

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia

***The Very Hungry Caterpillar
and Other Eric Carle Favourites***

Study Guide

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia draws upon the magic of “black light” to capture the charm of three classic storybooks by the internationally acclaimed author/artist, Eric Carle: ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar***, ***Little Cloud*** and ***The Mixed-Up Chameleon***. In translating these works to the professional stage, Mermaid Theatre’s triple bill mirrors Carle’s intuitive understanding of and respect for children, while enhancing the original works with unique sounds, colors and theatre surprises for young, first-time theatre-goers.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar follows the wonderful adventures of a very tiny and very hungry caterpillar as he progresses through an amazing variety of foods towards his eventual metamorphosis into a beautiful butterfly. This year marks the 40th anniversary of this beloved book. Since its publication in 1969, this story has been translated into more than 25 languages and sold over twelve million copies worldwide

High up in a beautiful blue sky, ***Little Cloud*** slips away from the rest and transforms himself into various shapes of things he sees - a sheep, an airplane, a shark and more. It’s a celebration of shapes and images, and the power of nature.

In ***The Mixed-Up Chameleon***, a little chameleon is bored with its life – sitting about predictably changing colour all day. So it decides to embark on an adventurous trip to the zoo. Upon seeing the beautiful animals there, the little chameleon tries changing to look like each one of them and learns the importance of being true to oneself.

Eric Carle’s colorful collages, combined with Mermaid Theatre’s masterful puppetry and music, create a truly memorable event for youngster of all ages. Following closely the books from which the shows are adapted, the stories teach, as well as entertain with large-scale puppets in vibrant shapes and shades.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Other Eric Carle Favourites is directed and designed by Jim Morrow, with music by Steven Naylor. Gordon Pinsent provides the narration, reading the books with a storyteller’s rhythm, as two puppeteers take us on a delightful journey

The Eric Carle website has a “Caterpillar Exchange” where teachers post ideas for using Eric Carle stories in the classroom. Here are some of the suggestions.



**The following are ideas for using
The Very Hungry Caterpillar in the classroom.**

- Make your own caterpillar by painting several paper plates in different colors. When dry, staple the plates together. Punch a hole in the top of the plates and, using fishing line, hang your “caterpillar” from the ceiling.
- Give each child a flannel board piece to represent an item in the story. As you read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, have each child place their piece on a flannel board, when it is mentioned in the story.
- Cut out flower shapes from construction paper and cover paper cups. Fill the cups with fruit juice, insert a straw into the middle of the paper flowers and let the children drink the “nectar” from the flowers.
- Learn the Life Cycle of a Butterfly. After reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, go through each of the stages of a butterfly’s life cycle with your students: 1) Egg 2) Caterpillar (Larva) 3) Pupa (Inside of the cocoon) and 4) Adult Butterfly. Give each student a circular piece of construction paper divided into four parts. Use yarn, Q-tips, tissue paper, and scraps of construction paper to make a 3D collage of a butterfly’s life cycle.

OR

Day 1: Make Caterpillars out of cardboard egg cartons. Paint them green and add wiggly eyes and pipe cleaner antennae.

Day 2: Use toilet paper rolls to make cocoons. Paint them and let them dry,. Then have your caterpillar “disappear” inside the cocoon.

Day 3: Give the children pre-cut butterflies to decorate and glue onto popsicle sticks. When the butterflies are dry, insert them into the cocoons. Pull them out and witness their changes!

- Graphing. Read the story and have children graph the amounts of food that the caterpillar ate on each day of the week.



**The following are ideas for using
Little Cloud in the classroom.**

- After reading the story, give each student a piece of dark or light blue construction paper. Fold the paper in half, crease it, then open the paper to its full size. Have the students place a small spoonful of thick white paint on the crease and fold the paper again. Students can use their hands to spread the paint around inside of the paper. When they open the paper, each one has a very unique cloud. Write a caption under each cloud that reads “It looked like _____.” Unique designs are guaranteed each time!!
- After reading the book, have students use their imagination to think of what else Little Cloud could turn into. Give each child a sheet of tissue paper (using colors such as turquoise and blue). Using the wrong end of the brush, have students paint swirls and line with white paint. When the tissue paper is dry, have the children cut out their cloud shape and glue it onto a blue piece of construction paper.
- After reading *Little Cloud*, have students make a cloud mobile. The students used foam to make clouds on blue paper. Then we glued blue yarn onto the cloud for raindrops. The students glued pictures of the things Little Cloud turned into on the yarn raindrops.
- Use Little Cloud to discuss the concepts of “more than” and Less than”. After seeing the play, ask the children to volunteer how many time Little Cloud changed. Write down the guesses and then check the book to count the actual number of times he changes. Use pre-cut index cards, shaped like different clouds, to show the actual number of cloud changes. Then use more cards to show the comparison of each student’s guess to the actual number of cloud changes. Discuss whether the guess was “more then” or “less than” the actual number. Continue, using all of the guesses given by the students.



**The following are ideas for using
The Mixed-Up Chameleon in the classroom.**

- For an art lesson, have the students create their own mixed-up chameleon by using various types of paper having different colors, textures, weights, patterns, etc. The students could also add additional patterns to the papers by stamping design with rubber stamps. Try using papers ranging from tissue paper, to textured foil paper and various papers of different thickness. Have the students tear the papers to create a similar effect to the artwork of Eric Carle.
- Create a book by having each student draw a picture of himself/herself with characteristics of a favorite animal. Then have them write or dictate what they would like to be. When completed, gather all of the pictures and create a classroom
- Make a transparency of a chameleon. Cut it out and staple it onto a popsicle stick. After a discussion about how chameleons camouflage themselves, hold the chameleon up against different backgrounds – their clothes, the wall, books, desks, shoes, hair puzzles, etc. to see how it blends in.

For more information on Eric Carle, and more suggestions from the Caterpillar Exchange, visit www.eric-carle.com/catexchange.html