



THE SUITCASE CIRCUS

LEE BRYAN, "THAT PUPPET GUY"

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LEE BRYAN is an **EMMY®** nominated touring puppeteer who has gained national recognition for his unique brand of curriculum-based puppet programs. As a featured guest performer with the internationally acclaimed **Center for Puppetry Arts** in Atlanta, Lee has been invited to perform at numerous national and regional festivals, and is a grant recipient from the **Jim Henson Foundation**.





Lee's productions feature... "*Puppet programs with a punch!*" Themes include environmental responsibility, cultural diversity and character education. Performances also feature a behind-the-scenes demonstration of puppetry techniques used in the show.

Lee's energetic performances combine multiple styles of puppetry with live vocal characterizations. **THAT PUPPET GUY** is fully self-contained and provides all lighting and sound support.

Lee is a member of Puppeteers of America, UNIMA, UNIMA-USA and the Atlanta Puppetry Guild.

Various credits include film work with the **Muppets®**, numerous television projects (including **Public Television**) and 15 years experience in the **Artist in Schools** programs throughout the Southeast.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- Science - The themes of balance, gravity, motion and energy are explored in this production. 
- Character Education—Perseverance, Patience, Courage, and Cooperation are illustrated by the characters in the show.
- Social Studies—Multiculturalism - the performers have come together from different lands. 
- Music— This performance is accompanied by music, the rhythm and tempo of which move the story along. 
- Art—A variety of recycled stuffed toys were made into puppets, and are demonstrated at the conclusion of the show. 

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES




Students will observe doll style rod puppets encouraging them to explore more possibilities with their own toys.



MORE ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS

Expand your students' knowledge and appreciation of "The Suitcase Circus"

AFTER THE SHOW

- * Explore the secrets of circus performers. Place a long line of masking tape on the floor and pretend it is a high wire. Students can develop their own acts using pool noodles, umbrellas and small plastic chairs as balancing props. Discuss why high-wire walkers need these props to alter their center of gravity. 
- * Listen to traditional circus music—Fucik's "Entry of the Gladiators" is most often associated with the circus. The Merle Evans Circus band has a CD "Circus Music From the Big Top". Create your own instruments or use the ones you already have, and march in a circus parade. The only limit is your imagination. 
- * *"The Most Excellent Book of How to be a Clown"* by Catherine Perkins has easy step-by-step instructions for designing costumes and make-up, preparing a routine, performing stunts, and interacting with the audience.
- * Your students can become a troupe of performing elephants. Have them line up and march in a circle. The leader can call out actions which the others must perform until another action is called out. Ideas for actions—looking for peanuts, trunks holding tails, flapping ears, tusks, and pounding feet.
- * Make your own tin can stilts. Take two empty 28 oz tin cans. Punch two holes in opposite sides of the closed end of each can. Cut two pieces of string, one for each stilt. Each piece needs to be long enough to go under the foot and reach as high as the waist. Pull one piece of string through the hole in one can and tie the ends together. Repeat with the second can. Enjoy your stilts! 
- * Design posters for "THE SUITCASE CIRCUS" and send them to **THAT PUPPET GUY**.

RESOURCES



What makes a successful human cannonball?

<http://www.ontariosciencecentre.ca/scizone/e3/circus/cannon/howto.asp>



Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey's Circus Education Center

<http://www.ringling.com/activity/education/>



Ideas for a Circus unit/theme in your classroom

<http://www.teachingheart.net/circustheme.html>



Apps, Jerry. *Tents, Tigers and the Ringling Brothers*

Wisconsin Historical Society Press 2007



Presnall, Judith Janda. *Circuses Under the Big Top* Franklin Watts 1996



The Merle Evans Circus Band "*Circus Music From the Big Top*".

Legacy 1994



ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS

Expand your students' knowledge and appreciation of "The Suitcase Circus"

THE SUITCASE CIRCUS

Animals and tightropes and cannons, oh my! From within a clown's worn suitcase emerge silly circus acts that will amaze, astound, and awe!

Featured acts include a tightrope walking elephant, a giraffe on stilts, a lion taming act, and a daredevil leopard who shoots himself out of a cannon to the other side of the room! "Kids, don't try this at home, these are trained professionals."

The puppets for THE SUITCASE CIRCUS are made from recycled stuffed animals. First, the animals were cleaned, then cut open and all the stuffing removed. Wire armatures and wooden head controls were installed and then the puppets were restuffed. New eyes were fashioned from white plastic spoons and black tape attached with hot glue. A quick trip to the costumer and these second hand stars were ready to perform!



Following the performance, the audience is treated to a puppet demonstration and (upon request) a brief question-and-answer session.

This production is made possible in part by a generous grant from the **Jim Henson Foundation**

A PUPPET is an object that appears to be alive when someone *manipulates* it. It can do and say things that real people cannot. Puppets can tell stories, educate and entertain the imagination all at the same time. While nobody knows when the art of *puppetry* began, all cultures throughout the world share some form of puppetry.

THE WORLD OF THE TRAVELLING CIRCUS

The roots of today's modern circus stretch back thousands of years to Ancient China, Greece, and Rome. The word "circus" comes from the Latin word for circle and referred to the open-air arenas where spectators gathered.

The first circus to appear in the United States was visited by George Washington in Philadelphia in 1793. In the 1800s, America was mostly rural. The circus played one night stands in tiny communities and then traveled overnight the ten miles or so to the next show. At dawn they would announce their arrival with a parade into town and set up their tent, hoping to make enough money to cover their overheads. Some circuses traveled by river, visiting ports along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers.

In 1890, the Ringling Brother's decided to travel by railroad so that they could reach cities they had never been to before. It took eighteen railcars to hold all the animals, performers and support staff.

In 1918, Ringling Brothers merged with Barnum and Bailey and became "Greatest Show on Earth" a three-ring extravaganza which continues to this day.

MORE ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS

Expand your students' knowledge and appreciation of "The Suitcase Circus"



AFTER THE SHOW

Stage your own Circus Puppet Show

Use everyday recycled household items to make your own circus puppets. Find some cheerful music, cover a table with a cloth to make a stage, and you're all set. Instructions and ideas for other easy methods of making puppets for your Circus Show can be found on the internet:

<http://www.videojug.com/film/how-to-make-a-wooden-spoon-puppet>

The puppets for your Circus Puppet Show can be as simple as pictures of clowns, lions, horses and other participants glued onto popsicle sticks.

<http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/famlit/howtokit/puppet/puppet.pdf>

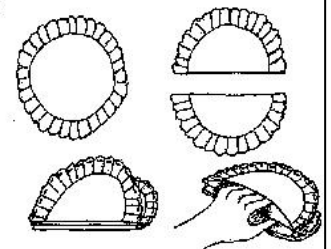
Or, you may choose to make different kinds of puppets for each act. Paper plate puppets would be good lions for instance.

Take an ordinary paper plate, the kind you can find in any grocery store, and turn it into a fabulous puppet that's **very easy** to make! What's more, this puppet can talk...

SUPPLY LIST:

2 9-inch paper plates (smaller for young children), Stapler, Scissors, Construction paper or cloth for covering the puppet, Odds and ends for decorating, and IMAGINATION

1. Use the thinnest plates you can find. Fold each plate in half and then open it. Cut one plate along the fold. Place each half on the uncut plate, so that the cut edge is level with the fold of the uncut plate.
2. Staple each half plate to the whole plate along the outside edge. Your hand will fit into the opening between the cut and uncut plates.
3. You're ready to decorate! Use odds and ends from around the home to give your Paper Plate Puppet some facial features. You can make a person, an animal or a fantastic creature. You can use paint, markers, paper or fabric to cover the plates. Be as elaborate or as simple as you like.



For the body, attach a square of cloth to either the top or bottom plate half with staples or tape.

CLOWN FINGERPLAY

Make five simple clown finger puppets—glue a picture of a clown onto stiff card. Attach a loop made of card and big enough to slip over your finger to the back.



Five funny clowns juggling balls galore
(hold up five fingers)
One tripped and fell, then there were four.
(bend down thumb)
Four funny clowns up on a trapeze,
One jumped off and then there were three.
(bend down pointer finger)
Three funny clowns blowing up balloons,
One ran away and then there were two.
(bend down middle finger)
Two funny clowns chewing bubble gum,
One left to get some more, and then there was one.
(bend down ring finger)
One funny clown having lots of fun,
He left the circus tent, and then there were none.
(bend down little finger)

By Diane Thorn