

Center for Puppetry Arts® Study Guide



Old Man and the Monkeys & other Chinese Tales

By Dragon Art Studio of Portland, OR

Sept 21 - Oct 2, 2011
Performances Wednesday - Sunday
Call 404.873.3391 to book your group



The Center for Puppetry Arts is supported in part by:



Center for Puppetry Arts is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization and is supported in part by contributions from corporations, foundations, government agencies, and individuals.

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The Center also serves as headquarters of UNIMA-USA, the American branch of Union Internationale de la Marionnette, the international puppetry organization.

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A note from our Education Director

Dear Educator/Parent,

Welcome to the Center for Puppetry Arts and this production of *Old Man and the Monkeys & other Chinese Tales* by Dragon Art Studio of Portland, Oregon.

Old Man and the Monkeys & other Chinese Tales is a fascinating collection of extraordinary vignettes performed by master puppeteers from China. This magical show is the perfect accompaniment to a thematic unit on China, Asia, animals, folk/fairy tales or multicultural children's literature – and is a great example of visual, musical and dramatic arts.

It has been proven (through test scores and numerous studies) that the arts

- invite empathy and interaction
- stretch the imagination
- develop important coordination and language skills (emotional and spoken)
- satisfy educational objectives across the curriculum
- support literacy and writing
- enhance social skills such as problem solving, turn-taking and active listening
- impact attendance in a positive way
- improve motivation and behavior
- and simply allow children to have fun (they're called "plays" for a reason, after all!)

This study guide is designed to prepare you for the experience of a live performance. You're also invited to utilize the suggested activities as a springboard for follow-up fun after the curtain has gone down.

All three areas of programming at the Center for Puppetry Arts (performance, puppet-making workshops and Museum) meet Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) and Georgia Bright From the Start Pre-K Program Standards. To access the GA Performance Standards that have been correlated to each programming area according to grade level, click the links below:

[Old Man and the Monkeys & other Chinese Tales, P-K & K](#)
[Old Man and the Monkeys & other Chinese Tales, Grade 1](#)
[Old Man and the Monkeys & other Chinese Tales, Grade 2](#)
[Old Man and the Monkeys & other Chinese Tales, Grade 3](#)
[Old Man and the Monkeys & other Chinese Tales, Grade 4](#)
[Old Man and the Monkeys & other Chinese Tales, Grade 5](#)
[Old Man and the Monkeys & other Chinese Tales, Grade 6](#)

To access a complete list of GA Performance Standards for all grades and subjects, please visit <https://www.georgiastandards.org>.

Enjoy the show!

Sincerely,

Aretta Baumgartner
Education Director

Educational Theatre Association
Association of Theatre Movement Educators

We need your wisdom!

We're in the process of evaluating the format and content of our Study Guides; we'd love your input. Please contact me at arettabaumgartner@puppet.org or 404.881.5144 to provide feedback so that we can make sure we're meeting your needs.

NOTE: A very special THANK YOU to Alan Louis, former Director of Museum and Education Programs at the Center for Puppetry Arts, for his hard work and expertise on the original version of this Study Guide (Center for Puppetry Arts, 2009). It was an inspiration for this Guide; select activities are reprinted with his encouragement and permission.

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES / DISCUSSIONS

WHAT IS A PUPPET?

A “puppet” is an inanimate (non-living) object that is brought to life by an outside force (usually a human being working as a performer) in order to tell a story.

There are many different styles of puppets celebrated in Chinese art and culture. Though glove puppets and shadow puppets are the oldest and most widely-used types of puppets in China, string puppets and rod puppets are performed extensively as well. The art of Chinese puppetry dates back thousands of years, beginning as cultural ritual and then developing into a form of entertainment.

Old Man and the Monkeys & other Chinese Tales showcases one particular style of puppetry: rod puppetry. Students of Chinese rod puppetry (such as *Old Man and the Monkeys'* puppeteers, Yuqin Wang and Zhengli Xu) study and practice for years to perfect their skills. Puppeteers work the rod puppets from below, holding the figures above their heads by thin metal rods that are attached to various parts of the human and animal figures they manipulate. Rod puppeteers stand and work behind a five-to-six foot curtain, which creates the illusion of a stage at its top edge.

- **DISCUSSION:** ask the children what puppets are. Have they seen them before? Are they real or pretend? What can be used as a puppet? Out of what materials can puppets be made, and why would you choose some materials over others for certain projects?

WHAT IS A PUPPETEER?

A performer who uses a puppet or puppets to tell a story is called a “puppeteer.”

There are two puppeteers in *Old Man and the Monkeys & other Chinese Tales*, Yuqin Wang and Zhengli Xu.

Yuqin Wang was born in Beijing, China. Wang's training began in the Beijing Opera School when she was ten years old. By the time she was eighteen, she had already sung and acted in scores of classical Beijing operas. Beginning in 1964, she directed her artistic energy toward puppetry. Through years of research and experimentation, she brought new excitement to puppetry by weaving traditional opera techniques into it. She has played the lead role in more than thirty puppet shows, numerous movies and television programs. She has performed throughout the world, receiving critical praise everywhere.

Zhengli Xu was born in Chong Qing, Sichuan province, China, and grew up in Beijing. He started to study puppetry in the second grade. He has performed as a Chinese rod puppeteer for over 40 years. Graduating from Beijing Puppetry Art School with a major in show production and direction, he spent many years studying under the great puppet masters of China. Like Ms. Wang, he has traveled to many foreign countries to perform. Drawing on his many years of experience in puppet-making, direction, performance and stage design, Xu produced and performed a large production of “Maiden Pearl” at The Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center in Portland, Oregon in September 1999 to critical acclaim. Mr. Xu designs and creates all the puppets, sets, staging and props, and selects the traditional Chinese music for the performances.

- **DISCUSSION:** Ms.Wang and Mr. Xu began working in the arts professionally when they were very young. What are some challenges that Ms.Wang and Mr. Xu might have faced as young people trying to work in a grown-up field? What are some of the skills they might have learned besides puppetry and singing through their work in the arts? Ask your students about the things that they do now, at their age, which might lead to a career when they are older.

WHAT IS AN AUDIENCE?

Being a good audience member is as important as being a good puppeteer! It takes teamwork between audience and puppeteer/actor to make a show successful. There are “rules of etiquette” that need to be employed, such as:

- **A LIVE SHOW IS DIFFERENT THAN TV OR MOVIES.** It’s okay to have fun, but do remember that the people on-stage (and in the audience) can hear you—be polite!
- **MAKE SURE EVERYONE CAN SEE.** Stay seated so the audience members behind you can see the show.
- **BE SUPPORTIVE.** The way audience members show they like something is to applaud. Make sure to applaud if you appreciate what you see and hear. Between songs or scenes, after the show, and after the post-show demonstration are appropriate places/times to show your appreciation.
- **LISTEN CLOSELY.** It’s important that you hear all the details of the story so that you can enjoy it fully.

- **DISCUSSION:** review the “rules” of being a good audience member. Role play what is appropriate and what is not.

WHAT IS THE STORY WE’LL SHARE (THE STORY SYNOPSIS)?

The Old Man and the Monkeys & other Chinese Tales is a compilation of five traditional and non-traditional tales of Ancient China. Stories of compassion and consideration -- and the greatest ping-pong match of all time -- are told with the grace and precision that only classically-trained veterans of puppet theatre can tell. The stories are delivered with beautiful music, ornate characters, and remarkably, no dialogue (a spoken conversation between two or more people)! Each story has a lesson to teach, often called a “moral.” Sharing a moral is an important element in the Chinese folktale tradition.

The stories featured in the puppet show, and the morals that they hope to impart, are:

The Old Man and the Monkeys - Alone in the woods, tired from carrying his load, an old man stops under a tree to rest. Little does he know that a gang of naughty monkeys live in a nearby tree. This story follows a tradition of clever monkey stories that are popular throughout China.

The Crane & the Tortoise - One day, a proud and beautiful crane flew to a pond and landed near the shore. There the crane met a very clever little turtle. The lesson in this story shows how patience and cleverness win against even the biggest bully.

The Donkey’s Best Friend - A loveable donkey teaches a cruel farmer about sharing work and being fair. A good friend helps along the way. This story teaches consideration and appreciation of all living things.

The Dancer - Surrounded by thousands of miles of desert, deep in the canyons of Dunhuang, China, there are hundreds of caves containing countless sculptures and paintings. Over 1,500 years old, the images tell stories of the ancient ones, including a cave of dancers. Meet the most popular of these dancers, evoking the exquisite art of ancient fairy tales. These tales are not just for children, but are an important part of Chinese heritage, passed down from generation to generation.

Super Duper Ping Pong – Welcome to the Super Duper Ping Pong Match! This is an awesome puppet performance whose ingeniously simple effects make this the greatest ping-pong match ever seen.

WHO CREATED THE PUPPET SHOW?

The puppet show is created by Dragon Art Studio from Portland, Oregon. Dragon Art Studio is one of the few professional Chinese puppet theater companies in the United States of America.

Before coming to America, Yuqin Wang and her husband and fellow performer, Zhengli Xu, were both leading puppeteers with the famous China Puppet Art Troupe for more than 30 years. When Wang and Xu came to Oregon in 1996 they founded their own puppet theatre: Dragon Art Studio. In their first year, they were invited performers at the 1996 Summer Olympics of Atlanta, and over the past 15 years they have shared the beauty and excitement of Chinese rod puppetry with audiences throughout the country. With their daughter Brenda, they take their puppet performances to schools, libraries, and museums. Yuqin Wang and Zhengli Xu were honored by the National Endowment for the Arts, which presented them with the 2004 National Heritage Fellowship Award, the highest honor our nation gives to folk and traditional artists.



Photo by Brenda Xu

Puppets from “A Donkey’s Best Friend”

NOTES FROM THE MUSEUM

at the Center for Puppetry Arts

Chinese Puppetry

The traditions of Chinese puppetry, which span centuries, feature an incredibly rich range of forms both ancient and contemporary in their design. Virtually every technique can be found, including hand, rod and shadow puppets as well as string marionettes and giant “walk-around” figures used in temple processions. In turn, each of these forms are presented with many local variations in source materials, puppet designs, and performance company structure. China has come to recognize the value of these local traditions, designating certain practitioners as Bearers of Intangible Cultural Heritages and encouraging artists to pass on their knowledge to a new generation. In an age where traditional performances are in constant competition with modern popular culture, such support may be the last hope folk puppetry has against extinction.

Puppets may be used for religious purposes or for pure entertainment, and highly complex puppets have been developed especially for television and film. In some communities, puppetry is used to present the same operas that might be heard in traditional Chinese opera, and may entertain the gods even when human audiences are not present. Source stories may dramatize local legends, the Monkey tales from 16th century novel, “The Journey to the West” or the stories of the great heroes and villains of “The Romance of the Three Kingdoms.” The Museum of the Center for Puppetry Arts is fortunate in having a wide range of Chinese figures in its collection. In some cases extremely rare, our figures have come to us from all over the length and breadth of China.

Bradford Clark
Curator of Collections, Center for Puppetry Arts
Professor, Bowling Green State University, Department of Theatre and Film



AS 0092-4:
Chinese Shadow Puppet
Artist Unknown
19th Century
Gift of University
of Richmond
AS.0092



AS 0063-23:
Chinese Hand Puppet
Artist Unknown
20th Century
Gift of University
of Richmond
AS.0066



2008003001-2:
Chinese Rod Puppet
Artist Unknown
20th Century
Gift of Nancy
Lohman Staub
2008.003.001

Learning Activities

P-K & K: Monkey Math

Georgia Bright from the Start Pre-K Content Standards covered: Mathematical Development (Associates Numeral Name with Set of Objects) MD 1 g

Georgia Performance Standards covered, Kindergarten: Mathematics (Number and Operations) MK MI b, d

Objective: Students will recognize and then select the numerals 0 through 10 as well as number words to name the number of elements in a set. Students will illustrate the numerals 0 through 10 by creating sets with Monkey Math game pieces. *This activity works best in a self-directed learning center or small group activity in the classroom.*

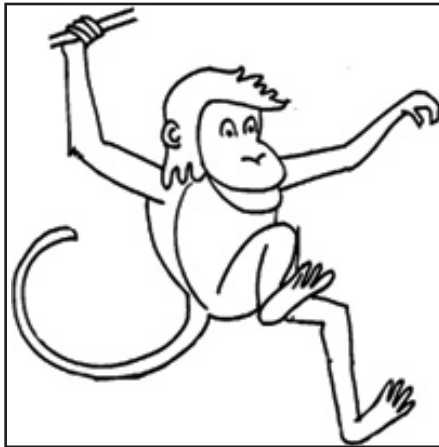
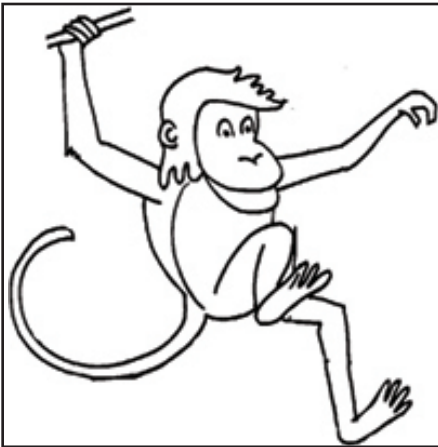
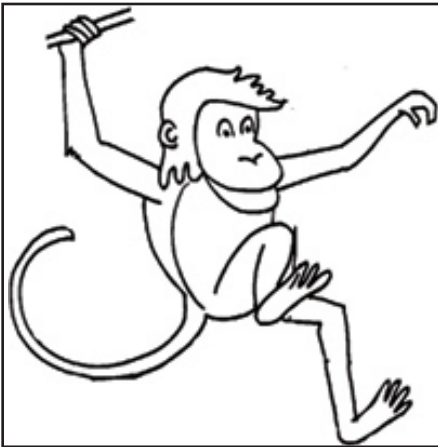
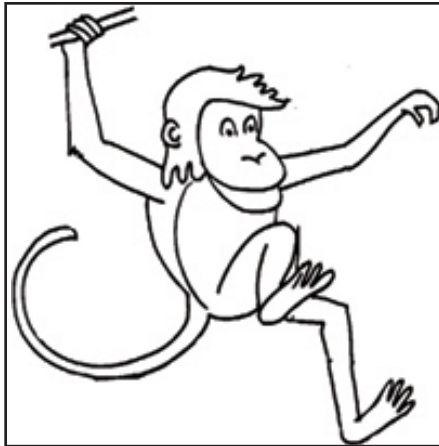
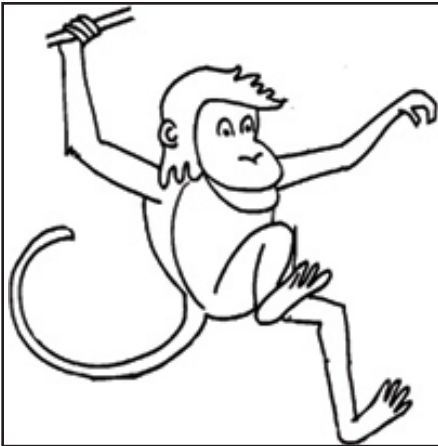
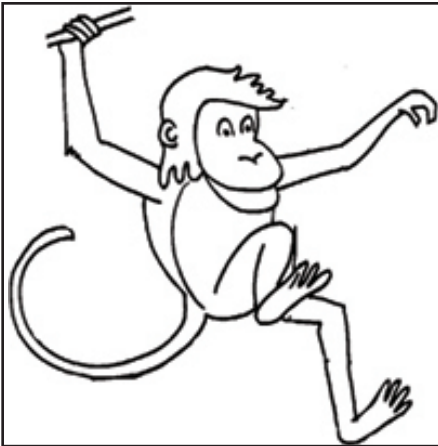
Materials: Monkey Math game pieces (patterns provided on page 6 of this study guide), white or colored card stock, index cards, paper, and pencils or markers

Procedure:

1. Photocopy the Monkey Math game pieces on white or colored card stock for a total of 10 monkeys per student playing the game. Cut out the monkeys (and laminate if desired). Prepare a set of 11 index cards with the number words “zero” through “ten” written on them.
2. Distribute 11 index cards to each student playing the game. Have students number their cards “0” through “10.”
3. Hold up an index card with a number word written on it, and ask students to match each one with the corresponding numeral index card. Continue until you have gone through all 11 numbers.
4. Next, ask students to shuffle all of their index cards into a pile. Have students take turns selecting a card and illustrating the number using the Monkey Math game pieces. Students should record each number they illustrate on a tally sheet.
5. Finally, ask students to create two different sets to compare and describe: unequal, equal, more than, fewer than, etc.

Assessment: Meet with students one-on-one and have them match number words to corresponding numeral cards and Monkey Math game pieces. Remediate if necessary.

Monkey Math Game Pieces



Learning Activities

1st & 2nd Grade: Monkey Fraction Fun

Georgia Performance Standards covered, Grade 1: Mathematics (Number and Operations) MIN4 c

Georgia Performance Standards covered, Grade 2: Mathematics (Number and Operations) M2N4 a, b

Objective: Students will relate fractions (halves, thirds, fourths, etc.) to concrete pictorial models of the fractions.

Materials: Orange crayons, chart paper and markers (or a dry erase board, chalk board or SMART Board), Monkey Fraction reproducible handouts from page 8 of this study guide (one per student)

Procedure:

1. Review fractions with students. Explain that the number below the line (denominator) represents the whole and the number above the line (numerator) represents the part of the whole. Demonstrate this concept using groups of like objects and write the numerical representation in the form of a fraction on the board or on chart paper.
2. Distribute Monkey Fraction handouts and orange crayons.
3. Ask students to color the number of monkeys from the group that will represent the fraction given for each group. For example, since $\frac{1}{2}$ is one out of two, just one monkey from the grouping of two should be colored orange.

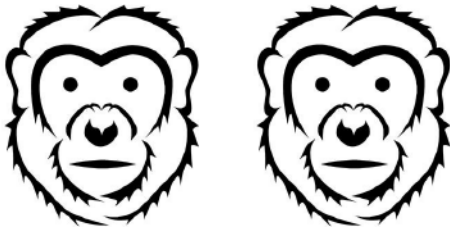
Assessment: Collect student handouts and check for accuracy. Remediate if necessary.



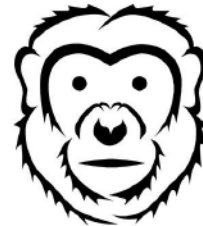
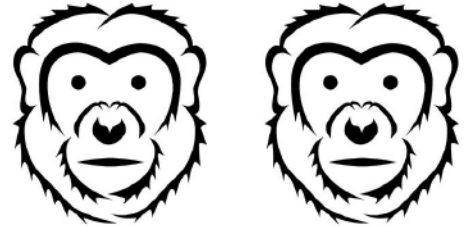
Puppets from the story “Old Man and the Monkeys”

Monkey Fraction Activity

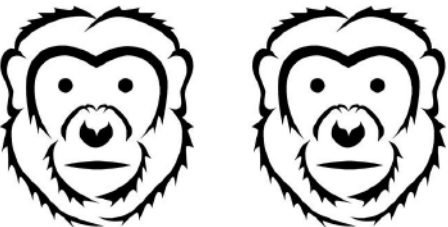
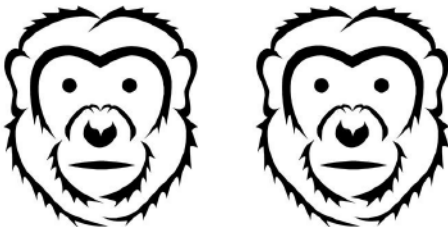
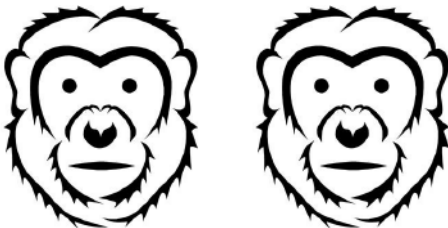
Directions: Using an orange crayon, color the correct number of monkeys to represent the fraction shown for each group.



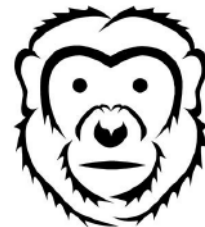
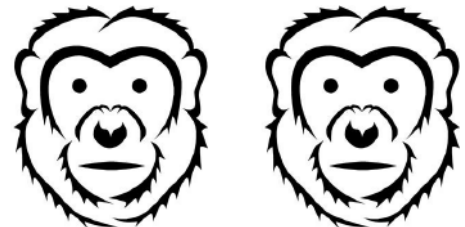
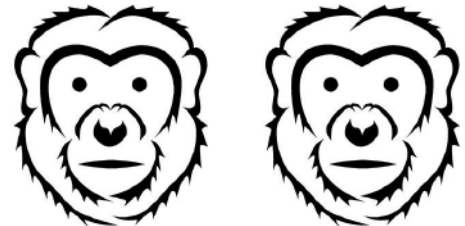
$1/2$



$2/3$



$6/6$



$3/5$

Learning Activities

3rd & 4th Grade: “The First Cup of Chinese Tea” (a word search puzzle)

Georgia Performance Standards covered, Grade 3: English/Language Arts, Reading, Vocabulary ELA3R2 a,e,f; English/Language Arts, Reading, Comprehension ELA3R3 a,i,k,p

Georgia Performance Standards covered, Grade 4: English/Language Arts, Reading, ELA4R3 a,b,c,e

Objective: Students will read a story about the origin of tea in China and complete a word search puzzle that uses vocabulary from their reading.

Materials: Word search puzzle student handout (one per student) from page 10 of this study guide, and highlighters or pencils.

Procedure:

1. Distribute word search puzzle student handout to each student. Read the directions aloud to the class. Ask students to read the informational paragraph to themselves and then complete the puzzle.
2. When all students have completed the activity, have students take turns reading sentences in the information paragraph aloud. Answer any questions about the content of the passage or the meaning of any vocabulary words.

Assessment: Check student work for completeness. Quiz students with questions on the reading after a few weeks have passed to see if they have retained the information given in the informational paragraph.



Photo by Brenda Xu

Puppet from the story “The Dancer”

The First Cup of Chinese Tea: A Word Search Puzzle

Directions: Read the story by Colette Chooy (below the puzzle). Locate all 19 bold face words in the puzzle. Circle or highlight each word as you find it. Words are hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally and backward.

C h i n a d f h g q u n b x e
 i n p m y l e n w y i e o s c
 u z g d o d i s i k p d i i n
 m a p w j m h s i a s r l o a
 a o e y a q w d w r m a i t r
 a r n e s l i o r v p g n y g
 s e t k d e c i t n e r g o a
 a s t z e l o n f l i q u p r
 z a z p d y l b m o n f z s f
 s i p p e d s o t u o l t a n
 j y r l x h v h f i t d z o a
 s n o i t a t i d e m u s c m
 t g n u d i r g a k y a a f b
 e p i g n e y n j i e k z m e
 a r t u r n i n g s i g d c r

It was **autumn** in **China**. The air was starting to chill and the leaves were **turning** brown. A Taoist monk was taking a break from reading his scriptures and **meditations**. He put a pot of water on the **fire** to warm the room, then he walked through the **garden** to watch the monkeys settle in for the cold **season** ahead. For the past year, he watched a monkey family gather certain **foods** at particular times of the day. This time, the **monkeys** were eating dried flower buds and leaves. The Taoist monk, amused, picked the same buds and leaves the monkeys had chosen. He was **surprised** to find that the flowers were still fragrant and the leaves were sticky with natural **oils**. The monk went back inside to where his water was **boiling**. He put his handful of **flowers** and leaves in a small bowl, then poured hot water over them. The **fragrance** released from the flower buds filled the air. The leaves changed the clear water to a deep **amber** liquid. The monk was so **enticed** by the **steaming** liquid that he slowly **sipped** his first cup of **tea**.

Learning Activities

5th & 6th Grade: The Year of the Ox: Understanding the Chinese Lunar Calendar

Georgia Performance Standards covered, Grade 5: ELA5RI (for informational texts) a,e,f,g,h

Georgia Performance Standards covered, Grade 6: ELA6RI (for informational texts) a,b,c,d

Objective: Students will visit the website of the Chinese Culture Center in San Francisco, CA, to determine their Chinese astrological sign and answer discussion questions about the Chinese lunar calendar.

Materials: Computers with internet access, notebook paper, and pencils or pens

Procedure:

1. Have students go to <http://www.c-c-c.org/chineseculture/zodiac/zodiac.html> and read all of the sections of text under the heading “Chinese Lunar Calendar.”
2. Ask students to consider these questions for discussion afterward:
 - How is the Chinese lunar calendar different from the Western calendar?
 - Why are there 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac?
 - Why is the Rat first?
 - What is your sign according to the Chinese zodiac? Do you agree with what it says about your personality traits?
 - Do the Chinese take the zodiac seriously?
 - Why would the Chinese Culture Center post this information on their website?
 - Using the information provided, calculate which animal in the cycle will represent the year 2020.

Assessment: Review these questions later in the school year to test for retention.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING & ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Chinese Puppetry

Many puppets in China, especially glove puppets used in the famous Beijing Opera shows, have their faces painted using bright colors that allow audience members to recognize specific character types instantly. Face painting, inspired by early make-up and masks of Chinese theatre and ritual, uses exaggeration and symbolism to help tell the story. Examples of colors and their symbolism are: red for loyalty, purple for wisdom, black for integrity, blue for bravery, yellow for brutality, green for chivalry, gold/silver for magic, and pink for humor. What symbolism do you see in the colors that surround you? What feelings do certain colors evoke? Do you have a favorite color? If so, what is it and why is it your favorite?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION: Fine Arts/Visual Art, Social Studies, Theatre Arts

Compassion and Consideration

What morals (lessons) did the characters in the story learn? Were these journeys of self-discovery easy or difficult? Can you think of an example of a difficult time you've been through that has taught you a lesson? Write this personal story down (changing any names or details that make you uncomfortable in sharing the story, details that might be too personal for you or a friend/family member). Add illustrations, and present it to your classmates so they can learn from your personal wisdom.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION: Physical Education (Personal and Social Behavior), English Language Arts & Reading

Music

Explore how music can help tell a story. This show had no spoken words (called “dialogue”). Movement and music were relied upon to tell the stories. How did music help you understand the actions of the play and the feelings of the characters? Make your own music: play drums you make out of coffee cans, guitars you make out of cereal boxes and rubber bands, and flutes you make out of empty plastic bottles. What mood or emotion do these different instruments suggest? Listen to the music of famous Chinese composers such as Cheng Mao-yun (1900 - 1957) and Nier Er (1912 — 1935) and discuss what their music makes you feel, think and visualize.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: Fine Arts/Music, Fine Arts/Visual Art

Places and People

What parts of the story made you think/know it was set in China? Find the country of China on a globe. Discuss products and customs that you know to be “Chinese,” and how these products and customs might have made their way here to us in our country. Talk about the costumes, scenery, and the characters in the puppet show and how they are representative of the country of China. How are these things similar to and/or different from our customs in the United States of America?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION: Social Studies

Puppetry

How are puppets brought to life? How are puppet shows created? Have the students create a puppet show using objects they can find in the classroom and/or in their desks. Have them each bring in one kitchen utensil from home (marked with their name on masking tape!) and brainstorm how to re-create a favorite fairytale using these utensils.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION: Theatre Arts

Stories and Storytelling

What are the different types of stories that are told? What elements characterize these specific types of stories? The stories that inspired this puppet show are called “folktales.” Folktales are China’s earliest literature. They existed even before written Chinese characters (Chinese letters of the alphabet) were invented; they were passed down orally from generation to generation. Folktales illustrate how characters cope with the events of everyday life and involve crisis/conflict and a moral (by contrast, fairy tales tend to involve magic and fantastical creatures; myth has at its core the origins of a people, and is often sacred in nature). What are examples of other folktales? Can you think of examples of fairy tales? Of myths?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: Theatre Arts, English Language Arts & Reading

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Internet Resources

<http://www.cntv.cn/>

Explore this website – the Chinese version of “School Tube” – to view videos of Chinese puppetry. Click on the “English” version of the page, and enter “puppet” in the search box. Choose the “video” tab, and enjoy dozens of videos featuring Chinese puppeteers and puppets.

http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/asian_theatre_journal/v027/27.2.chen.pdf

Follow this link to access the article “A Survey of Puppetry in China” by Fan Pen Li Chen and Bradford Clark (Asian Theatre Journal, Fall 2010). Please note that this is a university-level academic article.

<http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/china.html>

Investigate Chinese folk tales at D. L. Ashliman’s Folktexts, an online library of folktales, folklore, fairy tales, and mythology.

<http://china.mrdonn.org/zodiac.html>

Visit this website to find your birth year animal in the Chinese zodiac.

<http://dragonartstudio.com/>

Explore the world of Dragon Art Studio, Portland, Oregon.

<http://www.asianart.org/pastexhibitions.htm>

Experience the Asian art Museum of San Francisco online.

<http://www.afk.com/>

Visit Asia for Kids online - your key to cultural connections.

<http://www.dragoart.com/tuts/68/1/1/how-to-draw-a-chinese-dragon-the-body.htm>

Learn how to draw a Chinese dragon at dragoart.com.

<http://firehorseportfolio.com/tea/>

Read a selection of Chinese tea stories here.

<http://www.draconika.com/chinese.php>

Visit this website to learn why dragons are such an important and revered symbol in China.