



Educator Resources

YOUNG AUDIENCES PROGRAM

A graphic on a white background, tilted at an angle, featuring a house-shaped outline. Inside the house, several playing cards are visible, including the King of Hearts and the Queen of Diamonds. Overlaid on the cards is the word "immediate" in a lowercase, orange, sans-serif font, and the word "FAMILY" in a large, bold, orange, sans-serif font. Below the cards, the text "A New American Play" is written in a blue, serif font.

immediate FAMILY

A New
American Play

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MARK TAPER FORUM

Welcome

Project Faculty

Resident Teaching Artist
Debra Piver

Writer
Megan Mathews

Teaching Artists
Leslie Ishii
Marcos Nájera

Center Theatre Group is excited to have you and your students join us at *Immediate Family* by Paul Oakley Stovall. A great play raises questions about the human condition and a great educational experience allows students an opportunity to reflect upon those questions and begin to discover their own answers. To that end the material in Center Theatre Group's Discovery Guide and Educator Resources raises questions: questions about communication and expectations, questions about the roles we play in our families, questions about heroes, questions the power of games to bring us closer together.

Our goal is to provide you with a variety of entry points into *Immediate Family* so that you can choose what best suits you and your students.

The Educator Resources and Discovery Guide are companion pieces, designed to help you prepare your students to see the play and to follow-up the performance with options for discussion, reflection and creativity.

Discovery Guide

The Discovery Guide provides students with background information about the play and the subject matter, as well as questions for individual reflection. Written to be student-driven, the Discovery Guide helps prepare your students for the performance.

We have organized the Educator Resources into the following sections:

About This Play

This section includes a scene-by-scene synopsis of the play to provide you with detailed information about the content and form of the play.

Comprehension

This section includes background information about the setting and subject matter of the play. We have selected the information that most directly connects to or informs what happens in the play.

This section furthers and deepens the background information provided in the Discovery Guide. This section can be shared before the play and/or discussed after the performance. It can also be used to provide research topics for your classroom.

Connections and Creativity

This section provides ways to explore connections between the ideas presented in the play, the students' lives, and the world we live in. In addition, it provides opportunities for your students to use theatre to explore and express. Theatre activities are included that examine both specific artistic aspects of the production, as well as delve deeper into the ideas and questions raised by the production. The questions, activities and information in this section can be used both before and after the performance.

We know the hard work and dedication that it takes to bring students to see theatre. These materials are designed to support you in making the most of that experience. We applaud your passion for sharing theatre with your students and thank you for sharing your students with all of us at Center Theatre Group. We look forward to seeing you at *Immediate Family*.



601 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

About the play

Immediate Family

Table Of Contents

Welcome.....	2
About the Play	3
Comprehension	10
Connections and Creativity	18
References	35
Credits	36

This section includes a scene-by-scene synopsis of the play to provide you with detailed information about the content and form of the play.

SCENE-BY-SCENE

Setting: Hyde Park, Chicago. The Bryant family living room. Present Day. 2:00pm

Part 1

Evy Bryant is preparing a lecture on important African-Americans in history for a high school class she's teaching. Tony enters, wearing only a sweatshirt and boxers – he's clearly just woken up. Evy asks him to listen to her speech, but he'd rather get something to eat from the kitchen. Upset, she reminds him that he's not a kid anymore. He's about to get married, so he'd better grow up. A good place to start would have been taking responsibility for his wedding preparations – like finding out when their brother Jesse is supposed to arrive, checking on tuxedos, the limo, the choir, etc. But he hasn't done any of that yet.

Tony reminds her that their half-sister Ronnie's flight gets in at 2:30pm, and Evy was supposed to pick her up (which she has clearly forgotten). While Evy rushes to get out the door, Tony calls Jesse.

Jesse is driving from Minneapolis, still a couple hours away. Tony lets him know that Ronnie is staying at the house, too, instead of a hotel. She'll be sleeping in Jesse's old room, so Jesse is sleeping on the fold out couch in the living room.

Time passes...

Jesse arrives at the Bryant home while Evy and Tony are at the airport. It's been years since he's been back. He looks around the living room and contemplates the prominent portrait of his parents – The Reverend and Mrs. Jesse Bryant, Sr. -- displayed above the mantle.

Nina, his childhood next-door neighbor and best friend, barges in. They playfully shout derogatory greetings at each other, and immediately fall into a style of speaking they have shared since they were kids.

Nina asks about Jesse's boyfriend Kristian; she's looking forward to meeting him. Jesse tells her that he's on his way. He also tells her that Kristian recently proposed and Jesse hasn't given him an answer yet. It's a big decision – not only would Kristian like to get married in his hometown in Sweden, he'd like them to move there.

Jesse also reveals that he hasn't told Evy or Tony about his relationship with Kristian – Evy and Tony think Kristian is just a friend of Jesse's who has volunteered to photograph Tony's wedding for free. Jesse's not ready to tell them, so he asks Nina for a favor – can Kristian stay with her for the weekend? Nina agrees, but thinks Jesse's whole plan is a bad idea. She believes he has to be honest with his siblings.

Nina and Jesse decide to go out to eat. While Nina goes back to her place to change her clothes,

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Jesse calls Kristian, but gets voicemail. He texts Kristian as he walks out the door.

6:00pm...

Evy and Tony return from the airport with Ronnie. Evy and Ronnie are arguing. Ronnie is exhausted – she had an eight hour flight from Brussels; Evy and Tony were an hour late picking her up; and the traffic was terrible. Evy criticizes the number of bags Ronnie brought.

The one thing they agree on – maybe having Ronnie stay at the house was a bad idea. Maybe she should just go to a hotel. But Tony wants Ronnie there. He works quickly to smooth things over. He and Evy leave to get takeout Chinese for the three of them.

Jesse and Nina return home from the dinner, laughing and joking. They're delighted to find Ronnie there. Jesse notices one of Ronnie's bags – a case that holds paintings. She has painted a series of family trees – one for each of her siblings. When Ronnie asks Jesse when she'll get to meet Kristian, Jesse is forced (by Nina) to tell Ronnie the situation – that Evy and Tony think Kristian is just a wedding photographer. Ronnie and Nina agree – Jesse can't control how Evy and Tony are going to react, but he still has an obligation to tell them the truth.

Evy and Tony return with the food and are both extremely happy Jesse is home.

Part 2

It's 8:00pm.

Evy is telling Jesse about the lesson plan she's working on, while Ronnie sits in the background, listening and drinking. Evy asks for Jesse's help – she's made a list of 50 black heroes from history; would he mind writing a one-page introduction to some of them for her students? With the bulk of the wedding preparations on her shoulders, Evy has gotten behind on class prep.

Ronnie examines Evy's list and notes that there are a number of other important historical figures the students should learn about – he suggests Langston Hughes, Billy Strayhorn, and Bayard Rustin, among others. But Evy hasn't forgotten them; they're not on her list for a reason – Evy doesn't come right out and say it, but it is clear she doesn't consider them good role models because they are gay.

Tony enters dressed for an evening out and notices Ronnie's paintings. He really likes them, even puts one up on the mantle in place of their parents' portrait. Furious, Evy storms out to the back porch. Jesse follows to see what's bothering her.

Evy's overwhelmed with everything – Ronnie telling her what to teach her students, Tony moving the portrait to display Ronnie's painting, the lesson plan, the wedding. But more than all of that, Evy dreads the end of the weekend, after the wedding: Tony moves in with his new wife, Jesse goes back to Minneapolis, and Evy will be alone. Jesse reminds her she's not alone – what about her husband, Earl? Evy reveals that she and Earl are separated.

Earl doesn't want kids and Evy does, very much. Evy has needed to talk to Jesse about it, leaving him several voicemail messages over the last couple months. But Jesse hadn't returned any of her calls.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Jesse is apologetic – he’s been so busy. Evy asks him what he’s been up to. Where is he working, where is he living, etc. Jesse is still trying to make it as a professional writer, but to pay the bills he is event-planning, bartending, catering. And to help with rent, he has a... roommate... the wedding photographer... who he really wants Evy to meet. Jesse comes very close to telling Evy the truth about Kristian, but can’t do it.

Tony comes out to the porch. His future mother-in-law is on the phone and needs to talk to Evy. Evy takes the call and goes back into the house, just as Jesse gets a call from Kristian. Jesse answers but, because Tony is there, gets off the phone quickly.

Jesse works up the courage to explain his relationship with Kristian, but Tony reveals that he already knows. He’s always known Jesse was gay. He doesn’t have a problem with it, but tactlessly insists that Jesse and Kristian refrain from public displays of affection at the wedding.

Jesse begins to weep. Tony hugs him, saying, “When you get finished crying, I got your back. Okay?” Together, the brothers go back into the house.

They meet Ronnie inside. She is glad Jesse told Tony the truth, and suggests they toast the moment. After they clink glasses and down shots, Tony tells them to get ready for a night on the town. Excited about the prospect of going dancing, Jesse and Ronnie bust out moves right there in the living room.

After Ronnie comments on Jesse’s skills in the pelvic area, Tony asks a series of stupid questions, “So your boyfriend is the woman? Oh, are you the wife? Does it hurt?” Jesse and Tony begin to argue. It slips out that Tony’s fiancé, Dana, is four months pregnant.

Moments later Evy comes downstairs, wondering about the commotion. Tony tells Evy they’re getting ready to go out and invites her to come with them. She opts to turn in early, and cautions Jesse and Tony against staying out too late – they have an important commitment in the morning. She’s planned for herself, Tony, and Jesse to visit the cemetery where their parents are buried. When Ronnie wonders what time, Evy asks if she’ll stay at the house to meet a carpenter who is coming to fix the gazebo. Ronnie agrees, but is hurt. She asks Tony to wake her in an hour and goes upstairs.

Tony and Jesse get angry at Evy – that was a cruel thing to do. Whether Evy likes it or not, whether or not she can admit that their father had an affair, Ronnie is their sister. Jesse says he is not going to the cemetery in the morning; he’d rather stay home with Ronnie. Besides, he has “homework” – writing about the people on Evy’s list of black heroes.

Part 3

An hour later...

Ronnie comes downstairs. Now she, too, is dressed for an evening out. Jesse has been writing for the last hour and is taking a coffee break. Ronnie suggests they add some Bailey’s to the coffee; Jesse agrees, “Well, sharing is caring.”

They begin talking about black heroes. Ronnie urges Jesse to include the people she mentioned

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

earlier, plus others: Barbara Jordan, Alice Walker, Angela Davis and Lorraine Hansberry. Jesse could just sneak them in – Evy wouldn't notice until it was too late. But Jesse just can't – Evy would kill him!

Ronnie invites Jesse to visit her in Brussels. There is a whole extended family there that wants to meet him. She scrolls through family pictures on her phone, showing Jesse his many half-brothers and -sisters.

Tony comes downstairs to make sure everyone's ready to go out. Jesse isn't, so he rushes upstairs to change. The doorbell rings, Tony answers, Kristian has arrived. Ronnie is thrilled and invites him in. As Kristian gives out gifts (earrings for Ronnie, chocolate for Tony), Tony is clearly startled. Nina enters and greets Kristian warmly, especially after he gives her a beautiful bracelet. They hit it off right away – joking about the abundance of beautiful, blonde women in Sweden; the Swedish delicacy called reindeer stew. They bond over *Giovanni's Room* by James Baldwin. Tony broods. Nina teases him about his fiancée – Can she read? She better not be illiterate.

Jesse comes down and is surprised to see Kristian. Kristian goes to hug him but Jesse is awkward. Nina and Ronnie enthusiastically show Jesse the beautiful jewelry Kristian gave them. Tony acknowledges the chocolate. Nina steers Kristian out of the kitchen to her house, where he can wash-up and get dressed to go out with them. Ronnie goes to get another drink, leaving Tony and Jesse alone.

Tony is furious – Kristian is white?!? How could Jesse date a white person?!? And now there's going to be drama at the wedding. If Kristian were black, the guests who don't know Jesse is gay (or who know but would prefer not to acknowledge it) could just pretend Kristian was someone's cousin and not mention it. But now they can't do that!

Ronnie comes back in with her drink and reminds Tony to think before he speaks – Ronnie is half-white, so when he is disparaging of white people, he is disparaging of her. She also calls him out – Kristian is Jesse's partner and therefore part of the family. Tony better rise to the occasion.

Having been awoken by the raised voices, Evy comes downstairs. Weren't they all going out? Jesse tries to motivate everyone, but Tony has changed his mind. He wants to stay home and play Bid Whist. Despite the tension, Evy and Ronnie agree. Jesse begins furiously texting Nina and Kristian.

Tony sets up the card table and chairs. Ronnie and Evy argue over who gets Jesse as a partner. Ultimately, Ronnie wins – it will be Ronnie and Jesse against Evy and Tony. Evy lectures the group about the historical significance of Bid Whist, "Bid Whist is a part of our history... there is tradition in this game."

Ronnie and Jesse quickly take the lead, which irritates Evy. Nina enters with Kristian. She's dressed to the nines and enjoys having Kristian act as her personal paparazzi, as he snaps photos of her posing. But when Nina sees everyone playing Bid Whist, she changes gears immediately. Evy is relieved to have another skilled player enter the game – apparently Tony and Ronnie are not doing very well. Ronnie gets up to refresh her drink. Nina takes Ronnie's seat at the table.

Jesse brings Kristian over to the table to introduce him to Evy. She focuses on her cards and greets Kristian coldly, even after he hands her a gift. Ronnie offers to make drinks for everyone. Kristian

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

follows her into the kitchen to help.

Evy gets in Jesse's face – tonight is for *immediate family* only. Jesse tells her she can be mad at him, but she has no right to be rude to Kristian. Angry, Evy returns to the card table. She deals to Nina, Jesse and Tony. The game gets started again. So does the trash-talking.

Ronnie brings everyone drinks, but Kristian remains alone in the kitchen. Jesse goes into the kitchen to see if he's okay. Kristian is angry and confused – it's clear Jesse hasn't been honest with his family about their relationship. Kristian goes out the back porch while Jesse returns to the living room and rejoins the game.

Ronnie takes a bottle of wine out to the back porch to sit with Kristian. They begin to talk about his family in Sweden. Kristian has a six-year-old son he hasn't seen in a while. Ronnie challenges him – doesn't his son miss and need him? Waiting for Jesse is an awfully convenient excuse to avoid parental responsibilities. She tells him what it was like for her to grow up without her father. Ronnie still mourns for the years and relationship she should have had with her father.

Inside, the card players are on edge, and the game has become intense. Nina is dominating. Ronnie and Kristian enter. Nina invites Kristian to stand near her so he can learn the game from a master player. Tony asks Ronnie to sit in for him while he fixes up a plate of dessert for everyone. Evy is getting more and more agitated, and not happy that Ronnie is now her partner.

Nina and Jesse win again. When Ronnie starts to deal the next round, Evy smacks the cards out of Ronnie's hand and off the table. Jesse grabs her by the arm and demands she come with him to the back porch. Ronnie and Nina tell Kristian to sit at the card table; they're going to teach him how to play.

Outside, Evy and Jesse argue. Evy's furious that Jesse lied to her – they haven't really connected for years, and Jesse shows up with Kristian?!? Jesse points out that this exact argument is why he couldn't tell her – just look at how she reacts to things she doesn't like. Jesse knows how Evy feels about his sexuality – she believes marriage is between a man and a woman, and that being gay is a choice he could make or unmake if he tried hard enough.

Evy reminds him how much their parents sacrificed for him, how much she sacrificed so he could go to Howard College and make something of his life. She also reminds him how much their father loved him, and had such high hopes for him.

Jesse has a very different perspective on Reverend Bryant. He tells Evy about the time their father caught him and a neighborhood boy kissing. Rev. Bryant was so angry he beat Jesse ruthlessly. If their father had caught Jesse kissing a girl, even Evy has to admit, his reaction would have been the exact opposite.

Evy begs Jesse to find his way back to the Lord, to get married and have children. Jesse snaps back – Evy hasn't been able to have children; maybe God doesn't want her to. The argument escalates until Jesse storms back into the house, with Evy following close behind, demanding that she's not done talking to him.

Inside, the players are cleaning up the game, but are quickly drawn into Evy and Jesse's

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

confrontation. Ronnie finally stands up to Evy, “See, that’s your problem, Evelyn. You think your beliefs are the only ones that matter.”

Instead of listening or responding, Evy insists that Ronnie is drunk and needs to be put to bed. Ronnie proclaims, “I’m a member of this family, too!” Evy replies, “By half. Maybe.” That pushes Ronnie to her breaking point; she throws her glass at the wall and leaps at Evy. A fight ensues while the family tries to pry the women apart.

The fight is finally broken up, but they’re both still angry. Ronnie blurts out that Tony is soon to be a father but couldn’t tell Evy. Ronnie says, “It’s not just Jesse. Nobody wants to talk to you! We try! We try to reach out to you, to connect with you, and you just push and push and push. Look around you, Evelyn! Look at what you’ve got! Look at what you’re about to lose!”

At which point, Ronnie gets very sick, very fast. Tony and Jesse rush her outside, while Nina gets a wet rag from the kitchen and follows them.

Evy and Kristian are left alone. Evy begins to clean up the broken glass. Kristian helps her. After a few awkward moments, Evy begins to tell Kristian what it was like when she and Jesse were kids. They were so close. They did everything together, like sneaking out of bed to watch their parents and their parents’ friends play Bid Whist late into the night, laughing and drinking and generally carrying on. Jesse was so smart – he figured out how to play just by watching from the top of the stairs. Then he taught Evy. They’d practice for hours, anticipating the day when they’d be grown-ups playing Bid Whist, as a team.

But things changed. Tony came along later and unexpectedly. Taking care of him took up a lot of Evy’s time. Jesse started hanging out with Nina. Then Ronnie’s mother showed up at the Bryant family’s front door. Evy remembers it clearly: a white woman, with 14-year-old Ronnie in tow, screaming at their father because he refused to take care of his child. Rev. Bryant called the woman a liar and threw them both out. But Evy knew the truth right then – Ronnie looked just like him.

The Bryants didn’t see Ronnie again until the Reverend’s funeral, nearly 20 years later. And even though Ronnie didn’t have any relationship with him, she cried and made a scene, much to Evy’s chagrin. But the worst betrayal? Jesse was by Ronnie’s side the whole time, consoling and tending to her, without giving Evy – or what she was going through – any thought.

Kristian recites scripture to comfort Evy. He suggests that God has a plan for all of us. That’s what Kristian felt when he met Jesse – on a mountain ridge in the Muir Woods outside San Francisco. Both were seeking solace – Jesse was mourning the loss of his father; Kristian was lonely and far away from his family. Kristian prayed every day for a change, and then that day, in the middle of a huge national park, there was Jesse.

By the time they had hiked back down to the bottom of the ridge, Kristian knew he and Jesse were meant to be together. Kristian tells Evy how he felt comfortable enough with Jesse that after just a few hours they spoke about Kristian’s struggle being a father.

Evy is surprised by the revelation that Kristian has a son. She wonders how the boy would be affected if he was raised by two men. Kristian quotes Jesse, “My parents were straight and it did

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

not make me straight. We are what we are. Our parents don't make us. God makes us... and God loves us."

Moved, Evy takes the gift Kristian gave her and opens it – a beautiful pair of earrings. She thanks him warmly. They begin to talk about books, specifically James Baldwin. Kristian has just finished *Giovanni's Room*, a gift from Jesse. Evy takes her "first Baldwin" off her shelf and gives it to Kristian – *Go Tell It On The Mountain*. Kristian is deeply touched.

Jesse, Ronnie, Tony and Nina come back into the house. Ronnie is walking on her own, but slowly. She offers Evy a stiff apology for the glass, then goes upstairs to bed. Nina gathers Kristian and ushers him toward her house, but he hesitates, looking for some reaction from Jesse. He and Nina leave.

Together, Jesse and Evy make up the fold out bed, but tensely. Evy goes upstairs to bed. Jesse is alone in the dark living room.

He suddenly grabs his phone and texts Kristian. They meet on the back porch. Jesse is glad to see him, but Kristian is concerned. He doesn't know what to expect at the wedding, or how he is supposed to behave, or even who he is supposed to be – partner, friend, hired help? Jesse tries to avoid the question, but Kristian presses. He's made a decision – to go back to Sweden to be with his son and family.

Jesse is stunned. Then he, too, makes a decision, asking Kristian to "please do a better job of preparing me for your family..." They kiss. Kristian turns to go back to Nina's house, but instead, Jesse guides him through the kitchen. They stay up talking and laughing until dawn. Still in their clothes, Jesse and Kristian finally fall asleep on the fold out couch.

Early morning, Evy comes downstairs and opens the curtains. In the sunlight she sees Jesse and Kristian asleep together. She notices Ronnie's painting and takes it over to the window to see it in better light. Evy studies the painting.

End

Comprehension

This section includes background information about the setting and subject matter of the play as well as information about the artists involved. We have selected the information that most directly connects to or informs what happens in the play.

This section furthers and deepens the background information provided in the Discovery Guide. This section can be shared before the play and/or discussed after the performance. It can also be used to provide research topics for your classroom.

GLOSSARY OF HISTORICAL CHARACTERS DISCUSSED IN *IMMEDIATE FAMILY*

Angela Davis – (1944-) Activist and prominent scholar in African-American Studies, Feminist Studies, and Social Philosophy. Her early activism was affiliated with the Communist Party USA and The Black Panther Party.

Frederick Douglass – (1818-1895) Social reformer, public speaker, and diplomat. After escaping from slavery, he became the leader of the abolitionist movement.

Duke Ellington – (1899-1974) Composer, pianist, bandleader, and one of the primary innovators of big-band jazz.

Medgar Evers – (1925-1963) Best known for his work to desegregate the University of Mississippi, and a field secretary for the NAACP. Like Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., Evers was assassinated by a white supremacist.

Lorraine Hansberry – (1930-1965) Playwright and activist, Hansberry is best known for *A Raisin in the Sun*, the first play written by an African-American woman to be produced on Broadway. *A Raisin in the Sun* also earned her the New York Critics' Circle Award – she was also the first African-American playwright and the youngest American to win the award.

Langston Hughes – (1902-1967) American author and one of the most prominent artists of the Harlem Renaissance, Hughes is perhaps best known for his poem *Harlem*, which asks, “What happens to a dream deferred? / Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?”

Barbara Jordan – (1936-1996) A life-long civil rights activist, Jordan was the first woman to be elected to the Texas Senate (1966) and the first African-American Congresswoman elected in the Deep South. She served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1972-1979.

Martin Luther King, Jr. – (1929-1968) Key leader of the Civil Rights Movement and world-renowned civil rights spokesperson. He advocated non-violent, civil disobedience. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

Nelson Mandela – (1918-2013) After dedicating his life to fighting South African Apartheid (and spending 27 years in jail), Mandela became the first black President of South Africa in 1994. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.

Thurgood Marshall – (1908-1993) Activist, lawyer, and the first African-American Supreme Court Justice. As a civil-rights attorney, Marshall's victory in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) established that racial segregation in public schools violated the 14th Amendment.

Rosa Parks – (1913-2005) By refusing to give up her seat on a segregated bus in Alabama, Parks became the catalyzing force behind the Montgomery Bus Boycotts, one of the most prominent protests in American history.

Billy Strayhorn – (1915-1967) Jazz pianist and composer, Strayhorn collaborated with Duke

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Ellington for 30 years. He was a close friend of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s. He is best known for the songs *Take the 'A' Train*, *Chelsea Bridge*, and *Lush Life*.

Sojourner Truth – (1797-1883) An escaped slave, she became a fierce advocate for racial equality and women's rights. She is best known for her speech, "Ain't I a Woman?"

Harriet Tubman – (1820-1913) Prominent abolitionist. An escaped slave herself, Tubman led countless other slaves to freedom on the Underground Railroad.

Alice Walker – (1944-) Author and poet, Walker is perhaps best known for her novel, *The Color Purple*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1983.

Booker T. Washington – (1856-1915) Educator, civil rights advocate, and one of the most prominent African-American leaders of his time. Washington founded the renowned Tuskegee Institute.

Malcolm X – (1925-1965) Human rights activist and Muslim minister. He harshly criticized the white American power structure for its treatment of African-Americans, and advocated that they defend themselves "by any means necessary."

QUOTES BY AND ABOUT THE "HEROES" MENTIONED IN IMMEDIATE FAMILY

Quotes by and about Billy Strayhorn:

"All music is beautiful."

"If you want something hard enough, it just gets done."

"[*Take the 'A' Train*] was born without any effort - it was like writing a letter to a friend."

"...Billy Strayhorn was my right arm, my left arm, all the eyes in the back of my head, my brainwaves in his head, and his in mine." - Duke Ellington

"He demanded freedom of expression and lived in what we consider the most important and moral of freedoms: freedom from hate, unconditionally; freedom from self-pity (even through all the pain and bad news); freedom from fear of possibly doing something that might possibly help another more than it might himself; and freedom from the kind of pride that might make a man think that he was better than his brother or his neighbor." – Duke Ellington in his autobiography, *Music is My Mistress*

Quotes by and about Bayard Rustin:

"We need in every bay and community a group of angelic troublemakers."

"I believe in social dislocation and creative trouble."

"The proof that one truly believes is in action."

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

In a 1987 interview with the Village Voice, Rustin said, “I think the gay community has a moral obligation... to do whatever is possible to encourage more and more gays to come out of the closet.”

“Continuous resistance in nonviolent form breaks through the paralyzing peace which is peace for the master and misery for the mastered. Paradoxically, as it breaks the unjust social peace, its weapon of goodwill and love builds the sacred base of real brotherhood, in which the dignity and equal opportunity of every person is sacred and guaranteed.”

“If we desire a society of peace, then we cannot achieve such a society through violence. If we desire a society without discrimination, then we must not discriminate against anyone in the process of building this society. If we desire a society that is democratic, then democracy must become a means as well as an end.”

“The only power we have is the power of our black bodies, backed up by as many white bodies as will stand with us, to go into the streets and to create social confusion by sitting in the streets, by so disrupting the ability of the government to operate. I call now for an uprising, nonviolently, in 100 cities, where we will sit and stand and stand and sit and go to jail and jail again, until there are no color barriers.”

“When an individual is protesting society’s refusal to acknowledge his dignity as a human being, his very act of protest confers dignity on him.”

“My activism did not spring from my being gay, or, for that matter, from my being black. Rather, it is rooted fundamentally in my Quaker upbringing and the values that were instilled in me by my grandparents who reared me.”

“Twenty-five, 30 years ago, the barometer of human rights in the United States were black people. That is no longer true. The barometer for judging the character of people, in regard to human rights, is now those who consider themselves gay, homosexual, lesbian. The judgment as to whether you can trust the future, the social advancement – depending on people – will be judged on where they come out on that question.”

“The organizers and perpetrators of segregation are as much the enemy of America as any foreign invader.”

“The principal factors which influenced my life are 1) nonviolent tactics; 2) constitutional means; 3) democratic procedures; 4) respect for human personality; 5) a belief that all people are one.”

“I ask that if you teach your children one new name from the heroes of black history, please let it be Bayard Rustin.” – Henry Louis Gates, Jr. posted in *The Root* Aug. 19, 2013 (http://www.theroot.com/articles/history/2013/08/march_on_washington_meet_bayard_rustin_its_architect.html)

“Despite these achievements, Rustin was silenced, threatened, arrested, beaten, imprisoned and fired from important leadership positions, largely because he was an openly gay man in a fiercely homophobic era.” – from the film *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin*, Bayard

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Rustin Film Project, 2008

Quotes by and about James Baldwin:

“People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them.”

“American history is longer, larger, more various, more beautiful, and more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it.”

“I love America more than any other country in this world, and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually.”

“I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain.”

“The paradox of education is precisely this – that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.”

“Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.”

“Love takes off masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within,” in *The Fire Next Time* (1963).

“Everyone’s journey is individual. If you fall in love with a boy, you fall in love with a boy. The fact that many Americans consider it a disease says more about them than it does about homosexuality,” in *Conversations with James Baldwin*, 1989.

“Love him and let him love you. Do you think anything else under Heaven really matters?” in *Giovanni’s Room* (1956).

MARRIAGE EQUALITY FACTS AND RESOURCES

“Gay marriage [has gone] from a wedge issue used to drive us apart, to a story of freedom across our country, a civil right now legal in states that seven in ten Americans call home.” – President Barak Obama, State of the Union, 2015

www.freedomtomarry.org maintains a real-time, detailed timeline of events relating to marriage equality in the United States.

Statistics and Facts from Revel and Riot – a non-profit organization that promotes LGBTQ rights, awareness and equality “through art, graphics, resources, and t-shirts.” (<http://www.revelandriot.com>)

“Gay marriage is illegal in most countries around the world, and in many gay people are arrested and punished by way of imprisonments or death. Homosexual acts remain punishable by death in Iran, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, some parts of Nigeria and Somalia. Gay people are imprisoned for life in; Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Bangladesh, Gaza, Guyana, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Trinidad & Tobago, Uganda.”

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

“As of 2014, there are 17 countries that are fully non-discriminatory – meaning that they allow gay marriage, as well the right to adopt children. These nations are Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, England & Wales, Iceland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and Uruguay.”

The following is a list of rights guaranteed to married couples, but not to civil unions:

“hospital visitations, child custody, adoption, parenting rights, medical decision-making power, automatic inheritance, standing to sue for wrongful death of a spouse, divorce protections, spousal and child support, access to family insurance policies, exemption from property tax upon death of a spouse, immunity from being forced to testify against one’s spouse, domestic violence protections, and more.”

TIMELINE OF MARRIAGE RIGHTS IN THE UNITED STATES

1691 — British law bans interracial marriage in the American colonies; the penalty is permanent banishment to the woods, essentially a death sentence.

1883 — The U.S. Supreme Court decides that interracial marriage is illegal, a ruling that stays in effect for 84 years, until 1967.

1967 — *Loving vs. Virginia (1967)* officially makes interracial marriage legal and declares that marriage is a civil right that all Americans, regardless of race, are entitled to.

1984 — The first domestic partnership law is passed in Berkeley, CA.

1996 — The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is passed by Congress. It states that the federal government will not recognize same-sex marriages at all, and individual states are not required to recognize same-sex marriages granted in other states.

2004 — Massachusetts becomes the first state to legalize same sex-marriage.

2013 — The Supreme Court overturns DOMA.

2015 — In April, the Supreme Court will rule on whether or not marriage is a Constitutional right for everyone and, by extension, whether or not individual states have the right to impose bans.

In the United States as of February 2015, same-sex marriage is legal in 37 states, the District of Columbia and some counties in Missouri. Around the world, same-sex marriage is legal in 17 countries, including Brazil, Canada, England, South Africa, Spain, and Sweden (where the character of Kristian is from.)

WHERE DID THE PHRASE “COMING OUT OF THE CLOSET” COME FROM?

Coming out of the closet is actually a mixed metaphor, drawn from two different phrases. “Coming out” is drawn from the tradition of debutante balls, where a debutante’s coming-out party, originally about an entrance, meant coming out into society, and joining the community. There is a history of gay debutante balls as well, often published in the newspaper with other event announcements (weddings, debutante balls, etc.), so coming out also referred to announcing yourself to the greater public.

It’s believed that the addition of “closet” is from the saying “skeletons in the closet.”

BID WHIST

Bid Whist is a card game similar to Bridge, Hearts and Spades. It involves strategy, card counting, and careful communication between partners.

The game originated in Turkey, and was brought to the United States by slave traders from Europe. At that time, slaves were forbidden to learn to read and write – activities thought to lead to independence and rebellion. But slave owners allowed card games like Bid Whist that taught and improved math skills, which were necessary to track cotton barrels and crops.

After slavery ended, Bid Whist continued to gain popularity, and became a favorite among porters and waiters working on train lines. As a result, many Bid Whist terms come from trains and cross-country travel. The phrase “running a Boston” is thought to come from the all night card games played on the longest routes. If you were the big winner, you could brag, “I won all the way from New Orleans to Boston!”

Card Terms

Bid – The number of books a player thinks they can earn in a hand.

Book – After each player has played one card, those four cards make up a book; also known as a trick.

Suit – Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, or Clubs.

Boston – When a team takes all of the books in a round, they’ve “run a Boston.”

Uptown – Means high cards will win the book.

Downtown – Low cards win the book.

Go Under – When a team fails to earn the number of books they bid.

How to Play

Needed

4 players (two teams of two; partners sit across from each other)

1 standard deck of playing cards (52, plus two Jokers)

pencil and paper

Deal

1. Each player is dealt twelve cards. Six cards are placed face down in the center of the table to form the “kitty.”

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Bid

2. Players bid the number of books their team will win out of a possible thirteen.
3. When a player bids, they also decide whether high cards will win (“uptown”) or low cards will win (“downtown”).
4. Going around the table, players either pass or bid.
5. The highest bidder wins.

Play

6. Winning bidder takes the kitty and then discards six cards from their hand. These cards are counted as the first book won by the bidder’s team.
7. The winning bidder leads with any card. The other players have to follow the lead card’s suit, if they have it in their hand.
8. The highest-ranking card wins the book.
9. Winner of the book leads the next round.
10. If a player fails to follow a suit when they have a card of that suit in their hand, they “renege” and lose three of their books to the opposing team.

End Game

11. At the end of each hand, the bidding team either wins or loses points and must earn at least as many points as they bid. If they fail to do that, the points that they bid are subtracted from their total score. The non-bidding team neither wins nor loses any points.
12. The game ends when either team has won a total of seven or more points, or lost by seven or more points.

Connections and Creativity

This section provides ways to explore connections between the ideas presented in the play, the students' lives, and the world we live in. In addition, it provides opportunities for your students to use theatre, and other activities, to explore and express. Theatre activities are included that examine both specific artistic aspects of the production, as well as delve deeper into the ideas and questions raised by the production. The questions, activities and information in this section can be used both before and after the performance.

CULTURAL MAPPING

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

20-40 minutes depending on the number of categories explored

Objectives

- Students will gain knowledge of similarities and differences in their classmates.
- Students will be introduced to *Immediate Family* and begin to reflect on the play and any personal connection to the story.

Materials needed

Quotes from the play posted on the walls.

“Why are you trying to talk me out of being who I am?”

“But you gotta give them their choice, and then accept them for who they are...”

“Extra family, that’s icing, man.”

“So you went as far away from home as you could get.”

“Why don’t you keep your beliefs to yourself?”

“It’s ours and it does bring us together.”

“So that’s my family...”

Activity

1. Ask the students to move the desks to the side and stand in a circle.
2. Describe the room as a map of the world. Identify Los Angeles in the space.
Have students who were born in Los Angeles gather in that place. Have the other students group themselves according to their birthplace (north, east, south or west of Los Angeles). Each group must determine two additional things that they have in common. Report back to the whole class. (Example: The members of the “north” group all like pizza and are the oldest in their families.)
3. Repeat activity using other divisions:
Oldest, middle, youngest, only child.
Speak one language, two languages etc.
Most inspired by music, image, movement, language.
4. Quotes. Ask each student to stand by the quote that most intrigues them.
Discuss in the group why they chose that quote. What intrigues them about it?

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

TABLEAU/FROZEN PICTURE

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

30 - 45 minutes

Objectives

- Students will practice using their bodies to communicate an idea or theme.
- Students will reflect on the varied interpretations of the theme.
- Students will reflect on the ideas explored in *Immediate Family* through a physical exploration of its themes.

Activity

1. Divide students into pairs. Student A is the artist. Student B is the sculpture. Have student A create a statue out of B on the theme of the “future.” Examples: Flying cars, world peace, destroying the environment, graduating from college. Statues can be realistic or symbolic, personal or global. Have each student title his or her statue and present to the class.
2. Repeat exercise with B as the artist and A as the sculpture.
3. Repeat with any of the following show-specific ideas: Family, Siblings, Marriage, Family Tree, Secrets, Heroes etc. Have each student sculpt an image that represents one of these themes.
4. Discuss what these mean to your students and what these ideas meant in *Immediate Family*. Are they similar or very different?

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

ROLES IN LIFE

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

15 minutes

Objectives

- Students will look at the different roles they play in their own lives and families.
- Students will compare their roles to those played by the characters in *Immediate Family*.

Materials

Scrap paper and pens

Activity

1. Have each student draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper.
2. On the right hand side have students list all the “roles” they play in their own lives (e.g., sister, daughter, friend, student, athlete). Encourage them to think about hobbies, talents, responsibilities, family relationships.
3. On the other side of the paper have students list an adjective for each of their “roles” (e.g. bossy sister, loving daughter, loyal friend, hard-working student).
4. Have each student share one role they are proud of with the rest of the class.
5. Discuss family roles. What roles did the different Bryant siblings play in *Immediate Family*? What is the role you play in your family? Is it a role you want to play?

FAMILY PORTRAITS

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

10 -15 minutes

Summary

Small groups have one minute to form a family portrait. This is an exercise in teamwork and creativity. The students need to quickly decide who will play what role and how each person will be positioned in the “family portrait.”

Objectives

- Students will work together to create a frozen portrait.
- Students will work together to communicate different types of families.

Activity

1. Divide the class into groups of five.
2. Give each group a type of “family” that they will make a portrait of (e.g. royal family, super heroes family, dog/cat family, sports equipment family.)
3. Each group has 30 seconds to create its family portrait. Everyone must be in the portrait. Encourage the groups to use levels to make a more interesting portrait.
4. See if the other groups can guess what type of family the portrait portrays.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

“SO THAT’S MY FAMILY” REAL LIFE FAMILY PORTRAITS

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

30 - 45 minutes

Objectives

- Students will use pictures from their own lives and childhoods to create autobiographical images and text.
- Students will compare their family portrait to the family we meet in *Immediate Family*. What does each family have in common? What is unique to the student’s own family?

Materials needed

Family photographs

Activity

1. Ask students to bring in a family photograph(s) of a special day or event (e.g. a reunion, a wedding, a holiday, a graduation).
2. Divide students into groups of four to five.
3. Have each student share his or her photograph and describe what is happening in the picture.
4. Have the group select one of the pictures to bring to life. Have the group recreate the photo physically with each student playing a role. One at a time, ask each participant to share something that his or her character might be thinking or feeling in this moment. Stress that they are using their imaginations based on what they observed in the picture. Ask them to think of one line of dialogue that their character might say.
5. Back in their groups, create the other picture doing the above steps.
6. Working individually, have the students use their family photograph and the exploration to begin writing an autobiographical piece entitled “So That’s My Family!”

Variation

Have the students pick one person in the photograph and create a monologue for that character based on their observation of the photo.

Discuss the Bryants in *Immediate Family*. Which character did people most identify with? What parts of that family reminded the students of their own families? What parts of the Bryant family was very different than the students’ families?

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

HEROES

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

20-45 minutes

Objectives

- Students will explore what it means to be a hero.
- Students will collectively brainstorm heroic moments/acts in our country's history.
- Students will present these heroic moments through tableau and dialogue.

Activity

1. Warm-up. Have the participants move through the space. Each time the facilitator/teacher says "freeze," each individual will create a frozen statue showing an idea of a hero. The leader will share dictionary definitions of a hero while people move through the space. Repeat multiple times so that a range of ideas about heroes emerges.
2. Discuss. Share ideas about what it means to be a hero.
3. Divide the class into groups of five to six. Have the groups brainstorm heroic acts/ moments in American history. Select one of these moments to create a group tableau depicting the heroic deed or action. Every member of the group must be in the picture.
4. Add dialogue and movement to create a beginning, middle and end.
5. Share scenes.
6. Discuss. What do the heroes/heroic moments have in common? What are the differences?

Miriam Webster definitions for Hero

- a person who is admired for great or brave acts or fine qualities
- a person who is greatly admired
- *Hero* can refer to either a man or a woman, but it is often used to refer specifically to a man. The specific word for a woman who is brave and admired is *heroine*.
- the chief male character in a story, play, movie, etc.
- an outstanding warrior or soldier
- one that shows great courage
- a mythological or legendary figure of great strength or ability
- (classical myth) a being of extraordinary strength and courage, often the offspring of a mortal and a god, who is celebrated for his exploits

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

ACROSS TIME AND SPACE

Age Group

Middle, high school and/or college

Length

40 - 90 minutes

Objectives

- Students will research historical figures mentioned in *Immediate Family* and then explore through theatre.
- Students will juxtapose individual historical figures in different time periods as well as with contemporary life through improvisation, writing and discussion.
- Students will reflect on what makes a hero.

Materials needed

Photographs of the historical figures mentioned in *Immediate Family*:

James Baldwin
Angela Davis
Frederick Douglass
Duke Ellington
Medgar Evers
Lorraine Hansberry
Langston Hughes
Barbara Jordan
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Nelson Mandela
Thurgood Marshall
Rosa Parks
Bayard Rustin
Billy Strayhorn
Sojourner Truth
Harriet Tubman
Alice Walker
Booker T. Washington
Malcolm X

Activity

1. Assign each student one of the above “heroes” mentioned in *Immediate Family* and give each student a picture of the person assigned.
2. Each student must research that person and write down some facts about the person’s life. For example, where and when they lived, how they dressed, what they are remembered for, what struggles they faced, why they are a hero.
3. Have students imagine what this historical figure was most passionate about. This may be in the research or may be invented.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

4. Divide the participants into pairs and share information about their historical figure. Have them discuss what these two people might say to each other. What might they have in common or what differences would they have? Are they in the same time period or very different time periods? Would these people have known each other?
5. Ask each pair to create a short scene in which these two people meet. Have each character stay true to the historical period in which they live. How does the juxtaposition of time period contribute to the scene?
6. Share scenes.

Variation

Have each student select a contemporary person who they consider to be a hero. This could be someone in the public domain or someone they know outside of school. Have them research a little about that person and jot down some facts about the person's life. Where they live, how they dress, what they do for a living, what they are known for, what struggles they faced, why they are a hero.

Have students imagine what this person is most passionate about. This may be in the research, the student may know from personal connection or it may be invented.

Pair students up and have them create a scene between one contemporary character and one historical character. What might these two people say to each other? What might they have in common? What differences would they have? Have each character stay true to the historical period in which they live. How does the juxtaposition of past and present contribute to the scene?

Share scenes. What made all of these people heroes? Would they have found each other heroic? How did juxtaposing characters from the past help illuminate the present and vice versa?

Variation

Have each student write a scene between their assigned historical figure and the contemporary hero they selected.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

“Words like ‘freedom’, ‘justice’, ‘democracy’... people are not born knowing what these [terms] are. It takes enormous, and above all, individual effort to arrive at the respect for other people that these words imply.” - James Baldwin

EXPLORING ANTI-BIAS LANGUAGE FOR INCLUSION

Age Group

High School and College

Length

One to two 50-60 minute sessions

Summary

This three-part exploration will provide students with the opportunity to build empathy and thoughtfully discuss poignant terminology related to the play, *Immediate Family*, and students' own identifiers.

Objectives

- Build an environment for discussions around the history and political roots of terminology related to the play, *Immediate Family*, and the possible range of identifiers students might relate to or claim.
- Explore definitions and explore the language around a term or identifier of another human being.
- Build analysis skills to navigate challenging conversations around *Immediate Family* and with our friends, families, communities, and work places.
- Experience and practice respecting each other through how we use language in conversations.
- Support students to know and experience that these efforts can have far-reaching impact for families, communities and overall societal good.

Materials needed

- Paper
- Pen/Marker
- Copies of script excerpt from *Immediate Family* found below.
- Terms and definitions provided under Vocabulary below. Print out these definitions and cut or paste onto an index card so each group can work with one definition at a time.

Activity

Part 1: Brain Gym Warm-Ups

1. Stretch the left leg back and lunge forward with the right leg. Feel a stretch in the left leg. Switch sides and lunge forward with the left leg. Feel a stretch in the right leg. Breathe all the while stretching.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

2. Begin to march in place, swinging your arms, too (watch out for your neighbor). The opposition of arms and legs wakes up the right and left sides of the brain to get synapse firing back and forth. Keep breathing!
3. Bring both thumbs up in front at chest level like you're giving a "thumbs up!" sign with both hands. Begin to draw in the air with your thumbs and make sure your thumbs are mirroring each other. Come to a close and take a couple of deep breathes.

Part 2: Quotes/Excerpt

1. Divide the students into partners and have them choose either the character of Kristian or Jesse (see dialogue scripted below.)
2. Have them read the part of their character.
3. Have them read their parts more than once. Ask each partnership to explore what they notice taking on the role/voice of these characters.
4. Share with the larger group about what they experienced—any thoughts, feelings, memories, sensations.

Excerpt from *Immediate Family*:

Kristian: But you just don't talk about it?! Well, I'm sorry but you're not really out if you leave things for other people to figure out--!!

Jesse: Keep your voice down.

Kristian: Why? Am I embarrassing you?! Are you embarrassed about us Jesse?!?

Jesse: If I were ashamed of you or if I didn't want you here, you wouldn't be here.

Kristian: Oh, that is so nice of you to permit me to be here. Thank you so much.

Part 3: Exploring Anti-Bias Language for Inclusion

1. Divide the students into groups of four to five.
2. Before starting the exploration of the terminology provided, have the students close their eyes. Have the students explore these questions around identification in silence, to themselves, as you speak them out loud one at a time:
 - a. What is my full name?
 - b. What gender am I?
 - c. What is my heritage?
 - d. What is my race or ethnic background?
 - e. What class background am I?
 - f. What is my biggest triumph? (Choose one for now.)
 - g. What is my biggest struggle? (Choose one for now.)
 - h. What do I need to give up to be uncomfortable, in order to take risks to grow?These questions are taken from the Leslie Ishii Technique used in her Voice/Acting Liberation Curriculums.
3. Give each group one term with its definition written in anti-bias language. Ask the group to discuss the term and the language that is used.
 - a. Have you heard this term before?
 - b. Have you heard or read it defined in this way?
 - c. Do you have questions? If so, ask your group?

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

- d. Half way through, ask the groups to notice if anyone has been dominating the discussion? No need to point out anyone. Now, ask the group to be sure everyone in the group has had the opportunity to speak and contribute to the discussion.
 - e. Each group should be prepared to share a report of your group's process and findings.
 - f. Each group can use the pens/markers and large paper provided to write and track their exploration of the term. This can be a visual support to them when they are reporting out to the rest of the group.
4. Bring the groups back together to share their findings.
 - a. After sharing, ask the students if they were uncomfortable/comfortable?
 - b. Ask the groups to share about their process and how the shape of their discussion unfolded.
 - c. Based on their findings, further a discussion around any questions or confusions.
 - d. Ask the groups what they learned about the terms and discussing them.
 - e. Ask the groups about how the term was defined since this definition utilized anti-bias language – What did you learn regarding the language of the definitions? Can you tell this is language that is used by each of the groups who claim these identifiers? This is teaching us awareness so we can respectfully refer to a person or group when speaking about them.
 - f. Ask the students how they feel since opening up the discussion and experiencing this exploration of terminology.

Variation

- You can rotate the terms/definitions so that each group has a chance to explore each term. There are many resources on line to continue this work regarding anti-bias curriculums and training:
 - a. <http://ldir.org/> (Leadership Development In Intergroup Relations)
 - b. <http://www.naeyc.org/store/files/store/TOC/254.pdf>
(Anti-bias education curriculums and theory)
- Continuing this work helps participants to begin to develop the capacity to thoughtfully build analysis skills regarding challenging situations. Learning anti-bias terms and definitions is empowering for those who invest time in this exploration. Participants are planting seeds for becoming a discussion facilitator around issues of diversity and inclusion. Participants are learning the first stages of becoming an effective ally to someone of a marginalized group or targeted group.
- As a group discussion, you might first explore the definition of *privilege* and where they may or may not have privilege, including identifying as a member of a marginalized or targeted group.

Additional Reflection Questions/Prompts

Exploring anti-bias language can dispel fears and help one to reclaim their intelligence around societal conditioning and hurts. It supports us to have courageous conversations around these potent issues.

- After experiencing this activity, do you feel smarter, more comfortable using these terms or talking about these issues?

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

- Using the additional quote and the questions below, have students reflect and/or journal and eventually share about their thoughts and/or writings.
 - a. Were there times you felt afraid, didn't know about something and needed to pretend or deny the truth?
 - b. Did it lead you to do something you wouldn't normally do?
 - c. Would you do differently now? If so, how or what would you do differently?

"...Being afraid is just acting as if the truth were not true. Don't treat people like they're stupid or they'll start acting stupid, and the next thing you know, there's a lot of stupid shit going on." - Ronnie, *Immediate Family*

Vocabulary

All terms are taken from the curriculum of the Leadership Development In Intergroup Relations Organization. All terms are living definitions and as language does, they are ever-evolving.

- Bias: A conscious or unconscious preference that inhibits a person's capacity for impartial judgment.
- Prejudice: An unfair pre-judgment of an individual based on real or perceived group membership and bias.
- Discrimination: An action or behavior that favors some people and disadvantages others.
- Race: A social and artificial construct with exceeding social, economic, and political significance. Race is often associated with physical characteristics, e.g., skin color, hair types, eye shape, eye color, lip shape, etc.
- Privilege: Privilege operates on personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels and gives advantages, access, favors, and benefits to members of dominant groups at the expense of members of marginalized groups. In the United States, privilege is granted to people who have membership in one or more of these social identity groups: white people, able-bodied people, heterosexuals, males, Christians, middle or owning class people, middle-aged people, and English-speaking people. Privilege is commonly invisible to or taken for granted by people who have it. Privileges are unearned and they are granted to people in the dominant groups whether they want those privileges or not, and regardless of their stated intent.
- Racism: Racism is a system of oppression that consists of racial prejudice and discrimination – supported by institutional power and authority – used to the advantage of one race and the disadvantage of another race or other races. The critical element which differentiates racism from prejudice and discrimination is the use of institutional power and authority to support the prevailing white mainstream normative, reiterate prejudices, and enforce discriminatory behaviors in systematic ways with far-reaching outcomes and effects.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

- **Sexual Orientation:** An individual's physical and/or emotional attraction to another individual. A person's sexual orientation is sometimes distinct from a person's gender identity and expression.
- **Cisgender:** Describes someone who feels comfortable with the gender identity and gender expression expectations assigned to them based on their physical sex.
- **Heterosexual:** Someone who is primarily and/or exclusively attracted to members of the opposite sex. Can also be referred to men and women who form primary loving and sexual relationships with the opposite sex. In certain contexts, this term is used to refer only to those who identify as straight or relating to different/opposite sexes usually in terms of a perceived gender binary identification. (Definition created from a number of research sources.)
- **Heterosexism:** Heterosexism is a system of oppression based on one's sexual orientation and/or not conforming to a gender binary (a social construction of gender allowing only two gender expressions.) Heterosexism is any attitude, action, or institutional practice backed by institutional power, which subordinates people because of their sexual orientation and/or a gender presentation/identity that does not maintain the gender binary. This includes Homophobia, which is the fear or hatred of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and/or queer people. It is also fear of being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer and/or fear of being perceived as any of those identities.
- **People of Color:** A term of solidarity referring to Blacks, Native Americans, Latinos, Asians, Arabs, Middle Easterners, Pacific Islanders, and those who may identify as Multiracial. This term is preferred to other terms often heard, such as *minority* and *non-white*. While people of color are a numerical minority in the United States, they are the vast majority – nine-tenths of the world's population; White people are the distinct minority. Use of the term "minority," therefore, obscures this global reality, and, in effect, reinforces racist assumptions.
- **African American:** This term refers to people of African descent who were born in the United States. The term is preferable to "Afro-American" because African heritage is clearly identified and named. This identity often refers to a shared history of forced migration as a result of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and/or ancestors who were enslaved in the Americas.
- **Black:** A term referring to people of African descent who may be from any part of the world.
- **Arab:** Refers to people who are born in or descendants of one of the 22 Arab Nations (Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritanian, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen) as defined by the League of Arab Nations. The term "Arab," depending on the context, can refer to a range of identity-related factors including geography, citizenship, language, politics, ethnicity, and race.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

- Middle Eastern/Southwest Asian: A historical and political region of Africa and Eurasia with no clear definition. The term “Middle East” was popularized around 1900 by the British, and has been criticized for its loose definition. The Middle East includes countries or regions in Southwest Asia and parts of North Africa. This term is widely used to refer to Persian countries as well as Arab nations. Middle Eastern/Southwest Asian can refer to people who are born in or descendants of these regions.
- Asian American: Refers to people of Asian descent living in the United States, including people of Indian, Pakistani, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and Chinese decent, etc. Please note that the term “Oriental” is considered obsolete and pejorative.
 - o Note: Because Asian Pacific Islander heritage peoples do not always just identify as “Asian” or “Yellow” or “Brown,” a number of API related identifiers are listed. Historically, many see themselves as separate and equal identity groups.
- Pacific Islander: Refers to people from the islands of the Pacific, specifically within the region of Oceania (composed of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia) such as Samoa, New Guinea, Fiji, Guam, Tahiti, etc. It is helpful to remember that not every person born in or descended from this region identifies as Pacific Islander, so it is best to ask.
- South Asian: The South Asian community in the United States is comprised of individuals with ancestry from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The community also includes members of the South Asian diaspora- past generations of South Asians who settled in many areas around the world, including the Caribbean (Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad & Tobago), Africa (Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda), Canada, Europe, The Middle East, and other parts of Asia and the Pacific Islands (Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore). The community is comprised of individuals who practice a variety of religions and speak different languages, yet share similar immigration histories and racialization.
- Latino: This term refers to people from Mexico, Central America (such as Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador), South America (such as Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay), and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean (such as Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Cuba). The term also includes Chicanos (Mexican Americans). The term Latino refers to a shared cultural heritage (Black, Native American, and Spanish), a history of colonization by Spain, and a common language (Spanish). The term does not refer to people from Spain. In addition, the term “Hispanic” is one of the several terms of ethnicity employed to categorize any person, of any racial background, of any country and of any religion who has at least one ancestor from the people of Spain or Spanish-speaking Latin America, whether or not the person has Spanish ancestry. The preference for the classifier, Latino, over Hispanic partly derives from its emphasis on heritage from Latin America and not Spain.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

- Native American: Refers to the descendants of the people who originally inhabited the North, South, and Central America prior to the conquest by Europeans. There is still a debate as to whether the term Native American or Indian is preferred. Many Native Americans do use “Indian” and “tribe” in referring to their own people. However, many other Native Peoples suggest that “Indian,” “tribe,” and a host of similar words are incorrect and carry derogatory connotations in our society. It is recommended to refer to a particular people or nation by name, such as Cherokee, Hopi, Navajo, and Seminole.
- Indigenous: This term has different meaning depending on country and context. It can be applied to any ethnic group inhabiting the geographic region with which they have the earliest historical connection. A contemporary working definition will include ethnic groups (and their descendants) who have an historical continuity or association with a given region, or parts of a region. Those who formerly or currently inhabit the region before its subsequent colonization or annexation, or lived alongside other cultural groups during the formation of a nation-state may also identify as Indigenous. People can also identify if they lived independently or largely isolated from the influences of the claimed governance by a nation-state; and who, furthermore, have maintained at least in part their distinct linguistic, cultural and social/organizational characteristics, and in doing so remain differentiated in some degree from the surrounding populations and dominant culture of the nation-state.
- White: White can refer to people of European descent, including the English, Irish, Italian, German, Greek, Dutch, and Polish. White identity has been institutionally upheld as a way to give or deny social and political power. In US history, those at some point not considered white have included: Irish, Germans, Ashkenazi Jews, Italians, Spaniards, Slavs, and Greeks. The process of officially being defined as white by law often came about in court disputes over pursuit of citizenship (but also to create and maintain laws, voting rights, property, and privileges for one group and institutionally deny those rights to everyone else). The Immigration Act of 1790 offered naturalization only to “any alien, being a free white person.” This was ultimately determined by religious practices, education, inter-marriage and a community’s role in the United States.
 - o Note: Caucasian or Caucasoid used to describe the physical or biological type of some or all of the populations of Europe, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, Western Asia, Central Asia, and South Asia by a German Scientist, Christoph Meiners, who categorized peoples only as Caucasian or Mongolian. The term was used in biological anthropology for many people from these regions, without regard necessarily to skin tone. First introduced in early racial science and anthropometry in the 1790s, the taxon has historically been used to denote one of the then proposed major races of humankind. This term’s validity and utility is disputed by many anthropologists today and is no longer scientifically used.
- Gay: Someone who is primarily and/or exclusively attracted to members of their own sex or gender. Can also be referred to men who form primary loving and sexual relationships with men. In certain contexts, this term is used to refer only to those who identify as men.

About the Play | Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

- Lesbians: Women who form primary loving and sexual relationships with women. Some women may also use the term “gay” to describe themselves as mentioned above, those being exclusively attracted to members of their own sex or gender.
- Queer: An umbrella identity term encompassing lesbians, questioning people, gay men, bisexuals, non-labeling people, and anyone else who does not strictly identify as heterosexual. “Queer” was used as a derogatory word in the 1940s and 1950s. Currently, it is being reclaimed by some people and used as a statement of empowerment. Some people identify as queer to distance themselves from the rigid categorization of “straight” and “gay.” Some lesbian, gay, questioning, non-labeling, and bisexual people, however, reject the use of this term due to its tendency to sometimes deny the differences between these groups.

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Community Partnerships

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Program Manager,
Next Generation Initiatives

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Resident Teaching Artist

Center Theatre Group's mission is to serve the diverse audiences of Los Angeles by producing and presenting theatre of the highest caliber, by nurturing new artists, by attracting new audiences, and by developing youth outreach and education programs. This mission is based on the belief that the art of theatre is a cultural force with the capacity to transform the lives of individuals and society at large.

Education and Community Partnerships

Theatre is an enduring and powerful tool for communicating ideas, stories, emotions and beliefs that fuel the intellect, imagination and creative spirit. Center Theatre Group believes that stimulating awareness, creativity, dialogue and an inquisitive mind is integral to the growth and well-being of the individual and the community; and that nurturing a life-long appreciation of the arts leads inextricably to an engaged and enlightened society.

Center Theatre Group's education and community partnership programs advance the organization's mission in three key ways:

Audiences: Inspiring current and future audiences to discover theatre and its connection to their lives;

Artists: Investing in the training, support and development of emerging young artists and young arts professionals who are the future of our field; and

Arts Education Leadership: Contributing to the community-wide efforts to improve the quality and scope of arts education in Los Angeles.

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