens in a story) and setting (where a story takes place) of stories that they read.

### **Standard 4 – Writing: Writing Process**

Students discuss and keep a list of ideas for writing. They use graphic organizers (and) progress through the writing process, proofread, edit and revise writing.

### **Standard 6 – Writing: Written English Language Conventions**

Students write using Standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

### **Standard 7 – Listening and Speaking: Listening and Speaking Skills, Strategies and Applications**

Students deliver focused, coherent presentations that convey ideas clearly and relate to the background and interests of the audience. They evaluate the content of oral communication. Students deliver well-organized presentations using traditional speech strategies, including narration, exposition, persuasion and description. Students use the same standard English conventions for oral speech that they use in their writing.

The unit addresses the following Social Studies Standards:

### **Standard 2 – Civics and Government**

Students will identify and explain main components and characteristics of the United States government.

### **Standard 4 – Economics**

Students will describe the productive resources and market relationships that influence the way people produce goods and services and earn a living in the United States in different historical periods.

### **Standard 5 – Individuals, Society and Culture**

Students will identify individuals and groups that have contributed to the development of the United States, investigate the way that individuals and groups cooperate and adapt to the environment and resolve conflicts and examine the challenges faced and the contributions made by various cultural groups to American society.

**The unit addresses the following Visual Arts Standards:**

**Standard 1 – Responding to Art: History**

Students understand the significance of visual art in relation to historical, social, political, spiritual, environmental, technological and economic issues.

**Standard 3 – Responding to Art: Criticism**

Students describe, analyze and interpret works of art and artifacts.

**Standard 8 – Creating Art: Production**

Students understand and apply elements and principles of design effectively in their work.

**Standard 9 – Creating Art: Production**

Students develop and apply skills using a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional media, tools and processes to create works that communicate personal meaning.

**Standard 10 – Creating Art: Production**

Students reflect on, revise and refine work using problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

**The unit addresses the following Science standards:**

**Standard 1 – The Nature of Science and Technology**

Students work collaboratively to carry out investigations. They observe and make accurate measurements, increase their use of tools and instruments, record data in journals and communicate results through chart, graph, written and verbal forms. Students repeat investigations, explain inconsistencies and design projects.

**Standard 2 – Scientific Thinking**

Students use a variety of skills and techniques when attempting to answer questions and solve problems. They describe their observations accurately and clearly, using numbers, words and sketches, and are able to communicate their thinking to others. They compare, contrast, explain and justify both information and numerical functions.

**Standard 5 – The Mathematical World**

Students apply mathematics in scientific contexts. They make more precise and varied measurements in gathering data. Their geometric descriptions of objects are comprehensive, and their graphing demonstrates specific connections. They identify questions that can be answered by data distribution, i.e. “Where is the middle?” and their supporting of claims or answers with reasons and analogies becomes important.

**Standard 6 – Common Themes**

Students work with an increasing variety of systems and begin to modify parts in systems and models and notice the changes that result

**The unit addresses the following Math standards:**

**Standard 5 – Measurement**

Students recognize that measurement has applications in science, social studies, home economics and other subjects.

## **Standard 6 – Statistics, Data Analysis and Probability**

Students display, analyze, compare and interpret data sets; they use the results of probability experiments to predict future events.

**The unit addresses the following Music standards:**

### **Standard 1– Singing alone and with others**

Students sing alone, on pitch, and in rhythm, with proper timbre, diction, posture and with a steady tempo. They sing expressively, accurately and with good breath control, alone and in small groups.

### **Standard 2 – Playing an instrument alone and with others**

Students perform on one instrument alone or in an ensemble. Echo or play by ear easy rhythmic, melodic, and chordal patterns accurately. They perform instrumental parts while other students sing or play different parts.

### **Standard 3 – Reading, notating and interpreting music**

Students read music notation in simple and compound meters. They use notation to communicate musical ideas.

### **Standard 4 – Improvising melodies and accompaniments**

Students improvise simple harmonies to accompany pieces or songs. They improvise short melodies over given rhythmic pattern.

### **Standard 5 – Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines**

Students create an original composition, perform the piece on an instrument or sing it.

### **Standard 6 – Listening to, analyzing and describing music**

Students identify music forms when they are heard. They use proper terms when explaining music, music notation and musical performances. They identify the sounds of many instruments and voices and use movement to respond to musical traits or events as they are heard.

### **Standard 8 – Understanding music in relation to history and culture**

Students identify unfamiliar examples of music from either the Classic or Romantic musical style period when heard. They describe how musical elements are used in music from other parts of the world.

### **Standard 9 – Evaluating and critiquing music and music performances**

Students develop a list of criteria that exemplify musical quality. They use appropriate terms to explain their preferences for musical works and styles.

## Teacher Resource Books

- Bany-Winters, Lisa. *On-Stage: Theatre Games and Activities for Kids*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1997.
- Bany-Winters, Lisa. *Showtime: Music, Dance, and Drama Activities for Kids*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2000.
- Bobbie, Kidder. *ImaginACTION: Using Drama in the Classroom, No Matter What You Teach*. Cottonwood Press, 1995.
- Cairns, Trevor. *The Middle Ages*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications, 1975.
- Carlson, Laurie. *Days of Knights and Damsels: An Activity Guide*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1998.
- Cosentino, Lydia. *Classic Mouth: Monologues from Classic Literature for Boys and Girls*. Dramaline Publishing, 1996.
- Dobbs, Stephen Mark. *Learning in and through Art: A Guide to Discipline-Based Art Education*. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Trust, 1998.
- Elffers, Joost. *Play with your Food*. New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 1997.
- Eron, Polly. *Drama in the Classroom: Creative Activities for Teachers, Parents, and Friends*. Lost Coast Press, 1996.
- Gary-Cassady, Marsh. *Acting Games: Improvisations and Exercises: A textbook of theatre Games and Improvisations*. Meriweather, 1993.
- Hart, Avery & Paul Mantell. *Knights and Castles: 50 Hands-On Activities to Experience the Middle Ages*. Charlotte, Vermont: Williamson Publishing, 1998.
- Janson, H.W. *History of Art*. New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc. 1974.
- Lane, Barry. *After the End: Teaching and Learning Creative Revision*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1993.
- LaPlantz, Shereen. *Cover to Cover: Creative Techniques for Making Beautiful Journals and Albums*. Ashville, NC: Lark Books, 1995.
- Morin, Alice. *Newspaper Theatre: Creating Play Production for Low Budgets and No Budgets*,
- Peterson, Lenka and Dan O'Connor. *Kids Take the Stage: Helping Young People Discover the Creative Outlet of Theatre*. Watson-Guptill Publishing, 1999.
- Sanderson, Jeannette. *Read Aloud Plays: The Middle Ages*. New York: Scholastic, 1998.
- Sitarz, Paula Gaj. *The Curtain Rises: A History of Theatre from Its Origins in Greece and Rome through the English Restoration*. White Hall, VA: Shoe Tree Press, 1991.
- Rooyackers, Paul. *101 Drama Games for Children: Fun and Learning with Acting and Make-Believe*. Hunter House, 1997.
- Wilson, Brent. *The Quiet Evolution: Changing the Face of Arts Education*. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Trust, 1997.
- Wood, David. *Theatre for Children: A Guide to Writing, Adapting, Directing and Acting*. Ivan R. Dee, 1999.

## Children's Books

- Aliki. *A Medieval Feast*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1983.
- Baines, Francesca. *Castles*. Worldwise. New York: Franklin Watts, 1995.
- Beckett, Wendy. *The Duke and the Peasant: Life in the Middle Ages*. New York: Prestel, 1997.
- Branford, Henrietta. *Fire, Bed, and Bone*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 1998.
- Christian, Thee and Robert Levine. *Behind the Curtain: Hansel and Gretel: Your own Backstage Tour in Look-through and Pull-up Panels*. Workman Publishing, 1994.
- Cushman, Karen. *The Midwife's Apprentice*. New York: Clarion Books, 1995.
- De Angeli, Marguerite, *The Door in the Wall*. New York: Doubleday, 1949.
- Deary, Terry. *The Measly Middle Ages (Horrible Histories)*. Scholastic Paperbacks, 1998.
- Evans, Cheryl and Lucy Smith. *Acting and Theatre*. London: Usborne Publishing, 1992.
- Fleishman, Sid. *The Whipping Boy*. Santa Barbara, CA: Cornerstone Books, 1986.
- Gray, Elizabeth. *Adam of the Road*. New York: The Viking Press, 1942.
- Gibbons, Gail. *Knights in Shining Armor*. Canada: Little Brown and Co., 1995.
- Haycock, Kate. *Plays: Media Story*. Ada, Oklahoma: Garrett Educational Corporation, 1990.
- Hindley, Judy. *The Time Traveller Book of Knights and Castles*. London: Usborne Publishing, 1976.
- Hodges, Margaret. *St. George and the Dragon*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1984.
- Hodges, Margaret. *The Kitchen Knight*. New York: Holiday House, 1990.
- Howarth, Sarah. *What Do We Know about the Middle Ages?* New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1995.
- Howarth, Sarah. *The Middle Ages: See Through History*. New York: Penguin Books, 1993.
- Jordan, William Chester. *The Middle Ages: A Watts Guide for Children*. New York: Grolier Publishing, 1999.
- Langley, Andrew. *Medieval Life: Eyewitness Books*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.
- Oakes, Catherine. *Exploring the Past: The Middle Ages*. New York: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1989.
- Pyle, Howard. *Otto of the Silver Hand*. New York: Dover Publishing, 1967.
- MacDonald, Fiona and John James. *A Medieval Cathedral: Inside Story*. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1994.
- MacDonald, Fiona. *How Would You Survive in the Middle Ages?*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1995.
- Malam, John. *Theater: From First Rehearsal to Opening Night*. Chicago: Peter Bedrick Books, 2000.
- May, Robin. *Exploring the Arts: Looking at Theatre*. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 1989.
- Pernoud, Regine. *A Day with a Stonecutter*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publishing, 1997. (Series also includes: Miller, Nobleman, Troubadour)
- Pryer, Nick. *Putting on a Play*. New York: Thomson Learning, 1994.
- Ross, Stewart. *Fact or Fiction: Knights*. Brookfield, Connecticut: Copper Beech Books, 1996.
- Steel, Philip. *Knights*. New York: Kingfisher, 1998.
- Stevens, Chambers. *Magnificent Monologues for Kids*. Sandcastle Publishing. 1999.
- Tanaka, Shelley. *In the Time of Knights*. Toronto, Canada: Madison Press Books, 2000.
- Thee, Christian and Robert Levine. *Behind the Curtain: Hansel and Gretel: Your Own Backstage Tour in Look-through and Pull Up Panels*. Workman Publishing, 1994.

Weisberg, Barbara. *The Big Golden Book of Knights and Castles*. Racine, WI: Western Publishing Company, 1993.

Williams, Brian and Brenda Williams, ed. *The Age of Knights and Castles*. Chicago: World Book, Inc., 1996.

Wright, Sylvia. *The Age of Chivalry: English Society 1200-1400*. New York: Warwick Press, 1988.

Yacowitz, Caryl and Joanne Wetzel. *Onstage-Backstage (Photo Series)*. Carolrhoda Books, 1987.

## **Theatre Resource Sites**

Creative Drama and Theatre Education

[www.creativedrama.com/](http://www.creativedrama.com/)

Language Arts for Kids – Go to Drama and Theatre (resource links)

<http://kidslangarts.about.com/>

Mega Ed – Drama/Theatre (resource links)

[www.megaed.com/thearts.htm#drama](http://www.megaed.com/thearts.htm#drama)

The Drama Teacher's Resource Room

[www3.sk.sympatico.ca/erachi/index.html](http://www3.sk.sympatico.ca/erachi/index.html)

Drama – Edhelper.com

[www.edhelper.com/cat35.htm](http://www.edhelper.com/cat35.htm)

Lesson Plans – Improv Activities

[www.geocities.com/broadway/alley/3765/lessons.html](http://www.geocities.com/broadway/alley/3765/lessons.html)

Children's Theatre & Creative Drama

[http://dte6.educ.ualberta.ca/nethowto\\_support/examples/goth\\_r/drama/children.htm#children](http://dte6.educ.ualberta.ca/nethowto_support/examples/goth_r/drama/children.htm#children)

The Living Playbook (Improv Games)

[www.accessone.com/~up/playbook/index.html](http://www.accessone.com/~up/playbook/index.html)

## **Middle Ages Resource Sites**

Middle Ages

[www.learner.org/exhibits/middleages/](http://www.learner.org/exhibits/middleages/)

Life in the Middle Ages – Step Back in Time

[www.kyrene.k12.az.us/schools.brisas/sunda/ma/enter.htm](http://www.kyrene.k12.az.us/schools.brisas/sunda/ma/enter.htm)

Medieval Resources

<http://topcat.bridgew.edu/~kschrock/ed560/thaxter/res.htm>

Medieval History

<http://historymedren.about.com/mbody.htm?once=true&>

Taste of the Middle Ages – Daily Life

[www.godecookery.com/mtales/mtales08.htm](http://www.godecookery.com/mtales/mtales08.htm)

Medieval & Renaissance Games

<http://waks.ne.mediaone.net//game-hist/>

The Internet Connection for Medieval Resources-NetSerf

<http://netserf.cua.edu/>

Life in the Middle Ages

[www.uen.org/utahlink/activities/view\\_activity.cgi?activity\\_id=6336](http://www.uen.org/utahlink/activities/view_activity.cgi?activity_id=6336)

Marriage in Medieval Times

[www.dfwx.com/medieval\\_cult.htm](http://www.dfwx.com/medieval_cult.htm)

Middle English Plays and History

[www.luminarium.org/medlit/plays.htm](http://www.luminarium.org/medlit/plays.htm)

Baragona's Medieval Drama Page (resource links)

[www.vmi.edu/~english/meddrama.html](http://www.vmi.edu/~english/meddrama.html)

A Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Instruments

[www.s-hamilton.k12.ia.us/antiqua.instrumt.html](http://www.s-hamilton.k12.ia.us/antiqua.instrumt.html)

The Middle Ages

[www.geocities.com/EnchantedForest/tower/3098/midpeople.html](http://www.geocities.com/EnchantedForest/tower/3098/midpeople.html)

History and Social Studies (resource links)

[www.studyweb.com/links/4021.html](http://www.studyweb.com/links/4021.html)

Medieval Times

<http://members.tripod.com/~ehlavaty/medieval.html>

## **Other Media Resources**

### Video

*Medieval Times 1000-1450*, Sve and Churchhill Media, [www.svemedia.com](http://www.svemedia.com), 1-800-829-1900

### CD ROM

*StageStruck: Discover Australian Performance*, National Institute of Dramatic Art in Australia, [www.nida.unsw.edu.au](http://www.nida.unsw.edu.au)