



Preview Guide for Parents and Teachers
to Childsplay's Production of

A Thousand Cranes

We hope you find this guide helpful in preparing your children for an enjoyable and educational theatrical experience. Included you'll find things to talk about before and after seeing the performance, classroom activities that deal with curriculum connections and education standards, and resource materials.

By Kathryn Schultz Miller

Directed by Gary Minyard
Scenic Design by Jeff Lemire
Costume Design by D. Daniel Hollingshead
Lighting Design by Tim Monson
Sound Design by Jeremiah Neal
Masks and Properties by Jim Luther
Stage Manager: Alexandra Corder

The Cast

Sadako.....Willia Darian
Kenji.....Jason Powell
Mother/Grandmother.....Kate Haas

School Tour, October 2007- March 2008

Childsplay's
touring program is
sponsored by:



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The Eliot Spalding Foundation
The Shubert Foundation
The Stocker Foundation
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US Airways Education Foundation
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The Story: *A Thousand Cranes* is based on the true story of Sadako, a young girl born in Hiroshima during World War II. When the play opens Sadako is training for a foot race with her best friend Kenji. Two years older than she, Kenji acts much like a brother and coach. Although he playfully teases Sadako about being as slow as a turtle, he assures her that she will win the upcoming race. Excited, Sadako rushes home to tell her parents of Kenji's predicted outcome, but she must calm herself and behave with the proper respect before they will hear her news. That night, Sadako's mother and father are preparing for Oban, the Japanese celebration of the ancestors. They explain to their daughter that this is a time to remember the ancestors who have died, and they will be lighting a special candle in remembrance of Obachan, Sadako's grandmother who was killed when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Though she was very young, Sadako remembers her grandmother, and the bomb. She wonders if her grandmother can see her when she runs. The next day, Sadako and Kenji are again training until Sadako trips and falls. She thinks she is okay but when she tries to stand she feels dizzy. Sadako's parents take her to a doctor and she is diagnosed with "radiation sickness," or leukemia, a result of the radiation from the bombing. She wonders how she could be sick when the bomb was so very long ago. Sadako is too sick to run in the race, so Kenji comes to visit her in the hospital. He folds a gold paper crane for her as a gift and reminds her of the old Japanese myth that claims if a sick person folds 1,000 paper cranes the gods will grant her wish and make her healthy again. Hopeful, Sadako sets out on a new race to fold 1,000 cranes. Unfortunately, she becomes too sick to complete the task. Grandmother Obachan comes as a spirit to lead Sadako to the home of the ancestors. There, Sadako meets many others who were harmed by the bomb and her Grandmother tells her she must stay there with her. Sadako pleads to go back and finish folding her cranes but Grandmother Obachan tells her it is better to leave them for others to finish. Kenji and Sadako's other classmates do finish Sadako's cranes and make a wish of their own. In memory of Sadako, the children create a monument to their friend in Hiroshima Peace Park, inscribed with their common wish: "This is our cry, This is our prayer, Peace in the World."

We want
to hear
from you!

We would love to have your feedback on this Preview Guide. What did you find helpful? Did you use any of the content before seeing the play? After? Which activities did you try? Did you have success? Is having AZ Education Standards noted in the activities helpful to you or unnecessary? What else would you like to see us address in future Preview Guides? ANY COMMENTS WILL BE THOROUGHLY APPECIATED! Please send them to:

Katie McFadzen at kmcfadzen@childsplayaz.org or
c/o Childsplay, PO Box 517, Tempe, AZ 85280

**"There is no way to peace. Peace is the way."
-- A.J. Muste**

About *A Thousand Cranes*...

Here are topics for discussion or activities to use before or after seeing the production:

Hiroshima • Japan and World War II • Origami • Rituals and beliefs • Japanese culture • Leukemia • Grandparents • Peace • Friendship

Hold That Thought: Ask students the questions in **bold type** on this page before seeing the play and talk about their answers afterwards!

Theater Etiquette: It's helpful to review the rules of theater etiquette before seeing a show, especially since this may be the first live theater experience for some of your students. Please take a moment to discuss the following pointers prior to seeing the performance:

- ▶ Use the restroom before seeing the show as we do not have intermission during our school performances.
- ▶ Stay seated during the performance.
- ▶ Be respectful to the performers and other people in the audience by not talking during the performance. Remember, the actors can see and hear the audience just like you can see and hear them.
- ▶ Appropriate responses such as applause or laughter are always welcome.
- ▶ Food, candy, gum and beverages are not allowed during the performance.
- ▶ Use of cell phones (including text messaging), cameras or any other recording device is *not allowed during the performance at any time!*
- ▶ **How is seeing a play different than seeing a movie?**

Post-Performance Discussion: Due to the nature of the subject matter in *A Thousand Cranes*, the actors will conduct an extended post-performance discussion in which they will ask questions of the audience and give the audience an opportunity

to ask questions of them. The discussion will last about fifteen minutes (making the total running time of the presentation approximately fifty minutes).

Read the Books! It's always great to have an idea of what the story is about before seeing a play. *A Thousand Cranes* is based on the book *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* by Elanor Coerr. There is also an abbreviated version by the same author called *Sadako* as well as a variety of other books about her by other authors. Read one or more of the books before you see the play. **How do you think the play will be different from the book(s)? What are some of the challenges of turning a book into a play?**

The Characters:

- Sadako (pronounced *Sah-dah-ko*), a twelve-year old Japanese girl living in Hiroshima
- Kenji, fourteen-year old boy, Sadako's friend and running coach
- Grandmother Oba Chan, the spirit of Sadako's deceased Grandmother
- Sadako's parents

Here are some things to look for regarding the elements of design (set, costumes, sound, and masks):

- ▶ The set design is based on Japanese architecture and feature unique details like a rug and sliding doors. **How does the scenery help to tell the story?**
- ▶ The costumes are influenced by traditional Japanese dress as well as clothing from the time period (1955). Grandmother appears in a traditional kimono and obi (sash) and her wig is influenced by folded cranes. **What do the costumes tell about the characters?**
- ▶ Live and recorded sound effects and music are used to highlight moments and enhance the story. The actors play instruments (drums, for example) at a sound station at various points in the performance. **How**

does sound and music change the mood throughout the play?

▶ The movement is stylized and influenced by traditional Japanese dance. Masks are used for the grandmother and spirit characters. **How does the movement contribute to creating a non-realistic character?**

Vocabulary Words to Review:

- leukemia:** any of several cancers of the bone marrow
- Obon:** Japanese day of the spirits, where a candle is lit for ancestors who have died.
- Hiroshima:** city in southwestern Japan on the island of Honshu
- Atom bomb**
- radiation sickness:** damage to organ tissue as a result of large doses of radiation over a short period of time.
- sushi:** cooked or uncooked fish, rolled in rice; often wrapped in seaweed
- saki:** rice wine, served warm

Origami and Cranes:

Origami, the art of folding paper, comes from the Japanese words for folding, *ori*, and paper, *kami*. It probably originated in China around the first or second century and first showed up in Japan around the sixth century. At first, origami was an art that the wealthy practiced because they could afford the paper. As papermaking methods improved, origami became an art form for everyone. In 1797, *Thousand Crane Folding (Senbazuru Orikata)* was published. This book contained the first written set of origami instructions on how to fold a crane. The crane was considered a sacred bird in Japan and is considered a sign of long life and good fortune. It was a Japanese custom that if a person folded 1,000 cranes, they would be granted one wish. According to a folk tale, if one crane represents a thousand years of happiness, then a thousand cranes means one million years of happiness. Because of Sadako's story, the paper crane has become an international symbol of peace.



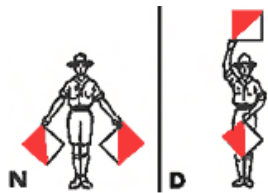
World War II, Japan, and the Atomic Bomb:

On August 6, 1945 at approximately 8:15 in the morning, the United States dropped the nuclear weapon "Little Boy" from the aircraft "Enola Gay" on Hiroshima in the Empire of Japan. In an instant, 66,000 people died. It is said that as many as 130,000 perished as the result of injuries from the bomb dropping or from radiation related illnesses afterwards. Another atomic bomb, "Fat Man," was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9th causing roughly 40,000 casualties and 25,000 injuries. Actual death and injury tolls vary depending on the source. The actual explosions from the atomic bombs were catastrophic but the after effects were equally devastating. The fallout from the atomic bombs created another hazard as well. The rain that follows any atomic detonation is laden with radioactive particles, and many survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki blasts succumbed to radiation poisoning. The atomic bomb also affected the future generations of those who lived through it. Leukemia was among the most horrible afflictions passed on to the offspring of survivors (as well as *to* survivors like Sadako).

Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945. World War II officially ended on September 2, 1945. The attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki are the only instances of nuclear weapons used in warfare. The Japanese people and government have been opposed to the use of nuclear weapons on their soil and in their waters since the devastation caused at the end of World War II.



The Peace Sign: The peace symbol made its debut on Easter weekend, 1958, in the UK. One of the most widely known symbols in the world, in Britain it is recognized as standing for nuclear disarmament - and in particular as the logo of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). In the United States and much of the rest of the world it is known more broadly as the peace symbol. It was designed in 1958 by Gerald Holtom, a professional designer and artist. The symbol itself is built on the semaphore code letters "N" and "D", which stands for nuclear disarmament. The circle represents the whole world, and as a whole the symbol means global nuclear disarmament. Since its creation in 1958, it has been adopted by people around the world who fight for peace and justice, and remains a powerful symbol to this day.



Semaphore codes

Obon: The Buddhist festival of Obon has evolved into a family reunion holiday during which people return to their home towns to visit and clean their ancestors' graves. The festival runs August 13th through the 16th and is one of the most important traditions for Japanese people. People believe that during Obon, the spirits of their ancestors return to their homes to be with their families. Alters are set up with food offerings. Paper lanterns are lit inside of houses and families go to the graves to invite the spirits to

come home. Dances are held all over the country and fireworks displays often accompany the festivities.

Obon has become quite the summer holiday in Japan. Businesses close and traffic is horrible (much like the U.S. might experience going to the beach for July 4th). Go to <http://gojapan.about.com/cs/japanesefestivals/a/obonfestival.htm> for a more detailed description of Obon and the festivities surrounding it.



Behind the Scenes of a Tour

Like all Childsplay productions an immense amount of work goes into the school tours. Unlike a show that you see in a theatre, the design team and production staff has many additional challenges when creating a tour. They have to consider how many months the production will be on the road, how to fit all the elements (including the actors) into a van, and how to make the load-in, assembly of the set and props and load-out as easy for the actors as possible. This is accomplished by countless meetings and planning sessions that occur as much as a year before the first performance.

Tours typically last much longer than a production in a theatre (an "in-house" show). Tours can be on the road anywhere from 6 to 12 months, sometimes even longer. In-house productions typically run 4 to 6 weeks. Every week a tour company may perform up to 14 shows in as many as 8 different schools. By the end of the tour, the actors may have performed

as many as 200 performances. Having so many performances can create a huge amount of wear and tear on the scenery, props and costumes and each department deals with this differently. The scene shop often coats scenery with a plastic hard coat that makes carved foam pieces indestructible. The prop shop often makes multiples of pieces that may break during the tour. The costume shop also provides doubles of any costume items so that actors can clean their costumes as frequently as possible. They also make sure that many costume pieces can be machine washed and dried instead of requiring dry cleaning.

All the scenery, props and costumes that you see in a Childsplay tour must fit into a van. The scenery usually comes apart into several pieces and then stacks, folds or nests together in the van. There is also room in the van for the sound system, toolbox and the cast - which could be as many as 5 actors. If the cast is lucky there is usually room to squeeze in a few suitcases when they go out of town!

In addition to everything fitting in the van it must be able to load out of the van and get assembled in one hour with sometimes as few as 3 people. The Childsplay scene shop uses what they like to call "tool-less technology" to create tour shows. This means tour sets get assembled with as few tools as possible, sometimes none! Pieces are held in place by screwing in knobs, pieces interlock or rest on posts and sometimes fabric appliques are Velcro-ed on to hard scenery frames.

Touring presents many challenges to a theater company. Only with excellent collaboration, communication and innovation are Childsplay tours able reach as many as 45,000 students a year with high quality sets, props and costumes.



First Lady Laura Bush (with Ricky Araiza and Yolanda London) speaks after seeing a touring performance of *Tomás and the Library Lady* at the Boys and Girls Club in Guadalupe



Photos by Childsplay, © 2005, 2006



The cast of *Interrupting Vanessa* performing in a multi-purpose room for a school audience

Things To Talk About and Do After Seeing *A Thousand Cranes...*

Discussion Starters

Now that you've seen *A Thousand Cranes* and have hopefully read one or more of the books about Sadako, here are some things to talk about: **How does the play differ from the book? Which characters or incidents were left out of the play or presented differently in the play? Why do you think the playwright chose to make the changes?**

Story Structure: All plays have three P's: People in a Place with a Problem. **Where does the play take place (setting)? Who are the people (or characters)? What are the problems (conflicts)? What happens at the beginning of the play? The middle? The end? What is the climax or high point in the plot? Resolution?**

Cause and Effect: Many people were affected (directly and indirectly) by the bombing of Hiroshima. Grandmother shows Sadako other spirits who tell about their experiences and how they were affected. **What other events in history, caused by humans, have affected numerous lives? Why did these events happen? How have you been affected by any such event?**

Rituals: Sadako's family performs a variety of rituals: taking off shoes before entering the house, preparing sushi and saki, and the celebration of Oban. **What is a ritual (any practice or pattern of behavior regularly performed in a set manner)? What are your personal rituals? Family rituals? School rituals?**

**"The best way to destroy an enemy is to make him a friend."
-- Abraham Lincoln**

Activities Linked to Standards (samples noted in bold):

Writing:

► A haiku is Japanese poetic form (unrhymed) of a keenly observed moment that pertains to nature or human nature. It has three lines: the first line has five syllables, the second has seven and the third has five. Write a haiku based on a personal observation. Share your haikus with the rest of the class.

W04-S3C1-02, W08-S2C4-04

► Sadako said her grandmother's smile was "like sunshine." She also says "I want to fly like the wind." These phrases are examples of similes. A simile is a comparison of two unlike things using 'like' or 'as.' Come up with a list of five to ten different similes. Now, use some of the phrases to write a short story about a relative or friend.

W04-S2C1-01,-02,-03

W08-S2C1-01,-02,-03,-04

► What would Sadako think about the world if she were alive today? Write a letter to Sadako telling her about how the world has changed since her death in 1955. Include your thoughts on peace in the world today.

W03-S3C3-02, SS08-S2C9-03

Reading:

► Read another book about Sadako or World War II (you can use the booklist in this guide for ideas) that you can use to write a book review. Include any new information about Sadako that you didn't learn from the play. Also include what you liked about the book and what you think could have made it better. Give the book a rating between one and five stars (five being the best). Share your review with the class. **R-S2C1**

Creative Drama/Theater:

► Wars happen when people and countries can't resolve their problems and differences. In groups of two or three, come up with a scenario that could happen in your school that might be difficult to resolve. Decide who is in the scene (characters)

and what the problem (conflict) is. Don't worry about coming up with a solution just yet. Try playing the scene out a few times and then share your scenes with the class. After each group shares, discuss three different ways that the problem could be solved. After everyone shares, go back and work on the scene again, choosing one of the suggested resolutions. Share the newly revised scenes. **TS1C1-101, -103, -201**

► Create peace sculptures! The goal of the sculpture game is to express an idea physically as an ensemble in order to make the sculpture look as if one artist created it. Divide into two teams or create one huge sculpture with the whole class. One student begins by choosing a frozen position that expresses the word peace. Once in place, the student may not move. One by one, each student adds on to the sculpture choosing a different way to communicate peace. Each student must physically connect to another person in the sculpture. Take a photo so the students can see their work. **4WP-R1**

Visual Art:

► As a class (or as a school) fold one thousand paper cranes. Choose a variety of paper colors and patterns. For step by step directions go to: www.sadako.com/howtofold.html You can hang the cranes in chains or one by one from the ceiling. Use the cranes as a symbol of your commitment to keeping peace in your school. **VA-S1C2-101, 3T-E2-01**

► Peace means "a state of harmony" or "an absence of hostility." There are many signs and symbols that represent "peace." There's the dove, the "V" hand sign and the circle with three-pronged fork. Using your choice of medium, create your own symbol for peace. It can be completely original or a combination of existing symbols. **VA-S1C1-101**

More Discussion Starters and Curriculum/Standards Connections (samples noted in bold):

Believing: Kenji believes that Sadako can win the big race. Sadako believes that folding 1,000 cranes will make her healthy. **Have you ever achieved something because you believed in it? Is it easier to believe in yourself or in other people? How can you show others you believe in them?**

Running a Race: Sadako and Kenji race when they practice running. Sadako hoped to win a big race. Sadako races to fold one thousand cranes in order for her wish to come true. **What are other ways of racing? What does it mean to race against time? What does it mean to win or lose?**

Dance:

► Research and demonstrate a Japanese dance form. What are the different types of Japanese dance? When and where are they performed? **D-S2C21-01, SS03-S1C1-03**

Music:

► Japan has a diverse musical history. Listen to examples of traditional Japanese music. You can also learn some traditional Japanese children's songs by visiting www.mamalisa.com/world/japan.html where you can listen to the MP3 or MIDI files for the melody and look at the sheet music for the lyrics. Can you learn a song and share it? **GM-S2C2, 6T-F1**

Social Studies:

► Create a timeline of events leading up to and following the bomb dropping on Hiroshima. **SS05-S1C1**

► Compare and contrast Japanese culture with culture in the United States or Arizona. Also include answers to the following: How far is Japan from AZ? How big compared to AZ? Where in Japan is Hiroshima? What is its current population of both countries? What was the

population before and after the bomb dropped in 1945?

SS07-S4C1

► Sadako inspired people across the world to strive for peace. At the base of the statue of Sadako reads, "This is our cry. This is our prayer. Peace in the world." In teams or alone, choose a non-English speaking country to report on. Find ten things about the country and its culture. Find out how to say "peace" in that country's language and what peace means to that culture. Share reports with the class and have everyone practice saying each country's word for peace. After each presentation, add your word for peace to a poster so that by the end of the presentations, the poster is filled with "peace" in many different languages. **SS06-S1C1, W04-S1C2**

Science:

► Sadako had to live with leukemia, something that most of us can't comprehend. www.royalmarsden.org.uk/captchemo/index.asp?lang=en&page=childhoodcancer_intro.htm&pNav=Cancer is a British site geared toward teaching children about leukemia and cancer. Explore the site and list five things that you've learned. **6T-F1**

► Research the effects of nuclear radiation on land, water, people, etc. What is nuclear fallout? What are the positive and negative aspects of nuclear energy? **SC04-S3C1**

Math:

► In teams, create 3 story problems based on the characters and situations in *A Thousand Cranes*. Then, trade with another group and see which group can solve the problems first! Here's an example: If Sadako was able to fold 120 cranes in six days, how many days would it take her to fold 1,000? **M04-S1C2, 4WP-E3**

More Writing:

► Sadako makes a wish for good

health. Write, in detail, about a wish that you have. **W-S2C4**

► All cultures have different beliefs. Beliefs are based on things like religion, politics, and family influences. Sadako believed that folding 1000 cranes could make her healthy. Kenji believed that Sadako could win her race. What do you believe in? Write ten complete and well-structured sentences that start with "I believe..." Compile everyone's sentences into an "I Believe" poem. **W06-S3C1, 4WP-E3**

More Creative Drama:

► Study the theatrical traditions of noh, kabuki and bunraku. How are costumes, masks, make-up, wigs and puppets used in these art forms? **T-S3C2-301**

► Divide into two groups. Each group has thirty minutes to collect research from the internet about the bombing of Hiroshima. One group is in favor and the other group is against the dropping of the bomb. Create a debate in which members of the group share their opinions. **T-S1C1**

More Visual Art:

► Characters of the Japanese alphabet are drawn using the art of calligraphy. The web site www.tooter4kids.com/Japan/calligraphy.htm gives a good overview of calligraphy. Find examples of Japanese characters and recreate them. **6T-F1**

► Japanese Noh masks are wonderful works of art (go to www.nohmask21.com/eu/index.html for some examples) Design and build a mask in the noh tradition. First, look at examples online for ideas. Then, create a drawing of what you want your mask to look like. Using paper mache (or paper plates if you want to keep it simple), create the base of your mask. Use tempera paints, markers and even feathers and fabric bits to decorate your mask. Use elastic if you want to wear your mask or hang them on display in your classroom. **VA-S1C2, 6T-F1**

Interesting Internet Connections:

www.iap-pecetree.org/opt

-the origami peace tree project

www.tammyyee.com/origami.html

-origami site for kids

www.origami.org.uk

-a site with 3D animated instructions on folding a crane; also has cool games related to origami

www.paperfolding.com

-good site for origami resources

<http://bestpaperairplanes.com>

-origami paper airplane patterns

www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/index_e2.html

-all about Hiroshima, Sadako's life, and the atomic bombing; appropriate for students to access

www.sadako.org

-World Peace Project for Children, in memory of Sadako

<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/>

-for kids about Japan

www.japan-guide.com/e/e691.html

-links to all things Japanese including traditions, arts, language and history

<http://web-japan.org/museum/perform.html>

-info on Japanese performing arts

www.atomicarchive.com/sciencemenu.shtml

-science of atomic physics, nuclear fusion, effects of nuclear weapons



About Childsplay:

Childsplay is a non-profit professional theatre company of adult actors, performing for young audiences and families.

Our Mission is to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, the hallmarks of childhood, which are the keys to the future.

We love to hear from our audience members!

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A Thousand Cranes Booklist

Prepared with the help of
Tim Wadham, Youth Services
Coordinator for the Maricopa
County Library District



Curriculum Connections:

Sadako Sasaki

Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes by Eleanor Coerr

One Thousand Paper Cranes: The Story of Sadako and the Children's Peace Statue by Takayuki Ishii

Children of the Paper Crane: The Story of Sadako Sasaki and Her Struggle With the A-Bomb Disease by Masamoto Nasu

Hiroshima

Hiroshima: The Story of the First Atom Bomb by Clive Lawton

Hiroshima: A Novella by Lawrence Yep

Hiroshima No Pika by Toshi Maruki

Japan and World War II

When My Name Was Keoko by Linda Sue Park

So Far From the Bamboo Grove by Yoko Kawashima Watkins

Weedflower by Cynthia Kadohata

Dear Miss Breed by Joanne Oppenheim

Origami

Fold Me a Poem by Kristine O'Connell George

Origami Activities: Asian Arts and Crafts for Creative Kids by Michael G. LaFosse

Yoko's Paper Cranes by Rosemary Wells

Rituals and Beliefs

Celebrate! Connections Among Cultures by Jan Reynolds

Japanese Culture

Japan by Gina DeAngelis

Japan in the Days of the Samurai by Virginia Schomp

Leukemia

Kira Kira by Cynthia Kadohata

Bluish by Virginia Hamilton



Grandparents

The Spring Tone by Kazumi Yumoto

The Hello Goodbye Window by Norton Juster

Nana Upstairs Nana Downstairs by Tomie DePaola

All materials are available through your local library. Check it out!

Want Some Drama in Your Classroom?

If you would like help incorporating drama into your curriculum by having Teaching Artist come into your classroom, Childsplay can help. We offer a variety of artist-in-residence and teacher training experiences. We can also help with pre- and post-show activities related to the production as well as AZ Education Standards connections. For more information, contact Patricia Black, Director of Education, at:

pblack@childsplayaz.org or 480-350-8129