

THEATRE DIRECT CANADA

PRESENTS

beneath the BANYAN

tree

a theatrical tale for
young people about
beginning a new
life in Canada

by **Emil Sher** with choreography by **Lata Pada**
direction by **Lynda Hill**, artistic director

Education Resource Guide

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Welcome From the Artistic Director

Welcome to the Education Resource Guide for our production of *Beneath the Banyan Tree*. I am extremely proud of this undertaking, both from an artistic and educational viewpoint. This lovely dance, theatre and storytelling piece offers a host of opportunities for young people to explore their relationships with one another, their peers and their own understanding of themselves as young people in this rich cultural diverse country of ours. The colourful and dynamic dance and music drawn the Indian tradition will be eye opening for some, and positively affirming for others.



Lynda Hill
Artistic Director

The powerful collaboration among the artists that brought this piece from concept to reality is also reflected in our wonderful relationship with educators within the different school boards we're visiting with our daylong program. It is this partnership between artists and educators that it is at the centre of our work here at Theatre Direct.

I would like to acknowledge the following individuals who have made this project possible because of their leadership, vision and faith in the power of theatre to spark learning, discovery and creativity in young people:

Mary Lawlis, York Region District School Board
Janet O'Neill, Toronto District School Board
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Mary Ann Fratia, Peel District School Board
Jo Nazar, Holy Name Catholic School
Bernardine Nelligan, Toronto Catholic District School Board
Mary Samuel, Peel District School Board

I'd also like to thank the following theatre presenters and community spaces for hosting *Beneath The Banyan Tree* for local school audiences and families:

Centre In The Square (Kitchener)
Children's Stage (Lakefield)
Humewood Community School (Toronto)
Holy Name Catholic School (Toronto)
River Run Centre (Guelph)
Lakeshore Arts (Etobicoke)
National Arts Centre (Ottawa)

Finally, I want to honour the teachers who enable the extended learning emerging from this theatre performance for their students.

Introduction

Welcome to the Education Resource Guide for Theatre Direct Canada's *Beneath The Banyan Tree*. With this guide we hope that you can find the tools to make this performance into an enriching education experience for your students.

The following themes can be found in *Beneath The Banyan Tree*:

- Fables as cautionary tales, through exploring stories from the Panchatantra
- Traditional and contemporary dance, elements of dance, meaning and metaphor in dance
- Music: Indian and Western forms, elements of music used to create mood
- The immigrant experience, cultural differences, generational differences, fitting in with the new, while not letting go of the old
- Making transitions to new situations and building positive relationships
- Recognizing, developing, and sharing talents
- Anti-bullying and anti-racism

The Guide is divided into two sections. The first section contains background information on the play, the dances in the show, the production, and Theatre Direct Canada. The second section includes classroom activities organized by various subject areas—The Arts, Language Arts, Social Studies, Guidance/Health, and Science. This structure allows you, the educator, to choose the focus that best suits the strengths and interests of you and your class.

The contents of each section are as follows:

Section 1: Background Information

- The Story
- The Production: Cast & Creative Team
- Theatre Direct Canada
- History of *Beneath The Banyan Tree*

Section 2: Curriculum Based Discussions & Activities

This section contains pre- and post-performance discussions and activities, and relevant curriculum expectations organized by the following subject areas:

The Arts:

- Dance:
 - Bharatanatyam dance, contemporary dance, meaning and metaphor in dance
- Theatre Arts:
 - Set, Puppetry & Costume Design
- Music:
 - Indian and Western forms, elements of music used to create mood



Language Arts:

- Fables: Exploring the elements of a fable, through the tales of the Panchatantra

Social Studies:

- Geography: Information about India, the land and the people, aspects of South Indian culture introduced in the play, Hindu words used in the show
- The immigrant Experience: Cultural differences, generational differences, fitting in with the new while not letting go of the old.

Guidance and Health:

- Making transitions to new situations and building positive relationships
- Recognizing, developing, and sharing talents
- Anti bullying and anti-racism

Science:

- Learning about banyan trees, location where they grow and their characteristics
- Learning why trees are important to humans and all of nature

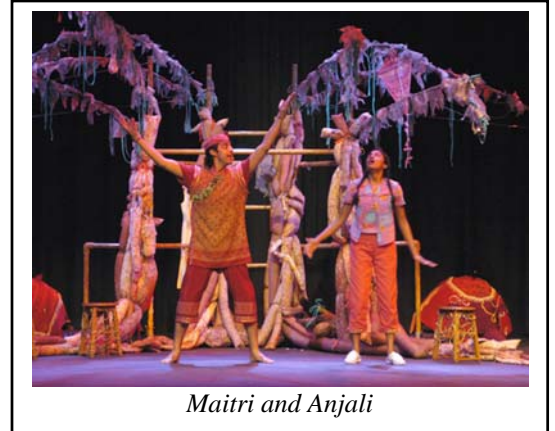
Suggested Projects for Grades 7/8

All Curriculum Based Discussions & Activities sections include suggestions for literacy, visual arts, drama, music, dance, etc.

Section 1: About The Play & Artists

The Story

Beneath The Banyan Tree explores the immigration experience of a young girl who has recently moved to Canada from India. Over the course of one day, we witness Anjali's struggle to adjust to her new life and her efforts to "fit in." We also witness how newfound friendship, family, and the power and richness of her culture provide her with the strength to be herself.



Maitri and Anjali

The story takes place in three locations: Anjali's home, her school, and in the colourful landscape of her imagination. Maitri, the spirit of the Banyan Tree, and three engaging animal characters from the Indian fables of the Panchatantra inhabit the latter. It is in the comfort of this imagined world that Anjali receives much needed guidance and insight.

At the heart of the story are the themes of identity, cultural tradition, and cultural pride, which are central to the relationship between Anjali and her grandmother, Aiji. When Aiji presents her granddaughter with a beautiful traditional outfit to wear for her 12th birthday, Anjali is stuck. Fearing mockery from her friends, she rejects the outfit as "too Indian." A similar conundrum arises when she is told to eat lunch at school and is handed an aluminum tiffin carrier filled with Indian food. When Anjali deliberately "forgets" her lunch, Aiji follows her to school and confronts her. Their dispute is played out in a wonderful tug-and-pull dance using the long blue scarf belonging to her traditional outfit. Anjali's challenges are captured most profoundly in her struggle at school and frequent teasing from Skylar, the class bully. An ally is found in a boy named Mason who himself has experienced teasing and bullying. We witness the beginnings of a strong friendship rooted in their mutual love of music and dance. Looming over Anjali's day, however, is the pressure of a class assignment, in which she must do a presentation, entitled "All About Me."

A well-meaning teacher has asked all the children to share stories about themselves and their culture. As a recently arrived immigrant, Anjali wants only to find acceptance and inclusion, and panics over the thought of telling her story. Maitri reminds her that stories can take any form and suggests that the gift for dance Anjali possesses is the best way to tell her story. Anjali summons up her courage and performs a dance in the Bharatanatyam tradition that reveals images of saying goodbye to loved ones, traveling long distances, and coming to a strange new place.

After a wonderful response from her class and her joy in a re-discovered pride, Anjali returns home with a new perspective. After reconciling with her beloved Aiji, Anjali puts on the traditional outfit she had earlier rejected and prepares to greet her parents at the airport on their return home to Canada.



The Production: Cast & Creative Team

Cast

Art James as Mason

Ash Knight as Maitri

Laila Moos as Ajji

Tanya Pillay as Anjali

Creative Team

Emil Sher – Playwright

Lata Pada – Choreographer

Lynda Hill – Director

Edgardo Moreno – Composer

Nova Bhattacharya – Choreography Assistant

Pat McCarthy – Education Consultant

nisha ahuja, Nova Bhattacharya, Sharada K. Eswar – Education Leaders

Theatre Direct Canada

Lynda Hill, Artistic Director

Theatre Direct Canada engages young people through compelling, inventive and uncompromising professional theatre.

Our major area of focus is the development, production and presentation of Canadian plays that provoke, challenge, question and empower our audience.

All of our productions are complemented by quality education resources and programs, reflecting our belief in the dynamic relationship between arts and education.

Since 1976, Theatre Direct has produced over 85 productions, and tours to thousands of young people annually. In recognition of its outstanding works for young audiences, Theatre Direct has been the recipient of 22 Dora Mavor Moore nominations resulting in 6 awards, and 9 Chalmers Canadian Play Awards.

In 2007, Theatre Direct will move to its own performance/studio space, where it will present to the local community, while continuing its commitment to touring school boards and communities beyond Toronto.

History of *Beneath The Banyan Tree*

Beneath The Banyan Tree was commissioned by Lata Pada and Sampradaya Dance Creations, and premiered in association with Theatre Direct Canada, under the direction of Theatre Direct's Artistic Director Lynda Hill.

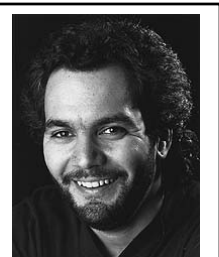
After its successful run at the Mississauga International Children's Festival in 2004, Theatre Direct Canada acquired this production.

For its 2004/5 and 2005/6 seasons, Theatre Direct Canada tours *Beneath The Banyan Tree* to theatre venues and schools throughout Ontario.

Both companies are thrilled that the vibrant creative collaboration between the playwright, choreographer and director continues.

“A playwright doesn’t just work with words. In helping to create *Beneath the Banyan Tree*, I have had the good fortune of working with some very gifted artists who have transformed words on a page into magic on the stage. Director Lynda Hill, choreographer Lata Pada, and composer Edgardo Moreno have shaped *Beneath the Banyan Tree* into a play energized by passion and power, and I’m delighted to have shared the journey.”

- Emil Sher, Playwright, *Beneath The Banyan Tree*



Emil Sher
Playwright

“Working on this wonderful production has been a very rewarding journey; it is such a powerful, yet thoroughly engaging story of Anjali’s new life in Canada, as she adapts to a new school and unfamiliar culture. Storybook characters from South Asian folktales come alive in this delightful dance theatre work. I am convinced that dance and theatre are an incredible medium to express the cultural plurality of Canada as well as tap into the creative imagination of young minds.”

- Lata Pada, Choreographer, *Beneath The Banyan Tree*, Artistic Director, Sampradaya Dance Creations



Lata Pada
Choreographer

“The dynamic team of a playwright, choreographer and composer has created a beautiful weave of theatre, dance, puppetry and music especially for young people. We are so excited about bringing this important play and its lessons of accepting difference and celebrating our unique cultural and creative gifts to schools and theatres around Ontario.”

- Lynda Hill, Director, *Beneath The Banyan Tree*, Artistic Director, Theatre Direct Canada



Lynda Hill
Artistic Director



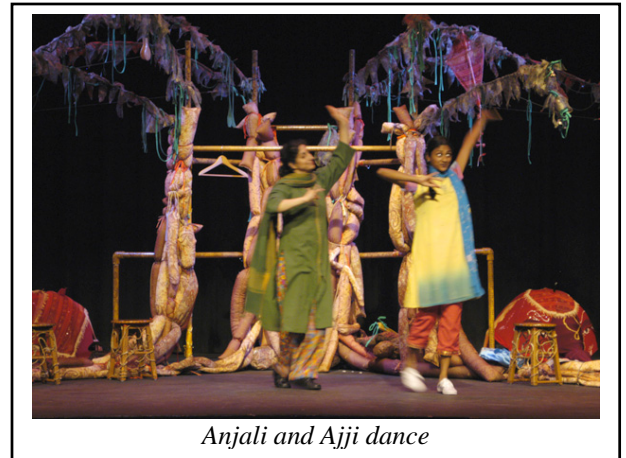
Section 2: Curriculum Based Discussions & Activities

The Arts: Dance

Description of Dances In *Beneath The Banyan Tree*

1. **Dream:** Anjali falls asleep and dreams of India. She learns that she is to move to Canada. Maitri tries to assure that while she cannot bring all her friends from home, she can carry with her the stories she loves best from the Panchatantra. Two of her familiar friends appear, Bundar, the monkey and Gampu, the elephant. Strangely, another character appears, that of the Peacock, Morni. Anjali is not yet aware of why these characters have appeared to her.

2. **The Jasmine Dance:** As the morning comes, we find Anjali's grandmother, Aiji, performing a dance wherein she is gathering jasmine flowers. Bundar, the monkey is pretending to be a jasmine flower bush and tricking Aiji by moving out of her way as she reaches for a blossom.



Anjali and Aiji dance

3. **The Journey to School:** After Anjali “accidentally” leaves her lunch at home, Aiji follows Anjali to school and along the way, attempts to hide behind trees (provided in dance form by Maitri).

4. **The Scarf Dance:** Aiji confronts Anjali about her refusal to wear her outfit and her feelings about being “too Indian.” She suggests that perhaps Anjali is ashamed of her grandmother. The confrontation results in a dance in which the two characters tug and pull using the dupatta (scarf). The dance is both playful and aggressive.

5. **The Schoolyard Dance:** Using familiar schoolyard games—ball, skipping, hopscotch, and hackysack, a dance evolves in time to the music. We see how Skylar keeps interfering with the fun that is developing between Anjali, Mason, and another boy (played by Maitri). Eventually, out of jealousy, Skylar pushes Anjali down to the ground.

6. **The Math Lesson:** Here the students turn a simple 9-times table into a fusion of Western and Indian rhythms. We also see how Mason and Anjali's friendship, rooted in a love of music and rhythm, is developing.

7. The Friendship Dance: After receiving encouragement and guidance from Maitri, Anjali is met onstage by the animal characters Bundar, Morni and Gampu. They all dance in celebratory and proud way that assures and comforts Anjali.

8. Anjali's Dance: Here, Anjali tries to tell her story using gestures and movements rooted in classical Indian dance. At first she speaks and uses gestures that represent such things as travel, family, hurt, happiness and pride then eventually uses only dance to express “her story.”

9. The Reconciliation: After arriving home and telling her grandmother about her day, Anjali and Aiji still must come to an agreement that life in Canada means mixing old ways with new ways. Anjali makes the decision to wear the beautiful traditional outfit given to her by her grandmother that she had rejected that morning. Maitri helps her put it on and as Anjali stares at herself in the mirror, she settles into a confident place. She shows herself to her grandmother who is thrilled to see her dressed in the outfit. Together they dance a folk-based dance that emphasizes the harmony and connection between the two generations.

Bharatanatyam: A South Indian Dance Form

The name of the dance comes from combining parts of the following words:

Bha = bhava (“expression”), Ra = raga (“melody”), Ta = tala (“rhythm”), natyam = (“dramatic dance”).

The History of Bharatanatyam

The Bharatanatyam is a dance form that originated around 2,000 years ago in Tamil Nadu, a region in southern India. It is one of the oldest and most celebrated religious dance forms in India. It is dedicated to the praise of God through the depiction of religious stories.

Originally, it was performed by devadasis, women who composed religious dances in Hindu temples. It was developed as the court dance of southern India in the medieval period and created for a female solo dancer. The art reached its peak in the period from 1798 to 1832 in the royal city of Tanjavur, when four brothers (known as the Tanjavur Quartet) crystallized the form and developed its repertoire. The Sanskrit term “marga” meaning road, direction, method, practice—is the word used to describe the traditional suite of repertoire established by the Quartet. A marga is made up of several different dances that demonstrate a gradual unfolding of the form by taking the dancer and audience through the elements of abstract and mimetic technique.

About 150 years ago, it was redefined as a performance art form. The Bharatanatyam is still used in religious ceremonies, but it has also become very popular as a form of performance art, and is used in music videos, movies, political messages, and advertising. The Bharatanatyam is composed of two different types of dance. The first is “nritya,” or abstract dance, and is composed mainly of the intricate movements of the feet and the abstract movements of the rest of the body. The second is “abhinaya,”



or expressional dance, which includes facial expressions and movements of the hands to express moods or feelings.

Meaning in Bharatanatyam: abstract or narrative

"It all means something, doesn't it?" people often ask Bharatanatyam dancers. The truth is, that sometimes a dance is just a dance. In an Alarippu (the opening dance of invocation), a Jatisvaram (a musical form similar to the rondo), certain sections of a Varnam (a complex music form), movement is presented in conjunction with mathematically complex configurations of rhythms. Or, dance for the sake of dance.

It is also true that sometimes there is a story. Once upon a time, all viewers of Bharatanatyam would understand the song and thereby the stories being told. But today, we are presenting Bharatanatyam in Ontario to a diverse range of people. It isn't essential to know the story, you don't have to understand each gesture. For example, in *Beneath The Banyan Tree*, you will understand the relationship between Anjali and Aiji as you watch both the Scarf Dance and the Reconciliation. In each movement, gesture and facial expressions are used to express the characters feelings towards each other and the situation they are acting out.



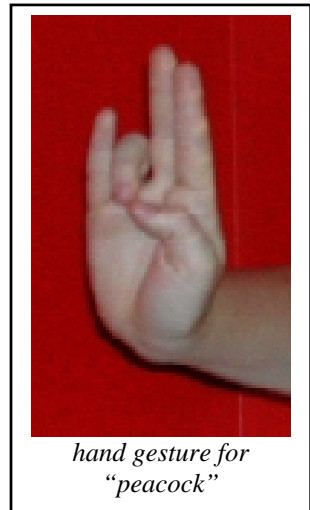
a Bharatanatyam dancer

The Elements That Go Together To Create The Bharatanatyam

Bharatanatyam dancers are predominantly women. It is a dance style in which there is heavy emphasis on hand movements to convey various emotions.

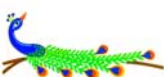
Eyes and facial expression: The dancer uses the face, especially the eyes, to express feelings. The eyes can be opened or closed to show anger or surprise; The dancer can look up or down to show shyness, or look to one side, to express suspicion or fear; or look from side to side to demonstrate watchfulness.

There are nine basic "rasa," or expressions of emotion, common to all forms of Indian dance. They are: love, heroism, compassion, wonder, laughter, sorrow, anger, fear, and tranquility. These are created by the position and expression in the eyes, with accompanying facial and body language.



hand gesture for "peacock"

Hands: In the Bharatanatyam, the position of a dancer's hand and the movement of the hand can signify a specific word, or it can express an emotion.

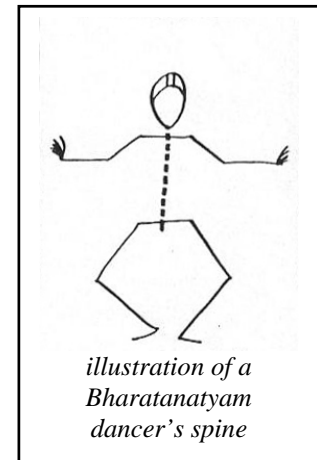


Beneath The Banyan Tree

The meanings are created by the position of the hand, as well as by the movement and position of the fingers, by the number of fingers used in the gesture, whether the gesture is performed with one hand or both hands, and whether each hand is in the same position or different positions.

Spine: The spine of the dancer is kept vertical, while the shoulders and neck move to create the shape of the dance.

Feet: The Bharatanatyam is performed in bare feet. The positions of the feet affect the way that the whole body moves within the dance. There are specific foot positions and movements that accompany body, hand, and facial movements. These tell us a story or express emotions. The tension and balance in the feet affect the tension and balance of the whole body, which in turn helps to provide information about characters, and convey a particular impression about them or what they feel.



Costume: The most commonly used styles include the Skirt/Sari style and the "Pajama Style." The knife-pleated fan, which is either knee-length or mid-calf-length, opens up during particular postures and enhances the beauty and richness of the costume. Costumes are often bedecked with ornaments, bells, and flowers. The dancer can also wear special jewellery and headgear.

The Relationship Between The Music And The Dance

There is an inherent relationship between the rhythms of South Asian music and the steps and patterns in Bharatanatyam Dance.

Tala (rhythmic aspects): One of the principal elements in Indian music. The various principles of rhythm are analyzed through 10 elements of tala theory.

Yati (One of the elements of tala): The concept of Yati pertains to the arrangement of patterns in a variety of ways to create different shapes. It is a concept of rhythmic design based on geometric shape that can be easily applied to choreography; either by literally creating the shape by moving the dancer through the geometric pattern, or by designing the movement so that it creates the pattern. This pattern would be played on the drum and the dancers' footwork would follow the same pattern.

Example: using a reduction pattern would create a triangle.

Gi Na Tom
Na Tom
Tom



Eight Styles of Indian Classical Dance and Some Famous Canadian Dancers

Bharatanatyam:	Lata Pada, Nova Bhattacharya, Menaka Thakkar, Gunaseelan, Jai Govinda
Kathakali:	Richard Tremblay
Kuchupudi:	Menaka Thakkar, Ravi Mony
Odissi:	Menaka Thakkar, Ellora Patnaik, Devraj Patnaik, Chitralkha Patnaik
Kathak:	Joanna DeSouza, Deepti Gupta, Usha Gupta, Bageshree Vaze, Rina Sinha
Manipuri:	Sukalyan Bhattacharjee
Chau	
Mohiniattam	

Pre-Performance Discussions & Activities

Primary

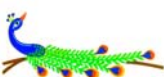
Discussions

- Ask the children about their experiences with dance. Who takes lessons? Who performs dances for audiences? Who has been to live dance performances?
- Find out if the children are familiar with dances from different cultures. Ask about costume, specific steps, etc. Here are Story Dances that the children may be familiar with. Ask the children if they know these or any others:

The Nutcracker	Russian
The Ramayana	Indian
The Mahabharata	Indian
Raven Stole the Sun	First Nations
Beauty of the White Peony	Chinese
Female Warrior Wu	Chinese
- Talk about the different kinds of dances that they will see in the play. (See Section 1: Background Information).
- Talk about the difference between a dance and a play.

Activities

- Sing some action songs, and discuss how the actions help tell the story
- Play charades or other action games to reinforce the idea that we can communicate without words.
- Sing “If You’re Happy and You Know It” adding verses with other emotion. (If you’re sad; If you’re afraid, etc.)
- Make a list of dance vocabulary that they know. Add to this list after the performance.



Junior

Discussions

- Ask the children about their experiences with dance. Who takes lessons? What kind of dance lessons do they take? Have they performed dances for audiences? Have they attended dance performances?
- Discuss dances from various cultures, including history, specific movements, and costumes, etc.
- Discuss how dance can tell a story. Ask if the students know any stories that are told in dance. For example, a culturally specific story/dance, ballets such as:

The Nutcracker	Russian
The Ramayana	Indian
The Mahabharata	Indian
Raven Stole the Sun	First Nations
Beauty of the White Peony	Chinese
Female Warrior Wu	Chinese

- Talk about how dance does not have to tell a literal story, but can “speak” in metaphors and symbols.
- Introduce the story of the *Beneath The Banyan Tree*, and explain that it is a play in which the actors dance.
- Explain that dance can be used in different ways in a dance performance:
 - Performed throughout, to move the story along, as in a ballet, in which the whole story is told through dance.
 - Performed at certain times in the story, to express feelings, define a character, or represent ideas through symbolism and/or metaphor.
 - A combination of both, as in *Beneath The Banyan Tree*.
- Introduce the term “choreographer.” How do they imagine that the choreographer and the dancers will tell the story or parts of the story without dialogue (e.g. movement, facial expression, gesture and narration)?
- What other elements will help to bring the story to life (music, sound effects, setting, costumes, etc.)?
- Introduce the terms “costume,” “lighting,” “sound,” and “set designer.” And the role of each. Make a chart that you can add to after the performance.
- Introduce the idea of the Bharatanatyam, the classical Indian dance. Talk about its origins, movements, symbolism, etc. (See Section 2: The Arts: Dance.)

Note: If any of the students are familiar with Bharatanatyam Dance, ask them to explain or demonstrate some movements and gestures.

What to watch and listen for during the performance

- The different kinds of dances that they see



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- How the drum and dancing work together to create the rhythm of the dance
- An example of when the dance is telling a story or when it is showing a feeling
- How the Indian dance is the same or different from dances that they know

Maitri: When a bird flies, that is a story.

Post-Performance Discussions & Activities

Primary

Discussions

- Talk about the dances in *Beneath The Banyan Tree*—their favourites, which told a story, which expressed emotion, etc.
- Discuss the movements of the animals in the fables—what was specific to each?
- What games were included in the Schoolyard Dance? How did they turn them into a dance (the rhythm, the repeated pattern)?

Activities

Call and Response Rhythms (small groups)

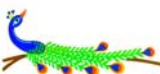
- Teacher claps a number of different rhythms, which the children imitate.
- In small groups, the children are given a specific rhythm, which they clap, stamp, or perform with percussion instrument. First, each group plays their rhythm separately and then together.

Pass The “Yes” (whole group)

- Class sits in circle. Teacher turns to student on right and says “yes.” That student turns to the next student and says, “yes” using a different intonation.
- The students continue to pass the “yes” around the circle until it comes back to the teacher.
- The teacher then starts with the student on the left, and gives a sign that means, “yes” (nod, thumbs up, etc.).
- Students are encouraged to use hands, head, shoulders, eyes, and facial expressions to communicate the word “yes.”
- The student to the left of the teacher passes yes. This non-verbal “yes” is passed around the circle until it comes back to teacher. Then the class discusses all of the ways that we can communicate without speaking. (Exercise may be repeated with “No!,” “Get Out!,” “Please?,” etc.).
- The students should then use the whole body to express the words they are communicating.

Exploring Dance & Movement (whole group)

- Students, working in a space by themselves, respond to verbal cues to perform a variety of action words (e.g. twist, shake, swing, explode, melt, shrink, etc.).



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- Students repeat this exercise, combining two or more actions.
- Teacher directs students to perform the action following a verbal image (e.g. You are moving in a windstorm; you are swimming through a weedy swamp, etc.).

Story-telling with Movement (pairs)

- Students recall the animal characters from the play, and imitate the movements they remember.
- Students choose an animal and then, with hands and arms only, imitate the movements of that animal. They then carry through the same type of movement with the other parts of the body (e.g. head, legs, feet, back, etc.).
- One half of the group performs their animals for the others. The audience guesses which animals are being portrayed.
- Children divide into pairs and perform their animal movements together to create a short dance.

Junior

Discussions

- Recall the dances from the play. Discuss whether they told a story, or expressed emotions. (See Section 1: Background Information for a list of the dances.)
- Discuss how the dances with Anjali and Aiji expressed the conflict and the resolution between them.
- Discuss the two dances in *Beneath The Banyan Tree*, the Schoolyard Dance and the Math Lesson, in terms of rhythms, patterns, and how ordinary movement became a dance.

Activities

Exploring Movement: (small groups)

- Teacher calls out a number into which the students quickly group. The teacher calls out an action or a shape for the students to perform (e.g. an elephant, an angry dragon).
- One half of students perform while the other half watches and critiques what they observe.
- Students form new groups and continue to explore communicating through movement, using more abstract ideas (emotions, colours, shapes etc.).
- Students, in small groups, plan, rehearse, and present a short movement piece using the elements they have been exploring.

Dance a Story (pairs)

- Share the information on Bharatanatyam Dance with the children (See Section 2: Curriculum Based Discussions & Activities: The Arts – Dance). Have them try some of the gestures and movements.



Beneath The Banyan Tree

- In pairs, the students pick a conflict situation from the play (Anjali offers Skylar some lunch; Aji wants Anjali to wear the salwar kameez to school, etc.). Review the conflict and how it was resolved.
- Students act out the chosen scene by choreographing a short non-verbal exchange using only body language and movement for “yes,” “no,” and a final gesture/movement that ends the scene (e.g. “I’m leaving,” or “Okay, I will.”). Note: They should perform three movements each, and one final movement together.
- Encourage the students to use some of the movements and gestures from Bharatanatyam Dance in their movement piece.
- Share movement pieces with the whole group.
- Ask the group to critique each dance, commenting on movement, gesture, and clarity of the story.

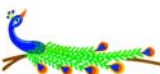
Morph into Dance (small groups)

- Review, with the students, the Schoolyard Dance or the Math Lesson, from the play. Talk about how these common activities were stylized to become a dance (skipping, hopscotch in school yard, patterns of nine in the math class).
- In small groups, students choose an everyday activity, such as getting ready for school, cooking, or shopping, etc.
- Students break the activities down into the movements involved and then choreograph them into a short dance piece (slow the movement down, exaggerate it, change the rhythm, stretch it out, etc.). They can add vocal sounds or body percussion (clap, stamp, snap, etc.) to establish the rhythm.

Student Choreography (whole group)

- Teacher plays a piece of South Asian music during this exercise.
- All children stand in a circle. One student performs an action accompanied by a vocalization, which they “send” to someone across the circle.
- The “target” person performs the same action and sound, and then sends a new one to someone else in the circle.
- This continues until everyone has sent and received an action/sound. Note: With older students this can be cumulative, with each student doing all of the actions/sounds in sequence and then adding a new one.
- Repeat this exercise with contrasting a piece of music, and discuss how it changes the action.

Note: If South Asian music is not available, use any other two contrasting pieces.



The Arts: Theatre Arts

Playwright, Emil Sher, and choreographer, Lata Pada, conceived a unique way of telling this story. Western and South Asian forms of drama/storytelling, dance, and music share an equal role in bringing the play to life.

Exploring Set, Puppetry & Costume Design

Set: With the exception of the Banyan Tree set piece at the centre of the stage, the space is relatively bare. It was the idea of the designer Cheryl Lalonde that the tree could serve the needs of the various locations. Therefore, certain props and other small set pieces, such as the stools used in the classroom scenes, are placed on or around the “tree.” This tree is also home to Maitri, the spirit of the Banyan Tree and the other animals from the Panchatantra.



the set

Puppets: Designer Cheryl Lalonde chose to depict the three characters from the Panchatantra using everyday familiar objects as inspiration. Gampu, the elephant comes to life from two large umbrellas decorated with richly coloured fabric, Bundar, the monkey is inspired by a tambourine and finally, a large decorative wall-fan becomes the tail of Morni, the peacock.

Costumes: The audience will notice that the colours of the Panchatantra characters match the characters in Anjali’s life. This decision was made to reinforce the idea that they each share qualities with their animal counterpart. Mason is like Bundar and Skylar is like Morni. Only Gampu stands alone.

Pre-performance Discussions

Primary

- Talk to the children about attending a play and the difference between that and going to a movie. Recall other theatrical experiences they have had at school or with family.
- Talk about the title of the play and what they think it means.
- What are some of the things they would expect to see when they arrive at the performance space (introduce set, costume, actors, audience).
- Make a list of theatre words (props, costumes, actor etc.). Ask them to listen during the Question and Answer Session for new theatre words to add to list.



Junior

- Discuss the title, *Beneath The Banyan Tree*, and ask what they think the story might be about and where it would take place.
- What theatrical elements might they expect to see in the performance space? (set, costumes, music, sound effects, etc.).
- Make a list of jobs in the theatre. Ask the children to listen for any new jobs they hear about during the Question and Answer Session. Add to the list after the show.

What to watch for during the performance:



Primary

- All the different ways that the Banyan Tree set is used during the performance
- What the designer has used to create the animal characters

Junior

- How the one set is used to suggest different locations
- How the actors use voice, body language, and facial expression to create the different characters

Post-performance Discussions & Activities

Primary

Discussions



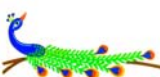
- Why did the set designer create a large tree for the centre of the playing space? What do you think it is made of?
- What are all the ways that the tree is used during the play? (Maitri's home, to hang props on, for the monkey to climb, a place for the characters to etc.).
- Which animal costume did you like the best and why?
- What did Maitri use to create the Crocodile?

Activities



Stick Puppets (individual)

- Ask each child to choose a character from *Beneath The Banyan Tree*.
- Have each child draw and cut out this character using construction paper or tag board, and paste it on to a stick or ruler, to create a stick puppet. (Use paper fasteners on neck, arms, feet, etc., to make the various parts of the puppet moveable.)
- The children get into pairs or small groups to act out different scenes from the story using the stick puppets.



Beneath The Banyan Tree

Puppets from Found Objects (whole group and individual)

- Have children look around the classroom and choose a few objects that they think they could use to make an animal or fictional creature (e.g. a tape dispenser = a dragon with sharp teeth).
- Have a number of kitchen gadgets in a box. Have the children pick out an item and decide what animal or other creature they are reminded of.
- Supply the children with glue, tape, scissors, paper, pipe cleaners and other art supplies. Allow them time to create a puppet from the kitchen gadget (e.g. wooden spoon, ice cream scoop, colander, pot-scrubber).
- Have small groups use their puppets in a puppet show.

Junior

Discussions

- How is the Banyan Tree both artistic and useful at the same time? How do the various characters use the Tree? (The monkey lives in the Tree; Anjali uses it to sit under when she needs to think, etc.).
- How does the designer show that Maitri is the spirit of the Tree?
- How are the different settings created, using just the Tree and the bare stage?
- Explain to the students that the designer chose to make the all the costumes from the materials and colours of traditional Indian dress, whether they were representing traditional Indian or Western styles. Ask them to suggest why the designer made this choice.
- Talk about how the animals were created by the suggestion of costumes, rather than the whole costume (e.g. the monkey drum, the umbrella elephant, the peacock headdress). How was this both artistic and practical?

Activities

Animal Creations (individual or pairs)

- Recall how using everyday objects to suggest the costume created the animals (the umbrellas for the elephant, the monkey drum, etc.).
- Brainstorm and make a list of animals and a prop or costume that could represent each animal.
- Individually or in pairs, students will use bits and pieces of props or costumes to create one of the animals. If materials are not available, students could draw sketches of their design ideas.

Primary/Junior

Activities

Mural Making (whole group)

- The whole class can work on a mural of the set. They can work together to create the Banyan Tree with paints or paper, with its roots and branches spreading out.



- Individually they can make characters from the Panchatantra, and place them on and around the tree.
- Other ways to use the mural:
 - Use the mural as a backdrop for the puppet shows.
 - Place vocabulary from the play on the tree branches.
 - Write the names of the children in the class on the branches, and their country of origin on a corresponding root.

Curriculum Expectations

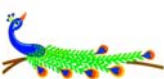
Drama and Dance

Primary students will have an opportunity to:

- describe their own and others' work in drama and dance, using appropriate vocabulary
- recognize and choose appropriate elements of movement for dramatizing their responses to different stimuli or ideas
- communicate, through movement, their thoughts and feelings about topics studied in other subject areas
- identify the themes and subjects found in drama and dance works, and make links between these and their own experiences

Junior students will have an opportunity to:

- describe the meaning and evaluate the effect of the work of others, using drama and dance vocabulary correctly
- explain and demonstrate the use of different patterns in creating effects in drama and dance
- create dances, using steps and positions borrowed from a variety of dance forms
- solve artistic problems in drama and dance, individually and in groups, and evaluate the solutions
- present and defend their analysis of a performance, focusing on assessment of the ways in which various elements of drama and dance are used together



The Arts: Music

Pre-Performance Discussions and Activities

Primary/Junior

Discussions and Activities



- Ask the students for theme music or songs from TV or movies. Hum or sing some of the songs.
- How is music used in movies? (for mood, to introduce characters, to make us feel certain ways, etc.). List some examples.
- Ask about musical instruments used in their cultures. When are they used? Do they accompany song or dance? Do they evoke any particular emotion?
- Are there any musical instruments that stir particular emotions (The flute is often happy; a cymbal crash can make us feel afraid, etc.).

Note: Demonstrate with actual instruments or excerpts from CDs if possible.



Anjali and Mason drum

What to listen for during the performance:



- The different kinds of music they hear
- The musical instruments that are used
- How the drummer and dancer work together to create the rhythm of the dance
- How the music helps create the different moods of the play

Post-performance Discussions & Activities

Primary

Discussions



- Talk about the music they heard in the show.
- Did the music remind them of any other music they know?
- How did the music make them feel?
- Did the music help to tell the story? How?

Activities



Yati: creating shapes with rhythm patterns

- Using the example of Yati (Section 2: Curriculum Based Discussions & Activities: The Arts – Dance) as an example, have the children clap the geometric shape.



Beneath The Banyan Tree

- As they clap, draw lines or the syllables on a chart. Show the children how the rhythm has created a triangle.
- Then have them clap the rhythm again, by following the notation on the chart.
- Finally let the children move to the rhythm, seeing if they can create a triangle with their feet.

Moving to music

Have all the children move to a piece of music. Give “side-coaching” with suggestions about the tone, rhythm, speed, etc.

- The teacher calls out the name of one of the animals from the story and the children move to the music as that character.
- Have one half of the group watch while the other half moves to music.
- Have the “audience” members comment on what they have seen, in terms of story, symbol, the animal mentioned.
- Have the children decide which of the rhythm instruments could represent each of the characters in the story.
- As the story is retold, have the children play their instrument each time they hear that character mentioned. (If no instruments are available, then body percussion and vocal sounds could be used.)

Junior

Discussions

- Was music used to introduce any of the characters?
- Did the music change when Anjali was in the imaginary world, and when she was in the real world?

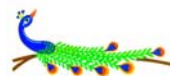
Activities

Yati: creating shapes with rhythm patterns

- Repeat the activity described above, for primary students of creating shapes with rhythms.
- Have the students create their own geometric shapes using rhythm patterns. Suggest a square, a diamond, a zigzag line, etc.
- Have them notate the shape using lines, musical notes or syllables. Next have them move to the rhythm, making the pattern with their feet.
- Have the students exchange their charts and clap, drum, or dance each other’s “Yati.”

Interpreting Music Through Movement (small groups)

- Each group chooses a piece of music to work with (e.g. Have music from various cultures on hand).
- As they listen to the music, each student contributes a movement, which the others copy.



Beneath The Banyan Tree

- The group then choreographs the movements into a dance, which they present to the rest of the class.

Note: This can be either a literal or abstract interpretation of the music.

Theme Music

- Students listen to a variety of classical music or culturally specific music sequences and decide on a musical piece to represent each of the characters in the *Beneath The Banyan Tree*.
- The groups can share their musical selections with the other groups and compare their choices.

Note: If equipment is readily available, they can record the different theme music and use them to retell the story.)

Curriculum Expectations

Music

Primary students will have an opportunity to:

- identify the beat, rhythm, melodic contour (or shape), dynamics
- identify rhythmic patterns
- create or arrange music to accompany a reading or dramatization, using appropriate rhythm instruments, body percussion, or "found" instruments
- express their response to music from a variety of cultures and historical periods

Junior students will have an opportunity to:

- read and perform simple rhythmic patterns
- create an accompaniment for a story, poem, or drama presentation, using their knowledge of beat, rhythm, and tone colour
- express their response to music from a variety of cultures
- communicate their thoughts and feelings about the music they hear, using language and a variety of art forms and media
- explain, using appropriate musical terminology, their preference for specific songs or pieces of music



Language Arts

In the play, the children are introduced to some of the characters and stories from the Panchatantra, a collection of moral tales from Southern India, composed to teach children lessons about life. The stories are told in fables, in which animals have adventures that teach them valuable lessons.

Indian Folk Tales

One of the greatest collection of stories are the Panchatantra and the Hitopadesa from the Jataka Tales.

These tales have traveled the world over and have been adapted into many other cultures. Involving not only human beings, but also non-religious gods, like the Sun King and the Mountain King, and the animal kingdom archetypes of the proud lion, the cunning jackal, the dim-witted donkey and the loyal dog among others, they are an excellent introduction into the culture and philosophy of India.



Anjali and Maitri

Panchatantra

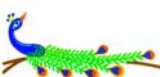
The Panchatantra is a collection of Indian animal fables, known in Europe as the Fables of Bidpai. The original work was in Sanskrit, and could have been written anytime between 100 BC and 500 AD, though some of the tales contained in it can be traced as far back as 1500 BC to the Rig-Veda (a collection of hymns counted among the four Hindu religious scriptures known as the Vedas).

The original text is a mixture of **prose and verse**, with the stories, 88 in all, contained in one of five **frame stories**—**Book I: The Loss of Friends, Book II: The Winning of Friends, Book III: Crows and Owls, Book IV: Loss of Gains and Book V: Ill-Considered Action**. The introduction, which acts as an enclosing frame for the entire work, attributes the tales to a learned Brahmin called Vishnusharma, who used these stories to teach worldly wisdom to the three dull-witted sons of a king.

Travelers carried the stories to Persia, Arabia, and in the 11th century AD to Greece and thence to the rest of Europe. But it was a 12th century Hebrew translation that became the source of most European versions. The stories also traveled to Indonesia in both oral and written forms. Similar tales are found in almost all cultures of the world—many folklorists look upon India as the source of all tales.

Simplicity and Universality

Just like Aesop's Fables and Hans Christian Andersen's Tales have enraptured the world with their fantastic stories, these tales from India are part of most households. Rudyard Kipling knew that when he



wrote “The Jungle Book” and thus created immortal characters that’ve made us laugh, who’ve made us shiver with fear, and who live in our minds forever. The simplicity of these tales and their universality is what makes them stand apart so memorably.

Teachers may want to use an exploration of the Panchatantra as a way of introducing the play and/or extending the experience for the students.

The following is the short descriptions of some stories from the Panchatantra.

The Foolish Lion and the Clever Rabbit

An old rabbit with wisdom defeats a foolish and power crazy lion.

- Issues: wisdom, values, conflict resolution

The Monkey and the Crocodile

A clever monkey outwits a mean crocodile.

- Issues: friendship, manipulation, greed

The Mice and the Elephants

The chief elephant accepts the request of mice, and then the mice saves the elephants from a trap net.

- Issues: acceptance, generosity, return of favour

The Fox Reared by the Lion

A fox is raised by a lioness as one of her own cubs in her family. One day, the fox is bullied by the lions because the fox do not fight with and eat elephants. Enraged with being called coward and told to leave, the fox decides to leave the lion family.

- Issues: acceptance, difference, bravery

The Greedy Crow

A lazy and impatient crow gets killed, while a pigeon enjoys living with what she has and gets.

- Issues: selfishness, respect

The Jackal Who Saved the Lion

Once a lion is saved by a jackal, and they become friends. Their families also become friends, however, the lioness does not like the friendship, and decides to make it known to the jackal’s wife. Knowing that the lion has no ill feeling on his part, the jackal decides that two families should stay apart and he and the lion keep being friends.

- Issues: friendship, difference, conflict resolution

The Doe Who Saved the Stag’s life

A doe’s love and devotion to her husband saves a stag, her husband, from a hunter.

- Issues: love, devotion, bravery



The Fish That Were Too Clever

Two fish with “superior intelligence” are killed by fishermen, while a frog and his family are successful to escape from them.

- Issues: seeing, listening, judgment, risk management

The Blue Jackal

A jackal who takes the advantage of an incident to conceal his identity and deceive other animals ends up falling into his own trap and getting killed.

- Issues: truth, deception, authority

The Geese and the Tortoise

A pair of geese plans to save themselves and their friend, tortoise from a drying up lake. In the implementation of the plan, the tortoise dies of his own act from his uncontrollable anxiety of being laughed at.

- Issues: friendship, priority, pride, value

Note: There are additional Literacy & Language Arts activities integrated into the other curricular sections.

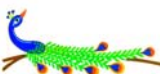
Pre-performance Discussions

Primary

- Have the children recall any fables they may be familiar with (e.g. The Hare and the Tortoise, How the Elephant Got Its Trunk). Ask them to tell the lesson learned in each of these stories.
- Who told/read them fables? (Parents, teachers, TV, movies, etc.).
- Introduce the characters of the monkey, the peacock, the elephant, and the spirit of the Banyan Tree, and explain that they will meet them in the play. Ask them to listen for the lesson or moral of each animal's story.

Junior

- Discuss the definition of a fable. Ask the students which fables they are familiar with (Aesop's Fables, Just So Stories, Trickster Tales, Anansi Tales, etc.).
- Talk about what is similar and different about these different cultural stories. Emphasize the idea that every fable teaches a lesson.
- If not already mentioned by students, introduce the Panchatantra Indian Fables. (See above). Make a list of the five books and their themes.



What to watch and listen for during the performance:



- The stories from the Panchatantra that are told in the play
- The fabled characters that are introduced in the play
- The lesson that each fable teaches

Post-Performance Discussions & Activities

Share with students that fables are a special kind of tale. Fables are short narratives that use animal characters, with human features, to convey folk wisdom and to help us understand human nature and human behavior. These stories were originally passed down through oral tradition and were eventually written down.

Primary

Discussions

- Discuss the stories and characters introduced in the play.
- Ask the children to recall the lesson learned from each story.
- Discuss the Panchatantra as a book of Indian fables originally commissioned by a king to teach moral lessons to his sons.
- Share one or two additional Panchatantra stories with the children (See Suggested Resources section).
- List the characters and the lessons learned.

Activities

- Have the children draw pictures of the characters from the fables told in the play.
- Have them make puppets, by cutting out the pictures and taping them to rulers. In pairs, act out scenes from the stories, using the puppets.
- In pairs, combine animals from the different stories to create new stories.
- On large sheets of paper, have each student draw a different part of the fables told in the play. Write a caption under each picture. Combine the pictures to create a Big Book to share with the whole class.
- In small groups, have the children act out one of the fables, using the movements of the animals that they remember from the play.
- Have the children visit the school library to find a picture book that illustrates a fable. Share the book with the class.

Junior

Discussions

- Recall the fables told in the play, listing the characters and the lesson taught.



Beneath The Banyan Tree

- Which character from the play corresponds to which fabled character (e.g. Mason = Monkey)?
- Discuss how the lessons learned by the animals relate to the characters in the play (e.g. In the play, Anjali learns about friendship, and so does the Monkey in the Panchatantra story.)
- Introduce one of the Panchatantra stories. Discuss the animal characters and the lesson taught.
- Note: If there are children in the class familiar with the tales, ask them to share one or two with the others.
- Explain that the Panchatantra was written in five volumes each volume dealing with a different subject:
 - Book I: The Loss of Friends
 - Book II: The Winning of friends
 - Book III: Crows and Owls
 - Book IV: Loss of Gains
 - Book V: Ill-considered Action
- Find one example from each of the five books and tell the lesson it is meant to teach. (See Suggested Resources for links to the Panchatantra fables.)
- Review the elements of a fable: characters, setting, a problem, a resolution, and a moral.
- Discuss how, in most fables, the characters are animals with specific human qualities. The characters are one-sided. They act and talk in a way that shows one quality, such as greed or generosity (For example, the monkey represents cleverness).

Activities

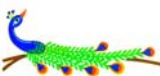
Create a Fable



- Make a chart showing the relationship between each of the Panchatantra characters and a human character from the play. Tell what makes the two alike. (Mason and Monkey are both funny and smart.)
- Discuss the elements of a fable (talking animals with human characteristics, a setting, a problem to be solved, a moral lesson to be learned). Record these on a chart.
- Using the story of the Monkey and the Crocodile as an example, fill in the Tales from The Panchatantra Chart (See Appendix – Activity Pages).
- Students read a few stories from the Panchatantra and repeat the above procedure for these stories.
- Students choose one element from each of the categories on the chart, and create their own fable. Be sure that each fable includes a moral.

Ways of “Publishing” the Student Fables

- Storyboards: Create a storyboard of the fable, by drawing a part of the story in each frame. Use captions and dialogue balloons to tell the story.
- Picture Books: Make a booklet, by stapling sheet of blank paper together. Print one part of the story on each sheet of paper. Illustrate each part of the story. Present these picture books to the kindergarten or primary classes.



- **Plays:** In small groups, have the students choose one of the new fables and act it out for the rest of the class. Have the audience suggest the moral of the fable.

Collecting Fables

- **Book Reports:** Find collections of fables in the library. Present the collections to the class. Include country or cultural origin, a few of the stories with the characters and their human characteristics, the situations, and the moral of each fable.

Curriculum Expectations

Primary students will have an opportunity to:

- retell stories, demonstrating an understanding of basic story structure and including information about characters, action, and story ending
- identify and describe some elements of stories (e.g. plot, central idea, characters, setting)
- identify and describe different forms of writing (e.g. poems, stories, plays)
- write to express personal ideas

Junior students will have an opportunity to:

- explain their interpretation of a written work, supporting it with evidence from the work and from their own knowledge and experience;
- identify the elements of a story and explain how they relate to each other
- draft, revise, and proofread as part of a strategic approach to effective writing;
- demonstrate grade-level proficiency in understanding a literary form by using its appropriate elements to create a complete whole
- follow a plan in which ideas are logically ordered
- direct writing to the intended audience



Social Studies

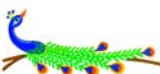
Through the lens of Social Studies, students could focus on the geography of India, the land and the people: cultural aspects of southern India, and the immigrant experience of leaving home and finding a way to belong in Canada.

Geography

- Students could prepare for the play by beginning with India, the country of origin of Anjali and her family. They could brainstorm what they already know about India, the land and the people.
- During the performance they could take note of what they learn about India—clothing, customs, food, names, etc.
- They could extend their experience through independent or group projects on one of the provinces or regions of India, including physical characteristics, culture, religion, where people from these regions have settled in Canada, and what they have contributed to Canada.

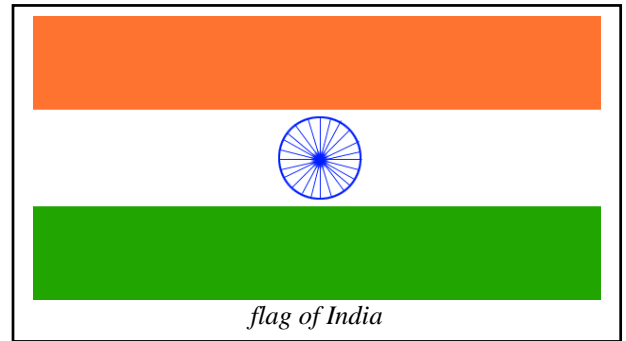


In the play, Anjali comes from Bangalore (Karnataka province).



Facts About India

- Capital: New Delhi
- Population: 1, 027, 015, 247 (2001 Census)
- Area: 3.3 million square kilometers
- Coastline Length: 7600 km
- Languages: India has two national languages – English (associate official) and Hindi (in the Devanagiri script). The Indian Constitution also officially recognizes 22 regional languages.
- Major Religions: Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism
- National Anthem: Jan gana mana, written by Rabindranath Tagore
- National Song: Vande Mataram, composed in Sanskrit by Bankimchandra Chatterji
- National Flag: Horizontal tricolor in equal proportion of deep saffron on top, white in the middle and dark green at the bottom. In the center of the white band is a navy blue wheel.
- National Animal: Tiger (*Panthera tigris*)
- National Bird: Peacock
- National Flower: Lotus
- National Tree: Banyan
- National Fruit: Mango
- National Currency: Rupee
- National Sport: Field Hockey



(Source: www.mapsofindia.com)

Glossary of Words

People

- Anjali: a girl's name meaning "offering." "Anju" is a diminutive form of this name.
- Ajji: the Kannada/Marathi word for "grandmother"
- Amma: the Kannada/Tamil word for "mother"
- Appa: the Kannada/Tamil word for "father"
- Hrithik Roshan: an Indian film star, very handsome

Anjali's names for her stuffed animals (fable friends)

- Morni: the peacock
- Gampu: the elephant
- Bundar: the monkey
- Maitri: the spirit of the Banyan Tree



Clothing and body markings

- bindi: the “holy dot” placed on a girl’s or a woman’s forehead. It is a blessed symbol of the Hindu goddesses Uma and Parvati, which signifies female energy (shakti). In the contemporary world it is also a decorative symbol.
- dupatta: a woman’s scarf and/or head covering. Also known as a “chunni.”
- Kameez: a woman’s shirt or blouse
- salwar: a woman’s pants

Food

- aloo ghobi: a spicy cauliflower dish
- chapati: a flatbread made with wheat flour, water, oil, and salt
- jalebi: orange sweet crisp round whirls, made from plain flour and water, deep-fried and then dipped in sugar syrup, served for dessert
- samosa: a deep-fried pastry appetizer filled with a vegetable and/or meat mixture.
- tiffin: a light lunch or snack, usually served at mid-day

Pre-performance Discussions & Activities

Primary

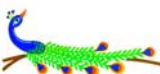
Discussions and Activities

- On a map of the world, place pins on the countries of origin of the children or their families. If not already included in your class demographics, include India, as the country from which Anjali, the main character in the story, comes.
- Explain to the children that India is a very large country made up of many different communities, each with their own expressions of culture. In the play, we learn about the part of India that Anjali comes from—the city of Bangalore, in the province of Karnataka.
- On a map of India, mark the province of Karnataka, and the city of Bangalore, as Anjali’s place of origin.
- If there are South Asian students in the class, have them identify where their family is from originally.

Junior

Discussions and Activities

- Using coloured string, show the route from the students’ countries of origin to Canada. Include a string showing Anjali’s route from India to Canada.
- Use a KWL Chart (See Appendix – Activity Pages) to find out what the children already know about India and what they want to know. After the play, complete the last column of the KWL Chart—What I Learned.



What to watch and listen for during the performance:




- The Indian clothing that the characters are wearing
- Any Indian food that they see or hear about in the play
- What Anjali says about her life in India
- The Indian names that they hear in the play
- The Indian music or dance that they hear and see in the play


Post-Performance Discussions & Activities

Primary

Discussions

- 
- What Indian words do we hear in the play? (people's names, food, clothing, etc.)
 - What do we learn about how birthdays are celebrated in Anjali's Indian community?
 - Describe the traditional dress that we see in the play.
 - Was the dancing the same or different from dancing that they know?
 - What foods does Anjali let Mason try?

Activities




If possible, invite someone from India to visit the class to answer the children's questions. If not, use secondary sources to complete the following activities.

- Make a list of Indian words they learned from the play (See Section 2: Curriculum Based Discussions & Activities: Social Studies). Make a list of other words they would like to learn.
- Find more about the celebration of birthdays in Indian communities, and compare them to how the children celebrate birthdays. (See Appendix – Activity Pages).
- Find pictures of the styles of clothing worn by men and women in Anjali's Indian community. Display them with captions on a bulletin board.

Junior

Discussions

- 
- What elements of Indian culture do the story present? (clothing, food, celebrations, manners, the arts of dance and storytelling).
 - Refer to the KWL Chart (See Appendix – Activity Pages) and fill in the last column—What I Learned About India. Add any information the children learned from watching the performance.
 - What kinds of Indian dance did we see in the play? (Anjali performs Bharatanatyam, the grandmother performs a peasant dance.)



Activities



- Make paper dolls of the characters, then draw and cut out clothes for them to wear. Dress them in traditional Indian and in Western outfits.
- Bring in actual, or pictures of, traditional clothing from the various cultures represented in your classroom. Arrange a fashion show or “store window” display of the clothing from cultures represented in the class.
- Try some of the dance steps and hand gestures that they learned from the play or during the Question and Answer Session following the show.

Anjali: I live in Canada now.

Maitri: Soon Canada will live in you too.

The Immigrant Experience

Pre-Performance Discussions & Activities

Primary

Discussions and Activities

- Read the synopsis of the story to the children, without giving away the ending.
- Ask them if they, or anyone they know, have moved to Canada from another country. Have them share their stories with each other.
- On a map, locate the countries that the children have mentioned.
- Discuss those things that Anjali might find different from her life in India (food, clothing, climate, school, friends, holidays, music, etc.). Record them on a chart, and keep it for a post-performance activity.

Junior

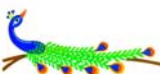
Discussion and Activities

- Locate India, the province of Karnataka, and the city of Bangalore.
- Discuss the various reasons why people move to a new country.
- Brainstorm what problems someone might have when moving to a new country. Record suggestions on chart paper. Keep these lists to refer to after the performance

What to watch and listen for during the performance:



- How Anjali feels about moving to Canada.
- What her friend has told her about Canada.
- What she is going to miss about India.



- What Anjali brings with her from India.
- How Mason and Skylar react to Anjali's differences .
- What we learn about South Indian culture (clothing, food, dance).

Post-Performance Discussions & Activities

Primary

Discussions

- Discuss what they learned from the play about Anjali's problems in moving to Canada. Compare them to the suggestions they made in the pre-performance discussion. Add any new ideas to the chart.
- List the elements of her Indian culture that Anjali was afraid to share with her friends.
- Make a list of the characters in the play. Discuss whether they helped Anjali or not.
- Talk about how Maitri helped Anjali.
- Talk about the relationship between Anjali and her grandmother. What did they argue about? How does the play show us that they really loved each other?
- Discuss what lessons the children and Anjali learned from the play.

Activities

- Draw a picture of Anjali, showing some of the things that she brought with her from India.
- Make a greeting card to welcome Anjali to Canada.
- Create a welcome package for Anjali. What items would you put in it?
- Make a list of "dos" and "don'ts" to help a newcomer fit in to your school.

Junior

Discussions

- Review the pre-performance discussion about problems immigrants may face. Compare to Anjali's problems in the play. Add any new ideas to the chart.
- Discuss what Maitri, the Tree Spirit, tells Anjali about the roots and branches of the Banyan Tree. Discuss how this relates to her moving to and settling in Canada, while keeping her deep roots in Indian culture.
- Think about the advice that Anjali receives from various characters in the story (Mason, Maitri, Grandmother). Rate the advice as helpful or unhelpful.
- Talk about the conflict between Anjali and her grandmother. What do the students think is the main cause of the conflict? What solutions do they have for either character?
- How would Anjali's experience of moving to Canada differ from that of her grandmother? Who do you think would have a more difficult time? Why?



Beneath The Banyan Tree

- Discuss what aspects of her culture Anjali is afraid to share with her new classmates (her dance, her traditional dress, her ethnic food). Give examples from the play.
- Discuss the friendship between Mason and Anjali. How did it come about? What does Anjali learn from Mason about being herself, and embracing her culture and her talents?
- Discuss examples from the play that tell us Anjali has decided to accept herself as Indian and Canadian. (e.g. She shares her cultural dance; she wears her Indian dress in public.)

Activities



Writing in Role (individual)

- As Anjali, write a letter to a friend back in India, describing her life in Canada, including both good and bad aspects.
- Write a journal entry from Anjali's point of view at the beginning of the play. Write a second journal entry from her point of view at the end of the play and see how they would be different. Note: Students could also write in role as Mason, Skylar, or Aiji.
- Remind the students that prejudice means to pre-judge someone or something. Then ask them to list any incidence of prejudice that occurred in the play. They should not just look at Skylar, but at the other characters as well (e.g. the grandmother has notions about non-Indian children. Anjali assumes things about Mason that are not true.)

Writing in Personal Voice (individual)

- In their own voices, students could write to Anjali to answer her questions about how to remain true to her roots while fitting in with her new community.

Conducting Interviews (whole group)

- In role as the reporters, or as characters from the story, students could conduct interviews with various characters in order to explore their behaviour and workable solutions to the problems they face.

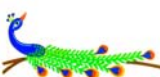
Tableaux (small groups)

- Students decide on one image that would best sum up this story. They create a tableau to illustrate this image. They can bring the tableau to life through movement and narration.
- Students then choose a scene and illustrate it by drawing a storyboard to depict the important moments in the scene. They may add captions and thought balloons to their storyboard.
- With a small group, they use tableau, movement, and narration to act out the storyboard.

Curriculum Expectations

Primary students will have an opportunity to:

- demonstrate an understanding that the world is made up of countries where people have both similar and different lifestyles



Beneath The Banyan Tree

- use maps and globes to locate countries as part of a comparative study of families from countries from different continents
- identify similarities and differences (e.g. in food, clothing, homes, recreation, land use, transportation, language) between their community and communities in other parts of the world
- identify the significant features of various family cultures (e.g. food, dress, celebrations)
- share family traditions with members of the class (e.g. festival of lights)

Junior students will have an opportunity to:

- demonstrate an understanding that the world is made up of countries where people have both similar and different lifestyles
- demonstrate an understanding that Canada is a country of many cultures
- construct and read a wide variety of graphs, charts, diagrams, maps, and models for specific purposes
- communicate the results of inquiries concerning their local community, using simple demonstrations, drawings, and oral and written descriptions
- create sketch maps to show the relative positions of places



Guidance and Health

The play provides opportunities to explore issues of racism, bullying, and ethnic prejudices, related to many expectations in both the Guidance and Health Curriculum Guidelines.

Pre-performance Discussions & Activities

Primary

Discussions and Activities

- Talk about bullying—what it is, where it happens, and the children’s experience of it.
- Discuss how we sometimes treat people who are different, especially if they come from a different country or speak a different language. Talk about why this happens.
- Introduce the characters from the story, explaining that Anjali is moving to Canada from India, and that some of the other characters may not accept her because she is different.
- Make a list of ways that we could make a new student feel welcome in our class. Keep a record to review after the play.



Skylar

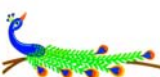
Junior

Discussions and Activities

- Introduce or review the concepts of racism, prejudice, and bullying and the students’ experience of them. Talk about the role played by the bully, the ally, or the bystander in these situations.
- Discuss the idea of judging others by outward appearance. Talk about why people do this. (fear, power, peer-pressure, etc.).
- Discuss their own or other peoples experiences of being prejudged because of ethnicity.
- Introduce the characters in the story and explain that Anjali is an immigrant from India. Have them suggest what kind of prejudices she may meet as she tries to settle into her new school. List ways that students can help someone new to the school or community. Keep a record to review after the play.

What to watch and listen for during the performance:


- An incidence of prejudice or bullying
- A scene that shows someone being helpful to Anjali
- A character who is: a bully, an ally, or a bystander



Post-Performance Activities


Primary

Discussions

- 
- Talk about an incidence of bullying that they saw in the play. (Who was involved, what happened, etc.). Decide what role each person played—the bully, the target, the bystander, and the ally.
 - Recall when Mason is the bystander and when the ally. (The bystander watches or even encourages the bully; the ally stands up for the target.)
 - Review the list of ways of welcoming a newcomer. Did they see any examples in the play? Add them to the list.

Activities

Movement (whole group)

- 
- Instruct the children to move about the space, in any direction. On a signal they stop and take a pose suggested by the teacher: show me “welcoming”; show me “unwelcoming”; show me “shy”; show me “sad and lonely”.
 - One half of the group watches while the other half performs. The audience comments on what they see and how it makes them feel. Repeat this activities with the group roles reversed.

Storyboard (Individual)


- Give the children a Storyboard (a page divided into four or more squares). Ask them to draw one picture in each square to retell one of the incidences of bullying from the play. In the final square, draw a picture to show a more appropriate ending.

Role-play (pairs or small groups)

- Have the children dramatize the story from the Storyboard, changing the ending to make it more appropriate. The audience comments on the changes made.

Junior

Discussions

- 
- Discuss the role of Skylar. Who or what does she represent in Anjali’s life? Ask the students to recall how Skylar acted during the Schoolyard Dance scene. Why might Skylar be acting this way towards Anjali? (jealousy, prejudice, etc.).
 - Is there evidence that Skylar has support from others in her bullying behaviour?
 - Discuss the lunchtime scene, in which Mason joins Skylar in teasing Anjali. Why do you think Mason does this? In terms of conflict resolution, what role is he playing at this time—the bully, the bystander, or the ally?



Beneath The Banyan Tree

- What does Mason do differently in subsequent scenes, that makes him the ally?
- What does Anjali herself need to do in order not to be bullied by Skylar?
- Remind the students that prejudice means to pre-judge someone or something. Then ask them to list any incidence of prejudice that occurred in the play. They should not just look at Skylar, but at the other characters as well (e.g. The grandmother has notions about non-Indian children. Anjali assumes things about Mason that are not true.)

Activities



Chart (whole group/small groups)

- Create a table with the column headings: Character, What Happened, An example of...
- Have the students give examples of conflict in the play. Fill in the first two columns of the chart as the students recall the scene.
- In small groups, have the children choose one of the examples and discuss what concept is illustrated: prejudice, acceptance, bullying, being an ally, accepting oneself, etc. Write their conclusions in the column labeled "An example of..."

Acting Out (pairs or small groups)

- Act out one of the conflict scenes from the play. Talk about the incident, and then replay the scene using any of the techniques learned in Conflict Resolution lessons, to create a better ending to the incident.

Writing in Role (individual)

- Have the students write a diary entry, as one of the characters in the play. Include an incident that happened at school and what they learned from it (e.g. Skylar learns that she liked the Indian dance, and that she should not have pre-judged Anjali).
- Students read the diary entries to each other and discuss the lessons found in the play.

Curriculum Expectations

Guidance (Grades 1-6)

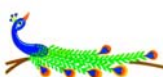
Students will have an opportunity to:

- identify the skills required for making transitions to new situations (e.g. a new school or class) and demonstrate their understanding of socially acceptable responses to a variety of situations in school
- demonstrate their understanding of using skills to build positive relationships at school
- demonstrate their understanding of "being a responsible citizen" in the classroom and the school.

Health

Primary students will have an opportunity to:

- describe types of verbal and physical violence (e.g. name calling, kicking, hitting)
- describe exploitative behaviours (e.g. abusive behaviours, bullying) and the feelings associated with them



Beneath The Banyan Tree

- explain the importance of being able to say no to exploitative behaviours (name calling, bullying, etc.)

Health

Junior students will have an opportunity to:

- apply decision-making and problem-solving skills in addressing threats to personal safety (e.g. from verbal abuse, physical fighting)
- explain how people's actions (e.g. bullying, excluding others) can affect the feelings and reactions of others
- apply strategies (e.g. anger management, assertiveness, conflict resolution) to deal with personal-safety and injury-prevention situations

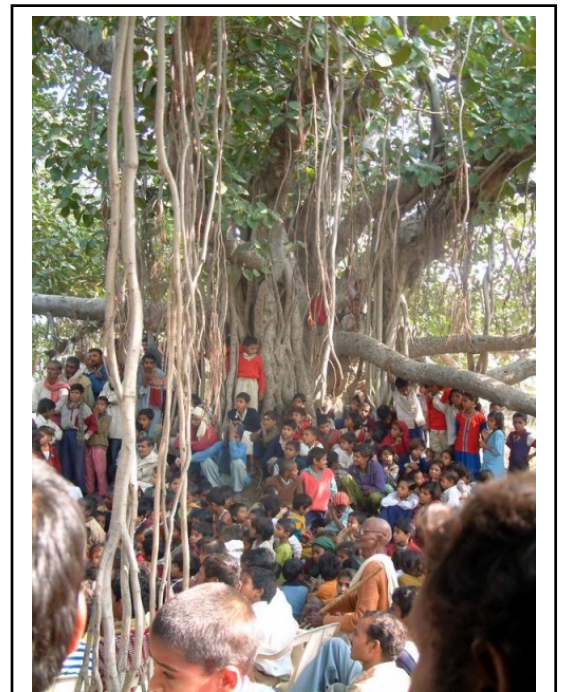


Science

Pre-Performance Discussions

Primary/Junior

- Find pictures of banyan trees in books and on the Internet (See Suggested Resources section). Explain how the banyan tree grows, as its branches reach out, sprouting aerial roots that grow into the ground and thicken to become trunks or pillars. Supported by these pillars, the branches spread further, developing more roots and trunks. Thus, one tree can become a whole forest. This forest is often the centre of the community where people rest, exchange news, and sell their wares, etc.
- Tell the children that one of the characters in the play has a very special relationship with a banyan tree, which, she believes, will keep her close to her first home in India, after she moves to Canada with her family.



people seated beneath a real banyan tree

Primary

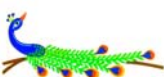
- Discuss the ways in which the banyan tree is useful to people and animals (shade, food, shelter, community meeting place, market place, etc.). If possible, read the book, “In the Heart of the Village,” a picture book about a banyan tree.

Junior

- Explain that the long life, beauty, and usefulness of the banyan tree makes it sacred to the people of the community where it grows. In some places, it is thought a spirit who protects the community inhabits the tree.
- Talk about the ways the people of a community use the banyan tree.

What to watch and listen for during the performance:

- The different ways that the Banyan Tree is used in the play.
- What the spirit of the Tree tells us about the Banyan Tree.



Post-Performance Discussions & Activities

Primary

Discussions

- Talk about how the designer made the Banyan Tree for the play.
- Recall how the Tree was used in the play.
- What did Maitri tell us about the roots and branches of the Tree?

Activities

- Make a list of all of the things we get from trees. Draw pictures of these items and display them on a bulletin board.
- Have the children bring leaves from the trees they observe on the way to school. Use books or the Internet to identify the trees. Display the leaves with captions on a bulletin board.
- Create a mural of different kinds of trees, including what we get from them (apples on the apple tree, maple syrup tap on the maple tree trunk etc.).
- Draw a large banyan tree and have children print the uses of the banyan tree on the trunks and branches.
- Complete the acrostic poem activity. (See Appendix – Activity Pages).

Junior

Discussions

- Discuss the symbolism of the Banyan Tree in the play.
- Discuss the spirit of the Banyan Tree and what role he played in the story.
- Review the information about the banyan tree discussed in the pre-show activities.
- Introduce other giant trees, where they grow, and how they are used (baobob, giant saguaro).
- Talk about other trees and how they are useful to humans.
- Discuss other books and stories about trees (e.g. “The Giving Tree” by Shel Silverstein).

Activities

- Using a world map or globe, mark the areas of the world where the banyan tree grows. Add the locations for the baobob and the giant saguaro.
- Make a diagram of the different parts of a tree and what each part contributes to community life. (trunks for lumber, fruit for food, branches for shade, etc.).
- In four groups: the first group makes a list or drawing of the ways the tree helped people; the second group records ways the tree helped animals; the third group records information about the ways the tree helped insects; and the fourth group records the ways that the tree helped birds.
- Make a 3-D model of a banyan tree, showing how the branches grow down to become roots and trunks.



Beneath The Banyan Tree

- Make a map of the trees in your school neighbourhood. List any products derived from the trees—fruits, nuts, etc. Include any animal or bird life observed in or around the trees.
- Extension: Use the map to take a primary class on a guided tour of the neighbourhood trees.

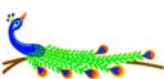
Curriculum Expectations

Primary students will have an opportunity to:

- identify the major parts of plants (e.g. seeds, stem, pistil) and describe their basic functions
- describe ways in which humans use plants for food, shelter, and clothing
- identify the parts of a plant that are used to produce specific products for humans (e.g. sugar, dyes, paper, cloth, lumber)
- describe various plants used in food preparation (e.g. vegetables, fruits, spices, herbs) and identify places where they can be grown

Junior students will have an opportunity to:

- describe structural adaptations of plants and animals that demonstrate a response of the living things to their environment
- investigate the dependency of plants and animals on their habitat and the interrelationships of the plants and animals living in a specific habitat
- classify plants and animals that they have observed in local habitats according to similarities and differences
- communicate the procedures and results of investigations for specific purposes and to specific audiences, using media works, oral presentations, written notes and descriptions, drawings, and charts



Suggested Activities for Intermediate Students

1. Theatre Review

As you watch the performance, take note of one of the following artistic elements, and report on that element to the class.

- **The Set:** Discuss how the set was both practical and creative. How did the designer create the different locations (house, school, schoolyard, dream world) with just one set? How did the various characters use the set?
- **Music:** What kinds of music did the sound designer use? How did the music suggest both India and Canada? Did the music ever suggest a mood or an emotion?
- **Puppets:** How did the designer create the animals of the Panchatantra? Why do you think they used only bits of costume to portray these animals?
- **Costumes:** How did the costumes represent both India and Canada? Did you notice any colour coordination? (e.g. Did Mason wear same colour as the Monkey?) Why would the costume designer make this choice? How were the set and costumes coordinated?
- **Acting:** What skills did the actors use to portray their characters? How did they change from one character to another? How did the costume designer help the actors to create different characters?

2. Geography

Prepare and present an independent study on a province of Indian or other South Asian region. As well as geographical features, be sure to include elements of the arts and culture.

3. South Asian Bazaar

With help from parents and the community, collect and sell South Asian art and artifacts, clothing, food, etc. at a bazaar. Use the proceeds as a fundraiser for your class/school, or for a suitable charity. This could be held in conjunction with a South Asian Festival.

4. South Asian Festival

Plan and hold a South Asian Festival in your class or school. It might include student performances of South Asian dance, songs, theatre, story-telling, or puppet shows, invited speakers, performing or visual artists, or community groups, refreshments with South Asian food and drink, a visual art display of traditional dress, drawings, or paintings.

5. Research (social and economic conditions)

Carry out research on social and economic conditions in various countries in South Asia. Report on the social or human rights issues that you discover (e.g. poverty, opportunities for education, child labour or child soldiers, human rights violations, the role of women and girls, etc.). Be sure to report on any initiatives to combat these conditions and improve the lives of people in these countries, and suggestions as to how you and your class/school could get involved.



6. Research (individual)

Research and report on a particular child or youth who has made a difference in the lives of people in an underdeveloped community. Tell us about the person and the actions taken. Was it a local, national or international event? Did this person inspire peers to get involved? Did the actions lead to a local or global organization? (e.g. Craig and Marc Kielburger formed Free The Children, and Leaders Today.)

7. Immigrant Stories

Interview a relative or friend who has immigrated to Canada. Ask about why they came to Canada; what happened when they arrived; what kind of obstacles they faced; who helped them settle and feel welcome; and how they are doing now. Share your findings through a written or oral presentation. If possible, include photos of the person in both countries.

8. CD production

Bring in music from the different countries represented in your class/school. Try to find traditional and contemporary music. Listen to the music and discuss similarities and difference (e.g. instruments used, beat, content of lyrics, etc.). With a small group, decide on a number of songs that could go together on a CD. Design your CD cover, including a graphic, a CD title, and the titles of the songs/tunes along with the instruments played. Explain your choices by writing the liner notes on the CD cover.

9. Surveys and Graphs

Do a survey of one grade in the school. Find out the number of countries represented in this grade level. Which countries are represented? How many language groups are represented? How many students were born in another country? How many of their parents came from other countries? Show this information on a bar graph. Display the graphs for all grade levels on the bulletin boards around the school. Add maps, pictures and other graphics to complete the bulletin board displays.

10. Indian Restaurant

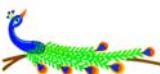
Open your own Indian Restaurant for a day.

Teacher

- Plan a class visit to an Indian restaurant in your community. Phone ahead and organize interviews with restaurant personnel. If possible, have a meal or snack at the restaurant.

Students

- Examine the menu, the decorations, and talk to the chef and waiters.
- Order lunch and talk to waiters about the dishes you are trying.
- Then as a class, plan your own restaurant day. Find cookbooks or recipes on the Internet.
- Learn about the differences between northern and southern Indian cuisine.
- Design the menu, table cloths, and decorations.
- Invite some parents or community members to help you with the cooking, or order food from a community restaurant.



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- Learn the words for food and beverages, and some “restaurant phrases” in the appropriate language (e.g. “May I take your order?”).
- Assign roles: chefs, host or hostess, waiters, busboys
- Prepare and send invitations to another class, parents or teachers.
- On the specified day, open your restaurant and serve your catered or homemade Indian food to the patrons.

11. A Change Of Heart

The main characters in *Beneath The Banyan Tree* learn valuable from each other. Choose one of the characters in the play, and describe how their feelings and actions changed. (See the Appendix – Activity Pages).

12. Shining a Light on Racism, Prejudice, Stereotypes and Bullying

Define “racism,” “stereotype,” “prejudice,” and “bullying” in the boxes provided on the “Shining A Light on Racism” Activity Page. (See the Appendix – Activity Pages).

Recall an incident from the play that illustrates one of these concepts, and check the appropriate box. In the large square, describe the incident, name that it is an example of, explain how the characters handled the situation, and whether or not you agree with their solution.



Suggested Resources

Books

- Bash, Barbara. *In the Heart of the Village*
- Choi, Yangsock. *The Name Jar*
- Das Prodeepa. *Geeta's Day*
- Das, Prodeepa. *I is for India*
- Demi. *One Grain of Rice - a Mathematical Folk Tale*
- English, Karen. *Nadia's Hands*
- Fata, Mrudul. *Favorite Tales of the Panchatantra*
- French, Fiona. *Jamil's Clever Cat*
- Hampden, John. *A Picture History of India*
- Haskins, Jim. *Find Your Way Through India*
- Haydlauff, Lisa. *Going to School in India*
- Hoffman, Mary. *The Colour of Home*
- Kamal, Aleph. *The Bird Who Was an Elephant*
- Lee Rose, Deborah. *The People Who Hugged the Trees*
- Lively, Penelope. *The Cat, the Crow and the Banyan Tree*
- Martinez, Alejandro Cruz. *The Woman that Outshone the Sun*
- Pluckrose, Henry. *Picture a Country - India*
- Rumford, James. *Nine Animals and the Well*
- Sheth, Kashmira *Blue Jasmine*
- Souhami, Jessica. *Rama and the Demon King, an ancient tale from India*
- Thomas, Pat. *The Skin I'm In, a First Look at Racism*
- Thornill, Jan. *The Rumour, A Jataka Tale from India*
- Uegaki, Chieri. *Suki's Kimono*
- Wolf, Gita. *Mala*
- Young, Ed. *What about me?*

India

- www.mapsofindia.com (Maps and facts of India)

Immigration

- www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/english/index.html (Province of Ontario)
- www.cic.gc.ca (Government of Canada)

Panchatantra Stories

- <http://members.tripod.com/~srinivasp/mythology/panchatantra.html>
- www.pitt.edu/~dash/panchatantra.html
- www.indiaparenting.com/stories/panchatantra/index.shtml
- www.panchatantra.org
- www.longlongtimeago.com

Celebrating Diversity

- www.pampetty.com/multigeneral.htm
- www.sandalwoodproductions.com/peacetree/sayings.html

Recipes & Food

- www.foodtv.ca
- www.pataks.ca/indian-food-in-canada
- www.world-recipes.info

Local South Asian Artists & Groups

- Autorickshaw, www.autorickshaw.ca (fusion)
- Kiran Ahluwalia, www.kiranmusic.com (folk & fusion)
- Toronto Tabla Ensemble, www.tablaensemble.com

Video – The Peace Tree

The Peace Tree is a 48 minute dramatic video that shares the story of a young Muslim girl and a Christian girl, who both dream of celebrating each other's festivals, Christmas and Eid. But when they share their dreams, they are met with resistance from their parents who express their concerns. The Peace Tree shares the voices of the children who try to enlighten their parents to the importance of sharing and celebrating diversity together. Through their struggles, they create a unique symbol—The Peace Tree, a tree that highlights the symbols from all our cultures and faiths to reflect the beauty of “diversity in unity.” More information is available at www.sandalwoodproductions.com



Appendix – Activity Pages

Activity Page

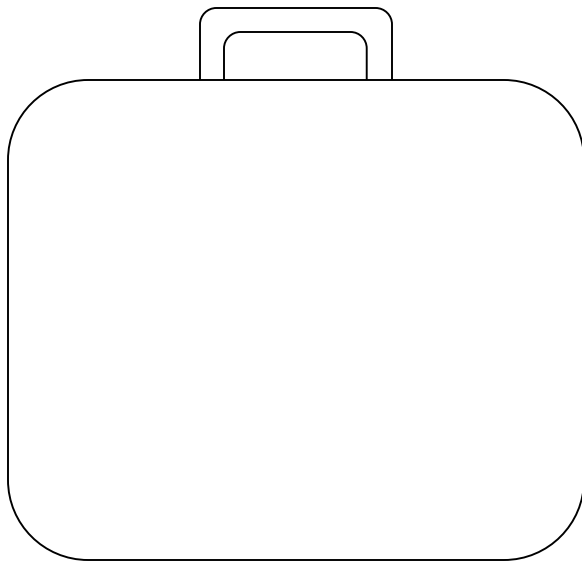
Pack Your Suitcase & Acrostic Poem

Pack Your Suitcase

You are about to move to a new country.

You've packed your suitcase with all your clothes, and you have space for just 5 more things. What 5 things would you pack to remind you of home?

Draw them in your suitcase.



Acrostic Poem

Create an Acrostic Poem about the tree or the characters who live in it. Here is an example.

B ranches out
A nd grows down deep
N urtures
Y ields flowers
A nd fruit
N ests the birds

Now you try with "Banyan" and "tree"

B _____

A _____

N _____

Y _____

A _____

N _____

T _____

R _____

E _____

E _____



Activity Page

What I Know. What I Wonder. What I Learned.

Fill in each of the columns with what you know about Indian culture, what you wonder about, and after the performance, what you have learned.

Know...	Wonder...	Learned...

Activity Page

Tales from The Panchatantra

Choose one of the stories from the Panchatantra told in the play.

Fill in the scrolls below with the parts of the story.

Draw a picture on each scroll.

The Characters

The Problems

The Lessons



Activity Page Birthday Celebrations

The play takes place on Anjali's birthday. Her Grandmother gives her a beautiful outfit called a _____ . She also makes her a special lunch.

In the balloons below, write the ways that Anjali's birthday is celebrated. Then add ways that they are the same or different from the way you and your family celebrate birthdays.

Anjali:

Me:

Anjali:

Me:

Anjali:

Me:



Anjali:

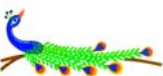
Me:

Anjali:

Me:

Anjali:

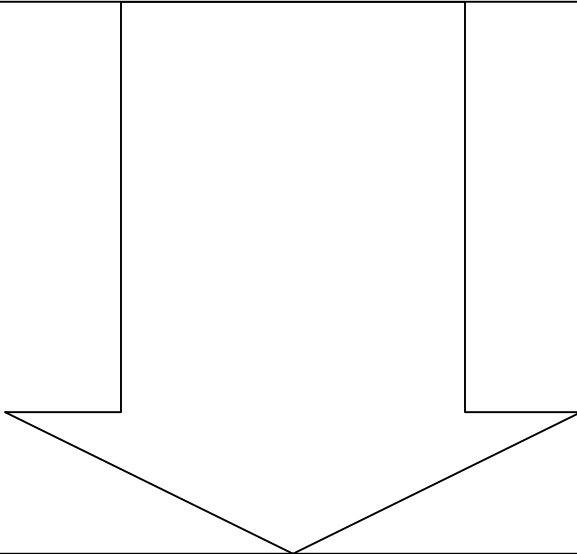
Me:



Activity Page A Change of Heart

Name of Character: _____

Step # 1.
Describe the characters' feelings, attitude, and actions at the beginning.



Step # 2.
List the events that caused the character to change.

Step # 3.
Tell how the feelings, attitude, behaviour changed during the play.



Theatre Direct Canada

Theatre Direct Canada engages young people through compelling, inventive and uncompromising professional theatre.

Our major area of focus is the development, production and presentation of Canadian plays that provoke, challenge, question and empower our audience.

All of our productions are complemented by quality education resources and programs, reflecting our belief in the dynamic relationship between arts and education.

Since 1976, Theatre Direct has produced over 85 productions, and tours to thousands of young people annually. In recognition of its outstanding works for young audiences, Theatre Direct has been the recipient of 22 Dora Mavor Moore nominations resulting in 6 awards, and 9 Chalmers Canadian Play Awards.

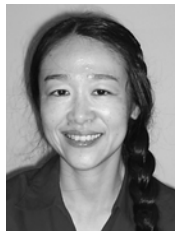
In 2007, Theatre Direct will move to its own performance/studio space in the Green/Arts Barns (a Toronto Artscape development), where it will present to the local community, while continuing its commitment to touring school boards and communities beyond Toronto.



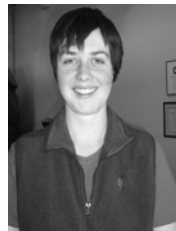
Lynda Hill
Artistic Director



John Watson
General Manager



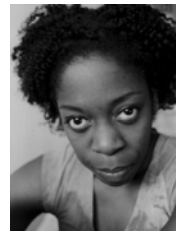
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Lisa Codrington
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Residence



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Theatre Direct Canada
aims to engage young people
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Theatre Direct Canada is an active member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT). This means we are committed to fair employment standards and practices. We engage professional artists who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association (CAEA) and operate under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement (CTA).

We are also members of Theatre Ontario, Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA), ASSITEJ Canada, and Performing Arts Organizations Network for Education (PAONE).

Theatre Direct Canada is supported by the following government agencies:



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Extension Exercise

Difference is Good—Weird is Wonderful

The following are two versions of a lesson that allows the students to work with text from the play. There are pre-performance and post-performance activities; we strongly suggest that you use the pre-performance activities to introduce your students to the play, but you may also choose the post-performance version, or both.

Pre-Performance Activities

This lesson is a great way to prepare your students for the performance of *Beneath The Banyan Tree*. The activities introduce the students to the language of the play, and give them some hints to the issues and themes explored in the story.

By working with lines from the script, representing the various characters, the children begin to identify with the characters, are curious about the story, and can't wait to hear "my line" in the context of the play.

If time permits, introduce this activity before coming to the gym on the morning of the performance. If this is not possible, then introduce a day or two before the performance.

Activity 1: Whose Line is This? Working with Text from the Play

Materials Needed

- Markers
- Strips of paper each containing one line from the play
- Container for the strips of dialogue
- Percussion Instrument, such as a drum, tambourine, rain-stick, etc

Preparation

- Prepare strips of paper with the following lines of dialogue from the play (6 of each)
 - Aiji: I worry about you
 - Maitri: Soon Canada will live in you.
 - Anjali: She'll laugh at me.
 - Mason: So let them laugh.
 - Skylar: I have a normal lunch.
- Put the strips of paper into some container (hat, basket) and let each student choose one.
- Have the students read the line of dialogue to themselves. Circulate to help with the reading.



- Ask the students walk about the space, reading the line in the way suggested by the teacher.
 - Shout it
 - Whisper it
 - Say it as if you are angry
 - Say it as if you are happy
 - Say it as if you are concerned
 - Other

Activity 2: Sharing the Lines

- Ask the children to walk about in silence. On signal they will pair up with the person closest, and read their lines to each other, using any intonation that they like. Repeat 3 or 4 times, pairing up with a different partner each time.
- Have the students freeze in place.
- When the teacher taps a student on the shoulders, the student says the line aloud, using body language, voice, and gesture to indicate the meaning.
- The teacher continues to tap students on the shoulder, until all have had a chance to demonstrate their lines.
- Discuss who says these lines in the play, and what the students think they mean.
- Talk about the feelings of both the speaker. What does it tell about the speaker? What clues does it give them to the content of the play?

Activity 3: Building a Scene: Putting the Lines Together

- Students get into small groups, making sure that each student in the group have a different line of dialogue.
- Students decide how to order the lines to create a scene or found poem.
- They create a tableau to represent the scene or poem.
- They practice and perform their scene or poem for the rest of the group.

Post-Performance Activities

This lesson is designed for students who have already seen *Beneath the Banyan Tree*. The activities review the language of the play, and explore some of the themes and issues explored in the play.

By working with lines from the script, representing the various characters, the children are reminded of the attitudes of the different characters, and are given a chance identify with the characters and the situations they faced in the play. It also gives them a chance to replay the scenes from the play, and find better solutions to the problems.

Activity 1

Materials Needed

- Markers
- Strips of paper each containing one line from the play
- Container for the strips of dialogue
- Percussion Instrument, such as a drum, tambourine, rain-stick

Preparation

- Prepare strips of paper with the following lines of dialogue from the play (6 of each)
 - Aiji: I worry about you
 - Maitri: Soon Canada will live in you.
 - Anjali: She'll laugh at me.
 - Mason: So let them laugh.
 - Skylar: I have a normal lunch.
- Put the strips of paper into some container (hat, basket) and let each student choose one.
- Have the students read the line of dialogue to themselves. Circulate to help with the reading.
- Ask the students walk about the space, reading the line in the way suggested by the teacher.
 - Shout it
 - Whisper it
 - Say it as if you are angry
 - Say it as if you are happy
 - Say it as if you are concerned
 - Other



Activity 2:

- Ask the children to walk about in silence. On signal they will pair up with the person closest, and read their lines to each other, using any intonation that they like. Repeat 3 or 4 times.
- On the last turn, have the students freeze in their pairs. When the teacher taps them on the shoulders, the pairs should perform their dialogue for the class.
- Discuss who said these lines to whom in the play, and discuss what they meant.
- Talk about the feelings of both the speaker and the listener. Was there anyone else in the scene? What were they doing?
- Reform into new groups by putting together all the students with the same line.
- Talk more about the scene, and it's meaning.
- Have each group plan a tableau to illustrate this moment in the play. Remember that the tree, Maitri, and the Panchatantra characters might also be in the scene.
- Practice by holding the tableau for 30 seconds, and then having someone speak the line.
- Groups share the tableaux with each other. Have the groups perform, one after the other, using a percussion instrument to conduct the action.
- Discuss the action and attitudes of the characters and how they could change the scenes to more appropriate behaviour. Replay the tableaux to reflect these changes.

Extension Exercise

From Strangers to Friends: Role-playing Families from Foreign Lands

The following is a lesson that can be used as a preparation or follow-up lesson. It explores the rich cultural heritage that immigrants have brought with them to Canada, and how we can learn to understand and celebrate each other's cultures. It starts with the language with divides people, and leads to the language with encourages understanding and appreciation for what is different.

Materials Needed

- Chart Paper
- Markers

Preparation

- Divide the paper into two columns. Label the first column, "Words for when we don't understand." Label the second column, "Words when we understand and appreciate."

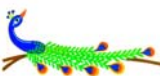
Activity

- Using the same tableaux groups from previous Extension Exercises (or new groups), have the students take on the roles of a family from an imaginary country. Encourage the groups to have three generations.
- They will decide on the following information about their imaginary homeland.
 - Where is the country? Is it near sea, mountain, desert; what is the weather like etc.
 - What language do they speak? What is the word for: Hello? Goodbye? Where is the store? What is your name? Welcome! Encourage them to add a gesture with each of the words or phrases.
 - What is a popular food in their culture?
 - What are they worried about in moving to Canada?
- The families will move around the space, meeting other families, talking and gesturing in their made-up language, and trying to understand the language of the other group.
- The groups will come together in a large circle to talk about the exercise.
 - How did it feel to speak in a language no one understood?
 - How did it feel to try and understand the other families' language?
 - What did you think about the way the other family talked, moved etc.?
- The leader should write the children's responses on the first column of the chart.



Beneath The Banyan Tree

- When all the groups have had a chance to respond, examine the words on the chart and see how many are negative words like, weird, strange, crazy etc.
- Have each group explain one of the words and gestures.
- Ask students if they would now change any of the words they used in their first descriptions. Write these words on the second column of the chart.
- Talk about how our attitude to new people and new customs changes when we take the time to understand.
- End the workshop by having students share ways they know of saying welcome in any language. Then on the count of three, all the children shout out “Welcome” in the language of their choice (including the gibberish).



Character Biographies



Anjali

My name is Anjali Krishnaswamy, and I am in grade 6. I grew up in India but now I live in Canada with my parents and my grandmother. I love to dance! My favourite book is Panchatantra Stories, which are stories about animals and people and the lessons they learn from each other. My favourite colours are yellow, pink, and light blue, but I like almost every other colour. My favourite subjects are math and gym. I hope that someday I can be a dancer as a job, but even if I can't do that, I would still always do it for fun.



Mason

My name is Mason, I moved to Toronto, Canada last year with my family and my drum Harold. So I know what it's like to be the new kid. Um...I like playing my drum and the spoons in percussion class, uh...playing the spoons for Anjali on the playground. Once, I got first place in the science fair two years ago for my awesome volcano, and uh...oh yeah, I played Peter Pan when I was in kindergarden. My favorite food is now samosas, it used to be pizza but thanks to Anjali, my new best friend, it's now samosa. Um...I'm also good at wall ball.



Aji

My name is Zara and I am Anjali's Aji, her Grandma. I live with my son's family in Canada now. I wanted to come with them so I could see my Anjali grow up. I also can care for her when her parents are working and make sure that they eat my cooking which they said they would miss very much if I wasn't here! Canada is so different from Bangalore where I've lived all my life. I miss it very much and I find some of the customs here very odd, but overall I am happy here with my family. Anjali brings me a lot of joy but she worries me sometimes because she is changing so fast.

Skylar

Hi! My name is Skylar. I am good at lots of stuff, especially skipping. At recess everybody likes to play with me (most of the time). I'm spunky, smart and sweet, because my Mom says so! My Mom is real smart because she works downtown in a really high building. She says she thinks of me lots because she's up in the *sky*—like my name, Skylar. Cool, eh?



Maitri

Maitri (pronounced "my-tree"), that is what the children who know me call me. I am the spirit of the Banyan Tree, which can be found all over the world in warm tropical climates, but I was the first. I help guide young ones through hard times, and when they no longer need me, I leave to help another. I am very, very old, but like the Banyan I am constantly growing and expanding myself. Be you in Canada, Kansas, or Katmandu, if you ever need me all you have to do is call my name and I will appear.



Beneath The Banyan Tree

Stage Manager

A Stage Manager is a very important person to have working on a show. Their job includes many duties. They are responsible for making sure the actors do the same thing in the show day after day, that they say their lines in the right order. They are also responsible for making the sound and music happen in the show, and if the show is in a theatre, they may be responsible for making the lights change for the show as well! The stage manager also must contact the schools that the company is traveling to, and confirm with them dates and times, as well as where the set can be loaded in. These are just some of the duties that a stage manager may be called on to perform.

