

The Mitten

Retold by Heidi Butkus

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The Mitten

Script

(Curtain is closed. During the show, chorus members are seated on steps of stage if available, or in chairs at the foot of the stage.)

Song #1: Overture (sung by the chorus/ everyone)

(Chorus stands for this song. Nikki, Baba, and Grandfather are standing on the stage in front of the curtain near the microphones. Baba has a basket with yarn and some knitting needles. There is a sled nearby.)

Narrator:

Once upon a time, there was a little boy named Nikki that lived with his Grandmother and Grandfather in the woods. Nikki's Grandmother, whom he called "Baba," used to knit him sweaters and socks and other clothing. One day, Nikki asked Baba to make him some brand new mittens that were white like the snow. So he said....

(Nikki approaches the microphone.)

Song #2: M-m-m Mittens (sung by Nikki, repeated by chorus)

(At the end of the song, Nikki goes back to his spot on stage.)

Narrator:

Of course, Baba was happy to make Nikki a pair of mittens. But she did not think that white was a good choice for a color. She was afraid that Nikki would lose them in the snow, and wouldn't be able to find them again. So Baba and his Grandfather said....

(Baba and Grandfather approach the microphone.)

Song #3: No Nikki (sung by Baba and Grandfather, repeated by chorus)

(At the end of the song, they go back to their spot on stage.)

Narrator: But in the end, of course Nikki got his way. Baba did make him a new pair of mittens that was pure white. *(Baba pretends to knit and gives Nikki a white mitten.)* So Baba gave him the mittens. And Nikki ran out to play in the snow. *(Pause, wait for him to take sled, cross stage and drop mitten.)*

Sure enough, just as Baba had said, he soon dropped one of his mittens. Nikki walked away from it, and never even noticed that it was missing. He was just too excited about the beautiful, sparkling snow. And the snowflakes were falling all around.

(Snowflakes, who were seated with the chorus, go to their places on the stage.)

Song #4: Snow (sung by the everyone, and danced by the Snowflakes)
(Snowflakes return to their seats with the chorus. The curtain opens to the stage set with a large felt mitten, which is attached with clothespins to a small rope that is strung from one side of the stage to the other. There is one microphone set up in front of it. Baba and Grandpa sit down with the chorus. The raccoon and the rabbits get up and stand to the side until their cue.)

Narrator:

Now it was very cold outside. By and by, along came two rabbits and a raccoon. They were very cold and when they saw the mitten, they thought that it would make a nice warm home. So they crawled into the mitten together to stay warm. *(Pause while Rabbits and Raccoon climb "into" the mitten. They actually stand behind it, and hold it just below their chins to peek out to the audience.)*

Narrator:

Soon, along came a wolf, a fox and a lion. They saw that warm white mitten and they decided that it would make a nice warm home. So they asked the rabbits and raccoon to let them in.

(The wolf, fox, and lion approach the microphone.)

Song #5: Move Over (sung by wolf, fox and lion, with the chorus joining in as designated. See lyrics.)

Narrator: But the rabbits and the raccoon did not think there was room for anymore animals in the mitten and they said....

Song #6: No Room (sung by the rabbits and raccoon, repeated by the chorus.)

Narrator:

Well, the rabbits and the raccoon did not want to share the mitten, but when they saw those big teeth, they moved over. (*On the words, "big teeth," the wolf, lion, the fox, and the chorus, growl and show teeth like a bear. The rabbits and the raccoon jump back in fright.*)

So the wolf, the lion, and the fox climbed inside. And the mitten was stretched out just about as far as it could go.

(The narrator pauses while the wolf, lion, and the fox go stand behind the mitten. There are some large blocks behind the mitten for them to stand on so that their heads can be seen above the raccoon and the rabbits. Our blocks are about 12" by 24". If no large blocks are available, find something else for them to stand on.)

Soon, along came a bear that was out for a walk in the woods. He was very cold, and when he saw that warm mitten, he wanted in, too.

(The bear approaches the microphone.)

Song #7: Move Over (sung by the bear with the chorus joining in as designated. See lyrics.)

Narrator: Well, the mitten was really very crowded by now. And the animals knew it couldn't possibly hold much more. So they said...

Song #8: No Room (sung by rabbits, raccoon, fox, lion, and wolf, and repeated by the chorus.)

Narrator: Well, the rabbits, the raccoon, the fox, the lion, and the wolf didn't think that there would be room for a bear. But when they saw those claws and teeth, they knew they had to make room somehow. (*On the words, "claws and teeth", the bear and the chorus, growl and show teeth like a bear. The animals in the mitten jump back in fright.*)

So the bear went inside the mitten.

(The narrator pauses while the bear enters the mitten. He kneels on top of a student desk or some other safe object that will allow his face to be seen above the others.)

The mitten was pulled and stretched to many times its size. Steam rose from the mitten as the animals huddled together inside. But still, Baba's good knitting held fast.

By and by, along came a mouse. He was just a very small mouse, and he was very cold. When he saw that warm mitten, he wanted to get inside, too. So he said...

(The mouse approaches the microphone.)

Song #9: Move Over (sung by the mouse with the chorus joining in as designated. See lyrics.)

Narrator:

The animals did not want to let anyone else in! So they said...

Song #10: No Room! (Sung by the rabbits, raccoon, fox, lion, wolf, and bear. Chorus repeats.)

Narrator:

The poor little mouse just shivered and stared at them sadly. The animals looked at that little tiny mouse and just rolled their eyes. The bear looked at the wolf. The wolf looked at the fox. The fox looked at the lion. The lion

looked at the raccoon, and the raccoon looked at the rabbits. Then they all let out a heavy sigh, and moved over just enough to let the mouse squeeze in. *(The children should act out each of the motions mentioned by the narrator. We always have the chorus do them too. It keeps them alert and involved, and they feel more like they are a part of the show.)*

And then something happened.

Song #11: The Sneeze (Sung by the everyone)

(At the word "Aaahhchoo," the chorus and the bear sneeze. The animals in front of the mitten unclip it and let it fall. Then they walk or hop away at the end of the song, and sit at the top of the steps with the chorus. Make sure you designate a specific spot for them to go to, and mark it with tape if possible.)

Narrator:

And so that was the end of Nikki's mitten. When he went home that night, he had to tell Baba that he had lost it, just as she said. And of course, he never did find it again.

(All stand)

Song #12: Finale (sung by the everyone)

Lyrics for All Songs

Mitten Overture

(sung by everyone)

Verse 1

My Baba she made some mittens to wear,
She made them as white as the snow.
I went for a walk and I lost one in the woods-
Oh, where, oh where did it go?

Chorus:

My mitten, my mitten, my fuzzy wuzzy mitten,
My mittens keep my hands warm.
My mitten, my mitten, my fuzzy wuzzy mitten,
My mittens make a good home.

Verse 2

My mitten's a home for a big gray wolf,
My mitten's a home for a bear.
My mitten's a home for an itty bitty mouse.
How many will fit in side there?

Chorus:

My mitten, my mitten, my fuzzy wuzzy mitten,
My mittens keep my hands warm.
My mitten, my mitten, my fuzzy wuzzy mitten,
My mittens make a good home.

M-M-M Mittens!

(sung by Nikki, repeated by chorus)

M-m-m mittens!
Make me some mittens!
It is c-c-c cold and I want to play out side!
M-m-m mittens!
Make me some mittens!
Make some mittens that are n-n-n new and white.
(repeat)

No, Nikki!

(sung by Baba and Grandfather, repeated by chorus)

No Nikki, no Nikki,
Nikki, Nikki, no!
You should pick purple, pink, or yellow!
No Nikki, No Nikki,
Nikki, Nikki, No!
White doesn't show in the snow.
No, no!
(repeat)

Snow!

(sung by all, danced by Snowflakes)

Chorus:

Snow, snow, snow, beautiful snow!
Snow, snow, snow, sparkling snow!

Verse 1:

Snow is on winter trees,
Animals are gonna freeze.
Snowballs are soft and white-
Let's all have a snowball fight!

Chorus:

Snow, snow, snow, beautiful snow!
Snow, snow, snow, sparkling snow!

Verse 2:

Grab the sled, run and play!
Snowflakes on my nose today!
Make a fat snowman now!
Angels too if you know how!

Chorus:

Snow, snow, snow, beautiful snow!
Snow, snow, snow, sparkling snow!

Ending:

Snow, snow, snow, snow.....Snow!

Move Over

*(The main characters sing the verses;
everyone sings the choruses)*

Verse 1:

Well it's pretty cold out in the snow and ice
And that warm mitten's looking pretty nice.

Chorus and characters:

Move over, move over,
Move over and let me in!

Verse 2:

Well you'll have to share it or you'll have to go.
Better let me in or I could bite you know!

Chorus and characters:

Move over, move over,
Move over and let me in!

No Room

(Sung by main characters, repeated by chorus)

No room, no room,
No room!
You can't come in 'cause there's just no room!
(repeat)

The Sneeze

(Sung by everyone)

So into the mitten the mouse did squeeze,
And the bear let out a tremendous sneeze...
Aah-chooo!
And....
The mitten it burst with a pop, pop, pop!
And away those animals hop-hop-hopped!

The Mitten Finale

(Sung by everyone)

Verse 1

If you are forgetful like Nikki was,
If you like to play in the snow,
Then listen to Grandma or Mommy when she says
Some colors are better you know!

Chorus:

So listen, so listen, you've really gotta listen!
Listening's a good thing to do!
So listen, so listen, you've really gotta listen!
Your Grandma's smarter than you.

Verse 2

If you find a mitten out in the woods,
We all know it's better to share.
But think really hard and you're gonna figure out
It's not a good place for a bear!

Chorus:

So listen, so listen, you've really gotta listen!
Listening's a good thing to do!
So listen, so listen, you've really gotta listen!
Your Grandma's smarter than you.

Cast

Nikki

Baba (Grandmother)

Grandfather

Wolf

Fox

Lion

2 Rabbits

Raccoon

Bear

Mouse

Narrator

Chorus - (anyone with no other role is in the chorus.)

Dancing Snowflakes or "Snowflake Cheerleaders"

(Somehow, this role is much more desirable to the children when referred to as a "snowflake cheerleader." You can have as many children play this part as desired. We once were able to fit 11 children on the stage at once to be featured during the "Snow" song.)

Please note: We changed the animals in the story to fit the costumes that we already had in our possession. The CD does not mention any characters by name other than Baba, Nikki, the Mouse, and the Bear. We encourage you to change the identity of the animals around, depending upon the costumes that you have available to you. Also, although the part of Nikki was written for a boy, a girl could play the part if the Narrator changes all of the pronouns, etc. from masculine to feminine. The lyrics in the CD do not mention the fact that Nikki is a boy.

Costume Suggestions

Nikki: white shirt, black pants, an ethnic-looking printed sash or belt tied around the waist (we looked for something that looked somewhat "russian" in nature, or eastern European, etc. The same fabric is used for Baba's skirt or shawl.) We also gave him some snow boots and a pair of white mittens.

Baba: a printed skirt (same fabric as Nikki's sash), a white blouse, granny glasses, and powdered hair. Wrinkles added with make-up are a nice final touch.

Grandfather: black pants, a white shirt, an oversized flannel shirt worn over the white shirt, and a hat. Draw a beard or mustache on his face if desired. Wrinkles added with make-up are also appropriate for Grandfather.

Wolf: gray sweatpants and sweatshirt, a gray sock tail pinned on to the back, and a headband type hat with pointed gray ears. We used felt with fabric stiffener ironed on. (All sock tails are lightly stuffed.) Add nose and whiskers with make-up as desired.

Fox: red sweatpants and sweatshirt, a headband type hat with pointed red ears, and a red sock tail with some white paint dabbed on the bottom. Pin the tail to the back. (Sometimes, a real looking fox tail can be taken off a hat, etc., instead of a sock.) Add nose and whiskers with make-up as desired.

Rabbits: We used pink blanket sleepers with cotton tails pinned on the back, but sweatsuits in various "rabbit" colors will also work. Hats can be purchased or sewn. Add nose and whiskers with make-up as desired.

Raccoon: gray sweatsuit, gray sock tail or a raccoon tail cut off of a hat, gray headband type hat with pointed ears, and a black bandit mask. Add nose and whiskers with make-up as desired.

Bear: black sweatsuit, a small black sock tail, and a headband type hat with rounded ears. Add nose and whiskers with make-up as desired.

Mouse: black sweatsuit, mickey mouse ears turned backwards so the logo doesn't show, and a long tail made out of a pair of lightly stuffed black tights. Add nose and whiskers with make-up as desired.

Dancing Snowflakes (or Snowflake Cheerleaders):

To make this part more desirable, and therefore get more children happily involved, we made these costumes rather elaborate. We sewed white "circle skirts" out of fleece, then gave everyone a white tee-shirt with a light blue snowflake painted on it. I found some snow themed, beaded headbands on clearance in January at Target, and then ordered pom-poms from the Oriental Trading Company. The children brought their own colorful mittens or gloves from home. For boys that wanted to take part as cheerleaders, we found some dark blue snow hats and scarves at Long's Drugs on sale. They wore the same white shirts with blue snowflakes painted on, and also got to use the pom-poms.

Chorus: the chorus members all brought gloves and mittens from home in lots of colors and patterns. We also made everyone a white shirt with a blue snowflake painted on with puffy paint. They wore blue jeans or dress pants, and snow hats if they had some. The colorful mittens against the white shirts looked wonderful.

Props

* One large cut-out of a mitten.

This is best made out of fleece or some other type of white fabric. A butcher paper mitten doesn't work well, because each time you practice the scene in which the mitten pops, you have to make a new one. We strung a lightweight rope across the stage and clothes-pinned it to the rope. When the mitten "pops," the children just unpin it and let it fall to the floor.

* One small pair of white mittens.

Start searching for a pair of white mittens early. They are not easy to find. (Baba's wisdom lives on!) White gloves can be substituted if necessary.

* A basket with knitting needles and white yarn for Baba.

* A sled or some other type of snow toy.

* Other Decorations

We found some large (24" diameter) snowflakes to hang from the ceiling of the stage. They were donated to us by Target when they removed their winter decorations.

Funding Suggestion:

Our PTA very happily paid us back for most of our expenses for this play. It doesn't hurt to ask if your PTA will help. We also acquired these costumes, props, and decorations gradually. The first year we put on this play, it was very basic, and has grown a little each year in terms of costumes and decorations.

General Instructions

"The Mitten" is a musical play that was written by a Kindergarten teacher for Kindergartners. However, it would also be very appropriate for any class up to second or third grade.

Probably the easiest way to put on a class play is to team up with another teacher and another class. We suggest that you plan on presenting the play twice with two casts of children as principal actors, and both classes forming the chorus together for both plays. In this way, you will have an understudy for every role, with one class providing the cast for a morning show and one class providing the cast for the evening show. Also, there will be more volume from the chorus with more children singing. For very young children, it is probably best if the teacher is the narrator. Older classes may be able to let one child or a group of children be the narrator. With Kindergarten and First Graders, the teacher that narrates the show stands up on the stage with the children, and is available to solve problems as they arise.

If two teachers team up to present this play, one teacher could teach both casts the stage direction while the other teaches the rest of the children the music and hand motions. If possible, have a parent volunteer or teacher aide assist in the stage direction to remind the children of their cues. If one child continually forgets his cue, sometimes it is helpful to give another child the job of reminding him. Even young children will take this responsibility seriously and may surprise you at how well they can remember their own part as well as someone else's.

This play was written in such a way that nearly every child that has a part on the stage has a buddy with him or her. For example, Nikki, Baba, and Grandfather all work together, although Nikki does sing one song alone. The Snowflakes all perform together, and the two rabbits and the raccoon stay together, etc. Therefore, with the exception of the Bear, the Mouse, and Nikki, each child sings and does all of the stage action with a buddy. It may be helpful to pair up a more confident child with a timid one. To increase the number of children given a part in the play, there could be extra animals if desired. You just need to find a place for them in (or behind) the mitten.

The children who have the principal parts in the play may also join the chorus before and after they sing their parts. You may wish to have a parent

helper stay on the side of the stage to quietly escort the children to their seats on the edge of the chorus steps or risers. We have found that it is also helpful to place a strip of masking tape with each child's name on it in the spot where they should sit when they are finished. The children will then always sit right where they are told, and you can separate children that should not sit together due to behavior problems. It looks very professional when children exit the stage and go straight to their assigned places in an orderly fashion. I have found that if the children stay off-stage when they finish their part, they tend to get a bit unruly because they are so excited. On the other hand, if they rejoin the chorus, they stay focused and under control since they are being watched and still are performing.

The big mitten should be strung up with a lightweight rope and attached with clothespins. Rather than getting inside the mitten, the children stand behind it. The first three children to get "in" the mitten, (the two rabbits and the raccoon) stand right behind the mitten and hold onto the rope, so that it rests under their chins. I put some very large blocks (about 12" by 24") behind the mitten for the next three children (the wolf, fox, and the lion) to stand on, so that their faces can be seen behind the first group to arrive. A large, stable table or teacher's desk can be put behind the blocks for the bear and the mouse to sit or kneel on when they arrive.

The hardest part of the play to orchestrate is the popping of the mitten. The children that are right in front of the mitten (the two rabbits and the raccoon) are given the job of unpinning the mitten from the rope and letting it drop to the floor. I also choose a responsible child to be in charge of holding on the rope as the mitten is unpinning, since it may bounce around wildly and hit someone in the face. Once the mitten drops, the children hop like bunnies to their assigned spots on the stage. Put some masking tape down on the stage with their names on it, so that they each know where they are going.

You will find that many of the songs are sung twice: the first time through the song is sung by the principal actors as either solos or duets, and the second time through the entire chorus echoes the song back again. The only solos in the play are sung by Nikki, the Bear, and the Mouse. If after practicing the music the children are not comfortable singing alone or in pairs, then the chorus may sing some or all of the songs both times through.

In order to teach the blocking of the play, I have found that telling the story with flannel board characters works very well. I went to an educational

supply store and found enough characters there to make up the whole cast, just by buying a few sets of storybook flannel board characters. To teach the blocking, I told the story several times to my class using the flannel board set and the music, encouraging them to sing along. By the time we go over to the stage to rehearse, the children already have a good idea of where they are going. Also, I show a videotape of past classes performing the show if possible. This really helps young children understand what you are trying to teach them.

Finally, have fun and keep your rehearsals "light." Very young children need to be told even the simplest stage direction many times before they remember it. Praising children for their efforts does wonders to help them succeed. To ensure success, before we begin each rehearsal we discuss their cues and remind the children of what they should do when they hear them. The narration has been set up to remind the children of their actions on the stage. Establishing some hand signals from the director of the play are very useful. The children will know when to begin singing when they see their director signal them. They can also be taught to recognize a hand signal that tells them if they are not loud enough or too loud, or if they need to approach the microphone a bit more. Sometimes, children inadvertently turn a microphone off. They can be taught a signal that tells them to turn it back on. You could also put a piece of tape on it to keep it on during the show. Usually we teach them never to touch the microphone. Instead, they should stand so their mouths almost touch the microphone. This is usually what it takes for a somewhat shy child to be heard. We always just use the CD playing in the background, and have the children sing along with it. If the children sing right into the microphone, they can be easily heard over the voices on the CD.

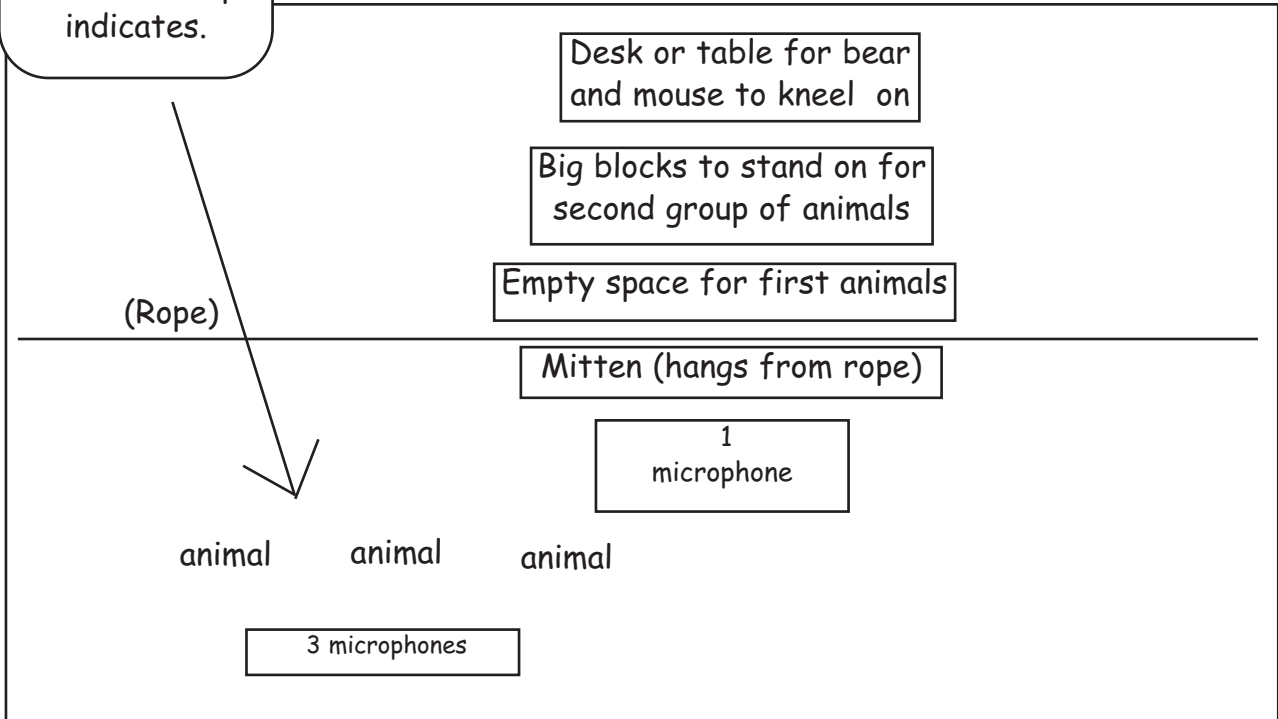
It may take 2-3 weeks of practicing the stage directions before very young children have learned it well enough to do it for an audience. Plan on about 2-3 weeks of practicing the songs as a group before choosing parts. (See suggested time-line.) Then team up with another teacher when it is time to teach the children stage directions. Leave the chorus members behind in the classroom with the other teacher and take only the main characters to the auditorium to learn the stage blocking. Sometimes, it is helpful to bring the children over in groups; for example, teach blocking to Baba, Grandfather, and Nikki separately from the animals. This helps to avoid discipline problems caused by bored children.

Remember, many people who are struck with "stage fright" often forget nearly everything they have learned when the spotlight goes on. The children will probably be depending on the narration to remind them of their actions, which is another reason why it may be easiest to let a teacher be the narrator. It may be necessary for the narrator to repeat a line if a child missed his cue.

Naturally, the older the children are, the easier it will be present this play. But it can be done very successfully with Kindergarten children as well. And truthfully, the mistakes are usually the cutest part!

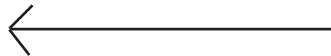
Stage Set Up

This is where the animals come to sing when the script indicates.



Baba Nikki Grandpa (Curtain)

2 microphones



After the curtain opens, move these microphones back to the space indicated.

Chorus
(Sitting on stage steps if possible)

Note: It is very difficult to get Kindergartners to share a microphone without having one child dominate the other. It is best to provide as many microphones as you have singers at any given time. For example, if you have three animals singing, you need three microphones if possible. Otherwise, the more outgoing child usually becomes a "microphone hog," sometimes even shoving the other child out of the way in his or her eagerness to "be a star." Also, parents get upset when their own child cannot be heard or gets pushed, and will sometimes demand that you do something about it immediately (in the middle of the show!)

Suggested Timeline

The Mitten can be easily prepared as a class play in about 5 weeks at a leisurely pace. (In other words, if you can devote 20 minutes a day for three to four days per week, you will probably be ready in plenty of time if you begin 5 weeks in advance.) The play can be done in less time if you practice more often, but I would caution teachers from attempting to produce this play in less than three weeks.

Beginning of School Year:

* Choose a date for your show and reserve your auditorium (if necessary) for both rehearsals and shows. Remember, these facilities are usually very busy especially during the holidays.

* Consider contacting your local cable company to see if they would like to broadcast your show if desired. Arrangements for this must usually be done well in advance. (We were never comfortable having our show broadcast until we had successfully produced it many times.)

* Begin making costumes.

Five weeks ahead of showtime:

* Introduce the story by reading any available version of The Mitten. We like Jan Brett's version. Reread the story at least twice and talk about it.

* Introduce the flannel board play and the songs. Show the children the stage blocking (where they go on the stage) with the flannel board characters. We usually do this about two or three times during this week.

* Teach the handmotions for the songs. Sing each of the songs at least one time per day. The only exception is that we usually wait to teach the Finale until the children know the Overture, since it is the same melody. It seems to be less confusing this way because they are written to the same tune.

Four weeks ahead of showtime:

* Continue practicing the songs and handmotions. We usually do this as "filler activities" or "sponge activities" when we need a break from sitting too long. We try to sing the songs a little bit each day.

* We also usually retell the flannel board story one more time during the week.

* Show a video or DVD of the play if you have one. I always save copies of the previous year's show. This visual aide especially helps the process become more concrete for the limited English students or students with language delays.

Three weeks ahead of showtime:

* Retell the flannel board story one more time. This helps them learn the blocking of the play, so it becomes more clear if you do it often.

* Audition your students by having them come up and sing in pairs in front of the whole group. Let students volunteer for this- no one HAS to do it. But if they won't, they cannot get a special part. They will have to be in the chorus. Explain that not everyone can be the main characters.

* Bring props to the stage that you will be using and make sure that there are no issues with the microphones. Now is the time to check the microphones, since technical problems can be time consuming to solve and can potentially ruin your show. Parents want to hear their children singing.

* Put tape down on the stage where the children stand when the children will stand at the beginning of the show. Write their names on the tape. (See the stage set up layout.) The children will also need some strips of tape put down where they should stand when they enter the mitten. You will also need to put tape names down on the spots where they will go after the mitten pops.

Usually this tape has two names on it: first a snowflake cheerleader's name, and then the name of a child that is playing an animal.

* Put tape down where your cast members will sit when they are sitting with the chorus. Write names on the tape, separating children that should not sit together. Put tape down to make a path where the cast members can come down off of the stage when it is time to join the chorus. (We have had children try to pick their way straight through the middle of the chorus as they sit on the steps. They don't necessarily know that they should go around.)

* Remember to bring tape to secure the cord from your CD player to the floor if necessary, and to tape down microphone cords. We always seem to have someone tripping over cords making microphones fall over and CD players stop running mid-show. Make a note about which CD track you are using for each song, just in case you lose power in the middle of the show.

* Send a note home to parents about your coming show. You may also want to inform them about when you are planning on auditioning. Sometimes we send home the words to the songs for kids to practice singing at home as part of their homework.

Two weeks ahead of showtime:

* Start bringing your cast members to the stage to practice. Usually the first day of rehearsal on the stage, I only bring the Nikki, Baba, and Grandpa with me. Teach them their parts first; then once they know their parts you can bring along all your other little "wild animals." TRUST ME: It's easier this way!

* After you have one session with only these children, then the next day, bring the animals along with the previously included cast members. Teach them their parts. Remember to give them a special place to sit when they are part of the chorus and have them sit there whenever it is not their turn to practice. My students know that they must always sit on their names. Otherwise, it becomes a bit chaotic as children wait for their turn to practice to arrive.

* On the third day, bring the snowflakes with you to practice.

* On the fourth day, review the blocking with all of the cast members, minus the chorus.

* Sometime this week, begin to try practicing with live microphones. Children can be really thrown off by any change that you make right before the show. They need to be taught how close to stand to the microphone in order to be heard.

* Plan on having one day each week to take a break from practicing. Kids will tire of practicing in time. Plus, if someone gets sick (including the teacher!) then you don't have to worry about losing a day.

One week before showtime:

* Bring entire class to stage to practice. Be sure to plan two or three days to practice with everyone. We always let the chorus have at least one day to watch the cast members perform. Otherwise, they will always be turning around to watch when they are supposed to be facing the audience.

* We usually feel comfortable enough at this point to only practice every other day, but this depends on how your students are doing. I usually plan on practicing more often, and then choose to skip it if we need a break.

* You may or may not want to let them practice once with costumes on. This is also a good time to take some pictures.

Audition Tips

-Have everyone try out on the same song. We usually use the "Move Over" song.

-Make notes on what you liked about each person, or what was wrong. This is helpful if you are confronted by a rather forceful "stage mom" who is upset about her child's part (or lack thereof.)

-We usually tell the children that the most important thing is that we can all hear you singing and that they do the hand motions. A child that won't move and can't be heard is not a good choice for a special part. We tell kids that we cannot choose them if we cannot hear them.

-Wait until later to choose children to be the "extra" characters, such as snowflakes, etc. We like to wait until we can see exactly who is the most disappointed to not be given a special role. Then we can give them the part as a special treat when the show comes closer. This usually helps heal some heartaches. Also, children usually tend to be disappointed about not being Nikki, the mouse, or the bear when you first make your announcements regarding roles to the class. If you tell them they are going to be a snowflake on that day, they are usually not happy about it. But if you tell them *later* (after all hope of being a main character is gone) then they are usually very excited.

-Consider double casting the best parts, such as the bear, the mouse, and Nikki. One child can perform for a morning show, and one in an evening show. That way, you have an understudy for the important roles. (However, be aware that this requires more rehearsal time.)

-Sometimes, it helps the kids who did not get a special role to know that you will be doing another show later in the year. Just don't mention it unless you KNOW you will follow through!

CD Musical Track Options

The music CD is divided into sections for your use. Where there is no singer indicated, the entire cast sings.

First Set: Demonstration Tracks

(This is how it is intended to sound!

These are good tracks to sing along with for rehearsals.)

1. *(This track contains the printable script only, no audio.)*
2. Mitten Overture
3. M-m-m Mittens (Sung by Nikki)
4. No Nikki (Sung by Baba and Grandfather)
5. Snow
6. Move Over (Sung by wolf, fox, and lion)
7. No Room (Sung by rabbits and raccoon)
8. Move Over (Sung by bear)
9. No Room (Sung by wolf, fox, lion, raccoon, and rabbits)
10. Move Over (Sung by mouse)
11. No Room (Sung by wolf, fox, lion, raccoon, rabbits, and bear)
12. The Sneeze
13. Finale

Second Set: No Vocals, instrumental performance tracks only

(These tracks are for those who wish their students to perform without any additional back-up vocals. This is for the very brave only! If you choose to use this option, be sure to practice the play using this track several times before the performance.)

14. Mitten Overture
15. M-m-m Mittens (Sung by Nikki)
16. No Nikki (Sung by Baba and Grandfather)
17. Snow
18. Move Over (Sung by wolf, fox, and lion)
19. No Room (Sung by rabbits and raccoon)
20. Move Over (Sung by bear)
21. No Room (Sung by wolf, fox, lion, raccoon, and rabbits)
22. Move Over (Sung by mouse)
23. No Room (Sung by wolf, fox, lion, raccoon, rabbits, and bear)
24. The Sneeze
25. Finale

Third Set: Vocals are only provided on the sections that the chorus sings. The soloists parts are done instrumental only, so that only your soloists can be heard.

(This set is for those that want vocal support for the performance for the chorus only. All other solo or duet parts have been eliminated.)

26. Mitten Overture
27. M-m-m Mittens (Sung by Nikki)
28. No Nikki (Sung by Baba and Grandfather)
29. Snow
30. Move Over (Sung by wolf, fox, and lion)
31. No Room (Sung by rabbits and raccoon)
32. Move Over (Sung by bear)
33. No Room (Sung by wolf, fox, lion, raccoon, and rabbits)
34. Move Over (Sung by mouse)
35. No Room (Sung by wolf, fox, lion, raccoon, rabbits, and bear)
36. The Sneeze
37. Finale

Fourth Set: These are the original vocals that were recorded by Kimmie and Krissie Butkus when they were six years old. You may wish to use these tracks for your students to sing along to during the performance, because they wind up sounding just like the children that are singing live. In other words, this provides support for the singers doing all parts, but it is somewhat more of a "secret" because it really sounds like children normally sound at this age. But be careful about switching tracks on the children without practicing with those tracks in advance!!!!!! We cannot emphasize this enough.

(These are the tracks that we have always used to perform this play. We just turn up the volume of the children's microphones higher than the voices on the CD.)

38. Mitten Overture
39. M-m-m Mittens (Sung by Nikki)
40. No Nikki (Sung by Baba and Grandfather)
41. Snow
42. Move Over (Sung by wolf, fox, and lion)
43. No Room (Sung by rabbits and raccoon)
44. Move Over (Sung by bear)
45. No Room (Sung by wolf, fox, lion, raccoon, and rabbits)
46. Move Over (Sung by mouse)
47. No Room (Sung by wolf, fox, lion, raccoon, rabbits, and bear)
48. The Sneeze
49. Finale

Acknowledgements

This play (both the words and music) was written by me, Heidi Butkus. However, the costumes were designed by Sherry Kinne, a dear friend that I shared a Kindergarten room with for 10 years before she tragically died of ovarian cancer. (Sadly, she never got to see this play, since she was in the hospital in an emergency situation on the night of our first show.) In addition to making and designing the costumes, Sherry provided much support in the formation of the management routines that are outlined in this booklet. Whenever you see the word "we" in this booklet, it is a reference to my good friend and "angel" Sherry. It is only through her love and support that this play became a reality for our students and yours. I will always miss her guidance and friendship.

The background tracks were originally recorded in the garage recording studio of my friend and neighbor, Michael Cravens. It was through his generous donation of time and resources that I was able to get my first three recordings arranged and recorded free of charge. Although he has since been paid for his services, and the vocals have been re-recorded, I will always be grateful for his visionary support of using music in the classroom and his belief in the value of it. I provided the melodies and words, and he provided all of the background music that you hear on the CD's. I will always value his friendship, help, and support that he provided and continues to provide in all of my endeavors.

The graphic designs on all of the CD covers, as well as the formation of the videos and DVD's, were all put together by the tireless efforts of my husband and best friend, Greg Butkus. It was through his knowledge of technology that I have been able to turn these projects into realities that can be shared with people like you. He also provided the expertise to put together the website, often spending many hours after work and on weekends to accomplish these tasks. I know that there is no way I can ever repay him for the time that he has given me, and he will always be my hero!

Sincerely,

Heidi Butkus