

RAUE CENTER  FOR THE ARTS

**Skippyjon Jones
Study Guide**

For Teacher Classroom Use

School Performance(s): November 4, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.

Public Performance: November 5, 2011 at 11:00 a.m.



Illustration from SKIPPYJON JONES by Judy Schachter. Used with permission.

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Located in historic, downtown Crystal Lake, Illinois.
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Dear Teacher,

We have created the following study guide to help make your students' theater experience with Skippyjon Jones as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a live theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the production, the experience is more significant and long-lasting. Our study guide provides pre and post production discussion topics, as well as a related activity sheet. These are just suggestions; please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion. We hope you and your class enjoy the show!

Background

Our play is based on the book Skippyjon Jones by author Judy Schachner.

The Story

- Skippyjon Jones, a male Siamese kitten, lives with his sisters and his mother. He is the family troublemaker who always thinks he's another animal such as a bird, a bat or a whale.
- One day, he gets in trouble and his mother sends him to his room. While he's there, he bounces on the bed and notices as he passes the mirror that he actually looks like a chihuahua and decides that he must really be a dog.
- Fantasizing as "Skippito Friskito", he travels to Mexico where he meets up with a group of Chihuahuas who are in fear of the evil Alfredo Buzzito, a bumblebee who demands beans from the dogs. The dogs tell Skippyjon that he is the answer to the prophesy that a stranger will come and free them from their tormentor.
- When Skippyjon confronts Alfredo, he doesn't act heroic but is humiliated and revealed to all as a kitten, not a Chihuahua. All the Chihuahuas are disappointed except Rosalita who convinces him that he can still defeat Alfredo.
- Skippito is inspired once more and with the help of all his friends, he battles the bumblebee and wins, piercing Alfredo till he bursts. At that point, it is revealed that Alfredo is really the piñata from his closet that he has destroyed and all the Chihuahuas are bean bag toys for his birthday party. His family celebrates Skippyjon's wild imagination and all is forgiven.

Before Seeing the Play

1. You may want to read some of the Skippyjon Jones stories and review the plots and characters with your students.
2. Discuss types of cats and dogs. In the story there are Siamese cats and Chihuahua dogs. What other kind of cat and dog breeds do you know? Who has a cat or a dog for a pet? Describe their behavior. Do they ever act like humans? Do they ever act like another kind of animal?
3. Discuss Spanish language words with the students. There are many Spanish words used in the play. What Spanish words do the children know? Ask if they know some common words such as amigo, gracias, frijoles, loco and por favor. You can find a list of words used in this production on the last page of this study guide.

After Seeing the Play

1. Ask your students how the play was different from the Skippyjon Jones books you read. How was it the same? Discuss the costumes. How did the actors portray cats and dogs?
2. Why do you think Skippyjon always acts like other animals? How does he feel about his family? What do they think of him?
3. Skippyjon has a very active imagination. Describe how he uses his imagination to create Old Mexico in his bedroom. How are the props used to create characters?

Activities

1. Have each student come up with one or two of their favorite parts of the show. What was their least favorite part?
2. Compare the show they just saw with other theatre shows they've seen or with the movie. How are they different? How are they similar?
3. Write a journal entry about the play. Include favorite or least favorite parts and scenes or times in the show that students related to in some way. Which of the children in the story do they relate to the most? If they were in that person's shoes, what would they do differently?
4. Pretend you are a reporter for a newspaper. Write a review of the play you have just seen.
5. *Act like an Animal:* In the play, Skippyjon acts like a bird, bat, moose, whale and a dog. Have your students pick an animal to research and then portray through physical action. Each student will learn about a particular animal's behavior and traits through research in books or online. The students can then create a poster with their research facts and a picture of the animal. Without revealing their subject, have the students take turns acting as their animal while the class tries to guess what it is.
6. *Foreign Language:* Word Wall- Have students choose a favorite word, define it, translate it into Spanish and illustrate it. Hang up the illustrated "dictionary" pages on the wall.
7. *Artistic Expression:* In the Skippyjon Jones stories, his closet becomes a new location for each adventure. Use your imagination to create the setting for a story out of your closet.
 - Bring in an item from your closet and use it to start a story.
 - Find a piece of clothing and turn it into a costume for a character.
8. *Poetry Comparisons:* Make acrostic poems using the words Siamese and Chihuahua. To make a poem of this type, write the letters of each word on the side of a piece of paper, and then have the students use descriptive words that focus on the animals' characteristics. An acrostic poem does not have to rhyme. For example: Slinky, Interesting, Awesome, Mouse-catcher, Eats cat food, Silly ears, Eager
9. *Fiesta Time!* Plan a fiesta with your class, create piñatas using paper mache, balloons and tissue paper. Make Mexican themed decorations and invitations. Learn about Mexican food and make some for the party to share. Put students into groups for different tasks. Parents can help too!

Bibliography

Judy Schachner is an award winning author of a many children's books including the Skippyjon Jones series which includes:

- Skippyjon Jones
- Skippyjon Jones in the Doghouse
- Skippyjon Jones in Mummy Trouble
- Skippyjon Jones and the Big Bones
- Skippyjon Jones, Lost in Space
- Skippyjon Jones, Class Action

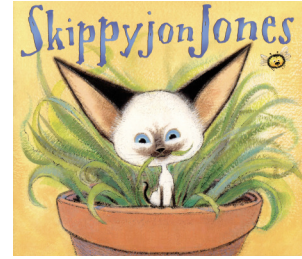
Internet

- Learn about author Judy Schachner: <http://www.judithbyronschachner.com/>
- Play games, watch videos, color pictures and download a curriculum guide at: <http://www.skippyjonjones.com/>

Name: _____ Date: _____

Skippyjon Jones

Complete the sentences using a word from the text box:



loco	bumblebee	bounce	fetch	beans
Chihuahua	Siamese	piñata	bird	fiesta

1. Skippyjon Jones woke up and thought he was a _____.
2. Skippyjon loved to _____ on his bed.
3. In the mirror, he thought he saw a _____.
4. The other dogs were afraid of a _____ named Alfredo Buzzito.
5. Alfredo told the dogs to "Spill the _____."
6. Alfredo was really a _____ in Skippyjon's closet.
7. Skippyjon is really a _____ cat.
8. When Rosalita raced the other dogs, Skippyjon told her she was "born to _____."
9. Instead of having a birthday party, Skippyjon and his family decided to have a _____.
10. At the end, Skippyjon and his family sang, "Let's go crazy _____!"

Name: _____

Date: _____

Skippyjon Jones Vocabulary

Check out these words with their Spanish translations:

Adios—Goodbye

Amigo—Friend

¡Ay, caramba! - Oh My Goodness!

Bandito—Bandit

Besito—Kiss

Cabeza—Head

Comprende—Understand

Creada para buscar—Born to fetch

El numero uno—Number one

Fiesta—Party

Frijoles—Beans

Gato—Cat

Gordo—Fat

Gracias—Thank you

Hola—Hello

La luna—The moon

Loco—Crazy

Muchacho—Guy

Noche—Night

Perdoname—sorry

Perrito—Small dog

Peso—Money

Piñata—Decorated container with treats inside

Por favor—Please

Por que—Why

Que pasa—What's up?

Siesta—Rest or nap

Sombrero—Hat

Un tiempo de espera—Time out

Vamos/vamos—Let's go