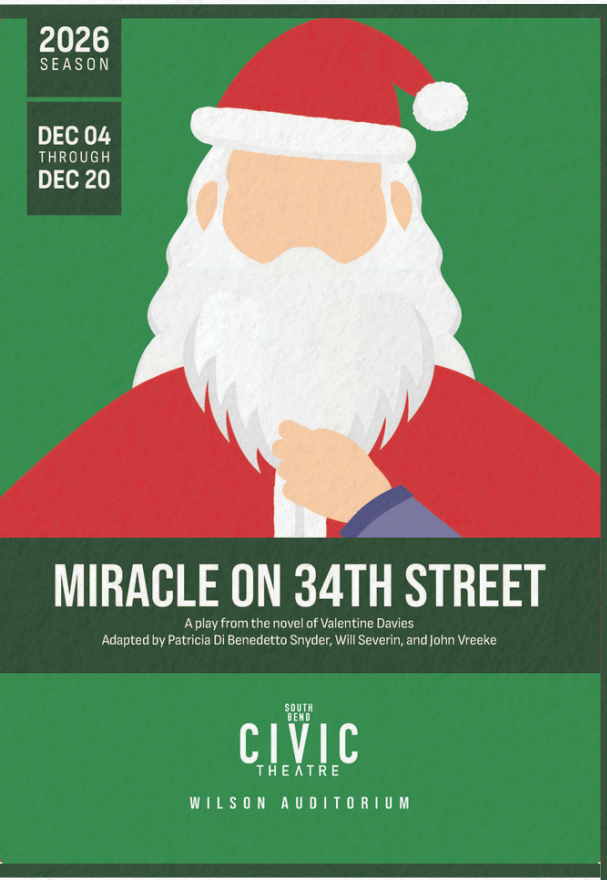

SOUTH BEND
CIVIC
THEATRE
presents
SHEIN
TRUST
Miracle on
34th Street
Behind the Curtain
SYNOPSIS | THEATRE ETIQUETTE | VOCABULARY LIST | SUGGESTED READING

Table of Contents



Recommended for Ages 5-14

Thank you for joining us on this journey back to 1947 New York! If you've ever dreamed of being on stage, creating sets, or helping bring stories to life, we'd love to have you join our community. There's a place for everyone, both on and off the stage!

03 Theatre Etiquette & Accessibility

04 Synopsis

05 State Learning Standards

07 Profile of the Author

08 Themes & Discussion Topics

09 Suggested Reading

10 Vocabulary

11 Let's Talk Kindness!

12 Activity: Social Studies

13 Activity: Visual Arts

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Theatre Etiquette & Accessibility

NO PAPARAZZI PLEASE

Leave cell phones, tablets, hand held games, and other distracting electronics at home or turn them off completely. No texting or photography during the performance.

TAKE YOUR SEAT

When the lights dim, the play is about to begin! Take your seat and stay seated. There will be one 15 minute intermission for this performance.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN (UNTIL IT ISN'T!)

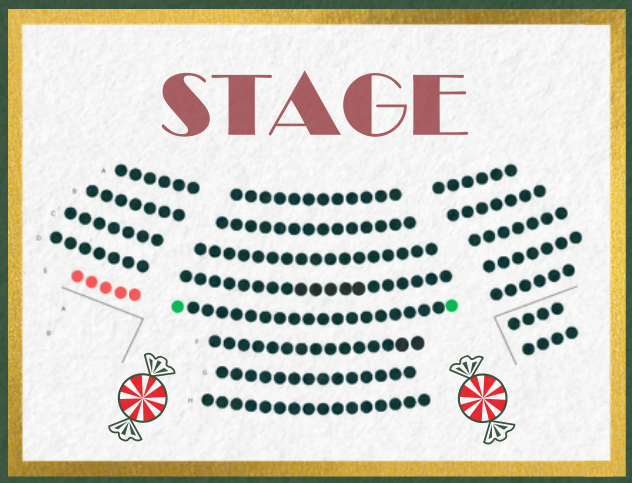
To ensure you and your fellow audience members have the best experience, focus all of your attention on the play. We ask that you refrain from talking to your neighbors as it distracts the actors onstage. Feel free to laugh and react naturally as the play unfolds. Applauding at the end of scenes and at curtain call is encouraged!

Santa's List: Accessibility

Exits located on either sides of the aisles marked with peppermints.

Two **wheelchair accessible seats** are marked in green and can be found on either side of row E.

Five **armless seats** are marked in red and can be found on audience left in row E.



Synopsis

Set in New York City during the holiday season, *Miracle on 34th Street* tells the story of Kris Kringle, a kind older man who is hired to play Santa Claus for Macy's famous Thanksgiving Day Parade and holiday events. Kris quickly wins people over with his warmth, honesty, and genuine care for others. But unlike the other adults around him, Kris insists that he is the real Santa Claus. His belief begins to change the lives of those around him, especially Susan Walker, a young girl who has been taught by her practical mother, Doris, not to believe in things like Santa or holiday magic.

As Kris's claims are questioned, the story builds toward a courtroom trial that asks an important question: can faith, hope, and kindness matter even when something cannot be easily proven? Along the way, Susan, Doris, and their friend Fred Gailey begin to rethink what it means to believe. *Miracle on 34th Street* invites audiences to consider the value of imagination, generosity, and trusting in something bigger than ourselves.

State Learning Standards

NOTE: Referenced standards listed on the following pages

INDIANA STATE K-12 LEARNING STANDARDS

Miracle on 34th Street explores a variety of themes and concepts. A few Discussion Topics we believe are particularly relevant include belief & faith, the power of wonder, kindness & generosity, and truth & identity.

Watching this production and engaging with our Behind The Curtain audience guide can foster essential skills for navigating the modern world including: **Creative Thinking**, **Collaboration**, **Critical Thinking**, **Perseverance**, **Communication**, and a **Growth Mindset**.

Additionally, we believe this experience and the accompanying guide can assist educators in meeting various **Indiana State Learning Standards**. We've highlighted some standards that align well with specific articles and activities below. While we've selected a few examples, we encourage you to get creative and find other connections between what your students are learning & this theatrical experience!

ATTENDING A PERFORMANCE OF *Miracle on 34th Street*

FINE ARTS

THEATRE ARTS | Anchor Standards 7-11

PROFILE OF THE PLAYWRIGHT

FINE ARTS

THEATRE ARTS | Anchor Standards 7-9

ENGLISH & LANGUAGE ARTS

READING COMPREHENSION | 8.RC.4-5 & 7, 7.RC.5-7 & 9, 6.RC.5-7 & 9, 5.RC.6, 8-9, & 11-13, 4.RC.5, 7-8, &10-13, 3.RC.5-6 & 11-13, 2.RC.1 & 6-7, 1.RC.1 & 6-7, K.RC.1 & 5-6

THEMES & DISCUSSION TOPICS

THEATRE ARTS | Anchor Standards 7-11

ENGLISH & LANGUAGE ARTS

READING COMPREHENSION | 8.RC.1-3, 7.RC.1-3 & 7, 6.RC.1-3 & 7, 5.RC.2-3, 4.RC.2-3, 3.RC.2-3, 2.RC.1-3 & 5, 1.RC.1-3, K.RC.1-3 & 5

COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION | 8.CC.1-3 & 6, 7.CC.1-3 & 6, 6.CC.1-3 & 6, 5.CC.1-2, 4.CC.1-2, 3.CC.1-3, 2.CC.1-2 & 4-5, 1.CC.1-2 & 4, K.CC.1 & 3

WRITING | 8.W.2-4, 7.W.2-4, 6.W.2-4, 5.W.3-4, 4.W.3-4, 3.W.4-5, 2.W.2-4, 1.W.3-4, K.W.3-4



SUGGESTED READING

ENGLISH & LANGUAGE ARTS

READING COMPREHENSION | 8.RC.1-3; 7.RC.1-3 & 7, 6.RC.1-4 & 7, 5.RC.1-6 & 10-14, 4.RC.1-5 & 9-13, 3.RC.1-5 & 10-13, 2.RC.1-5, 1.RC.1-6, K.RC.1-5

VOCABULARY

ENGLISH & LANGUAGE ARTS

READING FOUNDATIONS | 5.RF.1-2, 4.RF.1-3, 3.RF.1-5, 2.RF.1-4, 1.RF.1-4, K.RF.1-9

READING COMPREHENSION | 8.RC.1, 8-10, 7.RC.1 & 10-13, 6.RC.1, 10, 11 & 13, 5.RC.1 & 11-14, 4.RC.1 & 10-13, 3.RC.1, 7, 11-13, 2.RC.7 & 11-12, 1.RC.9-10

LET'S TALK KINDNESS

HEALTH & WELLNESS

6-8.1.2, 4.1, 4.3, 5.1, 5.4-6, 6.2, 6.4, 6.7; 3-5.1.2-3, 4.3, 5.1, 5.3-4, 6.2, 6.5, 6.7; K-2.1.2, 4.1, 4.3, 6.2-3, 6.5-6

ENGLISH & LANGUAGE ARTS

READING COMPREHENSION | 8.1-3 & 5; 7.RC.1-3 & 7; 6.RC.1-3 & 7; 5.RC.1-3, 6, & 11-14; 4.RC.1, 3, 5, 7, & 10-13; 3.RC.1, 3, 5-6, & 11-13; 2.RC.1-3 & 5; 1.RC.1-3; K.RC.1-3 & 5

COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION | 8-6.CC.1-4; 5.CC.1-4; 4.CC.1-3; 3.CC.1-5; 2.CC.1 & 4-5; 1.CC.1-2 & 4; K.CC.1 & 3-4

State Learning Standards

ACTIVITY PAGES

FINE ARTS

VISUAL ARTS | VA:Re7.1.6(a)-8(a), VA:Cr1.1.2(a)-7(a), 2.K(a), 2.4(a)-2.6(a) & 2.8(a), 2.1.6(a)-8(a), 2.2.2(a)-5(a), 2.3.K(a)-1(a) & 3(a), VA:Pr4.1.K(a)-2(a)

SOCIAL STUDIES

CIVICS & GOVERNMENT | 8.C.4-7, 6.CIV.7 & 13-16, 5.C.6-8, 4.C.5, 3.C.4-5, 2.C.3-4, 1.C.3-4, K.C.2

ECONOMICS | 8.E.2 & 4, 5.E.4, 4.E.3, 3.E.1 & 7, 2.E.3, K.E.2-3



THEATRE ARTS

Anchor Standards View Theatre Arts Standards

VISUAL ARTS

Anchor Standards View Visual Arts Standards

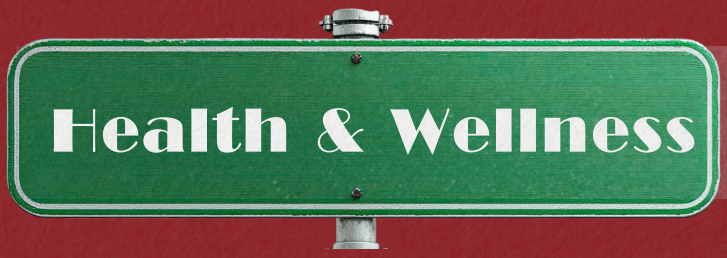


Common Core



CIVICS & GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMICS

8.C./E. View 8th Grade Standards
6.CIV. View 6th Grade Standards
5.C./E. View 5th Grade Standards
4.C./E. View 4th Grade Standards
3.C./E. View 3rd Grade Standards
2.C./E. View 2nd Grade Standards
1.C. View 1st Grade Standards
K.C./E. View Kindergarten Standards



Anchor Standards View Health & Wellness Standards



READING COMPREHENSION, COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION, AND WRITING

8.RC./W./CC. View 8th Grade Standards
7.RC./W./CC. View 7th Grade Standards
6.RC./W./CC. View 6th Grade Standards
5.RC./W./CC. View 5th Grade Standards
4.RC./W./CC. View 4th Grade Standards
3.RC./W./CC. View 3rd Grade Standards
2.RC./W./CC. View 2nd Grade Standards
1.RC./W./CC. View 1st Grade Standards
K.RC./W./CC. View Kindergarten Standards

PROFILE OF THE AUTHOR



Valentine Davies



Valentine Davies was an American writer, producer, and director best known for creating the story that became *Miracle on 34th Street*. Born in New York City in 1905, Davies developed an interest in theatre and storytelling at a young age. While studying at the University of Michigan, he wrote reviews, acted in student productions, and began creating his own work for the stage. He later continued his training at the Yale Drama School before building a career as a playwright and eventually moving into film writing in Hollywood.

During World War II, Davies served in the U.S. Coast Guard, and it was during that time that he first imagined the story of a department-store Santa who might actually be the real Kris Kringle. That idea became *Miracle on 34th Street*, first released as a 1947 film and later published as a novella alongside the movie. The story was a major success, earning Davies the Academy Award for Best Original Story and eventually becoming a beloved holiday classic. Davies went on to write and work on other notable films, including *The Glenn Miller Story*, *The Benny Goodman Story*, and *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*.

In addition to his writing career, Davies was an active leader in the entertainment industry, serving in major roles with organizations that supported screenwriters and film artists. His work often blended humor, heart, and a strong sense of humanity, which helped make *Miracle on 34th Street* such an enduirng story for audiences of all ages. Even decades after his death in 1961, Davies' holiday tale continues to be adapted for the stage and screen, reminding audiences of the power of belief, generosity, and wonder.

Themes

BELIEF & FAITH

At the center of the play is the question of whether people can believe in somthing they cannot fully prove. Through Kris Kringle, the story explores how faith, trust, and imagination can shape the way people see the world.

THE POWER OF WONDER

Miracle on 34th Street reminds audiences that wonder is not only for children. As Kris enters the lives of Susan and Doris, the play shows how a sense of possibility can bring joy, healing, and connection.

KINDNESS & GENEROSITY

Kris stands apart because of his honesty, compassion, and care for others. The play suggests that the true spirit of the holiday season is not about shopping or appearances, but about generosity, empathy, and treating others with dignity.

TRUTH & IDENTITY

When Kris insists that he is the real Santa Claus, the play raises questions about truth and identity, asking whether emotional truth can matter just as much as factual proof.

Discussion Topics

What is the main lessson Kris Kringle teaches to the people around him?

Susan has a hard time believng in things she cannot see or prove. Why do you think she feels that way at the beginning of the play? How do her thoughts change by the end? Write a paragraph answering each question.

Do you think believing in something always means having proof, or can belief come from trust, hope, and a “feeling?” When is it important to have proof and when is it better to follow your heart? Break into groups and discuss.

How does Kris bring wonder into the lives of other characters? What moments in the play show people beginning to see the world differently because of him?

What is the difference between being realistic and being cynical? Do you think the play argues that it is possible to be practical and still leave room for wonder? Break into groups and disucss.

Kris shows kindness in the way he treats children, families, and even poeple who doubt him. What are some examples of ways you can treat your community with kindness and generosity?

Why is identity such an important part of the story? How does the play ask us to think about what makes someone “real” or truthful?

Do you think the adults in the play learn as much as the children do? Why or why not?

Suggested Reading

Find these and other titles at the St. Joe Public Library

The Proudest Blue
by Ibtihaj Muhammad
THEMES EXPLORED: Truth & Identity, Belief & Faith, Kindness & Generosity
AGES 4-8

Last Stop on Market Street
by Matt de la Peña
THEMES EXPLORED: The Power of Wonder, Kindness & Generosity, Belief & Faith
AGES 5-9

A Boy Called Bat
by Elena K. Arnold
THEMES EXPLORED: Truth & Identity, Kindness & Generosity, Belief & Faith
AGES 6-10

Ellen Outside the Lines
by A.J. Sass
THEMES EXPLORED:Truth & Identity, Belief & Faith, Kindness & Generosity
AGES 8-12

The Parker Inheritance
by Varian Johnson
THEMES EXPLORED: Truth & Identity, Belief & Faith, Kindness & Generosity
AGES 9-12

Front Desk
by Kelly Yang
THEMES EXPLORED: Truth & Identity, Kindness & Generosity, Belief & Faith
AGES 8-12

Melissa
by Alex Gino
THEMES EXPLORED: Truth & Identity, Belief & Faith, Kindness & Generosity
AGES 9-12

New Kid & *Class Act*
by Jerry Craft
THEMES EXPLORED: Truth & Identity, Kindness & Generosity
AGES 9-13

Merci Suárez
by Meg Medina
THEMES EXPLORED:Kindness & Generosity, Truth & Identity, Belief & Faith
AGES 9-13

Wishtree
by Katherine Applegate
THEMES EXPLORED: The Power of Wonder, Belief & Faith, Kindness & Generosity
AGES 9-13

Other Words for Home
by Jasmine Warga
THEMES EXPLORED: Truth & Identity, Belief & Faith, Kindness & Generosity
AGES 9-13

A Kind of Spark
by Elle McNicoll
THEMES EXPLORED: Truth & Identity, Belief & Faith, Kindness & Generosity
AGES 10-14

Starfish
by Lisa Fipps
THEMES EXPLORED: Truth & Identity, Belief & Faith, Kindness & Generosity
AGES 10-14

Vocabulary

All definitions sourced from the Merrium Webster dictionary

Irksome- (adj) tending to make weary, irritated, or bored
We will relieve you of the irksome necessity of Christmas shopping.

Commercialize- (v) to manage on a business bases for profit; to exploit for profit
Christmas is commercialized.

Exceptionally- (adv) in a superior or better than average manner
You've been alert and exceptionally skillful but it's this Kris Kringle business.

Ashamed- (adj) feeling shame, guilt, or disgrace
You should be ashamed of yourself!

Spurious- (adj) outwardly similar or corresponding to something without having its genuine qualities: false
Madam, I am not in the habit of substituting for spurious Santa Clauses.

Abnormal- (adj) deviating from the normal or average, often unusual in an unwelcome or problematic way
People sometimes do grow very tall- but that is abnormal.

Inconceivable- (adj) unbelievable; impossible to comprehend
We must release this man playing Santa Clause immediately... it is simply inconceivable.

Contradict- (v)to assert the contrary of: take issue with
Il'm sorry to contradict you. Mrs. Walker. But there certainly is, and here I stand to prove it!

Delusion- (n) a false idea or belief
His delusion is for good. He just wants to be friendly and help people.

Equitable- (adj) having or exhibiting fairness or justice in the way people are treated
I'm sure I know how we can handle this in the most professional and equitable manner.

Vicious- (adj) dangerously aggressive: savage
He's dishonest and selfish and vicious.

Quixotic-(adj) foolishly impractical especially in the pursuit of ideals
How can you be so quixotic? You have to be realistic.

Miraculous- (adj) of the nature of a miracle: supernatural; marvelous
Unless something miraculous happens I'll have to accept the lunacy report and have the old man committed.

Uncanny- (adj) being beyond what is normal or expected: eerie, mysterious
Kris has an uncanny way with reindeer.

Immaterial- (adj) of no substantial consequence: unimportant
It is ridiculous and immaterial.

Concede- (v) to relinquish grudgingly or hesitantly
We are ready to concede that it's a most authoritative and efficient organization.

Let's Talk Kindness!

KIDS TALK ABOUT: KINDNESS! | PBS

A short video inviting children to think about what kindness looks like in everyday life and how they can care for others.
RATING: TV-Y | TIME: 1m41s

STANDING UP FOR YOURSELF & OTHERS | PBS

This video can support conversations about defending what is right, speaking up for others, and acting with integrity.
AGES: 8-11 | TIME: 10m51s

CHOOSE KINDNESS ONLINE | PBS

This playful and relatble video reminds kids to pause, reflect, and choose kindness in their online interactions. A valuable lesson on being responsible digital citizens and spreading positivity, even in moments of frustration. AGES: 10-14 | TIME: 1m4s

Activity

EXERCISE: Miracle on Our Street
GRADES: K-8th Grade
TIME: 1hr+

SUPPLIES: Pencil, Large Paper, Markers, Colored Pencils

OVERVIEW:
Students will work together in small groups to complete this design thinking project based on the play *Miracle on 34th Street*. In this project students will brainstorm a way to solve a problem facing our community that they think is important. Students will work together to design an invention or other form of solution to this problem, and do their best to show how their idea will work.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Begin this lesson plan by informing them that Kris Kringle himself has requested their help with helping to solve some problems facing our community. Then, ask students to list the things that need improving in our community: pollution, prices, needing more parks, an election, or other examples work best and should be noted. Also note any problems troubling your students that aren't on your radar.
2. Then, let students know that it will be their job to come up with a solution that helps this problem get solved, either completely or in some small way that they are able to explain. Inform students that thanks to Kris Kringle's help the explanations do not necessarily need to "work" in the traditional sense as long as students are able to explain what the idea is and how it could work in their own words. Adjust this expectation to fit your grade level.
3. Students will begin by discussing how to solve this problem in their small groups. In those same groups students will then put their idea to paper. Each explanation must include at least one picture and one sentence in addition to the verbal explanation.
4. Following group work time, have students present their solutions to the large group, taking questions following their presentation.

ASSESSMENT:

- Were students able to identify problems facing their community or the broader global community? How can we better inform students who could not identify these issues?
- Were students able to identify solutions to these problems in a way their whole group could understand? Why or why not?
- How well did students' discussions translate to visual and written form? Did any groups struggle with how to share this information? How can we support all learners in doing this in the future?

Activity

EXERCISE: Traditions, Traditions
GRADES: K-8th Grade
TIME: 1hr+

SUPPLIES: Markers, Colored Pencils, Crayons, Water Color Paints (optional)

OVERVIEW:

In this visual art based activity, just as *Miracle on 34th Street* shows many holiday traditions, students will discuss and explore the various traditions that surround the winter holidays for themselves and their peers. Students will complete 4 distinct pieces of art for today's lesson, each being a visual representation of a tradition they or someone in their group does to celebrate the winter holidays, or that they only do in the winter months.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Start today's lesson by asking students what things they associate the winter months with. Certain holidays, weather, food, or other winter-themed answers should be noted somehwere that students can see. If needed guide students toward including answers that relate to *Miracle on 34th Street*, and remind students if one of the items from the list was featured in the play.
2. Following this list, have students discuss their favorite thing from this list in detail with the members of their table group. Students must explain what their favorite thing is and why it is their favorite from the list.
3. After students have had a chance to share, inform them that today they will be drawing and coloring in 4 different pictures, 1 themed around what they enjoyed most, and 3 pictures showing their friends from class doing their favorite activities.
4. Following the creation of their artwork, invite students to share their drawings of their friends with each other.
5. After students have had a chance to share, ask for volunteers to share their 4 drawings with the large group.

ASSESSMENT:

- Were students able to make a list of winter themed activities and relate it to *Miracle on 34th Street*? How can we better help them make these connections in the future?
- Were students able to communicate effectively with their classmates? How can we better support students who have trouble communicating in the future?
- Did students understand instructions and create the appropriate number of pictures for each subject?
- Were students able to use art supplies and materials at a developmentally appropriate level? How can we help students who are struggling?

Work With Us

Learn More at SBCT.org

Whether you like to be “in the spotlight,” or prefer to stay “behind the scenes,” South Bend Civic Theatre offers plenty of opportunities to volunteer in every aspect of theatrical production, including field trips, learning new skills, and even opportunities to see shows for free! Checkout our website to learn more!

SOUTH BEND CIVIC THEATRE

Upcoming Shows



